

Hepatica Falls Tree Farm – 2017 Ohio Tree Farm of the Year

by Koral Clum

Randy and I feel very honored to receive this award for Ohio's Tree Farm of the Year and join the ranks of those who have been selected before us, many of whom we know or knew well and hold dear. I would like to tell you about who we are and what has been going on at our tree farm for the past 24 years.

At the beginning of our life together, Randy and I spent four years as foresters on the 63,700 acre Shawnee State Forest in southern Ohio. We entertained ourselves during field work with a friendly competition in wildflower identification. One of our favorite plants was hepatica. Although the leaves last a long time and stay green throughout the winter, the flower's time is brief and you have to put forth effort to find it and enjoy it. Hepatica flowers are a delight when you get to experience them. This ephemeral nature captures how we feel about woodland ownership, which is the reason we eventually chose the name Hepatica Falls Tree Farm.

In 1985, we became ODNR service foresters in east central Ohio. Randy covered Harrison, Carroll, and Stark counties and I was assigned to Tuscarawas, Holmes, and Wayne counties. Every day, we marked timber, or advised folks about tree planting, erosion

control, thinning, wildlife, or forest health. Every day, we wondered if the cooperators we walked with would have the time, energy, or interest to follow through on our suggestions. Thus began our search for a property to call our own, where we could do our best to practice what we preached. Randy started coming home from work saying, "I saw this wonderful property today," followed by *lots* of details. I quickly learned that my first question should be, "Is it for sale?"

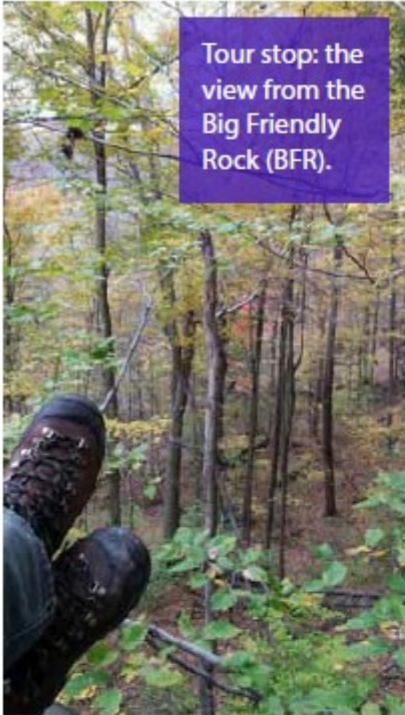
Fast forward to September, 1993: Because of circumstances too lengthy to explain, *in the middle of* the pre-tour work day for Carl and Alice Wooding's Tree Farm of the Year Tour, Randy and I snuck away and signed the contract to buy our 149 acres in Harrison County. What a time! As Wooding's Nominating Forester, I enjoyed helping them share their property with others during their tour, but Randy and I also ached to go set our feet on our new land. I wish for every forest owner that they could find as much joy in tree farming as we have!

Owning this land has definitely made us better foresters...more empathetic, more realistic, more

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Hepatica (*Hepatica nobilis*) is an early spring woodland flower in the buttercup family.





Tour stop: the view from the Big Friendly Rock (BFR).



The next generation- Casey (Clum) and Alex Halmagy.

educated, and more passionate. We would be remiss in talking about tree farming if we did not mention ECOFA (East Central Ohio Forestry Association), the local landowner group where we have met and worked with so many great folks over the years.

In 1997, Randy knew that working for the government was no longer his calling, so he walked away from the security of public employment and hung out a shingle as Clum Forestry Consultants. I had *no* intention of joining him, but I did notice that he was enjoying the new challenges. Three years later, I jumped in as well. As our job duties changed, our Hepatica Falls Tree Farm became a place where we could show clients how *their* land might look, if they had a harvest.

The timber production part of our ownership has been surprising to me. As a forester, I suppose I should not admit to this surprise, but it's true. And it is certainly correct that, "If you cut it, it will grow!"

We have divided our land into nine management

units, from 3 acres up to 52 acres in size. Recent inventory work revealed that our growing stock is between 650,000 and 700,000 board feet (BF) for the entire property. Historically, 96 acres were always in forest cover, although disturbed in places by sandstone quarries. Fifty six acres were in agricultural fields or pasture. Fifty acres of this open ground were planted to Austrian pine, Scotch pine, and holly in the 1950s, while six acres naturally reverted to hardwood forest.

A wide variety of slopes, soils, aspects, and previous stand conditions have provided a diversity that has been fun to manage. One of our goals has been to keep an undisturbed area to provide a comparison between managed and unmanaged forests. Four acres are isolated by geography along Rush's Run, so that section was a natural place to display an unharvested stand.

We call them *family* forests because Certified Tree Farms are such a wonderful place to build memories as a family. Our journey has included stick-forts, a tree swing, mushroom hunting, meals around the campfire,

Continued on next page

1994 - Selective Harvest	184,300 BF	673 trees	97 acres
2004 - Selective Harvest	122,954 BF	420 trees	80 acres
2011 - Pine Sale 1,478 tons	clearcut (6 + 4 + 0.3 acres) & thinning (6.5 acres)		
2013 - Acquisition of adjacent land			3 acres
2013 - Selective Harvest	146,600 BF	580 trees	103 acres
2016 - Ash Salvage, Plus	<u>51,760 BF</u>	<u>256 trees</u>	64 acres
	505,614 BF of Hardwoods from 1,929 trees!		

sledding, and exploring the three falls. Our daughter Casey was six years old when we bought the land. For those readers who remember her being carried on my hip or Randy's shoulders at field trips near and far, Casey is 30 years old now. We welcomed her husband, Alex Halmagy, into our family in 2015. They live near Harbor Springs, Michigan, where Casey is a teacher. She would probably list some of her most memorable times as watching river otters, discovering bobcat tracks, and requesting "tree cookies" made by Dad, *from the farm*, to be used as table decorations for her wedding reception. We are happy that we were able to share our enthusiasm for the outdoors with her.

We hope to share it with you on October 21, 2017. Our goal as consulting foresters is to promote science-based forest management in Ohio's forests. This objective carries over to our land, along with having fun. It will be a good day to recover from nature deficit disorder. Please join us! ♦

Learn more about Clum Forestry Consultants at <http://clumforestry.com/index.html>, or contact them by phone at (330) 364-2386. Directions and further details about the Tree Farm Tour will be forthcoming in the summer issue of *The Ohio Woodland Journal*.

Look What's Blooming in the Woods!

A red trillium (*Trillium erectum*), wait, with how many parts? The prefix *tri* (for having 3 petals, 3 sepals, and 3 leaves) still applies to the scientific and common names of this plant, even though this specimen happens to have *quad* petals, sepals, and leaves. Native plants occasionally exhibit these and other visible abnormalities, such as variegated leaves and odd-colored petals. Keep an eye out this spring, and maybe you will find one of nature's special jewels, like this "quadllium" flower found last spring by ODNR Service Forester Mark Rickey at Great Seal State Park in Ross County.



Randy and our largest tree, a 44-inch diameter white oak. Photos courtesy of the author