



KWOA
Kentucky Woodland
Owners Association
www.kwoa.net

Kentucky Woodlands of Tomorrow

by Doug McLaren, Past President of Kentucky Woodland Owners Association (KWOA)

During my career as a professional forester, I have had the good fortune to visit numerous woodlands owned by enthusiastic owners. Each of these properties differ due to landowner objectives, market accessibility, geographic location, species composition, and past and future management practices of harvesting, timber stand improvement (TSI), or some pre-commercial thinning project. The woodlands resulting from these factors create the great diversified forests found in the Appalachian Mountains of today. The future objectives of the woodland management plan are always emphasized, but one feature of eastern deciduous hardwood forests that is usually not fully discussed in the plan is the history explanation of how these forests developed, over time.

Today's woodlands and forests, nationwide, are often the result of previous events that lie beyond the landowner's control. Chestnut blight over 100 years ago introduced a fungus eliminating the American chestnut from the forest landscapes. The chestnut tree was nearly one-fourth of the forest before 1900. More recently, the American ash was eliminated from the woodland landscape due to an insect. Central Kentucky woodlands presently are invaded by honeysuckle—a shrub—that prevents future reproduction of hardwood seedlings because they cannot find enough sunlight to grow. Gypsy moth, now known as "spongy moth," affected growth of oaks in northeastern United States fifty years ago and is regularly monitored on Kentucky's borders. America's early pioneers planted the American elm throughout United States as a community tree. These streets no longer have the picturesque trees of their former landscapes: A disease, the American Dutch elm disease, eliminated this species in the 1950s and 60s. The native hemlocks found primarily along streams of Kentucky helping to cool the waters are being threatened by the insect hemlock woolly adelgid. Our forests and woodlands of today have been altered throughout the past century due to forest health issues.

These numerous health threats altering our woodlands are consistently discussed by individuals in the forest community. Two issues that may change our forest management plans are carbon credits and climate change, which might alter our forests and plant communities. These "what if" scenarios should be taken into consideration by woodland owners for the development of a woodland management plan in Kentucky.

The Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, with its many facets of communication, continue to discuss this list of issues among Kentucky woodland owners and forest professionals. We invite you to become part of the forest health conversation. Visit, join, and experience KWOA. The professional forester provides decision-making information to woodland owners, guiding them to produce productive forests of tomorrow with the discussions and decisions made today.

For more information visit www.kwoa.net

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