A Word from the President: David Boyt

Thank you to everyone who made the Fall '19 Walnut Council meeting/field day a huge success! Norm and Beth Stucky of Mockingbird Hill Tree Farm, just southwest of Jefferson City hosted the event, providing not only a one-stop field day, but also a terrific venue out in the woods and in their restored barn. Highlights of the business meeting included Dusty Walter’s nomination and unanimous vote to be our President-elect. Wendy Akres—already taking minutes of the meeting—accepted the position of Secretary last March.

In other business, Jim Ball circulated a letter to the American Forest Foundation regarding the exclusion of hardwoods from the CRP program and discussed the potential harm this could do to forest landowners who will lose CRP funding. We also discussed the possibility of hosting the 2021 Walnut Council annual meeting in Missouri—either central or in the southwest part of the state. We will be looking into possible locations and activities. Anyone with an opinion or interest in helping evaluate our options can contact me.

Finally, for the computer savvy among you, be sure to visit the Missouri Walnut Council Facebook page. We could use more likes! By the way, we need regional landowner representatives in northeast and southeast Missouri. Duties include networking with Walnut Council members in those quadrants, and helping organize meetings. Anyone interested? If so, you can contact me about that also.

Upon adjournment of the business meeting we headed out to the woods where Harlan Palm and Chris Lohmann discussed selecting crop trees and demonstrated pruning walnut trees both with a pole saw and a powered chain saw. By the time we got back to the Stuckys’ barn, the hot dogs were ready, and there was a camp fire with plenty of sticks for those who wished to cook their own. Inside the barn were drinks, chips, beans and Beth’s brownies. The rain came just as Jerry Van Sambeek, Jim Ball and Matt Renkoski started their (indoor) discussion of managing toxic fescue, and ended just as Jerry and Hank Stelzer finished their presentation on fertilizing hardwood trees. So, we were able to get back out in the woods, either on foot or on a wagon pulled by Norm’s antique Allis Chalmers tractor.

A first for many of us was a demonstration on precision measurement of tree growth presented by Shelby Jones and John Dwyer. By wrapping a stainless steel band around the tree and measuring reference marks with a micrometer, accurate measurement of tree growth can be made over a period of years, though Harlan Palm expressed some disappointment that no growth could be detected that day! Chris Lohmann discussed crop tree release on the bottomland site, and how thinning decisions should be made in a mixed forest site to maintain forest health. Meanwhile, Norm kept careful watch on the weather radar. Sure enough, as soon as we got back to the barn, the clouds opened up once again.

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Coming Events

Spring, 2020; Missouri Chapter Spring Event; Monitor: http://walnutcouncil.org/state-chapters/missouri/

For details.

Notice: if you are aware of an event that may interest and benefit our members, send the event details by email to:

mowalnutcouncil@gmail.com

Photo Right: Harlan Palm discussing pruning during forestry field day
The Missouri Chapter Walnut Council held our fall forestry field day Saturday, October 19th. Nearly 50 people attended hosted by Norm & Beth Stucky at their Mockingbird Hill Tree Farm in Cole County.

**Topics covered during the day included:**
- Crop Tree Release (CTR)
- Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)
- Corrective Pruning
- Using Dendrometers
- Managing Toxic Fescue
- Fertilizing Hardwoods

Virtually all of the learning stations were instructed by members of the Missouri Chapter: Chris Lohmann, Harlan Palm, Shelby Jones & John Dwyer, Jerry Van Sambeek, Jim Ball, and Hank Stelzer.

**Continued from Page 1:**
Events like this don’t just happen. Southwest Region Landowner Representative Matt Renkoski did a great job finding us an outstanding venue. Thanks to Norm and Beth Stucky for making their tree farm available for the meeting and field day. Consulting forester Chris Lohmann did an excellent job preparing for the outdoor seminars. A tip of the hat to the presenters and everyone who gave of their time and talent to put this event together!

**Right:** Harlan Palm discusses “corrective pruning.”
Support to Specialty Crops Organizations  
Eileen Nichols , MU Extension

MU Extension has a vision of stronger specialty crops industries in Missouri served by stronger statewide specialty crops organizations. After receiving a specialty crops grant from the state, five field specialists in horticulture contracted with me to collect information which they will then use to chart a path forward.

I want to thank the Missouri Chapter of the Walnut Council for allowing me to observe their field day in October at the lovely Mockingbird Hill Farm near Jefferson City. I saw a chapter with strong leadership and engaged members interested in expanding membership and providing valuable benefits to members. This makes the Chapter a good partner for our project as we explore ways to support state organizations. I will speak further with your officers but welcome input from the membership as well.

