



A Word from the UK Forestry Chair...

Proud and honored . . . This is how I have described being the new chairperson of the Department of Forestry at the University of Kentucky. Incidentally, it is also how I felt when the editors asked me to write a column for this issue of your fine magazine. Honor is a fairly straightforward word; pride has two meanings. When I say proud here, I do not mean prideful. Instead, I mean that it is satisfying and fulfilling to be part of something that is important, relevant, and meaningful. Part of this pride stems from the fact that I get to work with a group of faculty and staff that I know is deeply committed and is trying to do the right things. Another part comes from the fact that I know we are involved in a significant and worthy profession. I believe this forms the basis of what we have in common with the woodland owners of Kentucky.

You know better than I do that there are over 465,000 woodland owners in Kentucky. I would be willing to bet that most of those folks are proud and honored to be counted in that group. Woodland owners, whether they are passively involved in their land or actively managing it on a daily basis, play an important role in Kentucky and throughout the region. The many significant ways that you contribute to the economy, the environment, and society in general are often detailed throughout the pages of this magazine. These are things woodland owners should be proud of and honored for by their friends, neighbors, and citizens of the state. The fact is, being a landowner is often hard work, particularly if one tries to do the right things.

We also have in common the very special relationship and rich tradition of partnership between landowners and their land grant university; the University of Kentucky has long been a shining example of that tradition, and this magazine is a clear example of that partnership. As the new chairperson of Kentucky's land grant forestry department, and

by teaming up with faculty and staff of the department, I intend to make sure that our teaching, research, and outreach missions stay relevant and meaningful. I want you to know that we value the longstanding relationship we have with Kentucky's landowners, and we will continue to work hard educating your children and conducting research and educational programs that help you improve your bottom line in an environmentally responsible manner. We will take that responsibility very seriously.

We have a great deal of work to do in the coming months; this is an important time for Kentucky's land grant forestry department – your forestry department. The department has recently completed a new strategic planning exercise, a significant curriculum revision, hosted a formal review of our undergraduate program by our professional forestry organization (The Society of American Foresters), and we have a new department chairperson. These all combine to create a valuable formative opportunity so it has never been more important that we stay engaged with our stakeholders. We want to hear from you.

Accordingly, one of the most important things I will be doing over the next year is making personal connections with our clientele and cooperators – and this means the woodland owners of Kentucky. Though I cannot claim to be a native Kentuckian, I was smart enough to marry a woman who was born and raised in this fine state. During my many visits here, I have grown to love the Commonwealth, and I look forward to spending more time on the roads and in the woods of Kentucky.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Williams', written in a cursive style.