

Land History and Management Activities

Tim and Linda Eisele purchased the land October 9, 1990 from Babb Realty. The parcel includes 80 acres of wooded land and 20 acres of upland in Seneca Township of Crawford County.

The parcel was first described in the abstract conveyed from the United States to Catherine Cullen on September 12, 1850. On December 16, 1839 the original Surveyor's Notes described seeing white oak, burr oak, and aspen on the section line running along the property's East boundary.

In 1977 the land became part of the Haltmeyer farm, which in 1983 went through foreclosure and the land reverted to the Federal Land Bank of Saint Paul. In 1983 Haltmeyer's had entered into a contract with Mathews Lumber Company to purchase standing timber.

Babb Realty purchased the land in 1986. It then was logged by the Webster Lumber Company and Babb's placed 450 acres in the Managed Forest Law in 1988.

The Eisele's bought 80 acres in 1990 and an additional 20 acres four years later. They continued the 80 wooded acres in Managed Forest Law (closed to public access), with the goals of "managing with sound conservation practices that emphasize wildlife management, particularly for ruffed grouse and wild turkey."

MFL management plans have been updated and renewed in 2012 and 2016.

The 20 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) have been continued, with recent renewal in 2012. The overall plan is to increase biodiversity for wildlife.

Tim met with DNR Forester Gary Harden and DNR Wildlife Manager Dave Matheys on the land April 11, 1991 to walk the woods and seek advice (used a tape recorder to help remember the advice and I still have four pages of typed notes from that meeting).

The following lists some of the management activities:

Four clearcuts (totaling 9.8 acres) were made in the forest (three on the east side of the main ridge and one on the west side) during January and February of **1992**. In 2002, TSI was completed in 3 of the 4 compartments.

In August, **2003** Lambert Forest Produces (through private forestry consultant Jeff Christie) made 4 aspen clearcuts, to harvest over-mature aspen in an attempt to regenerate young aspen.

To establish prairie and warm season grasses, (with permission of NRCS/FSA) for diversity, we began cutting a portion of white spruce trees during April, 1999, and had the areas sprayed with Round-up on July 29, 1999, July 7, 2000, and September, 2000; then obtained seed for forbs and warm season grasses in July, 2000, did a controlled burn May 8, 2001, followed by a last application of

Round-up June 2, 2001, and then had Ron Sutton disk the land on June 15, 2001. We planted seed on June 15 and 16, **2001**.

The cabin was built by David Hege and Sons beginning on September 11, 2000. The Hege's actually began the cabin in their yard putting up logs to the top of the walls, then dismantled it and reassembled and finished it on site in September. The cabin was completed and the Eisele's celebrated a finished cabin on October 28, **2000**. Tim, Linda and son, Shawn, celebrated the beginning of 2001 on New Year's Eve at the new cabin.

Trees and shrubs have been planted in various locations to provide more diversity and wildlife foods. In 2001, we planted a mixture of 12 high bush cranberry, 11 American hazel, 10 red osier dogwood and 10 gray dogwood (obtained from Crawford County Land Conservation Dept.) in the "shrub" area northwest of the cabin. Six white cedars were also planted. We also purchased 4 large high bush cranberry, 4 large American hazel, and 2 red berried elder from the UW-Arboretum, now planted around the cabin.

In **2002**, we purchased 3 American hazel, 3 highbush cranberry from UW-Madison Arboretum. that are planted northeast of the cabin plus 3 American plum (Great Lakes Nursery Co.). Another 10 highbush cranberry and 25 white spruce (from the Crawford County Land Conservation Dept.). The cranberry went in the shrub area and the spruce east of the trail and in the clearing west of the trail at the entrance.

In **2003** we purchased 25 white spruce and 10 white oak from Crawford Co. Land Cons. and from Great Lakes Nursery 4 American mountain ash (planted west of the clover field north of cabin), 4 Sargent crab (east and west of cabin), and 4 white cedar. In April, we heard a ruffed grouse drumming in the woods. Walked the land with Tim Loose of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Spent time finishing sanding and putting sealer on the cabin.

In **2004**, 2 grey dogwood, 2 highbush cranberry, and 2 black chokeberry from UW-Arboretum, and 2 15" white cedar and 4 Sargent crab from Great Lakes Nursery.