Please feel free to contact me at 417 483-8139 or eileennichols@sbcglobal.net with your thoughts on what resources and services would make the Chapter stronger and of more benefit to members. The five field specialists in horticulture leading this project are Debi Kelly, Jim Quinn, Patrick Byers, Cory Creed, and Sarah Denkler.

Missouri Chapter Factoids:

- Our Chapter charter was signed November 1983.
- Our By-Laws contain 12 articles, are 2 pages in length and were approved in 1984. They are available for review upon request.
- We currently have 145 dues paying members and 25 guest members for a membership of 170.
- To-date, there have been 13 Chapter President's.
- The Missouri Chapter is divided into 4 regions: NW, NE, SE and SW using interstate 70 as the north-south boundary and U.S. Route 63 as the east-west boundary.
- Each region is overseen by a Regional Landowner Representative.
- The governing body for the chapter is the Executive Committee: President, President Elect, Treasurer, Secretary and immediate Past President.
- Walnut Council dues are $40 and Missouri Chapter dues are an additional $10 annually.

As of this issue we have not made a decision on the location for our spring event. Please send suggested tour locations via email to: mowalnutcouncil@gmail.com

Photo taken by Linda Noss.
MDC Holds 2019 Missouri Conservation Partners Roundtable in Columbia

THEME: “Healthy Lands and Waters, Healthy People and Healthy Partnerships”

Wayne Porath and Bob Ball represented the Missouri Chapter Walnut Council at the 2019 partnership forum sponsored and led by the Missouri Department of Conservation October 3rd in Columbia. Representation from natural resource partners was substantial with over 200 people attending. In her opening address, MDC Director Sara Parker Pauley, welcomed all partners and encouraged participants to identify additional partners. She noted the world is changing at an ever-faster pace, thereby presenting evolving challenges. For example, Chronic Wasting Disease in deer. She further noted that MDC is in process of reorganization to better address strategic priorities, integrated approach to natural resource management, relevancy, enhanced focus, customer experience, and enhanced partner and collaborations. Under this year’s theme, she emphasized that healthy lands and waters lead to healthy people and healthy partnerships.

“The Importance of Health and Nature” plenary session continued with a panel of Dave Case, DJ Case & Associates; Cheryl Charles, Children & Nature Network; and Marshall Johnson, National Audubon Society. Dave focused on results of his recent human dimension surveys of 8-10-year old children, then their parents. Both groups agreed with the premise that “connection” is good for you and that nature improves one’s well-being by helping us to relax, build confidence, and getting along. For adults, nature improved quality of time and provided beauty and peace. For kids, being in nature was fun, especially when with friends and doing things like riding bikes and playing soccer. Competing priorities, such as time and shifting priorities, were common in both groups. Encouragingly, folks from both political parties agree that being in nature helps them to feel better (conservatives 71%; liberals 81%). Dave suggested we focus on the United “NATURE” of Americans. We each have a role in what it means to be a human being.

Cheryl cited the book “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv as presenting evidence that connecting with nature helps us care for ourselves and the earth and makes us happier. Further, connectedness is a strong predictor of involvement.

Marshal focused on the importance of grasslands to humans: grass + cows = birds. He noted that many grassland birds are in decline, as are many of the 3,600 species of bees. Managed grasslands provide ecological requirements for both birds and pollinating insects. One in three bites of food are the result of bee pollination. Grasslands also provide for carbon storage and flood prevention. The Audubon Society has developed a collaborative Conservation Ranching program in which incentives are offered for good grassland stewardship through a certification label on beef products (see https://www.audubon.org/conservation/ranching). This program aims to enhance millions of acres of grassland bird habitat. Marshall challenged listeners to respect your potential partners – everyone can contribute. We should look for overlap and keep an open mind.

The afternoon was devoted to 12 workshops that included three central themes: Healthy Lands and Waters, Healthy People and Healthy Partnerships. In the “Working Lands Partnerships and Opportunities” workshop five bonne fide working landowners offered their perspectives on partnerships with a number of commonalities. USDA programs such as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) are critical to many landowners. Equally critical are partnerships with landowner spouses and other family members to meet goals. Other partners mentioned were community, university extension expertise, horticulture organizations, Quail Forever, MDC biologists and foresters. Without exception, this group of people who derive their livelihood from the land stated they could not do so without collaborative partnerships. A strong lesson to each of us!
Missouri Forests: Trends & Sustainability
Bob Ball, Missouri Walnut Council, adapted from Steve Westin, Missouri Department of Conservation

It is important to be aware of the sustainability of Missouri’s forests for several reasons. One reason is the contribution of Missouri’s forest products industry to the overall economy of the state. It contributes roughly $10 billion to Missouri’s economy annually, supporting over 46,000 jobs with a payroll of over $2.6 billion. The indirect benefits of Missouri’s forest industry generated by over 400 primary producer facilities over the state are enormous. The primary producers use roundwood in sawmills to provide the basic materials used by secondary producers to make many products including ties, pallets, barrels, furniture, cabinets and paperboard manufacturing.

