



Top 10+ Ways to Have More Fun in Your Forest

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Department of Natural Resources - Forest Resources Division

Top 10+ Ways to Have More Fun in Your Forest

1. Invest in a Forest Stewardship Plan
2. Share your knowledge with others
3. Buy another chainsaw
4. Take lots of pictures
5. Increase your income
6. Reduce your expenses
7. Expand your forest
8. Start your own seedlings
9. Minimize your frustrations
10. Spend more time in your woods
11. Plant a wildlife food plot
12. Have a family meeting
13. Learn to identify plants, trees, and forests
14. Listen to your forest



If the Big Ten can have 14 schools, I thought I would add a few more items to my Top Ten list...

#1 – Invest in a Forest Stewardship Plan



- Only 4% of landowners in the USA have a written forest management plan.
- A forest management plan, based on forestry science and environmental ethics, is the foundation for all other activities in your forest.
 - Landowner Goals – where are you going?
 - Forest Resources – what do you have now?
 - Recommendations – how do you get there?
- The USFS, DNR, and private sector foresters and wildlife biologists have partnered together to develop >5,000 Forest Stewardship Plans in Michigan since 1991.
 - A partial cost share of \$200 per plan plus \$0.50 per acre up to \$2,500 helps lower your cost
 - See www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship to find certified plan writers in your county
- A Forest Stewardship Plan can be used to enroll in the Qualified Forest program or the Commercial Forest program to lower your property taxes.
- NRCS-EQIP provides more financial assistance for a forest management plan, but it takes much longer to obtain and requires more landowner effort to apply.



*“My Forest Stewardship Plan
helps me manage, protect
and enjoy my forest.”*

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#2 – Share your Knowledge with Others



- Enroll in the American Tree Farm System to certify your sustainable forest management
 - No additional cost after investing in a forest management plan
 - www.treefarmssystem.org
- Join the Michigan Forest Association to network with other forest landowners
 - www.michiganforests.com
- Join a national forest owners association
 - National Woodland Owners Association (www.woodlandowners.org)
 - Forest Landowners Association (www.forestlandowners.com)
- Join the Walnut Council or Michigan Nut Growers Association
- Peer knowledge sharing:
 - visit your friend’s forest and then invite them to your forest

#3 – Buy Another Chainsaw

- Invest in professional quality tools:
 - Tree and Log Scale Stick - \$12
 - Planting Bar - \$37
 - Fiskars Splitting Axe - \$40
 - Spencer Logger's Tape - \$70
 - Garmin GPS - \$150
 - Leupold Binoculars - \$400
 - Stihl MS 361 - \$610
 - Gator HPX 4x4 - \$9,000



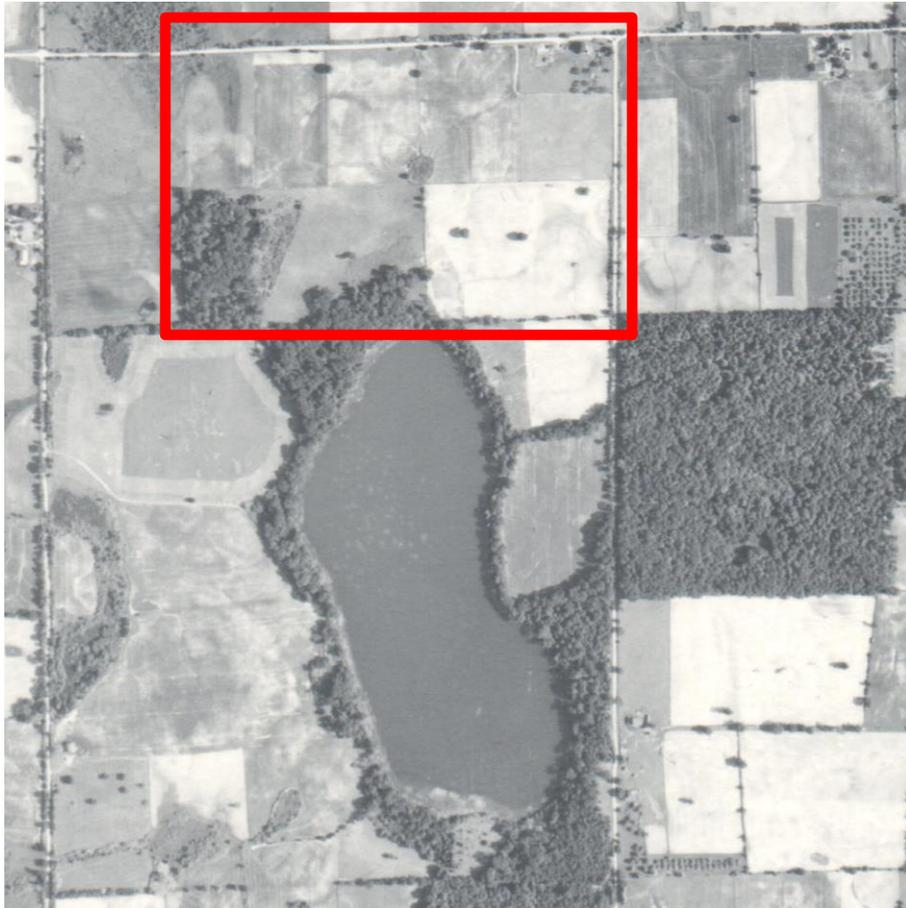
- Playing in your forest – Priceless!
- www.Forestry-Suppliers.com or www.BenMeadows.com
- Great Christmas presents for your spouse!

