

The  
Brickyard  
Creek

# Boreal Forest Citizen

*A Forest Cabin Community Founded on Active Stewardship*

Balsam Fir

Spring/Summer 2008

Vol. 1 No. 3

## Maintenance Matters

By Mike Wright

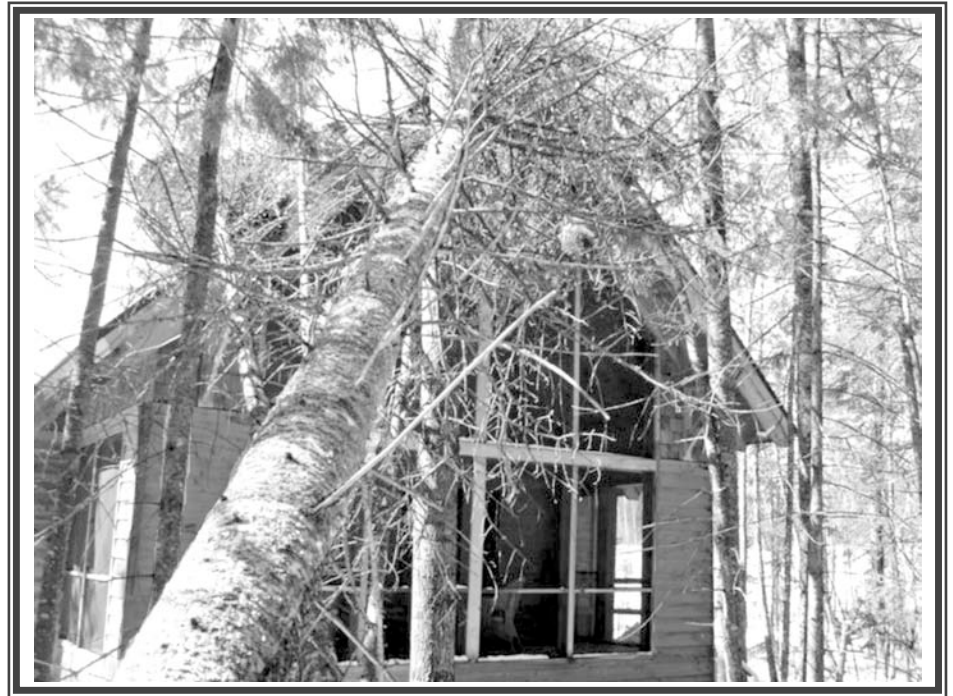
After seven years of living in Northern Bayfield County, I've determined that our four seasons are: Winter, Mud, Bug, and Huntin'.

This fine May morning, at about 5 a.m., my wife suddenly jumped out of bed and went into the living room, where I could hear her clicking a lighter near the woodstove. Too warm for a fire, I thought. That can mean only one thing: "Burning a tick?" I asked. "Yep." It was the sixth or seventh one we'd picked off ourselves, the kids and the dog in the past 24 hours. So, it's bug season.

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## The Winds of April

The winds that came with the snow on the weekend of April 10 – 11 forced us to reach into the last of our waning winter reserves to check our roofs, roads and insurance policies. It was the last hurrah of a hard winter that had brought beauty and also battered some late season spirits, however hopeful...the kind of hope in April which comes with a warning to keep one's guard up for a possible last blow.

The storm that blew out of Kansas and Iowa, advancing winds of 87 mph in some areas and 65 mph gusts during the course of a

blizzard that dropped 13.6 inches of snow, tested every tree in the BYC boreal forest. By the time it was over, trees were left toppled atop cabins and across trails. It was a mess to be reckoned with as we dusted off our summer plans during the first signs of a well-deserved spring.

But as the woods shuttered and our cabins stood precariously in the wind, a deeper, more far-reaching process was in motion. It had to do with what all native plant communities do. The forest was busy restoring itself in its continuous cycle of regeneration.

