



"BRINGING PEOPLE AND WOODLAND SUSTAINABILITY TOGETHER"

KENTUCKY WOODLANDS NEWSLETTER

www.kwoa.net

vol. 32 no. 4

Fall 2023



First Official KWOA Regional Meeting Well-Received

At its August board meeting, KWOA settled on a framework whereby directors in each region would take the lead in deciding what works best to connect members and woodland owners at the regional level.

The first "official" KWOA regional meeting convened at the Ohio County Extension Office in Hartford (western KY) August 1, co-sponsored by UK Forestry Extension. The Kentucky Division of Forestry provided staff including local foresters. *Some attendees commented that this was the first time they ever met their KDF Forester in person!* As plans evolve

for more regional activities KWOA anticipates involvement with all its partner organizations.

Mike Smith, a KWOA director and co-chair of the committee welcomed attendees. Participants were introduced to the KWOA mission and the purpose of the meeting:

- Raise awareness of the reasons for managing your woodlands.
- Make you aware of assistance programs available to help you make the most of your woods.
- Help woodland owners connect and learn from one another.

Billy Thomas, UK Extension Forester, conducted the evening presentation on Woodland Management in KY. Participants had time to meet each other and share experiences. They were already engaged in the topic and date for the next western regional meeting.

Regional meetings will be an ongoing benefit of KWOA membership. They may piggyback on existing programs in the region and/or team up with other organizations such as hunting clubs/wildlife groups.

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Kentucky Woodland Owners Association

Officers

President - Portia Brown, Shelby
Vice President - Scott Taylor, Casey
Secretary - Jack Rentz, Lewis
Treasurer- Jerry Brown, Grayson
Past President - Doug McLaren, Breathitt

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Preston Lacy, Scott
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Jimmie Sizemore, Clay

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Harry Pelle, Taylor
Henry Duncan, Logan
Will Bowling, Clay

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Lanny Copeland, Warren
James Vincent, Henderson
Mike Smith, Ohio

Board Members at Large

James "Greg" Kuhns, Bullitt
Jim Corum, Harlan
Steve Perry, Henry

Kentucky Woodland Owners Foundation

In addition to KWOA Board:
Karen Marshall, Owen
Gail Lincoln, Fleming, Greenup, Carter,
and Rowan
Frank Hicks, Greenup

Kentucky Woodlands Newsletter

Founding Editor - Don Girton 1993-2005
Editor - Karen Marshall

Kentucky Woodlands Newsletter is published quarterly. We welcome submission of articles and information for inclusion in the newsletter subject to review and approval by the executive committee. Editor reserves the right to edit all material for content and length.

Submit copy to:
Karen Marshall, Editor, info@kwoa.net
or
Kentucky Woodlands Newsletter
P.O. Box 1201
Frankfort, KY 40602

A Message From Your President

KWOA's mission, to bring people and woodland sustainability together, becomes ever more relevant as we are living in a world where the stress on our natural resources is obvious. We may not all agree on how we got here, but I believe we can almost all agree that change is afoot. As woodland owners, we appreciate the value of our woodlands and have plans for sustaining this resource on our land. Whether you are producing maple syrup, growing mushrooms, or Christmas trees, managing habitat for wildlife / hunting, or managing for timber production, the basic elements of sustainable forestry apply. **The more we can do to encourage sustainable practices the better off we all are.**

Over the summer of 2023 KWOA directors (current and past, as well as some at large members) have used their time and resources to attend regional meetings and woodland owner educational programs, industry events, gather organizational history, meet with partners, learn about new government programs, and advocate for federal conservation legislation. Other articles in this newsletter and on our website report on some of those activities. As KWOA looks at fostering more interactive experiences among members and partners, KWOA continues to provide access for members and the wider woodland community to many resources by:

- continuously updating our website and resources page at <https://www.kwoa.net/resources.html>
- sending monthly Wood Post E-news
- publishing Kentucky Woodlands quarterly newsletter
- supporting the Woodland Owners Short Course and other educational programs
- hosting Annual Meetings with in-depth dives on specific themes.

As an all-volunteer organization, with members and directors across the state, we face increasing pressure on our capacity for serving you. Membership dues provide our only regular income. One factor weighing on the board is the rising cost of existing operations. If you chose to receive this newsletter in hard copy, you have already seen the change to basic photocopy pages stapled together. The print shop we had used for years closed suddenly this summer! We are looking at other printing options. Our interest in engaging our membership on a regional level and in statewide committees, also highlights operational limitations. We are exploring options that would allow us to operate more efficiently and effectively.

