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Ecological Silviculture: What it is and Why it Matters

Dr. Brian J Palik, Science Leader for Applied Forest Ecology
USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station

Ecological silviculture is the toolbox for managing forests as whole ecosystems based on understanding and emulating natural disturbance and development. By seeking to reduce the disparity between a natural model and a managed forest, ecological silviculture is fundamentally different than classic timber-focused silviculture. In this presentation, Dr. Palik will discuss the beliefs underlying ecological silviculture as a conceptual approach, as well as the global context that has led to its evolution. He will present the foundational ecological principles that distinguish ecological silviculture from timber-focused silviculture, illustrating concepts and application through examples from his work in Great Lakes mixed-pine ecosystems in northern Minnesota.

Brian Palik is science leader for applied forest ecology with the USDA Forest Service-Northern Research Station, in Grand Rapids MN. He has B.S. in biology from Alma College, an M.S. in plant ecology from Michigan State University, and Ph.D. in forest ecology from Michigan State University. He works broadly on questions related to ecological sustainability and adaptability of managed forests through use of operational-scale and long-term silviculture research.

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