



## Iosco Conservation Update

Conservation District News

November 2022

Forester Russell Williams



### Tree Sale in Planning Stage

We are currently selecting which species to sell in the upcoming spring fundraising sale. There is a shortage of many species because of the difficulties of the previous couple of years. The catalog should be coming together soon.



### The Forests

Requests for site-visits are trending way down as the variety of deer hunting seasons are upon us. Most leaves are down now too, and trees are looking like their winter selves. Most insects are gone or frozen. When you want Russell the Forester to come out to your parcel for a free educational site-visit please call or text his cell phone at 989-310-6408. Whether a single tree or a forest full he is glad to visit.



### Christmas Tree for \$5

Remember that you can get a permit for cutting up to 3 Christmas trees on Forest Service Federal Lands. Go to the Huron Manistee website at [www.fs.usda.gov/hmnf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/hmnf) and click the Visit Us tab, then click on

Passes & Permits. Scroll down a little bit and you will see a link to buy a permit.



### Ingalls Forest every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday

The Forester will be on-site at Ingalls Forest, the Iosco Conservation Districts 80 acre parcel, every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday from 10AM to 2PM. Typically there will be some type of woodland project to work on and printed outreach materials available for visitors. If conditions allow it there will be a warming fire, coffee, soft drinks, and snacks. There are trails for walking and the mixed tree species usually bring in a number of bird species for watching. There is no hunting at Ingalls Forest.



### Oak Trees

All oak tree species can be categorized as being either in the red oak group, or the white oak group. Each of the groups have a number of distinct species within it. The wood produced by trees in the red oak group is more porous than the wood of the trees in the white oak group. This porous character makes oaks in the red oak group more susceptible to oak wilt disease. Red oaks typically grow faster and have a shorter life span than whites.

As you travel Iosco County you might notice some areas with an increasing number of dead oak trees. It seems that most of these areas are more towards the west than the east. It's not all oak wilt.

## Oak Trees Continued

The two lined chestnut borer is a small beetle that is showing up in high numbers. The adult beetle does little harm directly. The larval stage of the insect does the damage by eating the critically important tissue right under the bark of the tree. They look like thin white grubs maybe up to an inch or so long. As the larvae matures it goes into the pupal stage where it transforms into the adult beetle.

Armillaria root rot is a fungus that lives in the ground and feeds on tree roots. It can be very damaging to oak trees under some conditions.

The spongy moth (previously gypsy moth) has been present in high numbers in many areas of Iosco County over the past few years. It seemed that numbers were much lower this past summer though, thankfully. Oaks are a favorite food of the spongy moth caterpillar. Large areas of the woods were totally defoliated, some in consecutive years.

Much of the oak forest type we have is the result of extensive harvests in the late nineteenth century, and the large wildfires that followed. Many of the oak trees that are dying are around 120-140 years old. On marginal ground this might be the trees lifespan.

The sandy soils that underlie much of the oak forests have low water holding capacity and low nutrient availability. As weather patterns become more erratic and localized it may be that these soils are playing more of a role in tree health.

In any given oak tree, there can be a number of problems going on at the same time. Oak decline is the term commonly used to describe trees that have multiple simultaneous issues. It is believed that much of the oak tree death we are seeing is the result of oak decline.

Trees of the white oak group seem to be largely unaffected so far.



## What to Plant

I believe it is wise to regularly plant a variety of trees and shrubs. Each year plant some so that you minimize loss from tough growing conditions. A dry season can ruin your efforts. Russell the Forester is always happy to come out to your site and talk over some good options for planting. His cell number is 989-310-6408 talk or text.



Fall Colors