Chapter President’s Message

Don’t miss the Holiday Potluck Party!

David Robbins
Maryland Chapter President

The Maryland Chapter of the Walnut Council holds two workshops each year, at which we strive to provide our members and guests with valuable information on how to properly and scientifically manage their land. After all, the mission of the Walnut Council includes promoting sustainable forest management, conservation, reforestation, and utilization of black walnut and other high-quality hardwoods.

However, a less tangible but equally important part of our workshops is the opportunity for members to intermingle and, through casual conversation, share the knowledge they have obtained through years of personal experience. This has led to many life-long friendships, and a special comradery amongst our membership.

Many members have suggested to me that we should have a workshop without a formal agenda, during which members can simply socialize and enjoy each other’s company. Well…Ask, and ye shall receive!

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On December 17th, the Maryland Chapter of the Walnut Council, along with the Washington County Forestry Board, will be holding a Holiday Potluck Party. The party will be held at the home of Don and Linda Grove, in Washington County, west of Hagerstown. There is a very simple goal for this event: To have a good time.

As the name suggests, the lunch at the party will be potluck. So if you plan to attend, please bring a snack, entrée, side dish, or dessert for everyone to share. Since Walnut Council members are known for their impeccable taste, I predict that we will have quite a tasty spread on-hand.

Holiday Potluck Party (Continued on page 3)
Planting trees for conservation purposes can yield a lot of benefits for the environment and landowners. Strategically placed tree plantings can help landowners manage soil erosion, wind stress, shade, snow drift, water runoff, and even odor and noise. Tree cover provides wildlife habitat and associated recreation opportunities. If you have enough high-quality wildlife habitat on your farm, you may be able to lease hunting rights for additional income. A variety of species, like black walnut, oaks, black cherry, and maple, may have good income potential for timber, once they have reached large enough sizes to produce good logs.

To realize all this potential requires some purposeful planning and execution. Many tree planting attempts fail as a result of poor planning or lack of information on how to do it right the first time. Before you pick your trees to plant, think about what you want to accomplish. Am I planting for windbreak benefits, wildlife habitat, timber production, or a combination of the above objectives? You may be able to achieve all of these.
Holiday Potluck Party (Continued from page 1)

Just as an excuse to go for a walk in the woods, the Holiday Potluck Party will also include a winter tree identification walk. Aaron Cook, the Washington County Forester for the Maryland Forest Service, will lead us on a stroll around the Grove Farm; showing us how to identify common trees in our area when they do not have leaves.

By now, you should have received the announcement and registration flyer for the Holiday Potluck Party, which has been sent out via mail and e-mail. If you have not received the flyer, feel free to contact me and I will make sure you get one.

This party is simply going to be a fun, informal gathering of friends. I know the holiday season is busy, but I hope you can find time to join us!

Got E-mail?

Occasionally we have timely information to share with you. If you have an e-mail account, but have not received any e-mails from us this year, that means we don’t have your current address. If you would like to be included in the e-mail news list, please send an e-mail to David Robbins at: david.robbins1@maryland.gov.

We promise not to clutter your inbox!

Spring Tree Planting (Continued from page 2)

if your selection of species and planting design is well-planned. What site limitations am I working with? Check the soils and site characteristics of your planting site to be sure your chosen species will perform well there for the lifetime of the plant. Excessively wet or very shallow soils are not suited to black walnut, so planning to grow it on marginal sites for timber production will lead to disappointment. Some other species may do much better and still provide a chance to grow some good timber. Local experts such as professional foresters, Extension professionals, and conservationists with the USDA can help you with evaluation of your soils and site, as well as appropriate species and design of plantings.

Young trees will perform better if they are not in competition with perennial grasses and weeds. Eliminate competing weed growth from your planting area prior to planting your trees. This can be done with herbicide applications, tillage, or a combination of these. Establishing a tree-friendly cover to keep weeds in check and reduce erosion may also help you manage the planting. Some annual grasses like winter-wheat, rye, and some small legumes like small clovers or hairy vetch may make a good temporary cover. If the soils on the planting site have been compacted by equipment, consider disking or ripping the area to help tree roots penetrate and expand in the soil horizon following planting.

Locate a high-quality public or private tree seedling nursery for purchase of your planting stock. Conservation trees are often sold as bare-root seedlings or as containerized stock, so consider costs

Spring Tree Planting (Continued on page 4)
and logistics of shipping and planting in your planning. Your local forester can provide recommended nurseries, or you can consult the USDA Reforestation, Nurseries, & Genetics Resources site (http://rngr.net/) for nurseries in your state. Ordering early may be important to make sure you get the stock you need.

If you are planning on planting trees for a conservation purpose on your farm, you may be eligible for cost-sharing from the USDA under one of a variety of programs providing incentives for planting trees. Check with your local USDA Service Center to see if you are eligible and learn more about the program requirements.

Planting trees is an activity that leaves a legacy extending past our own lifetime. Make sure that effort is successful with good planning.

Goats have been chowing down on vegetation all over the world for millennia. Sometimes this is a benefit, and sometimes it is a detriment (just research the Galapagos feral goats). But intentionally using goats as a targeted vegetation management tool is a relatively new and burgeoning endeavor.

