

OHIO Woodlands Water Wildlife

Winter 2015-16

The Ohio Woodlands, Water, and Wildlife Newsletter is published in part with funding from the Renewable Resource Extension Act (RREA).

Using “My Land Plan” to Plan, Map, and Document Your Woodland Activities

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My Land Plan is a free service of the American Forest Foundation, the parent organization of the American Tree Farm System. It is a web based (<http://mylandplan.org>) tool designed to assist woodland owners with planning, mapping and documenting activities in their woodlands. We do not recommend that you use **My Land Plan** as a substitute for your Stewardship/Woodland Management Plan, which is developed in collaboration with a qualified forester; rather we suggest you consider using it as a tool aid you in designing and implementing your Stewardship/Woodland Management Plan. **My Land Plan** offers a method to keep this plan current, document activities with respect to when, where, and other details, and communicate your progress with your forester and others.

One of the most useful features of **My Land Plan** is the mapping tool which allows you to create a detailed map which includes your property boundaries, forest stands, trails, and other special features. The mapping tool is relatively simple to use. When you first create your account the program walks you through the process of adding your property boundaries. This is accomplished by simply tracing the parcel boundary which is visible for most Ohio counties when you zoom into your location. But remember, these maps are designed for management plans and should not be used as record when you sell your land.

My Land Plan allows you to switch between Map and

Satellite modes. In the Satellite mode your property boundary shows up on the latest available aerial imagery. The imagery is of such quality that many features can be identified and mapped. You can place markers on the map for objects like hunting stands, buildings, camp sites or individual trees. Lines or paths can be digitized (drawn) on the map to indicate the location of things like fences, trails, roads, streams or linear objects. Forest stands, fields, plantations and other features can be outlined to designate areas on your forest. Each feature can be named and a detailed description can be included.

In addition to this information **My Land Plan** automatically stores attributes from the map you create in a table. The attributes include the location (Latitude and Longitude), the length of linear features and the acreage of area features. This information can be used in planning where you would need length or area measurements such as for herbicide application or material acquisition for path maintenance. Unfortunately **My Land Plan** currently does not interface directly with your GPS (Global Positioning System). However, coordinates obtained from the mapping feature of **My Land Plan** can be used to locate objects in the field with your GPS, and coordinates obtained from your GPS can



Opening Screen Shot from **My Land Plan** (<http://mylandplan.org>)

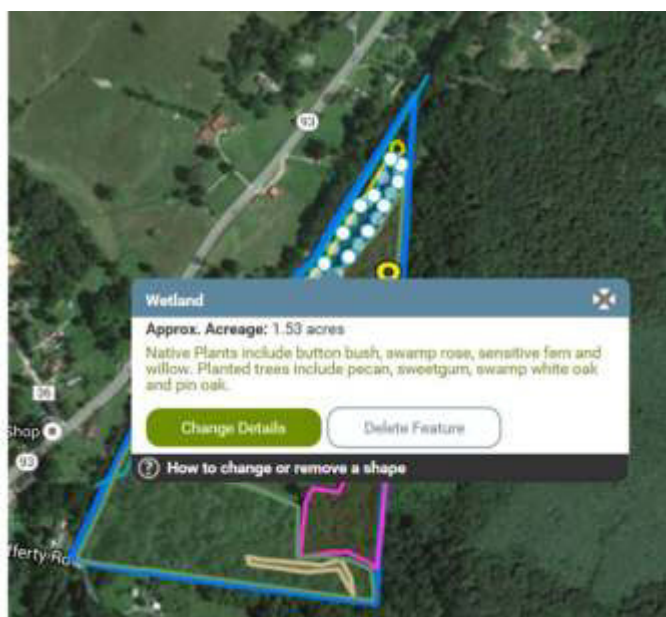
be integrated into the **My Land Plan** mapping feature.

Another offering of **My Land Plan** is the Goals and Activities feature. It allows you to choose from a list of



Basic map created with My Land Plan

broad goals like **Enjoy It, Protect It, Make It Healthy, Profit From It or Pass It On**. Under each of these broader categories you can select more specific goals like **Improve Turkey Habitat** or **Reduce My Taxes**. Finally you can create a list of plan activities (e.g. create a brush pile or monitor my woods for invasive plants) associated with each of your chosen goals. This section



Map showing detail of highlighted wetland area

is a great source of ideas and activities for you to discuss when you visit your local forester or to record the goals that are specified in your Stewardship/Woodland Management Plan.

The **Tasks** portion of **My Land Plan** offers land owners a method to keep track of accomplishments with respect to time of completion, details about the activities, and provides a method to document where activities occurred. For instance, if you treated invasive plants with herbicides, you can use this section to record the date, weather conditions, species treated, herbicides used and other specifics of the treatments that you apply with respect to the area where you applied the herbicide. So when it is time for a Tree Farm Inspection or the 5 year review of your plan by your ODNR-Division of Forestry, Service Forester, you've got all of your activities recorded in one easy to find location.