#4 – Take Lots of Pictures

- “No book or hired forester is a substitute for the instinct an owner can develop by simply watching their woods, year in, year out.”
 - *Working with Your Woodland: A Landowner’s Guide*
- Use a digital camera to record your observations
 - take pictures throughout the year, every year
- Find current aerial photos of your forest
 - Google Earth, Google Maps
 - your county may have online GIS software with aerial photos and other info
- Find *old* aerial photos to see changes over the last 70 years
 - MSU Geography Department has aerial photos dating back to 1938
 - www.rsgis.msu.edu/aerial_archive/index.php

Aerial photo taken in 1938

60 acre property – mostly agriculture



Google Maps 2013

60 acre property – half reforested
40 acre forest is now agriculture



#5 – Increase Your Income

- Hire a consulting forester to administer your timber sale
 - *Improve* your forest, harvest trees *you* want to sell, protect the trees you want to *keep*
 - Protect the ecology of your forest and *optimize* current and future economic value
- Lease your land for hunting or other recreation
 - DNR’s Hunter Access Program
 - www.michigan.gov/hap
- Explore new markets for low value forest products
 - Biomass for the MSU Power Plant, Genesee Power Plant, etc.
 - Wood pellets and outdoor wood burning stoves
- Sell Non-Timber Forest Products
 - “plants and fungi used as floral greens, Christmas greens, wild edibles, posts, poles, firewood, medicinal plants, and transplants”
 - Growers in Wisconsin are making \$\$\$ selling ginseng and goldenseal to China
 - MSU Extension has info on how to start a business based on natural resources

#6 – Reduce Your Expenses

- State of Michigan property tax reduction programs
 - Qualified Forest Program
 - 20 to 640 acres; save up to 18 mills; no public access for hunting; www.michigan.gov/qfp
 - Commercial Forest Program
 - 40+ acres, pay only \$1.25/acre; public access for hunting; www.michigan.gov/commercialforest
- NRCS financial assistance programs
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - Forest management plans
 - Conservation practices to implement your plan
 - Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
 - Plant trees on low quality agriculture land
 - www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/mi/technical/landuse/forestry/
- Proper income tax filing
 - Timber sales are usually taxed as capital gains, not ordinary income
 - Calculate your basis (*cost* of timber) for proper depletion allowance
 - www.timbertax.org

