

Working together we can make a difference! That statement is true for most endeavors and is certainly true when it comes to forestry issues. Working together to address locally important forestry issues is the primary goal of local forestry organizations (LFOs) in Kentucky. LFOs are local grassroots organizations, with varying levels of structure, created to address woodland and forestry issues in their area. There are several active LFOs in Kentucky. Some have been busy hosting local forestry meetings with invited speakers on subject matter that is important to them, while other LFOs are currently making plans for fall activities.

One of the greatest benefits of belonging to a LFO is that it gives woodland owners an incredible network of other woodland owners and forestry/natural resource professionals eager to meet and work with them. I am constantly amazed at how Kentucky's woodland owners truly care about their land. Most of these woodland owners want "to do the right thing" but are unsure of how to go about it and where to find the necessary assistance.



Bige Hensley of Clay County discusses the benefits of forming a LFO in Clay County with Clay County woodland owners. Bige is Clay County Farm Bureau President and chairman of the Kentucky Farm Bureau Forestry Committee and a strong supporter of LFOs. Photo courtesy: Billy Thomas

Local Forestry Organizations: A Great Opportunity for Kentucky's Woodland Owners

By Billy Thomas

LFO Supporting Organizations:

UK Forestry Extension:

859.257.7597 -- www.ukforestry.org

County Extension Agents:

www.ca.uky.edu/county

KWOA: 606.876.3423

www.kentuckywoodlandownersassociation.com

Kentucky Division of Forestry:

502.564.4496 -- www.forestry.ky.gov

Kentucky Division of Conservation:

502.573.3080 -- www.conservation.ky.gov

Kentucky Farm Bureau:

502.495.5000 -- www.kyfb.com

Kentucky Forest Industries Association:

502.695.3979 -- www.kfia.org

that is important for woodland owners to know, such as where to find assistance in managing their woodlands and what options are available to woodland owners.

If you live in an area that already has a LFO, consider joining it. But if your area does not have a LFO, consider forming one. The relationships you make and the information you learn will help you better manage your woodlands and will have a positive impact on your community and Kentucky overall.

Many reports and surveys have shown that the majority of woodland owners want a variety of interactions with their property. Wildlife, timber, healthy woodlands, and recreational opportunities are high priorities for numerous woodland owners. However, many of them indicate a general lack of awareness in regard to forest management and the benefits it can provide them and their fellow Kentuckians. Fortunately, there are a variety of assistance sources available to every woodland owner in Kentucky—and in every state in the United States, for that matter. Much of this help is available through local offices of state agencies. LFOs typically work with these local offices and are generally more aware of the services and programs they provide.

To get a LFO started, woodland owners and those interested in forestry in a county or multi-county area band together with forestry/agriculture professionals and organizations to discuss and plan a local meeting for the purpose of exploring the formation of a LFO. This has proven most successful in areas where important forestry issues are present and woodland owners and professionals see the need for organization and action and are committed to fostering the development of a LFO. Forestry issues vary from organization to organization, but examples include exploring how to cultivate more markets in an area or to share information

A new Web page has been created to provide general information about local forestry organizations, contact information for assistance in forming a LFO, information about individual LFOs in the state, and more. Check it out at www.ukforestry.org

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