



“Don’t it always seem to go that you don’t know what you got till it’s gone?”
-- from Joni Mitchell’s *“Big Yellow Taxi”*

I have been very blessed this year and have had the opportunity to make several trips to other states. On a clear day in October, I flew to Charlotte and then on to Fayetteville, North Carolina. As I looked down from the plane, there was nothing but trees. On a clear day in July, I flew to Chicago. There was a big contrast in the scenery from the plane windows on this trip. It looked like a patchwork quilt, with large blocks of agricultural fields outlined by thin bands of trees along the ditches and streams.

The city of Chicago should be commended on its “urban forestry” efforts. Wherever possible, the city is trying to grow trees in the concrete and asphalt jungle. On the trip downtown from the airport, I witnessed a lot of this effort. Unfortunately, I also saw many small groves of dead ash trees. I assume these trees were victims of the emerald ash borer. I spent time walking in just about every park in downtown Chicago, I can’t remember seeing a single live ash tree. I did see some live elm trees, which appeared to be receiving some type of treatment. It was an encouraging sight.

Since the early 1900s, Kentucky has been invaded by chestnut blight, Dutch elm disease, southern pine beetle, gypsy moth, hemlock wooly adelgid, and emerald ash borer. Now it appears that our black walnuts are in danger from thousand cankers disease, which has just been found in Knox County, Tennessee. The composition of our forests is rapidly changing due to all of these invasives. My own tree farm has changed drastically in the past couple of years due to the effects of drought, the ips beetle, and the ice storm of 2009. Areas that were once tall straight Virginia pine now look like matchsticks.

With all these “attacks” on our woodlands, it becomes more and more important to stay educated about what is out there in our forests. There are many, many sources of forest education in Kentucky. The Kentucky Division of Forestry, UK forestry extension, county extension offices, and consulting foresters are all excellent sources of information. Thanks to the Internet, forestry information is available from all over the world in just a matter of seconds. At the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association

(KWOA), we don’t claim to have all the answers to your forestry questions, but chances are we can direct you to the person who does have the answer. We attempt to keep our members informed and up-to-date on all the threats, dangers, and opportunities available for woodland owners. The only way for woodland owners to make good decisions concerning their forest management plans is to stay on top of all the threats and dangers and get into their forests to see what is there and what is happening.



Photo courtesy: Betty Williamson, KWOA President

The author’s woodlands, like many across the state, were significantly impacted by the 2009 ice storm. Do you know what to do if something happens to your woodlands? Being part of the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association will help you stay informed and prepared if something happens to your woodlands.

Don’t take your forest for granted. It might not always be there.....at least not as you know it now. To quote Joni Mitchell’s song “Big Yellow Taxi,” *Don’t it always seem to go that you don’t know what you got till it’s gone?*

Betty Williamson, President
Kentucky Woodland Owners Association
bettykwoa@bellsouth.net or www.kwoa.net