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TREE FARM GROUP MEMBERS OF THE YEAR

2009	John & Kristine Niemela
2010	Dennis Myllyla
2012	Stanton Township
2013	Phil & Charlene Waatti
2014	Mike & Julie Kinsel
2015	Steve Waslawski & Mary Curran
2016	Dead River Campers, Inc.
2017	Jim & Pam Grundstrom
2018	Dan Carlson
2019	Sampo Club
2020	Upper Peninsula Land
2021	Terra Indomita Tree Farm
2022	Nathan Miller & Elizabeth Fujita

2022 TREE FARM GROUP

MEMBER OF THE YEAR

NATHAN MILLER AND

ELIZABETH FUJITA

Nathan and Elizabeth own 46 acres located southwest of Chassell. In 2018 Green Timber drafted a forest management plan for them. The property was enrolled in the Green Timber Tree Farm Group following the completion of the management plan. During the planning process it became evident that Nathan and Elizabeth were committed to conservation and to utilizing and caring for their property.

These landowners conduct a number of practical and recreational activities on the property. They have used their property to keep bees, as well as to produce maple syrup and firewood. They have also installed a solar panel system to power their house. They enjoy using the property for recreational activities such as hiking, skiing, and photography.



Dense hardwood growing on the property prior to the timber harvest.

Prior to their ownership, this property was enrolled in a conservation easement held by the Keweenaw Land Trust. Nathan and Elizabeth have made it a priority to uphold the standards of this easement through their ownership practices.

Nathan and Elizabeth have just completed their first timber sale. Their forest management goals include diversifying the species composition and age structure of the forest, promoting the health and vigor of desirable trees, and making the forest more resilient to the impacts of climate change. To meet these goals, an individual tree selection harvest was conducted in a northern hardwoods stand.

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Dense stand of mixed pine prior to thinning.

Prior to the harvest, this stand was overstocked and many of the trees were displaying signs of stress and poor vigor due to the intense competition with each other for resources such as sunlight, water, and nutrients.

The thinning targeted the removal of the poorest quality trees to create more growing space for the residual trees. These residual trees will respond with increased vigor, growth rates, and resiliency to the impacts of climate change. All oaks and hemlocks were retained to maintain species diversity and wildlife habitat.

A stand of mixed pine was treated by removing all of the jack pine, white spruce, and balsam fir present, while thinning individual red and white pine. The jack pine, spruce, and fir were removed because they were reaching ecological maturity and beginning to decline. The red and white pines were thinned to allow growing space for the best individuals while encouraging a mixture of diverse hardwood and pine regeneration.

In addition to thinnings, Nathan and Elizabeth's timber sale project incorporated some patch clearcuts in areas where aspen trees were present. These patch clearcuts will stimulate the cut aspen trees to root sprout, creating a dense thicket of regeneration that will be utilized by

a number of song birds. These patches also help to diversify the age class distribution of the forest—making it more habitable for a wider range of wildlife species.

Nathan and Elizabeth have worked hard to control the spread of invasive species. Their property is located in an area consisting of a mixture of old farmlands and forests. Many of these old farms have gone fallow, making them ripe for the introduction of invasive species which then spread into the surrounding forested landscape. On Nathan and Elizabeth's property the primary invasive is autumn olive, which was introduced in the US from Asia. It was originally planted in the US as a source of wildlife food and cover until its invasive traits were observed. Autumn olive leafs out early in the spring and holds its leaves late into the fall.

This trait, along with its vigorous growth, allows it to displace native plant species and inhibit desirable tree regeneration. It is extremely difficult to control since it readily resprouts following cutting and burning. Nathan and Elizabeth have used a combination of mechanical and chemical means to control autumn olive on their property. This involves cutting larger stems and then treating the stumps with herbicide. They have also pulled younger stems by hand—aiming to extract plant roots.

Treating and controlling invasive outbreaks can be a never-ending task as seeds are spread from adjacent properties by birds and mammals. However, Nathan and Elizabeth's example of diligence can be seen through the thriving native populations of plants on their property.



Autumn Olive