

# NORFOLK WOODLOT OWNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Volume 1 Edition 25

April 2016

## President's Message

The NWOA Annual General Meeting at the German hall in Delhi, March 2, 2016 was well attended in spite of the scare the weather gave us. A good time was had by all. The two dynamic speakers; Michael Lothrop and Garth Pottruff enthralled us with survival skills and medicinal-edible trees. It generated a lot of compliments and interest. The early bird membership renewal draw, for the chain saw, was won by David Okines. Be sure to mark your calendar for the next AGM on Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at 5pm to 9pm at the German Hall in Delhi.

Thanks to the members that filled in the NWOA survey. The NWOA Board reviewed the long list of great suggestions and ideas. We would love to be able to conduct tours/workshops that would address those ideas and questions. We found that the best tours are conducted at a local woodlot. This allows members to compare notes on issues that they may have in common with the hosting woodlot owner. If any of you are interested in sharing something about your woodlot with fellow woodlot owners, please give us a call or email. Perhaps we could arrange a tour. This would be greatly appreciated by the NWOA membership. The true value of the NWOA membership is the sharing of all the bits of knowledge that we own individually. All of us are unique and each of us has something valuable to contribute to the organization.

Perhaps you have an area of expertise that would be of interest to other woodlot owners. It would be great if you could conduct a workshop to show other members how to improve their woodlot. For example; suppose your biggest concern for your woodlot is improved stream protection or better habitat for forest song birds and you figured out one of many ways of improving that in your woodlot. You could share that info at NWOA tour or workshop you could agree to help out with. Like-minded members would attend the workshop and they in turn share their experiences; every member quadruples their knowledge by sharing their own on the subject.

The members gave us a ton of good ideas for furthering our education about woodlots. Way more suggestions than this volunteer board can handle. So, if you are really impassioned on a given woodlot topic the best way to learn more is to help us organize a tour and/or workshop on the idea.

We welcome your comments, thoughts and ideas for our newsletter, workshops and Annual Meeting. You can post them on our website [www.norfolkwoodlots.com](http://www.norfolkwoodlots.com) or call me at 519-428-2615 or email me at [john.dewitt@holliswealth.com](mailto:john.dewitt@holliswealth.com)

**John de Witt**

## Alternatives in the Wood Industry

By: [Central Maine.com](http://CentralMaine.com)

The flooring plant and sawmill at Kennebec Lumber Co., in Maine, U.S.A., are bustling with activity on a weekday morning, as logs get measured and sliced into lumber and the boards are graded, stacked and prepared for shipping.

Meanwhile, just up the road, construction is nearing completion on a new biobrick manufacturing facility that will turn sawdust from the mill into a heating oil and firewood alternative — the eventual new home of Enviro Wood Briquettes.

And in Athens, to the east, a wood pellet manufacturer is looking forward to that form of fuel taking off.

All three businesses are examples of growing areas in Maine's forest industry sector amidst a recent series of paper mill closings and concerns about the state of Maine's wood products economy.

Earlier this month Madison Paper Industries, one of the area's largest employers, announced it will close in May, laying off 215 people.

The loss of area jobs is the latest in the paper industry, which has lost more than 2,300 jobs in the last five years, according to the Maine Department of Labor.

Yet the forestry industry remains an important part of Maine's economy, with the sector pouring about \$5 billion directly into the Maine economy each year, including about \$4 billion from the paper industry alone, according to the Maine Forest Products Council.

And some area forest products manufacturers and experts are hopeful that the sector will continue to thrive, despite the recent hits to the paper industry.

"It's a tough time right now, but there's plenty of opportunities in Maine and we need to start looking at them and building on them," said Patrick Strauch, executive director of the Maine Forest Products Council. "We have great forests and they produce a lot of products for us. They're still a core business here that's really going to continue to be important for rural Maine, and all of Maine. It's not going to disappear; it's just going to go through some transitions."

The outlook at Maine's sawmills is improving as the country recovers from the 2008 economic recession, but foreign competition, wood prices and startup capital remain challenges, according to experts.

"Our sawmills are fairly healthy. They've invested millions during tough economic times, so they're all looking for housing starts to improve," Strauch said. "The housing market has gradually been improving, but we're ready for an upsurge, and that's going to be reflected in people feeling better about the economy."

At Kennebec Lumber, President Denis Carrier said there is demand for the lumber and hardwood flooring the mill produces — about 60 percent of which comes from Maine trees. Business has grown on average 10 percent to 15 percent over the last eight years, according to Carrier, and the company has grown from 16 employees in 2000 to 180 in 2015.

"The market isn't the hold-back for us. Our products are in demand and we have a good reputation wherever it is, but our biggest concern is raw material," Carrier said.

