



Kentucky  
Woodland  
Owners  
Association

## If Granddad Only Knew...

[www.kwoa.net](http://www.kwoa.net)

Like most woodland owners, I have a limited amount of formal education about forestry and forest management. Since I took over management of the wooded portion of the family farm a little over 30 years ago, I have depended upon the advice of professional foresters and participated in all the landowner education programs that I could work into my schedule. It has become increasingly clear that the forest when I was a child and the forest into which it has grown did not just happen. That forest is a result of events that occurred over the past two or three hundred years. For some of those events, such as relatively recent harvests and ice storms, we have written records. For occurrences such as the chestnut blight and long-ago forest fires, we have only family legends and the forensic evidence that is provided by the forest itself. Almost everything that happens in a forest stand has consequences for the future of that forest. The things that we do today, and the things that we avoid doing, will have an effect, either positive or negative, on the forest of the future.

In my grandfather's day it was widely believed that if you harvested the useable trees from an acre of forest and then went away and left it alone, it would naturally grow back to much the same forest that was there before. We now know that Granddad was mistaken. If Granddad had known the things that we can now learn from professional foresters, and taken some of the actions that we now know to take, today's forest could be much healthier and more productive. We also know that our current forests face challenges that Granddad had never seen. Non-native insects, exotic plant diseases, invasive plants, changes in wildlife populations, and climate change are but a few of the issues that pose problems for forest managers. We cannot know all the challenges that will affect our forests in the future, but we can certainly take actions to address some of the challenges that exist today.

Photo courtesy: Diana Olszowy

How healthy is your forest? How do you know? What can you do to help? A forest inventory by an experienced professional forester is a good first step toward answering these questions. And those answers will inevitably bring up more questions. Participation in the educational programs offered by organizations such as the University of Kentucky Department of Forestry, UK Extension Service, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry can provide answers to many of those questions. The Kentucky Woodland Owners Association is dedicated to the promotion of good forest management and serves as an advocate for policies that will support good forest management. Everyone with woodlands in Kentucky is encouraged to consider joining and becoming an active member of KWOA. For more information, please visit [www.kwoa.net](http://www.kwoa.net).

-- Frank Hicks, KWOA President

**KWOA is dedicated to  
promoting  
economically and  
environmentally sound  
forest management.**

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[www.kwoa.net](http://www.kwoa.net)**

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