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Bug season is also the busy season at Brickyard Creek, especially for the maintenance professionals and contractors who serve the community. As your new Homeowners Association Maintenance Manager, I look forward to meeting those of you whom I've not yet had the opportunity to do so. I am usually on site five days per week fulfilling Association duties and providing maintenance, repair and handyman services for individual cottage owners. I use a red ATV loaded with toolboxes to get around the grounds.

My primary responsibilities for the Association are security, grounds maintenance, and well maintenance. I, or an associate, inspect the exterior of each cottage once per week, looking for signs of break-in or animal intrusion, listening for holding tank alarms, and looking for anything out of the ordinary. Fallen trees, hazardous trees, potholes in the road, wood chips, and garbage dumpsters are among the things that I oversee. Any questions or concerns having to do with grounds and trail maintenance can be directed to me.

An issue of particular interest this year will be the treatment of wells for iron bacteria. Iron bacteria is a naturally occurring organism in the soil and is harmless to humans. But, it makes the tap water brownish in color, doesn't taste very good, and over time can have an adverse affect on plumbing systems. To date, only a few wells at Brickyard Creek have been diagnosed with this problem. If you notice that the water runs brown/rust colored after having not been run for a few days, or if the toilet bowl is perpetually stained rust colored, your well may need to be treated.

Treatment for iron bacteria involves flushing out the well with a moderate solution of chlorinated water. However, the process takes about three days. As most of the wells are shared, coordination among homeowners is needed to plan the right time for well treatment. If you suspect that your well has iron bacteria, please contact me. For additional information about iron bacteria, the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources has an excellent webpage on the topic at [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/dwg/febact.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/dwg/febact.htm). Or, just Google "Wisconsin DNR iron bacteria".

**Security tips:** Draw your blinds if you have them, and keep alcoholic beverages out of site. Store ladders out of sight, such as under the cottage. Most of the cottages at Brickyard Creek are constructed so that the windows are too high to easily climb into. A ladder leaning up against the back of the cottage is an invitation to break in.

**Of Mice and Cottages:** Many homeowners use D-Con or other slow-kill poisons to control pests. Unfortunately, poisons cause greater problems than they solve. Mice eat the poison, then crawl under your water heater or boiler or some other hidey hole to die, then stink. Or, they head back out into the forest and are in turn eaten by an owl, fox, coyote or any one of many other creatures that eat mice. Usually, the predator will die from the poison. There are alternatives for automated mouse control, both home-made and commercial. Contact me for ideas! The best way to communicate with me is via e-mail. [wlhs@cheqnet.net](mailto:wlhs@cheqnet.net)  
Immediate concerns and emergencies, and those who don't care for e-mail: 715 - 209-6415.

Like all forests, the boreal forest depends upon an array of natural disturbances to keep it healthy and diverse. Without these disturbances, the forest would be dominated exclusively by a few species, which would lack the complexity to sustain plant, soil, water and wildlife resources. To the human eye, it would be less interesting, lacking the character of the well-developed natural forest community we enjoy.

Fire is first and foremost in a forest's arsenal of natural forces to help regenerate itself. Fires, which come in different frequencies and severity, serve to open up the forest to another round of development and recycling. The soil is infused with needed nutrients and plants that require fire to reproduce begin anew. Through it, the forest is like the mythological Phoenix, arising from the ashes. However, with various degrees of success, we seek to prevent forest fires, changing the forest dynamic.

With fire, windstorms become another formidable natural force in the ongoing process of forest regeneration. Windstorms open the woods for trees and plants that require full sun. Soon the more shade tolerant, slower growing trees that were towering over the forest canopy and felled by the wind, will be patiently establishing themselves again under these sun loving pioneers.

So we can rest, a bit assured, when the wind has bullied itself through the BYC forest, taking our trees and threatening our homes, that our beloved forest is about the business of keeping itself healthy and refreshed. It is doing what forests do as living communities. Sometimes all we can do is to stay out of the way.