He said the company struggles every year to get enough raw material — logs — to run the mill because Maine loggers are sending too much of their product out of the state.

“Our business could quadruple in size tomorrow morning if we had the raw material, but we can’t get it,” Carrier said.

Electrical and energy costs, like at many paper mills, also are a challenge for the Solon business.

In North Anson, Cousineau Wood Products is another sawmill and manufacturing outfit that also has expanded its business and plans to continue the growth.

The plant opened in 2001 as a sawmill that turned lumber into kiln-dried wood for cabinetry and furniture. During the housing market crash of 2008, demand for furniture and lumber dropped, and the Cousineaus shut down the sawmill. Then they invested in equipment to make laminated gunstocks, the wooden body of the gun that holds the barrel.

As of 2015, the company was producing more than 13,000 gunstocks a week, and it employs nearly 100 people. Its success is partly built on two federal Community Development Block Grants, which fund economic development projects in challenged areas. The company hopes to add 25 to 50 more jobs by the end of 2016, according to Vice President Brody Cousineau.

In addition to expansions at places such as Cousineau and Kennebec Lumber, Maine also could benefit from expanding its markets for biomass and renewable energy, according to Mindy Crandall, an assistant professor of forest landscape management and economics at the University of Maine’s School of Forest Resources.

Biomass is a viable market for low-grade material — trees that are too small to be used for saw timber or trees that may not be a good species for wood products — but that can be used to create energy.

Eliminating that material from the forest is critical to sustainability practices, according to Crandall, and it frees up the forest for bigger, healthier trees to grow for lumber and other uses. But both biomass facilities and Maine pellet plants have struggled to compete this winter with low gas and oil prices and a mild winter lessening demand.

Bob Linkletter, owner of the Maine Woods Pellet Co. in Athens, said despite the tough winter, the long-term outlook is good for pellets. The Athens plant, which employs about 35 people, manufactures about 100,000 tons of pellets per year.

“We need to get more in the state buildings and schools. That’s the best savings, and it would be the best way to get more pellets in use,” Linkletter said.

Ensuring that Maine’s forest products sector remains viable also means continuing to invest in the state’s paper mills that are left, according to Crandall and Strauch.

“Real people have lost jobs and the paper mills are challenged, but the ones that are still up and running are some of the larger mills that have seen capital investments; and if they’re competitive, they’re moving into other product lines,” Strauch said.

“It’s those kind of innovations that are really important,” Strauch said. “How to get that innovation and that kind of investment to take place in Maine, that’s the challenge we’re facing right now.”

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# Coyotes in the County

By Bernie Solymár – Past President, Norfolk Field Naturalists

Late last year, a couple of individuals made a deputation to Norfolk County Council about the “disturbing” increase of coyotes in Norfolk County over the last year or two. They claimed that coyotes are a threat to pets and humans. Their angst was because a small dog was attacked on a home owner’s driveway at night about 2 years ago, and because residents in Pt. Dover and Pt. Rowan (primarily) were seeing coyotes in broad daylight.

As a result, over the last few months of 2015, coyotes received a lot of local press and social media coverage. After some frustrating Facebook exchanges with a number of misinformed (and more often totally uninformed) persons, and a whiff in the air that Council was bowing to pressure from a few individuals, I decided to talk to our Board of Directors in regards to holding a public information meeting to try to bring some understanding and clarification about the biology and habits of this highly adaptive and intelligent predator.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> we hosted speakers from Coyote Watch Canada (CWC), at the Simcoe Research Station auditorium on Blueline Road. The response was awesome – over 100 people crowded in resulting in standing room only! CWC is a not-for-profit organization, which has studied coyotes and coyote-human interactions for almost 20 years. Their organization provides public education on the biology and ecological role of these animals, as well as government consultation, and municipal wildlife framework models on how communities like ours can co-exist with coyotes. It was heartening to see that 3 councillors and a staff member attended the meeting.



CWC’s executive director, Lesley Sampson, gave a thoroughly educational and entertaining presentation. Some of the points she made that really stood out were:

- The Eastern Coyote does carry wolf and dog genes but, based on DNA studies, cross-breeding occurred primarily a century ago as coyotes first started to move eastward from the Prairies, and gradually replaced larger predators (wolves and bears) in southern Ontario. The percentage of wolf and dog genes are small and inter-species breeding rarely occurs today, so that terms “coywolf” and “coydog” are misleading. They are “coyotes” but there is no argument that those found here are somewhat larger than those found in western Canada. This has an adaptive advantage to bringing down larger prey like deer, especially when there is lots of snow.

