



BIG SKY NIPF-ty NOTES



*Supporting non-industrial private forest owners (family forests)
in their rightful and responsible use, management and
enjoyment of their forested lands*

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DNRC's New State Forester

Say hello to Montana's new State Forester Sonya Germann. Sonya is the newly hired Administrator of Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's Forestry Division. She has a B.S. in Wildlife Biology and a B.A. in Liberal Studies with a focus on political science. She is nearing completion on a Masters in Natural Resource Policy with a focus on federal forest policy. Sonya hails from McAllister in Madison County, Montana.

Host a Walk in Your Woods!

In 2011, the Montana legislature established a week each October to honor the forest products industry and extend its appreciation for providing locally-made wood products, stewardship of private and public forests, and gainful employment. **You can host a Walk in the Woods event in your forest during Forest Products Week, October 21-27, 2018.**

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is offering grants of up to \$500 for such events. The DNRC offers a Guide for Hosting a Walk in the Woods event at http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/docs/assistance/biomass/walk_in_the_forest_planning_guide.pdf and an application for funding your event at http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/biomass/forest-products-week/fpw_wiw_rfp_-2018. The application deadline is September 21, 2018, and the applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

The goals of a Walk in the Woods include 1) informing the public of the many benefits of trees and forests, 2) increasing public awareness of the dynamic nature of the forest, and 3) informing the public that private family forestland owners have multiple and diverse objectives and that their investment in forest management results in benefits that we all enjoy.

Talking points could include:

- Focus on current issues, such as biodiversity, biomass, wildland-urban interface, or forests with high conservation value
- Explain the history of forestry in the United States and Montana and discuss trends using the U.S. forest Service's Forest Inventory Analysis
- Explain residential tree and landscape care, including species selection and planting, impacts on energy use, root damage, and proper pruning

- Showcase an example of ecosystem restoration
- Showcase the use of good silvicultural practices in a wetland environment
- Discuss the current health of local forests and tell guests how they can help keep forests healthy, for example, removal and prevention of non-native invasive species

Your audiences could include:

- Children/Students
 - Teach children about forests, forestry, and foresters. Parents and educators also benefit from exposure to the information presented to the children.
 - Provide children with a positive outdoor, hands-on learning experience about forests, natural resources, forestry, and foresters.
 - Increase children’s awareness, appreciation of, and respect for nature, forests, and foresters.
 - Expose children to the many benefits of forests-biological, aesthetic, recreational, educational, environmental, and economic.
 - Expose children to the many aspects of forestry, such as forest management, fire prevention, forest health, forest products, forest ecology, and wildlife management.
- Teachers
 - Teach educators about forests, forestry, and foresters.
 - Provide educators with positive outdoor, hands-on learning experiences about forests, natural resources, forestry, and foresters.
 - Increase educators’ awareness, appreciation of, and respect for nature, forests and foresters.
 - Explain to educators the many benefits of forests-biological, aesthetic, recreational, educational, environmental, and economic.
 - Expose educators to many forest issues, e.g., forest management, fire prevention, forest health, forest products, forest ecology, and wildlife conservation.
 - Encourage educators to share their knowledge and understanding with students in the classroom and out-of-doors.
 - Encourage educators to take their students outside to learn about trees and forests.
- Local leaders
 - Educate your elected officials and local opinion leaders about forests and forest management.
 - Help policymakers understand the important role forests play in the community, providing clean air, clean water, and jobs.
 - Demonstrate the commitment in time and resources it takes to responsibly manage forests.
 - Educate community leaders and local officials about environmental issues and decisions impacting forests.
 - Become a resource for an elected official and their staff for information about forestry in your state or local area.
- Tree Farmers and family landowners
 - Help spread the word about the importance of family forests to wildlife, clean water, recreation, and wood products.
 - Share with others the joys and rewards of caring for your woodlands.
 - Help other people who don’t own woodlands understand why caring for America’s family forests is so important.
 - Show off your accomplishments and commitment to sustaining America’s forest heritage.

The Guide for Promoting Forests and Forest Management is 35 pages and provides many ideas and planning aids. You may invite whomever you wish. School leaders and teachers are thrilled to have such a field trip for the students and can help you with ideas.

Hot chainsaw tip

Thanks to a member of the MFOA for this tip: Consider purchasing a chain saw that is battery operated. It is handy for those quick trims of shrubs or branches, and avoids the extra effort to gas and oil the traditional chain saw.