# The Learning Walks 2007

John Daly

The 2007 Learning Walks included a potpourri of topics suggested by your neighbors. This was the second season of these educational nature walks in Brickyard Creek. Each sixty to ninety minute stroll/walk has been designed to be a blend of information, stewardship, idea sharing and camaraderie.

## Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>: BYC – “a creek runs through it”

A number of years ago, a popular book was made into a movie. *A River Runs Through It*, focused on a family and the bond they had through their shared activity of fly-fishing. The story line was somewhat predictable but the beauty of the setting along the banks of a trout stream captured the viewers' imagination.

The first learning walk of 2007 asked the participants to focus their attention on the heart of our common property – the creek itself. The BYC watershed is extensive; the creek flows to the Lake Superior shoreline from the Bayfield Apple and Berry Orchards. The creek is complex and worthy of our attention and support. The participants learned about our role in this complex environment and the various ways we can assure the current and future health of the creek so that “it” continues to run through BYC.

## Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>: Wildflowers of the North

This learning walk was cancelled. We have it rescheduled in 2008. Sarah Boles of Northern Native Plantscaping in Cable, Wisconsin, a well-known expert on the wildflowers of the North, will be the leader of the learning walk.

## Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>: Know Your Flora/Fauna

The Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute (SOEI) at Northland College in Ashland, WI led this ninety-minute excursion along the trails of BYC. This learning walk was an intergenerational experience; the grandchildren of Mary and Lars Carlson joined several neighbors of BYC for the identification and documentation of the multiple flora (vegetation) of our unique environment. During the walk, the SOEI interns also helped us to identify the songs of the various birds of the Lake Superior National Shoreline. Due to the popularity of this learning walk, we will plan to repeat it in 2008.

## Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup>: Renewal of the Creek & the Annual Clean-Up Weekend

On your hikes along the trails of BYC have YOU walked under the road bridge and noticed the large amount of dirt piled underneath it? The Grounds Committee has noticed it and, with the help of your neighbors at BYC, taken action.

Northland and our partners at the SOEI advised the Grounds Committee to secure the creek bank under the bridge and,

hopefully, stop the on-going erosion of the dirt piles. It appears that the spring thaw each year results in our quiet creek transforming to an active flow of snowmelt that erodes the creek banks and fills the area under the bridge.

On this annual clean-up day, the Landon's (Cindi & Don), the Daly's (Linda & John), Deede Smith, Merrie Stoplestad, Connie McCulloch, and Joan Cybela waded into the creek to shovel the dirt (mud) out of the creek and to create a temporary re-enforcement for the creek bank. This strategy will be in 2008 and plans for a more permanent structure are being designed with our environmental partners at the SOEI.

**A schedule of the Learning Walks will be shared at the annual membership meeting on Memorial Day Weekend.**

**Do you have a suggestion for a Learning Walk topic in 2008?  
Please share your idea with an email to John Daly at spoonful5@charter.net**



**DEER MICE**  
(*Peromyscus maniculatus*)

Deer mice play an important role in the boreal forest, as a main food source for such carnivores as coyotes, foxes, bobcats, weasels, skunks, badgers, grasshopper mice, snakes, owls, and other birds of prey. They thus convert the vegetative resources of the forest for use by these meat eaters. This forest citizen is abundant in order to fill the significant demands and needs of these predators.