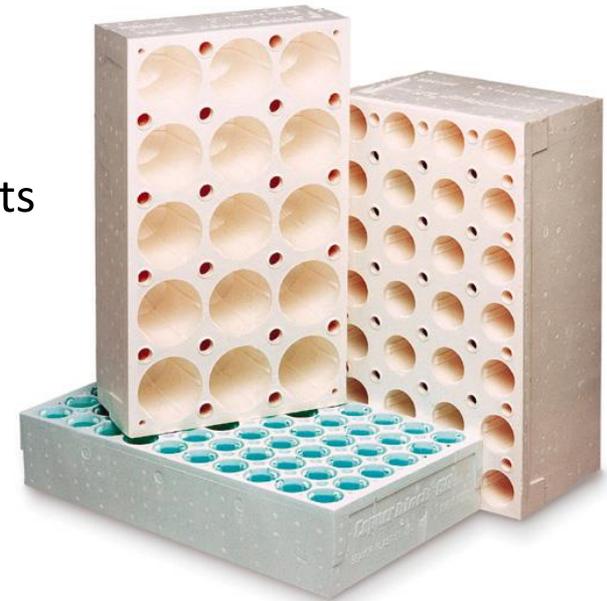


#7 – Expand Your Forest

- Land Use Change
 - Tropical forests are being lost to agricultural expansion
 - Michigan forests are being converted into subdivisions and agriculture
- Convert unproductive agricultural land to forest land
 - Allow succession to progress from field back to forest
 - Guide succession to your desired objectives with plantations
- Reverse the fragmentation of ownership
 - Purchase your neighbor’s forest or farm to expand your forest
- Reverse the fragmentation of management
 - Talk to your neighbor and if you share common values, *work with your neighbor* to manage a larger “ecosystem”

#8 – Start Your own Tree Seedlings

- Collect your own seeds from local trees
- Buy any species of tree seed at:
 - www.treeshrubseeds.com or www.sheffields.com
- *Woody Plant Seed Manual* for germination requirements
 - www.nsl.fs.fed.us/nsl_wpsm.html
- Use “styroblocs” to grow seedling plugs
 - www.stuwe.com
- Not necessarily cheaper, but lots more fun!
- A list of 21 tree seedling nurseries in Michigan where you can buy your tree seedlings is available at www.michigan.gov/privateforestland



#9 – Minimize your Frustrations (Know Who to Contact with a Question)

- Forester Stewardship Plan Writers: www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship
- Conservation District Foresters: www.michigan.gov/mifap
- Conservation Districts: www.macd.org
- MSU Extension Forestry: <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/forestry>
- MSU Department of Forestry: www.for.msu.edu
- MTU School of Forest Resources: www.mtu.edu/forest
- Natural Resources Conservation Service: www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov
- USFS Internet Resources: <http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/flg/>
- DNR Service Foresters: www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship

#10 – Spend More Time in Your Woods

- Buy property close to home rather than hundreds of miles away.
 - Spend time in your forest, not in your car...
- Build and maintain trails in your forest.
 - Design logging roads to be used later as hiking trails or access roads.
- Build a campsite and take your grandchildren camping.
 - Leave the iPods, TV, cell phone, tablet, laptop, internet, and video games at home.
- Share your forest with local children
 - Host a field trip for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, school science classes, or church youth groups.
- *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*
 - <http://richardlouv.com>

#11 – Make a Wildlife Food Plot

(Penn State was the 11th school in the Big Ten)

- Adding and maintaining a food plot can increase your chances of seeing the deer, birds and other animals that you want to see in your forest.
- You *may* also be eligible for cost share funding through EQIP
 - www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/mi/home/
 - Focus on perennial, native vegetation (warm season grasses) rather than annual crops
- Contact your local chapter of the Quality Deer Management Association (www.qdma.com) for networking and resources on food plots and habitat.
 1. Herd Management
 2. Habitat Management
 3. Hunter Management
 4. Herd Monitoring



