

THE MINING Journal

Tackling climate change with forest management

20 February 2020

Stepping into a forest, do you ever think about the state of health it's in? Do you ever look at the dead branches dangling from the bases of trees? The sunlight shining on you? The soil beneath you?

These are some forest characteristics that are natural and beautiful to the average person, but for forest managers such as Green Timber Consulting Foresters Inc. of Pelkie, these are key aspects that keep a forest healthy and thriving.

Green Timber Senior Forester Rexx Janowiak, who's also a tree farm group manager, gave a presentation Tuesday at the Ore Dock Brewing Co. titled *"Forests for the Future: Using Forestry as a Tool to Battle Climate Change."* Janowiak's presentation addressed the importance of forest management, what the company does and future projects at the 20th annual Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy meeting.

"It's vitally important in the U.P. because we have such a huge forest resource and because so many of the people in the U.P. enjoy that resource, it's extremely important that it's managed properly and maintained as a healthy ecosystem for future generations to enjoy," Janowiak said. *"And on top of that, the economic benefit that it provides the Upper Peninsula is staggering. The number of jobs and the amount of money that revolves around the forest product industry is quite astounding. And if forest management is done properly and sustainably, it can really be a long term solution to many problems."*

Since 2001, the company has been serving western U.P. from Marquette, Iron Mountain to Ironwood. Forest management is a *"tool,"* Janowiak said. It helps support a forest's health, quality and productivity, it incorporates wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities such as hunting and hiking and skiing trails. By removing the *"lower quality, dying and suppressed"* trees, it creates a durable, more resilient forest, concentrating on the higher quality, dominant trees, he said.

When foresters first enter a forest, they examine if there's water quality and soil issues because it's vital to protect natural resources, Janowiak explained. In some ways, foresters manage properties by manipulating the amount of sunlight, or the canopy, so that light pushes a forest to regenerate certain tree species. And some tree species are either *"climate change winners or climate change losers."*

There are several overarching goals foresters try to achieve on each property they facilitate to manage such as to maintain, restore and enhance biological diversity, water quality and ecological integrity, Janowiak said.

The prime time to conduct forest management is late summer/early fall or Jan. 1 until March, typically during the drier periods of the year, Janowiak said. Some of the challenges foresters run into include insects, pests and diseases that attack certain tree species.

“Each tree species, they all have different nutrients, water and sunlight needs. An oak tree requires a different set of nutrients, sunlight and water than a maple tree,” he said. “And knowing those tree characteristics and site characteristics through our management, and manipulation and canopy and amount of sunlight that reaches the forest floor, we can start to nudge the forest in a direction toward an oak-pine forest or an aspen forest or a maple forest based on the individual tree species and the site conditions.”

Forest management also deals with landowners and loggers, he added.

“Our primary goal is to ensure that A, the landowners are receiving the management they desire based on goals and objectives and B, it typically involves the sale of timber. We ensure that they’re receiving a fair price from the logger ... to protect landowners from any abuse,” Janowiak said.

Forest management is one way to tackle climate change by assessing the site quality, and determining what type of forest is best moving forward whether it’s maintaining maple trees or incorporating more tree planting projects to move a forest toward an oak-pine forest, he said.

Future projects for Green Timber Consulting Foresters include parcels in Gogebic, Iron and northern Marquette counties. Moving forward, foresters will need to monitor changing forest conditions such as climate change, weather, forest pests and disease, he added.

Source: <https://www.miningjournal.net/news/front-page-news/2020/02/tackling-climate-change-with-forest-management/>