NORTHERN NATIVE



PLANTSCAPES

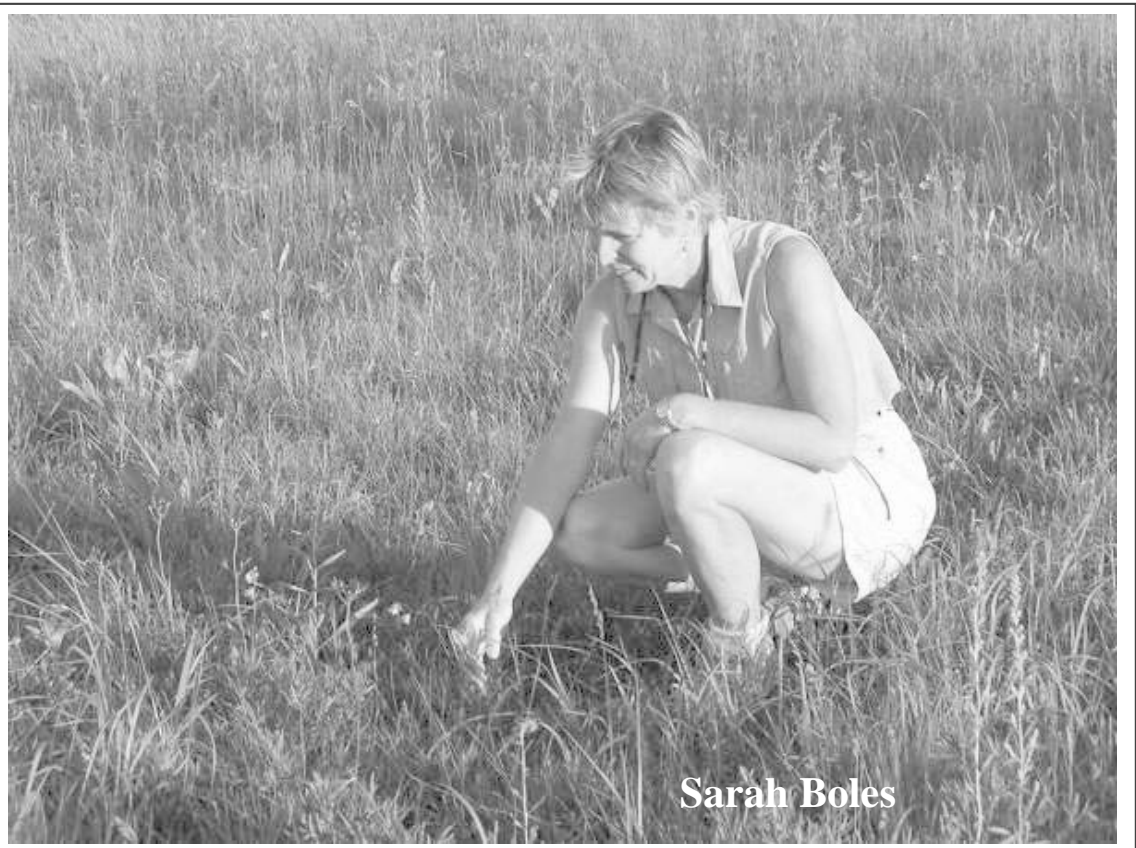
Greetings to the Brickyard Creek Family,

You may notice a short red-haired woman wandering around the property this season, clipboard and camera in hand. Do not fear, it's me, Sarah Boles. I am working with your Grounds Committee on enhancement of the native plant community. I will be on the grounds once a month during the growing season monitoring the vegetation, giving and receiving input from Mike Wright on management tactics, and developing planting plans for areas targeted for new installations.

My business is called Northern Native Plantscapes. I specialize in designing landscapes using primarily plants native to the northern tier of Wisconsin. The process for installing a native plant community is different than a traditional residential landscape, in that a native plant community is always evolving. I look at a site with succession in mind, and with an expectant eye, watchful for wanted and unwanted guests to establish themselves. The landscapes here are more than just beautiful scenery; they are vibrant communities of plants and animals.

I have over 20 years of experience in the "green" industry with formal training in ornamental horticulture. I consider myself a self-taught naturalist with a love and appreciation for our natural world. That world includes people, and I always consider how we are going to utilize our landscapes from walking trails, viewing points, resting areas, and open green spaces.