#12 – Have a Family Meeting

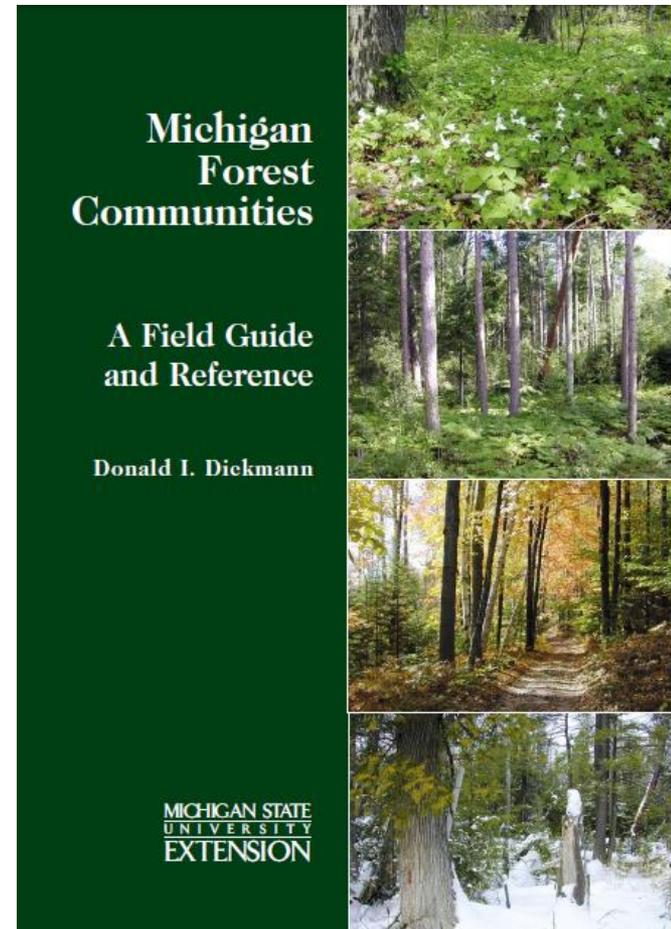
(Nebraska is the 12th school in the Big Ten)

- “the biggest challenge to keeping forestland in the family is the transfer of *personal values*”
- *Ties to the Land*
 - resources to help write a forest ownership succession plan
 - <http://tiestotheland.org/>
- Estate Planning Opportunities and Strategies for Private Forest Landowners
 - www.timbertax.org/estate/estate.asp
- Consider a conservation easement to preserve your land ethic and reduce estate taxes.
 - <http://landtrust.org/LTC/NatureOrgWebLinks.htm>

#13 – Learn to Identify Plants, Trees, and Forests

(Maryland is the 13th school in the Big Ten)

- “Michigan Forest Communities”
 - Excellent introduction to forest types
- “Michigan Trees”
 - Classic tree ID text by Barnes and Wagner
- Michigan Natural Features Inventory
 - <http://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/>
- Midwest Invasive Species Information Network
 - www.misin.msu.edu



#14 – Listen to Your Forest

(Rutgers is the 14th school in the Big Ten)

- Many Deer Hunters Use Trail Cameras....
 - www.trailcampro.com
- Consider Audio Monitoring!
- Remote Environmental Assessment Laboratory
 - www.real.msu.edu
 - www.real.msu.edu/projects/projects.php
- Zoom H1 Microphone - \$100
- Song Meter SM2+ - \$700
 - www.wildlifeacoustics.com



“The Song Meter was like extending our ears to remote areas during several days and even weeks...”

Ana Rodriguez and Miguel McMinn, biologists, Conservation Council of the Balearic Islands



Questions?

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Contact Information for Michigan Forest Management Programs

- Forest Stewardship Program
 - Administered by the Department of Natural Resources
 - Website: www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship
 - Program Contact: Mike Smalligan; 517-284-5884; smalliganm@michigan.gov
- Qualified Forest Program
 - Administered by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
 - Website: www.michigan.gov/qfp
 - Program Contact: Rich Harlow; 517-284-5627; harlowr@michigan.gov
- Commercial Forest Program
 - Administered by the Department of Natural Resources
 - Website: www.michigan.gov/commercialforest
 - Program Contact: Shirley Businski; 517-284-5849; businskis@michigan.gov
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
 - Administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Website: www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/mi/technical/landuse/forestry/
 - Program Contact: Andy Henriksen; 517-324-5234; andy.henriksen@mi.usda.gov
- American Tree Farm System
 - Administered by the American Forest Foundation
 - Website: www.treefarmssystem.org/michigan
 - Program Contact: Scott Robbins; 517-853-8880; srobbins@michiganforest.com