

# Treeways

May 2013

The long view ...

Taking care of the Sunfish Lake forest or your portion of that forest requires taking the long view. A tornado, a forest fire, or an ice storm can dramatically alter the look of our woods, but even the day after such a dramatic event the forest is still there. It looks different and the parts may have been rearranged but it is still there and will continue to change and develop into the future. There is a scientific term for this (succession) but that is another story.

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is on our doorstep. New infestations have been documented in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Roseville this winter. Our ash woodlands will pass the way of the dodo in a relatively few years. Many ash trees dying at the same time may create woodland fire hazards and lead to hazardous trees lurking in areas frequented by people.

The short-term view is to throw up our hands, swear at our bad luck relative to EAB, and believe that we can do nothing but let the ash trees die and let our woodlands be overwhelmed by buckthorn and other invasive species. **The short-term view says there is nothing that we can do to change the likely outcome.**

I prefer the long view... **my long-term view says there is a world of possibilities and all features of today's reality can change.**

Well, if I can't have ash trees unless I treat them with insecticides then maybe I could have disease resistant elms (many choices and more coming). Maybe instead of ash trees I could have bur oaks, bicolor oaks, red oaks, hackberries, tamaracks, hickories, white spruces, black spruces, white pines, birches, and red maples. Also since I know that diversity in my woodland will make my woodland better able to withstand future disturbances and problems maybe I will have all the above tree species and more in my forest. Maybe I will put in a meadow with native wildflowers in exactly the right place for me to enjoy. Maybe I will create a trail winding through it so that I can watch how my forest grows and changes and my children and their children can see how my forest grows and see these changes too. And maybe instead of thinking everything needs to occur in "real time" **in my woods real time will be an expression of the long view ...**

When you take the long view everything can change and the possibilities are endless! EAB may be the end of ash trees in my woods but it is not the end of my woods ... not now, not ever.

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