



Through The Knothole

a quarterly newsletter of the

HURONIA WOODLAND OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Issue # 86

www.huroniawoodlandowners.ca

Winter 2021

Best wishes for the New Year 2021 from your Huronia Chapter Board of Directors.

We hope that you and your families are all safe and well, managing these unique times of the era of Covid-19. Having the woodlots to enjoy has been an asset to occupying our time doing something we all love.

The great news is that the roll-out of the vaccines has begun, and better times are on the horizon.

Upcoming Event: MARK YOUR CALENDAR

VIRTUAL on ZOOM **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Saturday April 17th, 2021 at 1pm

NOTE: The log-in information will be sent in an email before the date.

The **White Pine Award** winner will be announced. This would normally have been done at our November 2020 meeting, however due to Covid-19, this meeting was cancelled.

The two **Jack O'Hara Forestry Scholarship Award** winners have been selected and will be announced.

Board of Directors: Please consider joining the Board. If you or your nominee would like to become a Board member, contact Jim Marchand (contact info on page 2).

Guest Speaker: John Pineau, Executive Director of the OWA.

Hope to see you all there virtually on line.

White Pine Award

Every year the Huronia Chapter presents its "White Pine Award of Merit" to a person who has shown outstanding forest management and conservation efforts.

Let Jim Marchand (Directors contact info on page 3) know if you have a submission for a nominee.

Previous Winners:

2020 – Nominations being accepted until March 14 2021

2019 - Gerry Beauchamp

2018 - Neil Craig

2017 - Ken Jewett

2016 - Terry Walton

2015 - Chris Ellsmere

2014 - Nancy & Dave Rowell

2013 - Peter DeVillers

2012 - Bruce Keeling

2011 - Ted & Anita Beaton

2010 - Douglas Matthews

2009 - Matthew Valk

2008 - Jack O'Hara

2007 - Jim Laking

2006 - David DeVillers

2005 - Ken Ewens

2004 - Allan McNabb

2003 - Don Archer

2002 - Wally McNeice

2001 - Charles Esson

2000 - J.R.M. (Mae) Williams

1999 - Wyman Jacques

1998 - Randy Crawford

1997 - Earl Dertinger

1996 - Robert (Bob) Ritchie

1995 - James D. Coats

1994 - Vivian Bell

1993 - Dr. Desmond C. Little

1992 - Laverne Dodds

1991 - John (Jack) Greaves

1990 - Donna + John McQuay

1989 - Max Craig + Family

1988 - Max Wagg

1987 - John Caston

1986 - Aage Lolk

1985 - Ken McCutcheon

1984 - G. Barrett Muir

1983 - Harold Parker

1982 - H.R. Drysdale

1981 - Wib Laking

OBITUARIES

Submitted by Earl Dertinger

This has been a challenging year for so many of us. Unprecedented as the news reports remind us daily, and for some families the loss of a loved one. For us the woodland owners, we have lost two of our members.

AUDREY ARCHER:

Audrey Archer passed away September 20, 2020. Audrey and her husband Don have been members for many years. Don was on our board and served as chairman for many years. Many will remember Audrey's big smile, her outgoing personality and her support of the woodland owners. She helped organise many White Pine Award meetings in Elmvalle and even managed to get a few of us to attend her church's Christmas dinner after our meeting.

DAVE ROWELL:

Dave Rowell passed away September 9, 2020. Dave and his wife Nancy have been members for many years. Both have been on the board, Dave as a director, Nancy as Director and Treasurer. Dave was a quiet person, attended board meetings and helped where needed. Dave and Nancy supported the fall field days, provided snacks for many of our meetings, encouraged members to sign attendance records for our events and took many photos of those events. Members at the fall field days will remember the excellent lunches the Rowell's put together for all to enjoy. But of course, the best was dessert with Dave's homemade chocolate chip cookies, reminders of his days running a restaurant in Orillia, "Souper Dave". Dave's obituary lists his wife Nancy as his best friend and Dave made best friends with a lot of us with those cookies.

The woodland owners do not have a standard or guidelines to follow when one of our members pass away. It is the best we can do is if one of us knows the person or catches a notice in the local paper. It is never easy when we lose someone and this past year has been even more challenging. We extend our sincere sympathies to both Audrey and Dave's families and to the families of members we may have missed this past year.