We feel like this is a crucial time for woodland owners to be working together to share expertise, learn about new adaptive practices, and become a greater presence in the larger agricultural community. I hope you will **consider helping us help one another** by donating to KWOA or KWOA. You can donate now at <https://www.kwoa.net/donate.html>.

-Portia Brown,
KWOA President





Photo by Sam Girton, August 2022 at the family home on Tug Fork Tree Farm

Don was recognized by Keith Argow, NWOA President, for his years of service to KWOA at its 2013 annual meeting.

In Memory - Don Girton

Submitted by Karen Marshall, KWOA Newsletter Editor

Don Girton, Campbell County, left us on July 30, 2023. Don and wife Mary Martha Girton lived at their Tug Fork Tree Farm near Alexandria. Martha passed in 2017. They are survived by three children.

Don was the founder of KWOA and its mentor since its incorporation in 1992. Don started its newsletter whose first issue was published in 1993. Don served as editor through its Winter 2005-2006 issue. Remembrances and appreciations for Don have poured in from all over the state and Washington, DC.

Don earned a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from Purdue University in 1958 after pursuing liberal arts at the University of Kentucky for three years. He has commented that the liberal arts background greatly influenced his career, including basic science but a lot of history, humanities and social studies. He received a Master of Science in Forestry degree from Yale in 1959.

Campbell County

Don served as a Campbell County Conservation District supervisor 1993-96, and during 2017-19. He was selected as its 2003 Outstanding Cooperator of the Year. He served

on The Campbell Conservancy board 2003-12.

He worked diligently on the district's Farmland Work Group committee and was instrumental in getting fair taxing for farmers on cropland and pastureland rental rates and farm structure property assessment for property tax purposes. He was an avid leader for farmers in pursuing their right to farm per KRS 100.

Don served on the Campbell County Planning and Zoning Commission. Upon Don's passing, Director Cindy Minter commented:

“ It is not the positions that he held but rather what he accomplished.... His work established the framework that our farmland is not vacant or undeveloped land. He recognized that small farms collectively serve a larger purpose. This led the conservation district to establish Agricultural Districts. He was a teacher, colleague and friend who valued the nature of the world and the grace that it gives every one of us. ”

Kentucky state service

Don's state level positions included the Kentucky Biodiversity Task Force, Kentucky Roundtable for the Economy and the Environment, Kentucky Agriculture Resource Development Authority and several committees for the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

National service

At the national level Don was a director for the National Woodland Owners Association and of assistance to its President at that time, Keith Argow.

Don worked for the US Forest Service for 27 years until his retirement at age 50. His assignments included forester, ranger and supervisor positions as well as legislative affairs specialist and national director of public affairs. Many of those years were spent in the national forests in the eastern US.

In his comments Don moved attendees with his acknowledgement that he has tried to apply principles learned in his personal life – **acceptance, patience and understanding of others** – to KWOA.

Board Member Harry Pelle Profile

I've been a member of the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association for about 15 years and a board member for a dozen or so. My love for the outdoors started as a boy roaming my aunt and uncle's dairy farm in Nabb, Indiana. It led me to become an avid deer hunter in my youth. After hunting public areas and other people's property we decided to purchase some hunting property of our own.

We purchased our first piece of ground in 1982, 400 acres in central Kentucky. We named our property Tallow Creek Farm. The property had been logged and high-graded several times and was in poor condition. However, it was good for deer hunting with a lot of young natural regeneration trees. To improve our habitat, we contacted the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. A wildlife biologist came out and made recommendations on improving our habitat for wildlife. One of the biologist recommendations was to have a Kentucky Division of Forestry forester develop a forest stewardship plan. Over time we became interested not only in hunting but in forestry. This led to many, many seminars on forestry and much good exposure to the University of Kentucky Department of Forestry and KWOA.

To develop a more detailed plan for improving our forest we began a relationship with a local consulting forester. We felt that to design a plan specific to our property, the first thing we needed to determine going forward was where we were. A timber inventory enabled us to drive a stake in the ground and know exactly what we had. This allowed us to better plan on where we wanted to go and pick options on how to get there. Through this education process we learned of financial assistance through the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service to help bring the logged over woods back into a working sustainable forest and ecosystem. Over the years we added adjoining pieces of property. We now have 2,000 acres of woodlands. After retiring from the plastic business in 2008 I had more time to focus on forestry. To date we have completed over 1,000 acres of forest stand improvement, by hand... the only way it can be done.

The NRCS Forest Stand Improvement practice is a wonderful thing that not only improves the woods but improves the



woodsman. You learn your property inch by inch, tree by tree, and you learn about the health of your woods and a host of other issues that help you build a better plan to improve your farm. In places where you need a culvert or that are starting to erode you see potential new access roads or new trails. You spot invasive species as they are starting, enabling you to get them under control while it is still possible. You see game and find game trails. You learn your boundaries well and you spot boundary issues before they get out of hand. You see tree health issues you would never notice from a truck or an ATV. They say the best thing for a tract of woods is "the tracks of the owner" and I am a firm believer.