Your homes in Brickyard Creek fit into the land so well. I look forward to developing a relationship with you as we work toward re-establishing the native plants communities that surround your homes.  
Sarah



Members of the BYC community come from many states and many different backgrounds, but all were attracted to the Bayfield area and ultimately Brickyard Creek. ☞

We want to know what drew you here and how you found your way. I'll start with our story and hope you will send yours for later publication to Dale Klubertanz. ☞

My family started going to Madeline Island in the 1950's (what my granddaughter calls the "olden days"). We stayed with friends on O'Brien Row in La Pointe. They were part of that large O'Brien clan which arrived in La Pointe in the early 1900's. Their cottage is still in their family. Somehow we managed to squeeze 4 adults and 11 kids into the tiny, 1 bathroom cottage. One of the things I loved most about the cottage was a large screened porch set right on the edge of the lake. In big storms the spray from the waves crashing on the rocks would come onto the porch, but, we stayed dry. My memories of that porch are part of what attracted me to the BYC cottages. We spent a lot of time in the lake, never bothered by the cold. Our favorite spot was Big Bay beach and the rocky shore where we jumped from rock to rock and at night built big camp fires. Sailing hadn't come to Lake Superior yet. ☞

In fact, we would be one of the area's earliest sailboat owners, but not until the late 1960's. Back then we co-owned a 35-foot Pearson with my father and Mary and Lars Carlson. We could often sail to Stockton and be the only boat there. There was no park service so we were free to build beach fires and explore at will. Our trips usually consisted of leaving work in St. Paul, Minnesota on Friday afternoon, racing for the ferry to get to the Madeline Island marina, and noisily climbing aboard in the dark. Typically, we had 4 friends with us and living together on a 35-foot boat was a real test of our friendships, a test we didn't always pass. In a good wind we would head for Rock Island, but in a poor wind we'd only make it to Stockton. Sunday we'd have to rush back to Madeline (and that's hard to do on a boat which averaged 4 knots), catch another ferry, and then try to stay awake for the 4 hour drive home. A hectic pace, but we loved it. ☞

I should interject here that the reason Steve came to Lake Superior was that he missed the ocean and Cape Cod where his family had spent their summers. I said if he needed an ocean I had one for him, and it had fresh water. It was love at first sight and he has been coming here almost every summer since 1964. He is drawn to the lake and especially sailing. ☞

In the 1970's my parents bought a house on Madeline, which rooted us there for 25 years. But, we often looked across at Bayfield (actually our house looked directly at Roy's Point) and wished we were on the mainland. When we sold that house we started looking for a new place and remembered hearing stories that Bob Davidson, who had once been a member of Steve's law firm, was selling cottage sites somewhere near Bayfield. We discovered the site, but for several years found no activity there. Then in 2000 we looked again and the project had finally taken off and there were models to look at and a very eager Bob Davidson ready to sell us a piece of paradise. We were pushovers. I had always wanted a cabin in the woods with that big-screened porch, and Steve wanted to have a sailboat, so it was a perfect marriage. So here we are. What's your excuse? Deedee and Steve Smith #29 on Sophie Lane. ☞

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## Red Cliff Fish Hatchery

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Established in 1994, the Red Cliff Tribal Hatchery focuses on the reproduction and stocking of Lake Superior coaster brook trout and walleye.

The hatchery has developed its own coaster brook trout brood stock (Lake Nipigon strain) with the assistance of the Dorian Fish Culture Station in Ontario. Egg production began in 1997. The brood stock has been successfully reproducing since. The Red Cliff Hatchery currently has the only brood stock for the Lake Nipigon strain coaster brook trout in the U.S. This season, the hatchery stocked 200,000 coaster brook trout.

Designated as a Class A disease-free facility, the hatchery's main building houses an intensive coldwater production area. This includes an incubation area, fry tanks, a laboratory, and twenty large raceways for fingerlings and brood stockfish. The hatchery also produces walleye throughout the summer. Eggs and milt are obtained from fish speared during the spring spearing season. The fertilized eggs are transferred to the hatchery for incubation in either Bell jars or Big Redds.