If there are other details you would like to record that are not accommodated by other built in features, **My Land Plan** includes a **Journal**. Here it allows you to keep notes and images from your experiences on your woodland if not recorded elsewhere in the application. Another important feature is the **Find Help** feature which helps you to connect with online resources and even foresters who are available to assist with you woodland. So whether you need some guidance on how to manage your woodland or you just need some help getting organized, why don't you give **My Land Plan** a try? Don't be afraid, just jump in. If you get stumped there are numerous tutorials available to help you with each feature. You'll be glad that you did!



Bird Feeders

Marne Titchenell, Extension Program Specialist, Wildlife

One of the easiest ways to attract songbirds to a garden or backyard is by putting up a bird feeder. Birds lead highly energetic lives and require large amounts of food to maintain their daily activities. During the winter, the need for food becomes even more important. The chickadee, for example, must forage for food from dawn to dusk in order to have enough energy to survive the cold night. Many of the feeders, seed selection, and feeder placement tips that follow can be utilized during the summer months as well.

First off, it's important to realize that 1) different birds prefer different types of food and 2) birds prefer to forage for food in different ways. Therefore, to obtain high diversity of birds at feeders, aim for diversity in the foods feeders are stocked with and in the types of feeders. This is not hard to do as there are many different types

of feeders available on the market, such as hanging feeders, ground feeders, and bird tables.

Hanging feeders will attract species that forage for food in trees and shrubs, where they are accustomed to clinging to swaying branches or hanging upside down to reach food. Chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, finches, jays, and goldfinches commonly visit such feeders. Fill these feeders with sunflower seeds (hulled seeds for less mess, black-oil sunflower seeds are preferred) or tiny thistle seeds (also called nyjer seeds). If choosing a mix of seeds, the most popular among birds contains white millet, cracked corn, and sunflower seeds. For additional diversity, consider hanging a mesh bag of a nut mixture to attract jays and woodpeckers. During the winter, suet in hanging metal cages is a favorite of woodpeckers, titmice, and nuthatches.

of birds are happier feeding at ground level, such as cardinals, doves, juncos, towhees, and sparrows. Place a hopper feeder (looks similar to a hanging feeder, but sits on the ground) in an open area to attract juncos and sparrows. Use caged hoppers to prevent unwanted visitors such as squirrels and raccoons from getting into the hopper. A ground feeder could also be a bird table placed low to the ground. When a ground feeder is placed near shrubs and bushes, especially evergreens, many birds are more comfortable popping out to fill their stomachs when safe cover is nearby. Fill ground feeders with seed mixes of cracked corn, millet, and sunflower seeds.

When attracting birds with feeders, the bottom line is diversity. The above are just a few tips, but by all means get creative with design, placement, and the food



Female Cardinal

Bird tables are a must in a backyard – they attract species accustomed to feeding on the ground and in the trees. Common visitors to a bird table will be finches, cardinals, jays, nuthatches, and titmice. A good bird table should have raised edges, good drainage, and a roof to protect the food from inclement weather. Many different types of food can be placed on a bird table to attract a diversity of different species. Consider mixing raisins and currants in to appeal to bluebirds and mockingbirds. A multi-tiered bird table will allow even more space for different types of food. Last but not least are ground feeders. Certain species

offered. While feeders are a great source of food for overwintering birds, natural food sources are best. Consider adding bird-friendly plants to your landscape that provide late fall and winter berries, such as holly, sumac, and Virginia creeper. In addition to food, you might also consider adding a heated bird bath to your landscape. Be sure to also check out the next article, 'Trading Tinsel for Treats' on using Christmas trees to create ideal bird habitat. Stay warm this winter and happy birding!

Trading Tinsel for Treats

Marne Titchenell, Extension Program Specialist – Wildlife

Ah, Christmas...it is almost here. Almost time to get out the stockings, candy canes, and red and green decorations. Almost time to start baking the Christmas cookies, drinking eggnog, and forgoing all dieting plans until the New Year. And it is almost time to obtain the most important item in celebrating Christmas...the Christmas tree.

Everyone enjoys bundling up in their warmest clothing and going out to the tree farm to choose the perfect Christmas tree, bringing it home, decorating it with shining lights and twinkling bulbs, and piling presents underneath it to be opened Christmas morning. But what happens to the Christmas tree after Christmas, when the holidays are over and all the presents have been opened? Here are some ideas for you wildlife lovers out there.

While we all hope to avoid the Griswold Family Christmas experience of a squirrel launching itself out of the Christmas tree, a past-prime Christmas tree in the out-of-doors can become a squirrel's dream home with a little decoration. Place your old tree out in your yard propped against a tree, patio, or anywhere that allows a good view from your window. Now the fun part – enjoy decorating your Christmas tree all over again! This time however, skip decorating with fragile glass globes and ornaments. Trade in the tinsel and bulbs for peanut butter and bird seed covered pines cones and garlands of cranberries, raisins, and peanuts. Create an edible 'string of pearls' with grapes, or cut thin slices of apples and oranges to be hung separately by colorful ribbons. Other ideas include hanging suet from your tree, millet, or bag of netting material stuffed with bird seed.