The U.S. Forest Service estimated there was approximately 30 million acres of forest in what is now Missouri in the year 1620. However, those acres have declined by nearly half for a variety of reasons including conversion to cropland, pasture and development. Cattle grazing in the woods, and the conversion of woodland to pasture caused a large decline in forest acreage between 1959 and 1987. Most of that loss has been recovered over time.

Our forest acreage is steady today with 15.4 million acres recorded in 2018, but those acres are susceptible to urban development and the conversion of forest land to pasture. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s NRI report (National Resources Inventory) between 1982 and 2015 Missouri lost 300,000 acres of forest land to urban development. The same NRI report also showed about 1 million acres of forest land was gained between 1982 and 2015. Most of that gain came from the conversion of pasture back into forest land, however, 500,000 acres converted were once forest land! There is a constant pressure on forest acres to become something else, even if the conversion is temporary.

Looking at the management of those remaining forest acres, the question frequently comes up “Are we ‘mining’ our forest?” In other words, are we cutting more wood than is growing in the forest? Overall that answer is “no”, but certain species and areas of the state warrant a heightened focus. Statewide we are NOT cutting our annual growth. Across all owners and species of trees, the net volume growth is 2.6 times the harvest removal volume. White oak growth is 2.2 times the removal volume, black oak growth is 1.9 times the removal volume, and black walnut growth is 2.2 times the removal volume. Maybe a greater concern is the fact we have a lack of forest acres in the young, regenerating age classes.

Adding to the complexity of managing Missouri’s forests is the fact private landowners (438,000 people) own 82% of the state’s forested acres, but 52% of those landowners only own 1-9 acres, and 212,000 landowners own 10 acres or more. The balance of the privately-owned forest land is owned by:
- 66,000 landowners own 50+ acres which is 8.1 million acres
- 27,000 landowners own 100+ acres of woods or 5.6 million acres, and
- 7,900 landowners own 200+ acres of woods totaling 3.2 million acres

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When so much forest is split up into small acreages, and that amount is growing at an increasing rate, working with so many landowners becomes a challenge. Management plans require many hours of a professional forester’s time whether the acres being planned are 10 or 1,000. Also, fragmenting a large ownership into smaller tracts at some point creates properties that are too small to manage for timber production and that resource becomes unavailable to industry.

### An Aging Forest

We have a serious lack of forest in the young, regenerating age classes.

**Missouri landowners identified ten reasons for owning forest land:**

Enjoy beauty or scenery, protect or improve wildlife habitat, privacy, protect nature/biological diversity, pass land to children/heirs, part of a home site, to protect water resources, hunting, firewood and **timber products which ranked last in that list!** This fact is consistent among several surveys carried out by the Forest Service over many years. **Harvesting timber is a low priority to many.** Also alarming is the fact only 1.7% of all family forest owners have a plan developed with a forester and that converts to only 7% of the family owned forest acres. Even this percent with plans figure may be optimistic. It seems many landowners equate loggers with foresters, so if they have talked with their logger about a timber harvest, they believe they have a management plan!

Protecting this $10 billion annual income to Missouri’s economy will require the continued support by all of our forest resource partners.
Growing trees takes a long time. And while planting trees is a noble deed, managing established trees will substantially reduce the amount of time needed to attain your forest management goals, from timber to nuts and everything in between. USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) offers technical and financial assistance through Farm Bill Programs to help you achieve your forest management goals. Following is a list of some popular Farm Bill Program opportunities.

Forest Management Plan development: Most of us know what we want as an end-product from our woods, but knowing how to get there, or even if we can get there, is sometimes a challenge. A Forest Management Plan (FMP) will simplify this process by identifying priorities and guiding your management decisions. Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS can provide financial assistance towards the development of an FMP. EQIP FMP participants must use a forester that is on the USDA “Technical Service Provider” list to develop an FMP. Payment is provided to the participant after the FMP is certified as complete by NRCS. Note that an FMP or a similar Plan is required for most NRCS financial assistance (programs) available for forest improvement practices. A “similar plan” refers to FMP’s developed outside of EQIP (through other funding sources or as a direct service from a consulting forester) and Forest Stewardship Plans developed by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC).