The hatchery has the capacity of incubating over eight million walleye eggs. Once hatched, walleye fry are transported to drainable rearing ponds. Walleye fry are reared to approximately six to seven inch fingerlings before being stocked.

Annual production varies, but after construction activities are completed, production capacity should be 100,000 walleye fingerlings, one million walleye fry, 100,000 yearling lake trout, and 500,000 whitefish fingerlings.

## Beyond the Steps – “Discovery” of the Upper Creek

One early September morning, a member of the Grounds Committee was observed making a leisurely trek along the banks of the creek in an area that has seldom seen human footprints.

The observed individual wore water repellent boots, a long-sleeve shirt to repel the insects and a backpack, the contents of which included data gathering tools - a camera, small telescope, a pad of paper, a pen and two garbage bags. It appeared that the solo hiker had a destination in mind as he slowly negotiated this area without trails. At various times, he abandoned the creek bank and chose to use the creek bed. He was able to successfully balance his weight on rocks layered with a slippery carpet of thin green lichen. At several locations, the hiker slowed his trek to climb to the higher ground and thus avoid any potential damage to the creek bank and bed.

The hiker documented his observations, sketched his journey and recorded data about the unknown upper waters of Brickyard Creek. As you review the hiker's list, envision yourself on a similar journey this next spring or summer at Brickyard Creek . . . beyond the steps.

- ✚ the singing birds, mischievous squirrels, deer and other forest critters
- ✚ the gurgles of the creek as it meanders toward Lake Gitchie Gumme
- ✚ the buzz of vehicles on Highway 13 sounds very distant
- ✚ several pockets of litter from the recent past
- ✚ tree arches and bridges from past wind storms
- ✚ isolated areas of natural rock cropping
- ✚ numerous Listening Points – nature's invitation to pause and reflect

There is a new energy at Brickyard Creek. We come here to pause and reflect; we come here to be alone; we come here to escape our perceived reality AND we come here to listen – to truly listen to nature, and thus to ourselves. We seek our own Listening Points.

**Listening Points - the silence of the wilderness, that sense of oneness which comes only when there are no distracting sights or sounds, when we listen with inward ears and see with inward eyes, when we feel and are aware with our entire beings rather than our senses.**

Sigurd F. Olson

## “Cold Words and Air”

**Eddie Fortier and the Novelty Four**  
*Winter, Winter, that is the time I fear.  
That time is drawing near.  
With its ice and its snow.  
And there's no place to go.*

*Winter, winter, if you were here a day  
And then go miles away  
As it is you are here  
'leven months of the year.*

*Winter, Winter, that name makes me sigh  
Now this isn't bunk  
Why I feel so punk  
I could lay right down and die.*

Chorus:

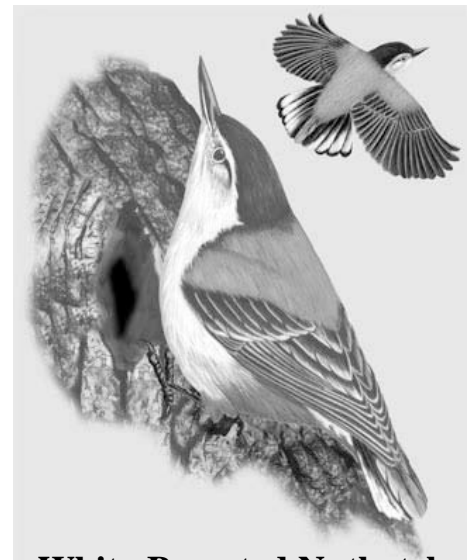
*Because it aint' no joke, my duds are old  
I'm dead broke, my feet are cold,  
Looking thin, I'm almost in,  
When I hear that North wind whine,  
There's a chill runs up my spine.  
Good-bye, summer. I've got the winter blues.*

**One of Bayfield's oldest songs. It was sung by the residents at Memorial Hall (it used to be located where the lake front park is now).**