On holiday weekends the farm has long been a gathering place for our family. Our oldest daughter and her family have now moved to the farm. We have many friends and family, grandkids, aunts, uncles, and cousins that come to swim in the ponds, ride ATVs, fish and have cookouts. It is not unusual to have 40 or 50 friends and family on a good weekend.

We continue to expand on our vision of a "place to hunt" to the place Tallow Creek Farm has become today.



2024 KWOA Annual Meeting

The 2024 KWOA Annual Meeting will convene March 25-27 at the Berea Forest Outreach Center.

The meeting will begin at 1:00pm on Monday and end Wednesday at Noon. Program topics include prescribed burns, the White Oak Initiative and how a changing climate might impact how we manage our woodlands. Members can also look forward to learning about the history of the research forest and spend some time in its woods.

For updates go to <https://www.kwoa.net/kwoa-meetings>.

Forest Conservation Easement Program Act of 2023

The Forest Conservation Easement Program Act of 2023 was introduced in the U.S. Senate as S. 2631 on July 27 with the goal of including the legislation in the 2023 Farm Bill with mandatory funding. This legislation is designed to provide landowners with viable options for keeping their woodlands privately owned and functioning as working forests through conservation easement options. The legislation would prevent the conversion of forests into non-forest areas by authorizing funding to purchase development rights from willing private landowners. This would be achieved by placing a voluntary conservation easement on the privately owned land.

One significant feature is that it would provide funding for conservation easements to be acquired by non-federal and non-state entities. This simulates a longstanding program for farmland and ranchlands and fills a vital funding gap for forestland.

The FCEP Act introduces two components:

Forest land easements

NRCS will provide funding for eligible entities (state, local and tribal agencies, and NGOs/land trusts) to purchase working forest conservation easements, filling a void among federal programs. Currently, no existing forest easement program provides funding for land trusts to acquire easements.

Forest reserve easements

NRCS will purchase forest conservation easements directly from willing private and tribal landowners and provide financial assistance for the management and restoration of the lands to benefit at-risk species.

While the conversion of forestland to other uses has been offset by reforestation of other lands, the quality of forests replacing those that have been lost are not equal.

S. 2631 was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

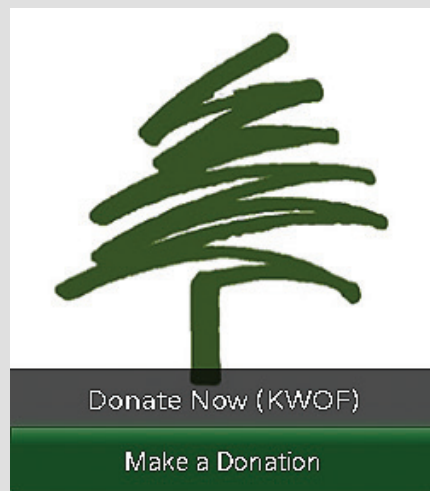
KWOA has gone on record in support of the FCEP Act. KWOA members are encouraged to consider supporting this legislation. See President Portia Brown's letter to the Kentucky congressional delegation and its agricultural committee staff: <https://www.kwoa.net/news/kwoa-signs-on-in-support-of-forest-conservation-easement-program-proposed-legislation>

Download a sample letter you can use, contact information for your senator and representative, and updates on the status of the legislation.

Greg Kuhns, board member at large and others have reached out to the following entities to support the effort including Kentucky Forest Industries Association, Kentucky Tree Farm Program, Kentucky Natural Lands Trust, Kentucky Chapter Association of Consulting Foresters and Kentucky Farm Bureau.

Help Support Us

Woodland owners join together to improve forest management science, services, education and law. Your contribution will make sure that mission has the resources it needs to be successful.



[Donate to the Kentucky Woodland Owners Foundation](#)



[Contribute to Kentucky Woodland Owners Association](#)

<https://www.kwoa.net/donate>



Yes, I want to join KWOA!

KENTUCKY WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1201, Frankfort, KY 40602 |

info@KWOA.net | www.kwoa.net

Date Paid: _____ Membership: ___New ___Renewal

Check one: ___ Forest/Woodland Owner ___ Non-owner Supporter ___ Business or Organization

Woodland Acreage by County: _____ acres _____ county, _____ acres _____ county
 Include all Acres per county _____ acres _____ county, _____ acres _____ county

Name(s) Primary: _____
 Spouse/ co-owner, contact person: _____

Mailing Address: _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Primary - E-mail Address: _____ Phone: _____

Second - E-Mail Address: _____ Phone: _____

You can join in person at an event, pay online at www.kwoa.net, or you may mail this form with your check.