2019 Legislative session

The Montana legislature will convene in January of 2019 for four months. The legislative session is by far the busiest time for the MFOA. We monitor the bills introduced in the Senate and the House, the amendments, and the hearings. We also offer testimony, both written and in person, to those committees considering items important to forest land owners. We need your help, particularly to testify before committees in Helena on items of importance to forest land owners. If you have a yen to help, just contact us to discuss what it entails. You can choose the amount of time you might wish to contribute and we can easily fit your schedule.

Weeds to spray in the fall (a repeat from the Fall 2017 NIPF-ty Notes)

Our thanks to Mike Jones, Gallatin Valley Weed Department Coordinator, and Jane Mangold, Associate Professor and Extension Invasive Plant Specialist, Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences, Montana State University, for providing us the following information for weeds that respond well to herbicides in the fall.

- Weeds with rhizomatous roots that are still green will be sensing shorter day lengths and cooler night temperatures, sensing them to put on fat for the roots.
 - Canada thistle
 - Spotted knapweed
 - Leafy spurge
 - Russian knapweed
 - Field bindweed
 - Dalmatian toadflax
 - Yellow toadflax

- Short lived perennials, biennials, tap rooted plants. Look for seedlings that have germinated, wait a bit for fall moisture such as after mid-September, then spray in September or October. Spraying in the fall will eliminate the need to deal with these plants in the spring. These plants are easy to kill; but remember there may be a bank of seeds on/in the ground that you will have to address for years to come. Missing a year will set you back years.
 - First year houndstongue rosette
 - Spotted knapweed regrowth
 - Oxeye daisy rosette
 - Hoary alyssum rosette

- Annuals.
 - Cheatgrass – This is not classified as a noxious weed, but rather a “regulated plant.” Regulated plants have the potential to have significant negative impacts. The state recommends minimizing the spread of regulated plants. It is acceptable to pull small patches of cheatgrass in the spring or spray in the fall. Wait for cheatgrass to emerge in the fall and spray when there are one to two leaves per plant. Spray with Plateau or Panoramic SL (active ingredient is imazapic). In the first two weeks of April (or a bit later if you have a later spring), seed with grass. Wheatgrasses are particularly tolerant to imazapic. The Plateau label lists species that are tolerant/susceptible. Or, you can spray with glyphosate early in the spring and seed grass immediately thereafter.

When is a weed seed viable?

Why should you care? Because a viable seed indicates it is capable of producing a weed. A rule of thumb is that a seed becomes viable when the seed becomes hard to the pinch. However, I have on occasion used

herbicide on certain weeds when the seed was quite soft to the touch, only to return later to find the plant in poor shape but with what appear to be viable seeds. When in doubt, I bag out. When in doubt, one might ask a service forester, the local weed district, extension agent, or other expert.

Canada thistle

Did you know that pulling Canada thistle will **not** kill the plant? The long tap root on a pulled thistle deceives many people to think the pulled thistle plant is gone. Look again at that root and notice the bottom of the tap root is missing (ergo still in the ground). That missing tap root will produce another plant in due course. Pulling the thistle is still likely beneficial because it will prevent the plant from going to seed (this year that is). Mowing or pulling Canada thistle multiple times per year and for multiple seasons can injure and exhaust its root system, but pulling one time will not provide long term gain.

Burning those fuels

Now is **not** the time to burn those fuels. In fact, there may be a burn ban in your area.

Fire prevention

Here are some fire prevention tips that are not published often enough.

- Exhaust Systems on vehicles easily catch dead grass and other items on fire. Grass is particularly high this year in parts of Montana due to early rains. Do not spend time driving on private roads and paths which contain dead growth and/or woody debris. Worse yet, do not park a vehicle in these spots. Anything with a combustion engine is a risk.
- If you are pulling a trailer, make certain the safety chains are not dragging on the ground. Loose chains have caused very large fires.
- Chain saw use may be restricted during a designated burn ban. When you stop working in the forest after using saws or other equipment, stay in that area for the required time after you stop work (perhaps one to two hours). Keep a watch for smoke or other sign of possible fire from your work before you leave. At this time of year, eat some service berries to while away your precious time.

MFOA Membership

The MFOA membership rolls have steadily increased. We are grateful. If you believe your membership is worthwhile, you can help the MFOA by telling your neighbors and friends about us. There is strength in numbers, particularly when we are testifying before the Montana legislature and must first introduce who the MFOA is and why legislatures might wish to pay attention to us.

Montana's private forest owners

How many private forest owners are there in Montana? A whopping 29,000 plus. How many acres do they collectively own? Well over 4,000,000. Wish they were all members of the MFOA.