Introducing 2 New Members

Dean Sorensen is the son-in-law of Bill Schneeberger who is one of the founding members of the Iowa Chapter of the Walnut Council and owns a 31 acre tree farm located 7 miles outside of Waukon. This includes a 10 acre black walnut plantation, mixed with occasional oaks, that Bill planted about 30 years ago using seedlings from the Iowa State nursery. This plot has been heavily pruned and thinned over the years. Dean, along with his wife Lynn, have been managing Bill’s woodlands for the last 6 years. They own 3 acres adjoining both the tree farm and their business, Kitchen Krafts, Inc., which they planted with trees about 10 years ago. This 3-acre plot was planted by direct seed and included black walnut, oak, maple, ash and cherry. There has been no pruning or thinning in this plot to date. Dean’s primary concerns with management include the lack of diversity and the degree of entrenchment by invasive species, in particular bush honeysuckle, in the first plot. Two pictures follow.

Larry Decker owns The Big River Specialty Company where he and his family custom engrave stone, wood, concrete and glass. Larry has a property about 22 miles SSW of Dubuque on which he has planted 5.5 acres in a mixture of hardwoods including black walnut, a lot of oak, hard maple and ash. He direct seeded this plot about 15 years ago. Larry’s original interest in planting trees was to convert farmland into woodland in an area that is particularly difficult to farm. At this point he considers the planting a retirement project, though he insists he’s years from retiring. Larry has been a hobby woodworker for over 40 years and has been compelled to plant at least a tree or 2 every year of his adult life. The walnut trees in his planted acreage are doing quite well while other species have suffered deer damage. He’s confident they’ll come through OK, however. On the next page you will see two pictures of Larry’s tree plot, and he is standing in the foreground of the first one.
American Chestnut
The following picture shows an American Chestnut planted as a seedling about 15 years ago on the Krotz farm. It’s been producing seed for 5 or 6 years, though generally the critters manage to take off with the seed well before it can be collected.

If you’re interested in the current research on the American Chestnut, here is an online article from Scientific American:


The title and introduction:

A New Generation of American Chestnut Trees May Redefine America's Forests
Before an exotic fungus nearly wiped them out in the late 1800s, abundant chestnut trees shaped the forest ecosystem, providing food and shelter for numerous other species. In coming decades Chestnut trees engineered to battle the fungus could restore these lost relationships.

Estate Planning for Woodland Owners
There are about 2.7 million acres of hardwood forests in Iowa that are owned primarily by about 138,000 private landowners (www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/rb/rb_nc266a.pdf). The objectives of these owners range from timber production to hunting and other recreational activities to in direct preservation of the environment. Family-owned forests can be financially important, but they can also often result in strong emotional ties to the land, and the ties may have little to do with the economic gains seen in other types of real estate. Owners generally end up making the management of these forests an integral component of their lives. It’s no wonder that owners of forestlands spend significant amounts of time attempting to determine how to preserve 1) the value of the land itself and 2) the values about the land. Most of these forests will change hands within the next several decades and timely planning is important to ensure satisfactory transitions. There is information out there and there are experts able to help you make these decisions. Our fall event will provide an opportunity to learn a bit about how to start to plan. In the mean time, here are a couple of resources online:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/stewardship/estate/estate.shtml
Importance of Invasive Species
In May, Iowa’s governor declared June to be “Invasive Species Awareness Month” in hopes of drawing attention to the danger this type of pest poses to Iowa’s various environments, including its woodlands. In his statement he noted “Awareness of invasive species is an important first step towards behavior change which can prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in Iowa.”

Invasive species are a threat in that they can compete with and potentially disrupt or destroy native plant and animal populations. A few species have been deemed extremely problematic here in Iowa woodlands including buckthorn, garlic mustard and bush honeysuckle.

A good resource for information on Iowa’s invasive species is [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov). The fall event will provide an opportunity to directly learn more.

**The Iowa Chapter of the Walnut Council Fall Event**

will be held in and near Washington, Iowa from 10-2:45 on **Saturday, October 17th**.

**Agenda:**

10:00-11:30  Estate Planning, especially LLC’s, for Woodland Owners
- presented by Joseph L. McConnell, attorney
- approximately 45 minutes presentation followed by question/answer
- at the Washington Public Library, on the south side of the town square, in the State Bank Room upstairs

11:30-12:30  Lunch will be Dutch treat at Pizza Ranch on the east end of town just off highway 92. The buffet meal and drink is less than $10 and there are a variety of other choices.

12:45-2:45  Larry Krotz’s farm about 5 miles northeast of Washington. (2750 230th Street) We’ll be in the woods so be sure to dress appropriately. In the next column you will find information about what’s going on at the farm.

**Assistance Requested:**

I would love to spread the word about what you’re doing with your trees. Please, please, please brag a little bit and send me pictures. You don’t have to put anything into paragraph form or pretty prose . . . I’ll do that for you. Another possibility would be to let me know a topic of particular interest to you. I’ll do some research and check with other members, or see if I can locate an expert for some help.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Heisdorffer, interim president of the Iowa Chapter of the Walnut Council

Email: cheisdorffer57@gmail.com or Phone: 563-940-3654 or
Snail mail: 2437 Arlington Ave.
Davenport, IA 52803

If you need directions to any of these venues, I’ll make sure you get them. We’ll most likely have coffee and donuts at the estate planning.

Topics:

**Mark Vitosh**, District 12 Forester, will discuss identifying and dealing with invasive species in Iowa woodlands. You will have a chance to see examples either growing on the property or samples provided by Mark.

**Ray Lehn**, District 6 Forester, will be discussing the direct seeding project started on 18 acres in 1988. Ray’s office has been involved with this project since its inception, including the planning and follow-up management.

There is no registration fee for Iowa Walnut Council members and their families.

It would be very helpful for planning to let me know as soon as possible whether you are planning to attend one or both portions of this event, or even if you think you’d like to do these things.