If you don't feel up to re-decorating your Christmas tree, simply prop it up against another tree or brush pile to create winter shelter for rabbits, fox, squirrels, birds, and other small mammals. If you have a pond, placing your Christmas tree underwater will create protective habitat for fish, amphibians, and aquatic insects in the spring,

such as dragonflies. Just be sure to place it far enough away from places where people might be swimming once temperatures rise.

Finally, if you are feeling really ambitious...how about that Charlie Brown Christmas tree that is present in every Christmas tree farm or store? Take pity on that



sparsely needled conifer and donate it to the birds, squirrels, rabbits, and chipmunks. Who says you can't have multiple Christmas trees to decorate? Have fun and enjoy the wildlife viewing opportunities that your wildlife Christmas tree will bring you! Happy Holidays!

Thinking of Selling Timber?

Kathy Smith, Extension Program Director – Forestry

Lately my voice mail box has contained numerous phone calls asking questions about timber prices and selling timber. I thought it might be a good time to cover some basic timber marketing guidelines.

If you are thinking about selling timber, or if you are approached with an offer to buy some of your timber, don't "jump too quickly." Take the time to find out what you have to sell and then make sure to choose an appropriate method of marketing that timber. These steps typically result in substantially more income and more satisfaction on your part at the end of the process.

If you have little or no experience in woodland management or timber marketing, seek the assistance of a professional forester. The Ohio Department of Natural

Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry has foresters located throughout the state who, at no cost, can provide assistance in selecting trees that should be harvested and can recommend related timber stand improvement practices to help achieve your ownership goals. They can also provide limited marketing assistance. You can find who your forester is at the Division's website <http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov/serviceforesters>.

Another option for getting assistance is to hire a consulting forester. While they will charge a fee for their services they will be working for you in this process. This means you will have someone setting up the sale and monitoring the sale to ensure that all goes according to plan. A list of consulting foresters is available at <http://osafdirectory.com>.

There are some guidelines that landowners can use to make the process of selling timber more successful. Those steps include:

Determine the reasons for selling timber.

Why do you want to have a timber sale? Is it because someone knocked on your door or sent you a flyer about it? Is having a timber sale part of your overall forest management plan? While harvesting trees can serve as a source of income, it can also be a means for accomplishing other things such as improving the health of the forest, creating and/or enhancing wildlife habitat, and altering species composition to name a few.

Determine the specific trees to cut and estimate the volume.

It is always a good idea to mark the trees you are offering for sale. A professional forester can help you decide which trees should be marked to make sure that the harvest will satisfy your objectives and keep the forest healthy. All trees for sale should be marked with paint and a tally created. This tally is an estimate, as the trees stand, of how much volume you are offering for sale.

Select the proper timber sale method.

Some landowners want to harvest and sell their own timber. My caution here is always that the process of logging requires special skills and knowledge and it is dangerous work. There are lots of places to make mistakes when you do it yourself.

Most landowners sell their trees as they stand in the woods. This method is called 'selling stumpage'. There are two types of sales when selling stumpage. The first

and most often recommended method is a **lump-sum** sale. This is a timber sale where there is a single payment made to the seller, preferably before any trees are cut.

The second method is **sale-by-unit**. This method requires someone to scale the trees as they are harvested and the seller is paid a certain amount for each unit of product cut.

Advertise the timber sale, select the buyer and enter into a contact with the buyer.

These are the steps where details matter. Having a professional to guide you through this process can prove to be invaluable at times. Should you take a single offer for the timber, negotiate prices with buyers or do written sealed bids? All are options, though most woodland owners utilize the written sealed bid method.

There are a lot more details that are involved in the process of selling timber. What I have highlighted here are just some of the key points you need to think about. To learn more check out our fact sheets '*Getting the Most Return From Your Timber Sale: Don't Just Sell Your Timber, Market It*' F-37-01 and '*Timber Sale Contracts*' F-38-02' – both are available online at the **Woodland Stewards** website <http://woodlandstewards.osu.edu> under publications, forestry. If you are interested in the current Ohio Timber Price Report it is located on the **Woodland Stewards** website under publications. The price report is currently being generated twice a year – January and July and really just gives you a ballpark figure to work with.

There are other resources available to help you with the process. Call Before You Cut <http://callb4ucut.com/ohio/> has a listing of resources to help landowners. The Association of Consulting Foresters <http://www.acf-foresters.org> also has a listing of professional foresters available to help you with this process.

As you can see there is a lot of information and professional assistance available when you start thinking about having a timber sale. Make sure that you are doing what works best for you and your woodland – utilize the resources that are out there. Trees are a long term investment, make sure that you take care of them the best you can.

2016 Calendar

March 2nd

Ohio Woodland Water and Wildlife Conference

Mansfield

April 2nd
16th

Ohio River Valley Woodland and Wildlife Workshop
The Good, The Bad and The Hungry

Madison, IN
Trumbull County

May 7th
20th
24th

Capturing Natures Wonders
Forest Health 101: Non-Native Invasive Plants
What Can You Do With Your Woods

OSU Mansfield
Holden Arboretum
Butler County

Keep checking the website for up to date class listings.



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COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
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Look for newsletter articles, links to fact sheets and other publications by browsing our site. Registration for upcoming Woodland Stewards classes may also be done electronically.
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