**The Novelty Four (Eddie Fortier, John Westerlund, Johnny Sayles and Mike Carlson) was a local orchestra in Bayfield during the early 1920's.**

## The Nuthatch: an apt description

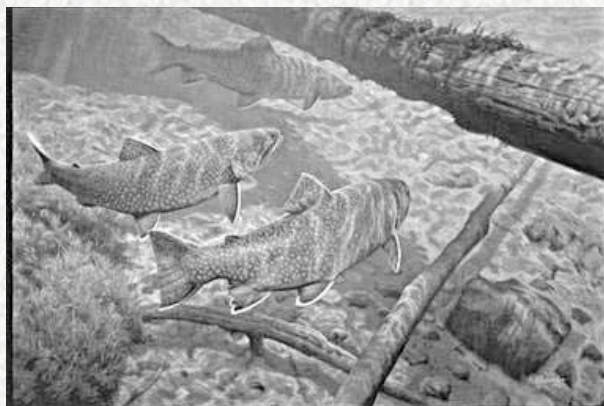
“Nuthatch” is derived from “nut-hack”, a reference to the habit of hacking or pecking open nuts by wedging them in bark and hammering them open with its bill.



**White-Breasted Nuthatch**

# The Native Coaster Brook Trout

**Fishery biologists are trying to save the once abundant, native coaster brook trout in the few places where it has survived over-fishing and loss of spawning areas dating from the 1880s. You can help protect and bring this rare and beautiful fish back into the Great Lakes ecosystem.**



Reprinted from US Fish and Wildlife Web Site:  
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/ashland/brook/coaster.html>

## What is a coaster brook trout?

Coasters are brook trout that live at least some of their life in the Great Lakes or in the ocean along the Atlantic coast of North America. In Lake Superior they usually swim up tributary streams to spawn in late fall, but may also spawn along the lakeshore. Coasters differ from brook trout, which live in streams year-round, in size (mature adults are usually over 16 inches long and may weigh several pounds), color (more silvery), and have longer life spans.

Named after their fondness for Lake Superior's rocky shorelines, coasters were the darlings of 19th century anglers from America and Europe. Diaries from the period joyfully record the fish's brilliant colors, trophy size, gourmet taste and eagerness to rise to the bait.

Sadly, predictions in the late 1800's that this bonanza couldn't last, came true. The unregulated coaster brook trout was easily over-fished and human activity damaged watersheds. For example, spawning beds were buried under sand churned up as rafts of freshly cut timber headed downstream to sawmills. Trout population numbers began a downward spiral. By the 1940s, the number of wild coaster populations was reduced to a mere half-dozen.

## What can we do?

Bringing coaster brook trout back to its native waters, from western Lake Superior to the shores of northern Lake Huron, is a complex task. Federal, tribal, state and private partners in the United States and Canada are gathering information from the few remaining sites of wild populations. To bring back the "little salmon of the springs" three things are clearly needed:

-  **Protection of remaining stocks.**
-  **Rehabilitation of spring-fed areas of streams.**
-  **Redesign or removal of dams blocking access to those streams.**

Working together, we can keep the words of *Henry David Thoreau* from coming true . . .

*"But one is inclined to use the past tense in writing of the wild brook trout. Constitutionally incompatible with the advance of civilization, this exquisite fish is dying. Where man has dried up his springs by deforestation, polluted his waterways, straightened streams into ditches and denuded them of their natural cover, the wild brook trout has vanished."*

## We need your help!

No one knows streams better than the anglers who fish them. If you have any information about coaster brook trout, or would like to learn more about them, please contact:

### LAKE SUPERIOR-WIDE:

Trout Unlimited, 703/284-9410, Arlington, Virginia

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 715/682-6185 ext. 208, Ashland, Wisconsin

