



For Release:  
Contact:

May 22, 2013  
Joe Maher  
General Manager  
UPM Blandin  
218-327-6398

Amy Rutledge  
Manager – Corporate Communications  
218-723-7400  
arutledge@mpower.com

## **NEWS**

### **News Release**

## **UPM Blandin and Minnesota Power kick off forest restoration project marking culmination of historic easement exchange**

Grand Rapids, Minn.(May 22, 2013)— UPM Blandin and Minnesota Power kicked off a reforestation project on 90 acres of forestland along a 160-acre transmission line vacated by Minnesota Power today.

“Today we will begin the reforestation of 90 acres of forestland along a 160-acre transmission line that has been vacated by Minnesota Power on UPM Blandin forest land,” said Joe Maher, UPM Blandin General Manager. “In our agreement, Minnesota Power has vacated an existing utility easement for this No. 94 transmission line on Blandin forest land and in exchange, we have granted Minnesota Power a 130-acre utility easement on UPM land north of Nashwauk.”

“We value our partnership with UPM Blandin on this important project,” said Brad Oachs, Minnesota Power Chief Operating Officer. “This unique easement exchange has resulted in new infrastructure that will help the region’s economy through enhanced electric reliability while promoting a healthy forest for the enjoyment of generations to come.”

Maher welcomed the participants and Grand Rapids High School students. “Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate this historic agreement between UPM Blandin and Minnesota Power. We are also celebrating the UPM Plant-a-Tree initiative, which has had planting events at sites in several countries including China, Germany, UK, Finland, Estonia, Uruguay, Russia and in the U.S. at the Madison, Maine mill and today on Blandin land.”

Following a tree-planting demonstration by UPM Blandin foresters, participants and forestry students from Grand Rapids High School kicked off the planting of 81,000 jumbo white spruce and red and white pine seedlings.

“The prior No. 94 transmission line created a 9.4 mile long corridor through the center of a 15,000 acre tract of Blandin forest land that is now covered by a conservation easement,” Maher said. “The new No. 94 line is 8.3 miles long, is confined to a few smaller tracts of forest land and allows us to substantially reduce forest fragmentation.”

This land exchange is in accordance with the Upper Mississippi Forest Project conservation easement agreement Blandin signed with the State of Minnesota in 2010 on 187,876 acres of UPM-owned forest land in Northern Minnesota. Under the conservation easement, UPM retains ownership of the land and will continue to use it as a working forest. The easement provides the public with access for recreational purposes such as hunting, fishing, hiking and snowmobiling in perpetuity.

The utility easement is significant because it restores large blocks of Blandin forest land and ensures that the land is protected from development and will be a working forest managed under Blandin’s unique Smart Forestry system, which is designed to enhance productivity and support economic and environmental sustainability.

“This agreement between UPM Blandin and MP illustrates how the Upper Mississippi Forest Project Conservation Easement promotes and protects our existing forest land management program,” said Maher. “We look for opportunities to reduce fragmentation, restore habitat, increase ecological diversity and promote forest productivity. This agreement to re-route the No. 94 corridor allows us to achieve all of these.”

#### **About Blandin**

UPM Blandin, a wholly owned subsidiary of UPM Corp., is one of North America's leading producers of lightweight coated magazine and catalog printing papers. With sales offices in the Chicago suburb of Westmont, IL, UPM North America comprises the North American publication paper operations of UPM Corp., and is the continent's third-largest supplier of lightweight coated paper to magazine and catalog publishers, retailers and printers. Learn more at [www.upm.com/blandin](http://www.upm.com/blandin); Like us on Facebook: UPM Blandin Forestry.

#### **UPM Paper**

UPM has 21 modern and sustainable paper mills in Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Austria, China, and the United States. As the world's leading producer of graphic papers, UPM Paper provides customers with renewable high-performance products, and delivers more through efficient practices and continuous innovation. UPM Paper's annual net sales amounted to EUR 7.2 billion in 2012 and the business group employs approximately 12,600 people. To learn more about UPM Paper, visit: [www.upmpaper.com](http://www.upmpaper.com).

**UPM** leads the integration of bio and forest industries into a new, sustainable and innovation-driven future. Our products are made of renewable raw materials and are recyclable. UPM consists of three Business Groups: Energy and pulp, Paper, and Engineered materials. UPM employs approximately 22,000 people. UPM is present in 67 countries and have production units in 17 countries. UPM's annual sales exceed €10 billion. UPM's shares are listed on the Helsinki Stock Exchange. UPM – The Biofore Company – [www.upm.com](http://www.upm.com)

#### **About Minnesota Power**

Minnesota Power provides retail electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota to 143,000 customers and wholesale electric service to 16 municipalities. More information can be found at: [www.mnpower.com](http://www.mnpower.com)

*The statements contained in this release and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.*

###