



Kentucky Natural Resources Conservation Service

Supports Sustainable Forestry



by Michelle Banks Tice, Kentucky NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

The Kentucky Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers numerous programs to help woodland owners implement conservation practices on their property. The Kentucky Forestland Initiative provides financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help woodland owners achieve their property objectives, whether it is wildlife habitat, timber production, or economic sustainability. Regardless of your objectives it is important to have a written forest management plan. The plan outlines the strategy, documents goals for managing forest resources, and helps you keep track of achievements.

Decreasing Wait Times for Forest Management Plans

The University of Kentucky Department of Forestry and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension Service (UK FNR Extension) recently partnered with the Kentucky Division of Forestry and Kentucky NRCS. Together, these partners work to address the long wait times Kentucky woodland owners are experiencing to have a forester develop a forest management plan. Encouraging woodland owners to work with a professional forester to develop a forest-management plan is one of the more frequent recommendations UK FNR Extension makes to woodland owners. However, the long wait times for a woodland owner to work with a service provider creates an obstacle to the implementation of conservation practices. Based on feedback from these woodland owners, partners created a project to help woodland owners. Through NRCS's Regional Conservation Partnership Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, a five-year project (approved in 2017) was developed to utilize close to \$300,000 in financial assistance for woodland owners to hire technical service providers to develop conservation plans for their woodlands. These providers expand the number and availability of conservation technical experts capable of offering customized, one-on-one conservation advice to landowners.

Through a new, standardized forest-management plan template, service providers can increase their efficiency, leading to shorter



Kentucky NRCS provides many programs to help woodland owners manage their woodlands.

Photo courtesy: Renee' Williams

wait times for landowners to address woodland resource concerns such as water and soil quality decline, forest health, air quality, threatened and endangered species, and invasive species. Counties included in this project are: Adair, Allen, Barren, Bath, Boyd, Breckenridge, Carter, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Elliott, Estill, Fleming, Grayson, Green, Greenup, Hardin, Hart, Johnson, Larue, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Magoffin, Marion, Martin, Mason, McCreary, Meade, Metcalfe, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Powell, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Rowan, Russell, Simpson, Taylor, Warren, Wayne, and Wolfe. Interested woodland owners in these counties who have been waiting for a forest management plan should visit their local NRCS office and ask about the UK Forestry RCPP project.

To learn more about Kentucky NRCS and all of the programs and technical assistance they have available for Kentucky woodland owners, please visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/ky/home/>.



Pam Snyder, Kentucky Division of Forestry, instructs foresters on the new forest management template used in this project.

Photo courtesy: Billy Thomas