



Editorial

By Kathleen Preece

Reach For It: Pencil, Camera, iPad

This is an editorial for people who get goose bumps when they hear the drumming of a ruffed grouse or the snort of a vanishing doe; and shiver when the quaking aspen rattle, or the song of a Baltimore oriole is heard for the first time in the spring.

It's an editorial for people who are curious about what they see, smell, hear, and touch in the outdoors. It's for explorers of new places, as well as those who are still amazed by the places they know best.

And it's dedicated to Michael Dobb – Minnesota's 2017 Tree Farmer of the Year (*see story on page 14*), who takes the sounds and sights and shivers of being a woodland owner - and goes one step further – he records them.

Like many of us, Michael makes plans, plants trees, schedules harvests, and celebrates his woodlands. But unlike many of us, Michael has a record of his planning, his plantings, his harvests – and his celebrations.

Throughout the near-100 pages of *“My Memoirs of the Dobb Property – Dobb Forest Stream,”* Michael conspires to tell the whole story of his ownership, management, and love of the Dobb Tree Farm located in the northern reaches of Minnesota's Koochiching County. Although his trips to the woodlands from his home in Washington State were limited to a few times per year, he recorded events and observations that carried his interest and his passion throughout the year.

1997: This trip to the land was summer vacation with wife Marcy and daughter Briana along; the trip included stops at relatives along the way. I had arranged to meet logger Mike Timmer in Littlefork at the Big Spoon Café to talk terms of a harvest. Forester Raymond Johnson took me to the west side of the woods and pointed out whitetail deer tracks and the narrow trail they created. He showed me bark scraped off birch trees and explained a white tail deer recently removed velvet from his antlers by rubbing the tree – a technique used to polish the antlers. Raymond told me members of the deer family (moose, caribou and deer) shed and grow new antlers each year. Let's say, I did not remember ever learning THAT in school!

2000: On the final day of this trip, it dawned on me I wanted to install my Tree Farm signs along Highway 71 to recognize family members for their decades of ownership of this land. How could it be achieved so as not to create a problem with neighbors or Minnesota Department of Transportation? On the flight back to Washington State, I was reading a magazine article about the upcoming presidential election between Bush and Gore and the global warming issue. The article triggered in my mind a clever way to describe why I bought the 320 acres. Of course! It was my global warming investment! With northern Minnesota being the icebox of the nation, it made perfect sense. The sign would say, “Dobb Forest Stream, Est. 1919, Dobb Family Tribute.”

2008: My day wrapped up with a trip to the property and the installation of a nesting box. It was placed on a tree about 50 yards north of the first nesting box installed the previous year. Returning home, I have a lot to think about and anticipate what the next year will bring. The year ends in grand fashion as I received my second SFIA check in a total of \$2,755.20. Making it even more eventful was receiving in the mail a Certificate of Appreciation from the Arbor Day Foundation for the tree planting: “For recognizing the beauty trees bring to our world and the importance they hold for the future of the planet.” Being a landowner is just getting better and better.

The psychologist Abraham Maslow said . . . *“The most fortunate are those who have a wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder and even ecstasy.”*

Wishing you “again and again,” the ‘awe, wonder and even ecstasy’ this summer of your Life brings - and wishing you recorded memories to open the pages to, during the winters of your lives.