- Coyotes are highly intelligent, inquisitive and adaptable. In rural areas they will approach built up areas because they often find a ready source of food. Solution – don't leave garbage, compost, etc. out. Put in secure containers with lids.
- New infrastructure such as roads, fences and urbanization impacts how wildlife moves throughout our communities, often resulting in increased sightings. Urban boundary expansion creates a loss of habitat and green spaces for wildlife. That explains, in large part, why Pt. Dover residents are seeing more coyotes. Just look at the proliferation of housing in that town!
- Coyotes are predators – in fact top of the food web in southern Ontario. As such cats and dogs become “fair game”. Pet owners that live in rural areas need to take responsibility of their pets by having them on a leash and not letting them roam at large.
- Removing coyotes by shooting or trapping does not work. If anything it can exacerbate the issue. Lesley explained this is because coyotes hang in small family units. These “packs” have territories that, when they are exterminated, are simply taken over by coyotes from neighboring areas. The “new” animals do not have the knowledge of the territory that the former pack had and therefore tend to be more of a “problem”.
- Lesley dismissed the misconception that coyotes feed regularly on feral cats. She pointed out that a coyote isn't very smart to tangle with prey that has teeth and claws and can fight back when there are easier prey items around like voles, chipmunks, rabbits, birds, etc. Makes sense but too bad!
- Finally, we received a Hazing 101 course. Hazing is a method of negative association that safely compels a coyote to move away from humans. This includes making yourself look big, yelling and throwing things at a bold coyote. Tin cans half filled with pennies, banging pots, and water hoses also work. Trick is to stick with it until you have forced the coyote out of your yard, farm, etc.
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Excerpted from the Norfolk Field Naturalists April 2016 Lotus



Cartoon by Ron Tchorek

## Red Pine Management Workshop

By: Betty Chanyi – NWOA Board Director

Wednesday, March 16 started out with a downpour of rain that threatened to cause problems for a scheduled tour of a maturing Norfolk County red pine woodlot. However, when 1 p.m. rolled around, the clouds parted and the sun came out to warm the plantation where Adam Biddle led 16 keen participants on a very interesting tour.



Adam Biddle - tour leader



Dolf Wynia - tour leader #2

Along with Adam Biddle of Norfolk County's Parks and Forests Department and Dolf Wynia of the Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association, John McLaughlin, a Forest Pathologist with BioForest, gave a very informative talk about good management practices in a red pine plantation. We were shown a pine plantation that had been thinned only a couple of times over the 60 to 70 years of its existence.



John McLaughlin - Forest Pathologist

One of the diseases that plague such plantations is Heterobasidion Root Disease (HRD) which is a fungal pathogen. This pathogen invades red, white and /or jack pine through stumps where there is a high density monoculture and where there is root contact or grafting within and between susceptible species. It especially occurs where plantations have had periodic thinning occurring and which were planted on former agricultural lands.

There are signs to look for when there is suspicion of HRD in a pine woodlot. If a group of pines are declining or have died, the crowns are thin with gaps in the forest canopy, the foliage is off-colour or yellowing and the fruiting bodies of the "popcorn" HRD are evident at the base of the trees, the culprit is HRD.



We found evidence of all these indicators in this County owned 100 acre red pine plantation on Highway 24. This disease is causing a decline in the quality of the forest and trees that could have been sold as pole logs or saw logs. They are now less valuable and may have to be sold for mulch at far less value than the healthy trees that are free of HRD. But the proper management of such woodlots is key.



A complete circle of trees was removed where HRD had put trees into decline thus causing windthrow of living trees.

When harvesting a pine woodlot, it is important to take measures that the HRD will not be spreading any further. The application of borax used to be used to stop the spread and infection of other trees but borax is now considered a hazard to the environment so a new product has been found to counter the effects of HRD. The product known as Rotstop C is a biological fungicide that is applied to the stump of the pine trees and is a naturally occurring wood decay fungus which inhabits the same ecological niche in pine stumps and can out-compete the HRD fungus. John McLaughlin is now working with BioForest, the company which produces Rotstop C, and is a wealth of information when it comes to controlling this forest destroying fungus. Just like any other application of hazardous materials, a spraying permit is required for purchasing and using this fungicide. For more information check out [www.BioForest.ca](http://www.BioForest.ca) or call 1-888-236-7378. Help protect your forests by using appropriate management practices.

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## Website Information

For more information, and access to Newsletters, visit our Website [norfolkwoodlots.com](http://norfolkwoodlots.com)

Current Newsletters are posted in the 'Members Area' of the website.

To access this section you need to login with your Username and Password

Select the "**Member Area Login**" and login. (*hint. Your user name is your full email address and password as was sent to you*) You should be able to reset your password if needed, or if problems send an email to [membership@norfolkwoodlots.com](mailto:membership@norfolkwoodlots.com)

Once logged-in, select "**Members Area**" go to "**Current Newsletter**" page. Once there you can select the latest or any newsletter you would like to read.