

HSC NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE BEECH BARK DISEASE POLICY

Beech bark disease represents a significant challenge to wildlife habitat management on the HSC. It has been identified throughout the HSC.

The following web page is recommended for additional information:

<http://michigansaf.org/ForestInfo/Health/BBdisease.htm>

Beechnuts provide the only significant source of hard mast on the Club. We are to far North for hickory and red oak is sporadically distributed on the Club. Over the long haul we can expect a significant decrease in the beech component throughout the Eastern UP. Aggressive oak establishment represents the best-known alternative. Oak has been planted on the Club in the past with disappointing survival rates. Investments in site preparation and protection were never made.

Action Item #1 – Convert portion of hardwood to other forest types.

At the October 2005 Board of Directors meeting the following resolution was passed:

Where as our hardwood forests are being devastated by the beech bark disease and wildlife habitat is being adversely affected because of the lack of nutritious habitat being regenerated on these sites. Let it be resolved that the Hiawatha Sportsman's Club actively pursue converting approximately 20% of our hardwood thinnings to other habitats. Those habitats should include Aspen and agricultural food plots depending on the site as determined by our forester, biologist and manager.

Action Item #2 – Conduct hardwood thinnings.

Management guidelines differentiate between stands (A) not yet infected; (B) within the advancing front; (C) within the killing front or (D) in the aftermath forest. The Club is currently within the killing front.

1. Identify, mark and retain resistant trees.
2. Identify trees for salvage.
3. Identify, mark and retain relatively healthy beech – 1-2 per acre.
4. Favor regeneration of other tree species (increase oak and cherry components – oak through planting and cherry by retaining in aspen/jack pine stands, and creating regeneration holes within hardwood stands – cherry needs moderate sunlight to regenerate).

Hardwood regeneration needs to be monitored to see if desirable species can grow through the deer browse (currently stripped maple and beech appear to be the dominate species as the deer do not tend to browse on these species).

Action Item #3 – aggressive oak establishment

MSU Silviculture professor Don Dickmann visited the Club in the fall of 2000 and has written a preliminary plan for oak establishment. His full report is available for review. He made three points (1) planting oaks for their acorns is a long-range endeavor – 25 to 30 years before mast is produced in any quantity (2) start with small plantings on a range of sites, learn from experience (3) don't be deterred by failure. Oaks can be successfully planted! But it's tricky business with lots of places where a wrong turn can be made.

Year	Project	Comment
Spring 2006	Planted 6 bushels of acorns in timber sale site #5-05 (oil well aspen) at West end of oil well Rd.	
Spring 2005	Planted 6 bushels of acorns in a variety of sites.	Excellent germination. Poor survival as of fall '05
Spring 2004	Planted 1.5 bushels of acorns SW of Cranberry Lake (mostly in trenches).	Excellent germination rates. Poor survival as of fall '05
Fall 2003	Planted 450 containerized red oak in trenches N. of cold creek in failed aspen area.	
Summer 2003	Mechanical release completed along F-trail – Oak release.	
Fall 2003	Members scatter planted 1 bushel of acorns	Need to discuss member Interest...
Fall 2002	Planted and fenced S-trail plantation. 3,500 containerized red oak planted	
Fall 2002	Members scatter planted 2 bushels of acorns	
Fall 2001	600 red oak and 45 bur oak planted 45 S. of Jocko on B-trail 200 @ G-trail 355 N. of US-2	
Spring 2001	Scatter planted 1,000+ acorns N. of US-2	
Spring 1998	1,000 bare root red oak planted	
Spring 1998	1,000 bare root red oak planted	
Spring 1996	500 bare root red oak planted	
Spring 1995	105 bare root red oak planted	0% survival
Fall 1993	200 oak @ T43N R9W Sec. 5 (stand #277)	

Action Item #4 – Increase % of upland mesic conifers within hardwood stands.

Hemlock and white pine are components of HSC northern hardwood stands. White pine has been slowly seeding in where mature white pine trees exist as a seed source. While both hemlock and white pine seedlings are preferred deer browse, hemlock is difficult to establish past the deer. It is desirable to increase the percentage of upland mesic conifers within our hardwood stands for a variety of reasons:

1. Important component of deer habitat.
2. Important component of bear habitat.
3. Important component for many bird species.

More information about mesic conifers can be found at:

http://www.dnr.state.mi.us/publications/pdfs/huntingwildlifehabitat/Landowners_Guide/Habitat_Mgmt/Forest/Mesic_Conifers.htm

The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) has cost share funds available to facilitate increasing the % of upland mesic conifers within HSC hardwood stands. During a site visit by Kevin Swanson, MDNR wildlife habitat biologist, last fall a verbal commitment was made to supply HSC with 8,000 trees (50% hemlock & 50% white pine). The trees will be provided at no cost and HSC will pay to have them planted. Monitoring for deer browse will be done until the trees exceed browse height. If successful additional plantings will be recommended.

Ideas for 2007

- Plant 6 bushels of acorns in spring of 2008 if acorns are available in the fall of 2007.
- Begin transplanting oak seedlings South of Pullup (develop techniques for success).
- Evaluate release on fenced site and continue release if desirable.
- Mechanical release on 20+- year old oak near powerline.
- Mechanical release on 20+ year old oak along North A-Trail.
- Get acorns for members to plant in the fall if interest.
- Maintain accelerated timber sales in hardwoods as entire Club is either advancing front or killing front.