

Minnesota Society of American Foresters  
Headwaters Chapter Business Meeting Minutes  
July 22, 2004  
International Falls

About 20 people met in Pelland, west of International Falls at 9am to tour Boise's experimental forests.

### **Jack pine thinning**

The first stop was at a 9-year-old jack pine stand. The site had been planted with red pine, but was dominated by volunteer jack pine. The stand had been thinned from 1500 to 700 stems per acre. Boise foresters feel they get a financial return on such treatments. Craig Halla, who led the tour, illustrated his commitment to the success of Boise plantations by saying he "gets married to a plantation." He stays with it until he is sure it will survive, but he said they don't fight good popple. This stand had been a mature jack pine stand that was logged in the summer and full-tree skidded. The soil was sand over clay.

### **Red pine plantation**

The second stop was a red pine plantation that was site prepped with Arsenal, a herbicide. The spray killed the volunteer jack pine and 80% of the red pines were killed by mice and wetness. After replanting, 50% of the trees died. They realized success after the third planting. This stand had been a jack pine plantation, planted in 1948 and harvested in 1993. A release treatment with Oust herbicide in 1997 resulted in a profusion of thistle, which had to be controlled with a treatment of Transline herbicide. The Transline caused the pine needles to curl but resulted in no mortality. The moral of the story was not to kill good jack pine until you know the planted red pine are going to make it.

### **Aspen thinning**

The third stop was an aspen stand that had been thinned at age 13. The thinning, done with small skidders (Clark 666), left 500-700 trees per acre. Halla recommended doing it at temperatures around zero degrees Fahrenheit. He said -20 degrees is too cold; the stems will snap off. Thirty-two degrees is too warm; they won't be adequately damaged. An 8-foot-wide swath is knocked over and a 4-foot-wide swath is left.

Success at precommercial thinning in aspen requires:

Homogeneous stand

Minimal softwoods or rock outcropping

Age 8-11: do it before the trees express dominance (also, early thinning reduces collateral damage)

Advantage of thinning aspen:

Reduces rotation age by 5 to 7 years, sometimes 10

Caveat:

You must do a final harvest on time (~35 years) or lose the advantage.

Halla fertilized this stand with 100# of urea, one year after thinning.

### **Hybrid poplar trials**

The last stop in the field tour was at a hybrid poplar field trial. Boise has 630 acres of hybrid poplars planted in northern Minnesota. Their primary problems are deer and grass. Halla emphasized that this is black dirt farming. You must cultivate and spray. He said it is harder to grow than corn. Spare the herbicide and you will likely fail. He tried to get by with cultivating and minimal spraying to save money (\$5 vs \$60/ac). The result was unsatisfactory performance by the trees. He recommended the NM6 hybrid for that area, but said it was still not ideally suited to their climate. It was susceptible to early and late frosts. Halla said hybrid poplar growing is challenging, but that it has promise for a dedicated landowner.

### **Koochiching County recreation**

We stopped at a county administered boat landing on the Rainy River for lunch. Dennis Humisch, Koochiching County land commissioner, talked about the county's recreation program. He said he was firmly committed to keeping county recreation opportunities free of user fees so that all people could participate regardless of income.

### **Mill tour**

After lunch, we toured the Boise paper mill in International Falls, and were probably one of the last groups to go through before the corporation was sold.

### **Business meeting:**

Kara Huziak, chapter chair-elect, called the meeting to order in a conference room at Boise's International Falls headquarters.

Harvey Tjader, chapter secretary/treasurer, read the minutes of the last meeting and gave a treasury report. The minutes and report were accepted as read.

### **Old business:**

Support of seminar programs in Grand Rapids and Bemidji –

The belief of those in attendance was that the program in Grand Rapids is not active. Tjader reported that the Bemidji program was not asking for money and suggested that we wait until they do before considering financial support. (Since then, they have invited SAF to help sponsor a workshop on deer and the landscape. Tjader forwarded the invitation to the state executive committee.)

### **New business:**

Supporting the state SAF program of sending a new member to the National Convention. Cost approximately \$65-80.

Moved by Paul Dubuque and seconded by Steve Ludwig to budget \$80.

Discussion on whether to continue sponsoring four students from around the state to attend state winter meetings.

Moved by Mitch Wilson and seconded by Chuck Krukewitt to provide four \$100 scholarships.

Fall chapter meeting:

Dan Gilmore had suggested meeting to draft a prescription for thinning the 100+ year-old Chapman plantation on the ICC campus in Grand Rapids. Those in attendance seemed to like the idea.

Bemidji Area Natural Resources Continuing Education Consortium one-day workshop on Deer and the Landscape – Dec. 2, 2004

The workshop has been expanded to a day and a half, Dec. 2 & 3. It will likely be held at Concordia Language Village in Bemidji. Lodging is available on-site (~\$20). Registration will likely be \$75. Tjader is on the planning committee. The workshop will answer the questions:

Is the deer population too high?

What are the costs and benefits of a high deer population?

Can the deer population be controlled?

If so, how?

If not, how can we cope with a high deer population?

MNSAF was invited to sponsor a refreshment break or the evening social. The Wildlife Society and Minnesota Deer Hunters Association are also being asked.

Meeting adjourned.