

KWOA Addresses Legislative Task Force on Woodlands Economy and Management

KWOA and partners conducted a two-hour presentation and discussion on the economic potential of Kentucky's woodlands with a select group of attentive and thoughtful Kentucky legislators. Representative Rick Nelson chaired the November 20th meeting at the Capitol. KWOA President Jim Corum led the presentation that included remarks by more than a dozen KWOA members, partners and invited experts. Corum proposed to the task force that Kentucky's \$8.7 billion forest industry has the potential to generate a \$34 billion economic impact with proper management of its timber. KWOA presented five major issues that threaten the health and productivity of Kentucky's woodlands with accompanying recommendations to solve each problem. The issues and recommendations are briefly provided as follows:

Issue 1: Forest Health

Recommendation:

Legislatively establish the forest health task force (chaired by the state entomologist) attached to the Kentucky Division of Forestry with funding if possible.

Issue 2: Timber Theft

Recommendation:

- Strengthen criminal prosecution of timber theft
- If legislation is enacted include all stakeholders (e.g. KWOA, KFIA, Loggers)
- Strengthen fine collection and enforcement of repeat Bad Actors
- Establish a law enforcement unit of the Kentucky Division of Forestry to increase criminal prosecution of Timber Theft and Arson

Issue 3: Competitive Disadvantage

Recommendation:

Establish incentive program for woodland owners to enhance the production of CERTIFIED WOOD using Indiana's Classified Forest System as a model

Issue 4: Wildfire

Recommendation:

- Establish a law enforcement unit of the Kentucky Division of Forestry to increase criminal prosecution of Timber Theft and Arson
- Provide funding for the development of fire lanes on private woodlands
- Provide reward for information leading to the conviction of a wildland arsonist
- Adopt recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Wildland and Arson (2006)

Issue 5: Limited Markets for Abundant Low Grade Trees

Recommendation: Request Legislative Research Commission investigate the potential to develop incentives package for the utilization of low quality trees. Provide stimulus to encourage co-generation using woody biomass.

Final Recommendation: KWOA and its partners recognize that while some issues such as forest health and timber theft can be addressed in the upcoming session; however, many issues will take more time to develop. To deal with these significant issues KWOA requests that both the House and the Senate convene a joint task force in 2009 to further discuss legislative initiatives.

WE NEED YOU & YOU NEED US!!

KWOA members can look with pride on the accomplishments of the organization during 2008. 2009 finds us poised, ready to serve you and your interest in cost efficient, environmentally friendly sustainable forestry, as well as to deepen our advocacy of the following: Issues of Forest Health, Property Tax Fairness, Apparent Lack of Good Insurance Products for Woodland Owners, Certification Procedures, Seeking Additional Markets and Current Log Prices. These are only a few of the issues begging for our attention.

By renewing/joining, you will receive the following benefits and services:

- Periodic newsletters
- With the Membership Plus option, you will receive the newsletters of the National Woodland Owners Association
- Access to our annual two-day membership information rich conference at General Butler State Resort Park, March 20-21, 2009.
- Open invitation to attend the quarterly business meetings of the Board of Directors of the KWOA
- Representation of your interests at the Kentucky Best Management Practices (BMP) Board and at hearings on legislation affecting woodland owners.
- Frequent interactions of directors representing woodland owner interests at the Kentucky Division of Forestry and the University of Kentucky Department of Forestry
- Invitation to our cosponsored field days with the Kentucky Division of Forestry and the UK Dept. of Forestry and UK Extension Service
- Representation on the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee
- Representation on the Kentucky Forest Health Task Force
- Representation on the Kentucky Conservation Committee
- Representation on the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission Task Force on Land Stewardship and Conservation.

Come join with other woodland owners just like you, in learning, socializing, and in sponsoring the activities that will make your woodlands healthier, more hospitable to wildlife, aesthetically more engaging and more valuable.

To join KWOA or for more information about KWOA activities please visit www.kentuckywoodlandownersassociation.com or contact Betty Williamson at willdan@bellsouth.net or 270.821.8657.

Photo courtesy: Diana Olszowy