The Matt Valk Woodlot

By David Hawke

In the spring of 2009 Matt Valk (with great assistance from Peter Devillers) planted 10,300 seedlings in Oro-Medonte Township. Tree species were white pine (2,200), red pine (6,800), red oak (1,050) and black walnut (250). This was done via the 50 Million Trees program.



Photo: David Hawke at work in the trees

In the autumn of 2011 Matt and son-in-law Dave Hawke hosted the Huronia Woodland Owners fall tour which was well attended. The weather was perfect and we had two walk-about's and a fabulous lunch. So much great information was exchanged between participants! Matt was the recipient of the HWO White Pine Award in 2009 for his interests and dedication to managing his other woodlot.

This article is an update on the tree farm, and of Matt. The trees are doing okay, Matt not so much. A few years ago he fell at home and broke a hip. While undergoing rest and therapy for the hip operation, he fell and broke his other hip! The resultant stress and medications seemed to speed up his dementia and his ability to communicate was quickly lost. Matt now lives at the Leacock Long-term Care facility in Orillia and is 94 years old.

When Matt had to leave the farm, his son-in-law Dave Hawke took the reins in regards to tree management.

It's been 12 years since planting and here is a summary of how things are going:

A series of 'disasters' have befallen the plantation, including the replacement of 1,000 red pine seedlings which died as the result of poor shipping and weak genetics; the invasion of tall thick grasses which threatened to suffocate the new seedlings planted in the shallow trenches; white pine blister rust has ravaged about 25% of this species; white pine shoot weevils have affected the growth of 50% of the trees; frost killed the leaders on most of the black walnuts – two springs in a row!

Despite the above paragraph, we are still very much enjoying working with the trees! As Mack Williams (a family relative and renowned forester in his day) once told me, "It's all just an experiment." While Matt was quite frustrated and had great anxiety over the losses, Dave tries to look at the percent of survivals and be thankful for them.

Pruning of the white pines started in 2014 as a preventative method to thwart the spread of blister rust (thank you to John Quick for his advice and resourceful help) and has now been re-done in 2019/20.

Pruning of the red oaks and black walnuts has also been applied in an attempt to eventually produce veneer logs. The young trees are now 'branchless' up to the ten-foot mark; goal is to keep branches clear to the 14-foot height as the hardwoods continue to mature.



Photo: Hardwood Pruning

Thinning of the white pines has begun, due mainly to removals of blister rust damaged trees. The initial planting had many of the seedlings placed too close together (in all species) so a bit of breathing room is being created with selective removals.

A big change has occurred in the goals of the Valk Valley Tree Farm: originally planned as a timber harvest project (albeit several years in the future) the intent has now swung more to habitat enhancement and creating a healthy and diverse forest. When the land ownership changed from Matt over to Dave the 15-year agreement with 50 Million Trees was nulled; and the MFTIP goals encourage (or at least allow for) forest growth with recreational goals over commercial gain. That's not to say we are abandoning harvesting, just that timber sales will be less of a priority.

Looking forward, the big challenge will be "what to do with the removed trees"? Currently Dave is chipping the pruned branches and creating huge piles of biomass (anybody want some blueberry bedding?). Some of the thinned trees are just big enough to create some firewood for campfires and kindling. When the red pines are tackled in the next few years a plan deal with the removed trees will have had to been hatched!

Lacking a large landing site and having small inventory per species, it will be difficult to attract a logger to conduct normal harvesting practices. Indeed, Dave is working with Sandy Agnew and the Ontario Woodlot Association to

come up with an assistance program for private landowners of small plantations.

Life goes on, the trees keep growing. No complaints, really. Just keeping abreast of the challenges.

Through the Knothole, Jim Marchand, editor

We need articles from Huronia members because our members would like to see stories about our members, their properties and projects. Please consider sending me an article, from you or a friend.

Submission deadlines for articles:

Winter: Jan 10

Spring: April 10

Summer: Aug. 10

Fall: Oct 10

DIRECTORS (in alphabetical order)

President/Chairman: rotating among Directors

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OWA Director, HWOA Chapter Rep.

Directors Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month except June, July and December.

PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Or placing the name forward of
someone you would like to see
guiding the direction of our Huronia
Chapter.**

*We have a long history of involvement in
good forestry guidance, management
and practices.*