Forest Management Practice Implementation through EQIP: Financial assistance is available through EQIP to apply practices identified in an FMP. This may include forest thinning (FSI or TSI), prescribed burning, non-native invasive species control, erosion control on eroding forest trails, and restoration of woodland and glade habitats. Specific FSI methods include stocking-based thinning as well as crop tree release, both of which can be used to improve growth of black walnut and other desirable timber trees. EQIP is a competitive program and applications are approved for funding based on ranking scores. Payment rates range from approximately 65% to 90% of state average costs and are obligated after a practice is certified as being complete. EQIP contracts vary in length based on the items included in the contract, but typical lengths are 2-3 years.

Forest Management Practice Implementation through CSP: CSP is designed to promote and reward existing conservation measures and to encourage further improvements. CSP is targeted at treating multiple Resource Concerns (such as water quality and plant [forest] health) and includes both conservation practices and enhancements. Think of enhancements as conservation practices with added requirements designed to meet targeted goals. For example, a popular CSP enhancement is Crop Tree Release for Mast Production. This enhancement requires implementing Crop Tree Release with a focus on trees that produce hard mast (primarily acorns but includes walnuts). Additional requirements include retaining snags and controlling non-native invasive species around crop trees. Like EQIP, CSP is a competitive program with applications being approved based on ranking scores. Ranking scores are determined by the current level of conservation present at the time of application. CSP contracts are five years in length and require the application of practices or enhancements to further improve the level of conservation. All acres operated by the applicant must be included in the contract. Fixed payments are provided annually (based on level of conservation and acres) and payments for practices or enhancements are provided after they are certified as being complete.

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Tree Planting: While managing existing trees is usually the faster way to achieve your goals, there are of course plenty of situations that call for planting trees. Rest assured that there are multiple tree planting opportunities available through EQIP and CSP! This includes agroforestry and basic reforestation through EQIP and planting for specific wildlife needs in CSP, to name just a few. Also, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) offers another avenue for establishing trees on existing farm land, providing cost share for planting as well as annual rental payments for planted acres. CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the program is undergoing changes as a result of the 2018 Farm Bill. Contact your local FSA office for more details about CRP.

Program Applications: Applications for EQIP and CSP are accepted at your local NRCS office throughout the year. However, each program will have a “application cutoff date” for each new fiscal year. The application cutoff dates for EQIP and CSP have not been determined yet for this fiscal year. Contact your local NRCS office for more information and check the NRCS website for updates.

For more information on USDA NRCS Farm Bill programs visit: [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mo/programs/](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mo/programs/)

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**iNaturalist - Smart Phone APP**

Connect with Nature

One of the world’s most popular nature apps, iNaturalist helps you identify the plants, animals and insects around you. Get connected with a community of over 400,000 scientists and naturalists who can help you learn more about nature! By recording and sharing your observations, you will create research quality data for scientists working to better understand and protect nature. iNaturalist is a joint initiative by the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society.

**KEY FEATURE:** Discover species new to you both near and far including hardwood trees, conifers, forbs, grasses, insects, fungi, mammals and more. It is able to identify both native and horticultural plants.

**PROCEDURE:** Take several photos of the specimen, such as leaves, stem, flowers, seeds or in the case of animals, whole body, head, teeth, feet, etc. (anything that might be diagnostic) and submit all those photos to iNaturalist. The “share” feature will distribute your photos to this vast network of scientists around the world providing almost immediate feedback to identify the specimen. **Available from the Google Play Store and it’s FREE!**

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**It’s Pruning Season!**

To view articles on pruning hardwood trees, review “Pruning Articles” posted at our website: [http://walnutcouncil.org/state-chapters/missouri/](http://walnutcouncil.org/state-chapters/missouri/)
For Sale - Stihl Chain Saw!

⇒ This Stihl chainsaw can be yours for only $16,700!

⇒ Solid wood...holly, walnut, butternut and maple. Includes plug wrench!

⇒ Available at Tamarack in Beckley, West Virginia.

Help Grow Our Membership!

Your help is requested in growing our membership by reaching out to woodland landowners looking for advice and recommendations to help them manage their woodlands. These folks may be family members, relatives, friends, neighbors or work colleagues. If you can provide us with their contact information by sending an email to: mowalnutcouncil@gmail.com we will follow-up with them. THANKS!