In **2005**, we purchased 10 white oak, 20 red osier dogwood and 10 highbush cranberry from the County, and 2 American plum, 2 nannyberry, 2 ninebark and 1 grey dogwood from the-UW Arboretum, and 3 red osier dogwood from Great Lakes Nursery. We also bought 4 semi-dwarf apple trees (Liberty) and planted them plus 2 plum to west of cabin. On April 29, we had the prairie (planted in 2001) burned for the first time by Pheasants Forever Habitat Crew. We heard woodcock peenting out on the burned prairie the following evening.

In **2006**, we purchased 3 elderberry, 2 bladdernut from UW-Arboretum and replaced the 2 ninebark that we purchased last year which died and replanted them on the west side (looks like they died as well). In an experiment, we also purchased

25 Frazier firs planted on south end of the property and most died out by 2020. We planted 2 3-year old red cedars and 3 5-year old white cedars (and got 6 free Colorado blue spruce – put in on south end of land), from Chief River Nursery.

In May we saw baptisia in bloom in the big prairie, also rattlesnake master, bergamot, purple prairie clover, and lupine in the small prairie.

In September of 2006, we put in 4 chestnut seedlings obtained from Larry Severeid, of West Salem. As of 2022, 3 of the trees failed to survive but the fourth is doing well along the road going uphill to the cabin! It is now about 20-feet tall, and fingers crossed it will survive. As an experiment put up orange plastic fencing (deer enclosure) in the shrub field around some dogwood to see what vegetation survives without deer.

In **2007** we planted 4 elderberry purchased from UW-Madison Arboretum, and 4 black chokeberry. We have basically eliminated the wild parsnip previously found along the white pines. Linda has used the Parsnip Predator to good effect! We had visitors from the Driftless Initiative visit to tour the land.

In **2008** we installed a large “Bat Motel” down in front of the cabin for bats. Records show we are hearing woodcock peenting in the prairie, and have bluebirds nesting. We noticed lupine blooming in the prairie and hosted friends for our first “Prairie Daze.”

2009 transplanted the mountain ash that was in the woods north of the cabin into the opening “foodplot” in hopes it will get more sunlight. Also planted 11 Sargeant crabapple in the small foodplot north of the cabin. In April, while turkey hunting, heard a grouse drumming and actually observed a grouse walking across the clover field west of the cabin.

On April 28, 2009 we burned the prairie, it was the second time as first was in 2005. We also burned a small area under the powerline west of the cabin. Planted 4 white pine seedlings in the orange plastic “deer enclosure” that had been put in back near the shrub field in 2006 to see if deer will avoid plants within. In May we noted Baptisia growing in the prairie. We found: our first 3 apples on one of the apple trees; lots of big bluestem under the powerline where we’d burned; and had Gary Harden mark trees for TSI (on the east side of the ridge) with help from EQIP. We trimmed the lower lateral branches on walnuts that the forester had marked as crop trees.

2010 the ATV had its first oil change and servicing, and is useful in hauling wood, chain saw, etc. Hearing whip-poor-wills in the morning and have bluebirds nesting in 3 nest houses on the prairie. This year we got about a bushel of apples from our 4 trees. In December a wet snow brought down many limbs on white pines along the trail on the way in.

2011 In the spring cut many trees on the eastern side of the ridge where we needed TSI work. Did see a ruffed grouse on the path north of cabin in April, and

while turkey hunting on our west ridge had two wood ducks land on a large branch up above me! Several sightings in May include scarlet tanager, blue eyed grass and showy orchids. Tim and Linda spent time pulling garlic mustard and cutting honeysuckles in the woods. On July 9 we hosted our Prairie Daze open house. A highlight was when Linda was taking some UW graduate students through the prairie and a turkey launched skyward right in front of them. It had nested there, and we left the nest and 9 eggs hoping they're safe. In answering the students' question, Linda said "That's why we wanted the prairie." Again had the forester mark crop trees and we trimmed the lateral branches up to 17-feet.

2012 We experimented cutting off the flower heads of fleabane in front of the cabin to the left of the path, and pulling fleabane to the right of the path to see if it helps. We've done similarly with Canada thistle in the wildlife foodplot, trying to pull all we can and cutting seed heads off of others. On July 21 we hosted "Prairie Daze" with a nice gathering of friends. In September sold the hard-to-start brush mower and bought my favorite DR Field Mower!

