

Invasive Trees being removed from Hathaway Preserve

Bryce Metcalfe of Metcalfe Forestry in Grayling is the forester who coordinates Little Traverse Conservancy's (LTC) sustainable forestry work in its working forest reserves. He is overseeing the removal of Scotch pines from the Hathaway property that began about a week ago and is expected to continue for roughly a month. Timberline Logging out of Gaylord is conducting the harvest.

Scotch pine were planted on the property at one time for a potential Christmas tree farm. But they are an exotic invasive tree and now occupy much of the property at the expense of native plants. Roughly 95% of the Scotch pine trees will be removed. Bryce said, "The forest will naturally regenerate with a mixture of the



Bryce Metcalfe is the forester overseeing the harvest. He is standing beside a small ash tree. It is hoped that ash can thrive in the openings created and make a comeback now that the initial wave of ash borer has passed through.



Scotch pine

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The Scotch pine formed large parts of forests in northern England and Scotland until around 8,000 years ago and continue as the foundation of the native pine woods of Scotland.



Gold-winged Warblers have been rapidly declining in numbers because their preferred habitat, shrubby, young forest, have been declining. Historically, natural disturbances like fire and flooding have created these kinds of habitat. This cutting will do that.



Mackinaw News

by Sandy Planisek

species that are already there including Scotch pine. However, I expect the regeneration of trees to be thicker than the current forest and the percentage of Scotch will decline.” He anticipates that the removal will make the preserve a very good habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, classified as a species of special concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



In Scotland the main economic value of Scotch pine lies in the timber industry, since their soft, reddish wood is widely used for home furniture. The pulp is also used for making paper. In the United States, they have seasonal value as live holiday decor: approximately 30% of the 35 million Christmas trees harvested and sold annually belong to this species. Our twisted trees are unsuitable for these uses.

The trees are being chipped on site. The “clean” chips are going to the new manufacturing facility in Grayling, Arauco, to be used for manufactured boards. The “dirty” chips are going to a facility in Cadillac where they will be burned for electricity production.

This process will hopefully break-even financially for LTC, as this is not high value wood. LTC could not afford sustainable forestry work here without the sale of the timber. If you walk through the woods, you will note a lot of the Scotch is curved. Bryce said that the species is not strong in our environment and often the young main trunk of the tree gets diseased, causing growth of lateral stems. This is apparent in the twisted and haphazard shape of many of the trees. It is one of the reasons the wood doesn’t have high value. Bryce has been to Scotland and noted how much better the tree does in its native soil.

The existing trail cut by the school students is being protected and additional trails will result from the cutting. The land may look messy at first but LTC says we will be amazed at how much better it will look in a relatively short period of time. There are some beautiful, tall white pine trees that will be seeding the area naturally this fall when the white pine cones ripen.



White pine is the Michigan state tree, a native that was harvested heavily during Michigan’s lumbering era. It has needles in bundles of five; Scotch pine has needles in bundles of two.



The clearing off Central Ave. will become the parking lot for the reserve with trails leading off.