### IN WISCONSIN:

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, 715/682-7123, Odanah

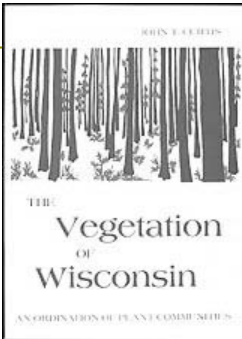
Department of Natural Resources, 715/392-7988, Superior

Red Cliff Band of Chippewa, 715/779-3728, Bayfield 7

## Native Trees to the BYC Boreal Forest

In 1987, John Curtis (UW-Madison) published one of the most important contributions in the field of plant ecology during the twentieth century. This definitive survey established the geographical limits, species compositions, and the environmental relations of the plant communities composing the vegetation of Wisconsin.

To the right are the trees identified in this survey as those that make up the boreal forest of Wisconsin to which the BYC boreal forest belongs. These are the only tree species to plant at BYC and need to be planted in their natural genetic form and not as a hybrid.



**Importance Value (I.V.)** A measure of the significance of a plant in a stand or a community, expressed as the total of its values for relative density, relative frequency, and relative dominance, with a possible range from 0 – 300.

**Constancy** A specialized term to indicate the degree to which a species occurs in the separate stands of a given plant community. It is based upon a single sample of fixed size or fixed number of pints in each stand and is expressed as number of occurrences as a percentage of number of stands examined.

## Average tree composition of boreal forest in Wisconsin

*The Vegetation of Wisconsin: An Ordination of Plant Communities*, John T. Curtis, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI, 1987.

Species <i>In Order of Dominance</i>	Average Importance Value	Constancy (VALUE = 0 - 100%)
Balsam Fir ( <i>Abies balsamea</i> )*	69.5	100%
White Spruce ( <i>Picea glauca</i> )*	25.2	100%
White Birch ( <i>Betula papyrifera</i> )	25.9	87%
Mountain Maple ( <i>Acer spicatum</i> )*	1.1	82%
Red Maple ( <i>Acer rubrum</i> )	9.2	77%
Quacking Aspen ( <i>Populus</i> )	22.6	64%
White Pine ( <i>Pinus strobulus</i> )	34.2	59%
White Cedar ( <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> )	31.9	59%
Mountain Ash ( <i>Sorbus Americana</i> )*	.8	56%
Sugar Maple ( <i>Acer saccharum</i> )	10.7	54%
Black Ash ( <i>Fraxinus nigra</i> )	2.4	51%
Red Oak ( <i>Quercus borealis</i> )	5.1	46%
Red Pine ( <i>Pinus resinosa</i> )	13.8	44%
Canadian Hemlock ( <i>Tsuga canadensis</i> )	14.8	41%
Yellow Birch ( <i>Betula lutea</i> )	13.4	41%
Pin Cherry ( <i>Prunus pennsylvanica</i> )*	.4	33%
Big Leaf Aspen ( <i>Populus</i> )	.3	31%
Ironwood ( <i>Ostrya virginiana</i> )	.6	28%
Basswood ( <i>Tilia americana</i> )	1.9	23%
Black ( <i>Prunus serotina</i> )	.3	23%
Jack Pine ( <i>Pinus banksiana</i> )	8.1	18%
American Elm ( <i>Ulmus americana</i> )	.5	18%
Balsam Poplar ( <i>Populus balsamifera</i> )*	13.8	15%
White Ash ( <i>Fraxinus Americana</i> )	.7	15%
Hills Oak ( <i>Quercus ellipsoidalis</i> )	1.6	10%
Black Spruce ( <i>Picea mariana</i> )	.8	10%
White Oak ( <i>Quercus alba</i> )	.3	8%
American Hornbeam <i>Carpinus</i>	.1	8%
Tamarack ( <i>Larix laricina</i> )	.4	5%
Slippery Elm ( <i>Ulmus rubra</i> )	.4	5%
Bitternut <i>Yellowbud</i> Hickory ( <i>Carya</i> )	.1	5%
Green Ash ( <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> )	.1	3%

\* Species which attain optimum importance in the Boreal forest

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