2013 Again trimming walnut and oak lateral branches for marked crop trees. Planted several shrubs west of the cabin: ninebark, black chokeberry, dogwood, highbush cranberry, and planted 10 butternut at south end of prairie and west of the sumac. In September we picked 3 to 4 bushels of apples.

2014 Still trimming crop trees. Picked 4 to 5 bushels of apples from our Liberty brand apple trees.

2015 Had Driftless Land Management conduct their second burn on the prairie. In the spring I saw a ruffed grouse under a white spruce tree east of the cabin. Each year we are cutting box elder and some buckthorn, but fortunately not a huge amount of buckthorn. July 18 held Prairie Daze open house and On Sept. 26 we hosted an RGS Young Forest Management landowner workshop for Ruffed Grouse and other wildlife with about 30 people here.

2016 We enlarged the cage on the white cedar we planted years ago on the south end of the prairie. Met with a consultant to inspect for a new MFL plan, and cut box elders and marked box elders and honeysuckles to be cut later on east side of the ridge. Had Brian Graham cut some downed trees across trails, and we put up a wood duck box north of the cabin. More pulling and spraying of garlic mustard.

2017 The year of the BEAR. On Feb. 17 temperatures were 60-degrees and we worked in short sleeves in the powerline cutting all the sumac to try to open the area for native prairie vegetation. On March 23 I was there to mow a fire break around the prairie and that night in bed up in the cabin loft when a motion light went on on the front porch. I went to the glass front doors and on the other side of the glass was a large adult black bear! It had rained that evening, and as it walked down the steps I could see large wet paw prints on the porch boards. On July 15

we hosted our Prairie Daze for 48 people.

2018 We have purple milkweed and butterfly milkweed in bloom near the powerline.

2019 Gary Harden and Rick Livingston of Driftless Forestry marked the woods for a harvest in the MFL portions. In October, had Gary girdle several oaks just west of the cabin on the outside of a ring of oak wilt and treated them with Garlon to try to stop the spread of oak wilt. We have begun experimenting with spreading some wood betony seeds in the prairie to try and open some areas to benefit forbs and reduce thick big bluestem, and experimented clipping the seed heads of big blue in the small prairie. Bought several plants at the UW-Madson Arboretum Native Plant sale and planted a burr oak down in front of the cabin, plus wild ginger, Jacobs ladder, prairie doc, gayfeather and geranium in the small prairie. Pulled lots of honeysuckle in walnuts and oaks east of the cabin.

2020 We distributed more wood betony seeds in the big prairie just beside the road going from the oak tree up to the Leopold bench. Also some bed straw. With the shutdown due to Coronavirus we “self isolated” on the land and waged war on honeysuckle on the east side of the ridge. Had to cover the plywood on the crawl space of the cabin completely with hardware cloth, as the squirrels continue to gnaw. Hired Randy Hoffman to come over and give us his observations, and we learned to identify sedges, and he also saw a trillium. Planted 2 winterberry west of cabin and fire ring along edge of clover field. In June we had a small solar panel installed, plus battery/converter, a gift from Shawn. Had a representative (Dan Carter) from Prairie Enthusiasts walk the land for his observations and he showed us bedstraw and bastard toadflax, and recommended mowing where we planted wood betony. Also walked the land with Abbie Church and Chris Kirkpatrick for comments, and they pointed out our first three bird orchid. On Sept. 2 met with the logging co. and expressed our concerns. Logging started, and we stopped back later in Sept. to check on progress and watch. Later we walked the trails and are appalled by the numerous wide trails and “unharvested” downed trees. This fall we had over 5 bushels of apples from our 4 trees!

2021 Met with the DNR MFL forester (Joe Schmaedick) who outlined 3 areas where we need brush and TSI follow-up to cut mid-level trees (elm, box elder, ash, bitternut hickory) to encourage regeneration. We put prairie seed on the bare soil on the log landing and drove over it to pack it in. Mowed the small prairie and raked the duff away to try to get sunlight to the ground. We used the Blackhawk Hills Logging Trail Seed Mix and did our own seeding of logging roads where it looks like the loggers’ seed didn’t take, and picked and hauled up 2 garbage bags stuffed full of garlic mustard. Planted a swamp white oak from UW-Arb. Native Plant sale down in the valley. Planted 6 shrubs in what used to be the wildlife foodplot north of cabin and which we hope will become a new shrub field.

Put in 2/each: ninebark, black chokeberry, and hazel. Cut all small aspens invading the prairie. In September had Ron Sutton mow half the prairie to mimic a burn and hope to be able to burn in a future year. Saw my first mockingbird in the pines. In the fall we had only a few apples, way less than usual.