Annual Membership and Donation Options	Dues	Amount Enclosed
KWOA Basic 1-year Membership: Woodland owner household, business, organization, or supporter includes full color PDF <i>Kentucky Woodlands</i> Newsletter	\$35.00	\$ _____
KWOA & NWOA 1-year Membership: Includes the optional NWOA (National Woodland Owners Association) membership in addition to the Basic KWOA membership. By adding NWOA you will receive the <i>National Woodland</i> quarterly newsletter & woodland report in addition to the Basic KWOA membership	\$65.00	\$ _____
KWOA Basic 3-year Membership: Woodland owner household, business, organization, or supporter includes full color PDF <i>Kentucky Woodlands</i> Newsletter	\$100.00	\$ _____
KWOA & NWOA Basic 3-year \$190.00: Includes the optional NWOA membership in addition to the Basic KWOA membership	\$190.00	\$ _____
KWOF Contribution: Voluntary (much appreciated) contribution to the Kentucky Woodland Owners Foundation deductible as a charitable donation. KWOF provides scholarships, service forestry awards, and contributes to other related charitable / educational work.	Any Amount	\$ _____
KWOA Contribution: Voluntary (much appreciated) contribution to help with operating expenses, such as bookkeeping, communication, programming, advocacy, and educational expenses.	Any Amount	\$ _____
Add On Black & White Hard-copy Newsletter: Upcharge to cover expenses. \$10.00 for one year or \$30.00 for 3 years.	\$10.00 or \$30.00	\$ _____
TOTAL		\$ _____



Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee Continues Shared Stewardship Agreement

Submitted by Portia Brown

On August 10 at the above signing ceremony, Kentucky became the 50th state to join in the Shared Stewardship Agreement; learn more at <https://www.kwoa.net/events/kentucky-shared-stewardship-agreement>.

Continuing the partnership focus, KWOA attended the 2023 Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee Meeting hosted by KDF On August 31. We heard reports on the important work being orchestrated between the USFS, KDF, NRCS and UK Forestry Extension, as well as partner reports.

KDF Director/State Forester Brandon Howard: half of Kentucky, over 12 million acres, is forested; the value of partnerships; we really can't over-coordinate.

USFS regional office: forest stewardship national and regional program updates; Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act legislation that focus on capacity building involving shared stewardship across private and public lands; Landowners Support Programs focusing on beginners, high poverty, tribal and Veteran landowners.

KDF Management Chief Pam Snyder: KY Forest Stewardship Program updates; FSP benefits both cost share and non-cost share acres. New GIS capabilities help gather data on practice implementations.

KY Forest Legacy Program Coordinator Chase Terry: in-depth report on forest land conservation across the state.

- The big FLP areas in Kentucky are Big Rivers, Knobs and Marrowbone State Forest/Wildlife Management Area. Seventy five percent of the FLP lands use conservation easements. Some new areas are under consideration and there is growing interest in buffer areas around military bases. New IRA legislation focuses on large landscape level projects. Mineral rights were noted as an issue that can interfere with establishing conservation easements.

Bridget Abernathy, KDF Assistant Director: updates on Stewardship Coordinator position, KDF nurseries, Urban Forestry funding, new GIS Specialist (will help assess factors like percent of tree canopy), Prescribed Fire Coordinator position to help with wildfire preparedness, a new 5-year 4-person Tornado Preparedness Team to work in woodlands impacted by storms.

Additional partner updates came from NRCS, KNL, KFIA, TNC, UK Forestry and Natural Resources, KWOA and several others. The real point of this report is not to provide details on every program but rather to highlight the complexities of various programs and the challenges our partners face in administering the programs that help woodland owners manage their lands.

2023 Calendar of Events

**Kentucky State University
Habitat Management Symposium**
October 2-4
Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm
<https://www.kaee.org/events-1/ksu-habitat-management-symposium>

Wild & Scenic Film Festival
October 20
7 - 9:30pm EDT
Kentucky Conservation Committee
Lyric Theater, Lexington or virtual
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wild-and-scenic-film-festival-kentucky-2023-tickets-709567544627?aff=oddtcreator>

KWOA Board Meeting
November 9
Kentucky State University
Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm
Featured speaker: White Oak Initiative Executive Director Jason Meyer
<https://www.kwoa.net/kwoa-meetings>

KENTUCKY WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 1201
Frankfort, KY 40602



HABITAT MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

October 2-4, 2023

**Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm
Frankfort, Kentucky**