To learn more about using goats for vegetation management, the Maryland Chapter of the Walnut Council spent a day with Brian Knox, a Licensed Professional Forester and owner/operator of Eco-Goats (part of Sustainable Resource Management, Inc.). We had the opportunity to learn all about goats, and to tour a field site to see them in action! To say that we learned a lot would be an understatement.

The first thing we learned is that not only are goats cute and furry, but they are also highly intelligent and each one has a unique personality. Endlessly curious and mischievous, they need daily supervision to ensure that they stay inside the temporary fence used to delineate their browsing area.

As most people know, goats will eat almost anything they can fit into their mouths (except for most grasses). Of course, they do have their
preferences, as well as certain plants they cannot eat. But compared to other animals, goats have an extremely wide range of vegetation that they will consume. Curiously, they love eating anything that has thorns on it; making them a great option for controlling multiflora rose, barberry, greenbrier, wineberry, etc.

This nearly indiscriminate browsing can be a good thing, or a bad thing, depending on your objectives. Goats do not differentiate between what we consider desirable or undesirable species. They will eat it all. So they should only be used in an area where it is acceptable for all the vegetation to be browsed down. If there is already a significant amount of desirable regeneration in an area, goats might not be the best option. Goats will also strip the bark off of trees under six inches in diameter, so they would not be a good option for a young tree plantation.

So this begs the question: What is a good place to use goats for vegetation management?

Goats are best used to control vegetation in areas that are thickly overgrown with undesirable species, such as invasive-exotic plants. This is especially true if the area is too overgrown to allow access to perform mechanical removal or apply herbicides. Goats can also be particularly useful in public spaces and community common areas,
Fall/Winter 2017

Goats (Continued from page 5)

where there might be public push-back against the use of herbicides. People love the cute goats, and Brian Knox says, “they are my best public relations tool.”

It is important to consider that the goats will not kill the plants, only chew them back to the ground. So most plants will re-sprout from the roots; and without shade from the overgrowth, seeds in the soil can readily germinate. For this reason, goats are usually utilized as a preliminary treatment to remove dense underbrush and allow access for follow-up spot treatments. After rotating goats through the area, herbicides or mechanical cutting can be used to selectively treat the vegetation that returns – killing the unwanted species and leaving the desirable regrowth.

In the end, goats are just another tool in the arsenal for managing land. Like all tools, they have their pros and cons, and are only useful if applied correctly. This is why it is important to consult with a reputable company that understands the benefits and, more importantly, the limitations of the goats. Brian Knox, for example, was a Forester and resource manager long before he was a goat herder. He recognizes the situations where goats can be helpful, but also will be the first to say if they are not the right tool for that site.

Because using goats for vegetation management is a growing trend, there are some companies entering the market whose primary interest is making money, not properly managing resources. These are often people who already own goats, and figure they will use this opportunity to make some quick money on the side. If you want to try using goats on your property, be sure to choose a company that understands sustainable resource management, and knows when it is appropriate to use (or not use) the goats.

It’s also important to understand that all vegetation management is a process, not a project. You will need to design and implement a multiple-year program, utilizing many different tools and techniques. If the conditions are right, perhaps the cute goats can lend a hand.

To learn more about Eco-Goats, go to www.eco-goats.com.
Prepar ing for Tax Season – Some Resources for Woodland Owners

Minimizing your tax liability while not running afoul of tax law can be a delicate dance. Fortunately, several resources are available to help landowners and resource professionals understand how the tax code impacts financial management and tax reporting for woodlands. An annual update, Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2017 Tax Year by Dr. Linda Wang, a National Timber Tax Specialist for the U.S. Forest Service, is produced each year to provide a brief overview of tax considerations for woodland owners.

If you need more detailed information, the National Timber Tax Website provides tools and information to better understand how the different types of woodland ownership and management impact your tax situation. The annual timber tax tips publication and the National Timber Tax Website can be accessed at: http://www.timbertax.org/

The Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center also has a publication, Financial and Tax Aspects of Tree Planting, to help you understand the potential financial and tax implications of conservation tree planting. Access this and other landowner publications at https://htirc.org/resources/landowner-information/

Upcoming Events:

Walnut Council MD Chapter Holiday Potluck Party
December 17, 2017
Location: Grove Tree Fram
15717 Spade Rd., Hagerstown, MD
Contact: David Robbins
301-371-0675
david.robbins1@maryland.gov

Private Applicator Pesticide License Training
January 9, 2018
Location: Anne Arundel Co. Extension Office
Gambrills, MD
Contact: R. David Myers
410-222-3906
myersrd@umd.edu

Local Forests, Global Needs
January 20, 2018
Location: VFW Post 467
Westminster, MD
Contact: Donna Davis
410-848-9290
donna.davis@maryland.gov

Farm Succession Workshop
January 30, 2018
Location: Frederick County Extension Office
Frederick, MD
Contact: umaglaw@umd.edu

Walnut Council Annual National Meeting
July 29—August 1, 2018
Location: Grand River Center
Dubuque, Iowa
Contact: Liz Jackson
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