2022 The year started by cutting the dead white spruce that are next to, and being killed by, the walnuts southeast of the cabin. We have ordered oaks, shagbark hickory that we will plant there to try and replace with hardwoods, and intend to buy more shrubs for the new shrub field north of the cabin.

Tim and Linda were named Wild Turkey Woodland Owners of the Year by the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation in 2005; received the Crawford County Forestry Award in 2011; and were named the District Tree Farmers of the Year in 2011.

They've hosted field visits for the National Wild Turkey Federation, Bad Axe Chapter of Wisconsin Woodland Owners, Ruffed Grouse Society Landowners Workshop, and Open Houses for local neighbors, friends and conservationists in Crawford County.

Tim and Linda spend much of their time every year trying to reduce, and eliminate, buckthorn, honeysuckle, box elder, Canada thistle and Wild Parsnip. They've also worked to trim oak and walnut marked by the forester as crop trees.

The property presents a variety of wildlife: deer, bear, bobcat, coyote, skunk, opossum, flying squirrel, barred owls, turkeys, wood ducks, pileated, red-headed and red-bellied woodpeckers, flickers, warblers, Yellowthroat warbler, red-starts, scarlet tanagers, Indigo bunting, rose-breasted grosbeak, ruby-throated hummingbird, eastern towhee, bluebirds, cardinals, bluejays, orioles, cedar waxwings, Acadian flycatcher, wood thrush, red-tailed hawk, woodcock, mourning doves, and occasional ruffed grouse. Flying over are Tundra swans, bald eagles, sandhill cranes, turkey vultures, and Canada geese.

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Trees, shrubs and flowers

List of Prairie seeds received from Madison Audubon Society and planted on June 16, 2001:

Grasses

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) 15

Canada Wild Rye (*Elymus canadensis*) 9
Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) 15

Forbs

Common milkweed
Heath aster
New England aster
Canada milkvetch (*Astragalus canadensis*) 7 oz.
White false indigo (*Baptisia leucantha*) 8
Sweet Indian Plantain (*Cacalia suavelolens*)
Prairie coreopsis (*Coreopsis palmata*)
Pale Purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*) 6
Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)
Showy sunflower (*Helianthus laetiflorus*)
Sawtooth sunflower
Ox-eye sunflower 10
Roundheaded bush clover (*Lespedeza capitata*)
Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) 3
Evening primrose 1/2
Prairie cinquefoil (*Potentilla arguta*)
Yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*)
Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) 7 oz.
Sweet black-eyed Susan
Compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*)
Rosinweed
Stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)
Showy goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)
Meadow rue
ironweed
Glade mallow
Canada tick trefoil 1 oz.
Onion
Culvers root

Seeds in mix from Prairie Nursery (in front of the log cabin): Wildflowers-
Lavender hyssop, butterfly weed, smooth aster, white aster, Canada milk vetch
(legume), lanceleaf coreopsis, pale purple coneflower, lupine (legume),
beardtongue, purple prairie clover (legume), black eye Susan, stiff goldenrod, sweet
scented goldenrod, spiderwort and hoary vervain. **Grasses**-side oats grama, prairie

dropseed, little bluestem.

Clover in foodplots - White Dutch clover (Seneca Seed & Feed)

L.L. Olds Seed in foodplot - Brier Ridge Brand Gobbler Gourmet Wildlife Mixture planted in 2001: 29% hardy brand alfalfa; 24% medium red clover; 20% creeping red fescue; 10% empire birds-foot trefoil; 9% Kentucky bluegrass, 5% white clover. Will be replaced by below:

Seed mix for the new prairie to be seeded May, 2022 where the wildlife foodplot was west of the cabin include:

Black-eyed Susan, Canada milkvetch, Canada tick-trefoil, common milkweed, cream gentian, Illinois tick-trefoil, leadplant, little bluestem, Missouri goldenrod, old field thistle, pale purple coneflower, rattlesnake master, rosinweed, round-headed bush clover, showy goldenrod, showy sunflower, spiderwort, stiff goldenrod, thimbleweed, white baptisia, white prairie clover, wild bergamot, wild lupine, wild quinine, yellow coneflower, smooth blue aster, rough blazing star, golden alexander, early sunflower, prairie drop seed, and prairie blazing star.

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