

# GREEN HORIZONS

A Monthly Newsletter from MU Forestry Extension and The Center for Agroforestry in association with the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri

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## Missouri's Tree Farmer of the Year is John Heckmann

Brian Schweiss, Missouri State Tree Farm Committee



*The Heckmann's (l to r: Grant, Megan, Stacy, John and Trevor) want you to see Bear Valley Tree Farm for yourself, June 2!*

The value of Tree Farm runs deep for John Heckmann. On his 800-acre farm just north of Hermann, the four cornerstones of the American Tree Farm System (wood, water, wildlife, and recreation) exemplify his reasons for owning and managing their family farm. According to John, "It is important that we can have forests for wildlife, wood products and recreation." At first, he did not realize all of these uses are compatible on the same property. "This combination of recreation and investment really drew me to the Tree Farm Program," he said.

John and his wife, Stacy, acquired their first tract in 1993 and from there it grew to its current size. In 2008, John requested assistance from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). This opened up many management opportunities for him.

(see *Tree Farmer of the Year*, pg. 3)

## Cost Share Funds Available for Loggers and Landowners

Jason Jensen, Missouri Department of Conservation

Loggers and landowners can both benefit from a new Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) pilot cost share incentive program called the Best Management Practices Conservation Innovation Grant. The grants are focused on encouraging timber harvesters to use good practices that protect soil and water on private land timber sales in 57 counties across the state.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) were developed as a guide for loggers and landowners to combine safe logging practices with steps that will avoid damage to water quality and soil erosion associated with timber harvesting. By taking steps to learn the BMPs and implement them, MDC hopes the Conservation Innovation Grant will encourage loggers and landowners to work together in maintaining the best possible forest health and productivity.

The grant is designed to be a partnership between loggers and landowners as they do business together. If approved, the cost share directly pays loggers \$10 to \$20 per acre to use the BMPs and landowners receive \$5 per acre.

(See *Cost Share Funds*, pg. 5)

### In this issue:

Missouri's Tree Farmer of the Year	1
Cost Share Funds for Loggers and Landowners	1
Summersville Men are Loggers of the Year	2
Social Network for Missouri Forest Landowners	3
Forestry 101: Just Say "No!" to High-Grading	4
Summer Forestry Workshops for FFA Instructors	5
The Benefits of Joining FWAM	6
The Latest Green LEED Building	7
NRCS Online Tool	8
Timber Management Boosts Wildlife and Crop Trees	10

# Summersville Men are Loggers of the Year for 2011

Jason Jensen, Missouri Department of Conservation



MDC foresters, Jason Jensen (left) and Michael Bill (right) presented J&G Loggers, Jay Duncan, Gene Fiske, Sr., and Gene Fiske, Jr. (center, left to right) with the Ozark Regional Logger of the Year Award. The Summersville men went on to be selected State Loggers of the Year.

Loggers throughout the state play important roles in keeping Missouri forests healthy and sustainable. In recognition of outstanding performance by Missouri loggers, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) presents annual regional and state Logger of the Year awards.

The 2011 Missouri Logger of the Year state award is being shared by Jay Duncan, Gene Fiske Sr. and Gene Fiske Jr. of J&G Logging in Summersville. The three men received multiple nominations and were named Loggers of the Year for MDC's Ozark Region earlier in 2011.

"MDC recognizes and appreciates loggers who use best practices to harvest timber in ways that are economically, ecologically and socially sustainable," said Missouri State Forester and MDC Forestry Division Chief Lisa Allen. "The statewide Logger of the Year award is the highest honor loggers can achieve in Missouri. It takes special conviction to being the best to achieve this honor, and we congratulate these outstanding loggers."

The awards are given to loggers who demonstrate good working relationships with landowners and foresters, cause minimal damage to remaining trees and resources on harvest sites, use best management practices to conserve soil and water, address wildlife management concerns, practice sustainable forest management and use wood products wisely.

"For Jay, Gene Sr. and Gene Jr., these traits are a way of life," said Missouri Forest Products Association (MFPA) President Tony Parks, who nominated the men. "J&G's de-

sire is to make harvesting a pleasurable experience for the landowner and logger. They are receptive to concerns and instructions from the landowner."

One of the projects that J&G Logging recently worked on was a sensitive and high-profile thinning operation in a virgin pine area of Pioneer Forest near the Current River and close to Highway 19. The site included trees more than 250 years old that were being left in the stand.

Pioneer Forest is the largest private landowner in the state. Brandon Kuhn, a Pioneer professional forester, also nominated the loggers based on how impressed he was with their work.

"J&G is the best I have worked with at shutting themselves down when it is too wet to work," Kuhn said. "As a forester, it is very difficult to tell loggers to go home because of wet conditions knowing they only get paid when they work. It is truly a blessing when loggers make this decision on their own."

The Nature Conservancy Ozarks Preserve Manager Neal Humke, who also nominated the men, inspected the logging operation and noted, "It was good to see that J&G was putting in the effort and time that it took to do it right, leaving a stand of timber that Pioneer Forest can continue to be proud of."

J&G Logging has also completed several timber sales on Sunklands and Angeline conservation areas in Shannon County. MDC Forester Michael Bill, who also nominated the men, said, "They are very concerned about the forest resource."

Missouri Logger of the Year recipients receive framed certificates from MDC and a Stihl chainsaw donated by Crader Distributing in Marble Hill. J&G Logging received the award at an MFPA meeting in Branson.

MDC recognizes Loggers of the Year in each of its eight regions. Those selected are then eligible for the statewide award. Loggers must be nominated by a professional forester. For more information on the MDC Logger of the Year Award criteria and process, visit [www.mdc.mo.gov](http://www.mdc.mo.gov).

*Editor's Note: This one slipped past us in preparing the last issue of Green Horizons. But, loggers are an important link in the chain of good forest management and we need to recognize those in the logging community that make sound forest management part of their business model.*

## Tree Farmer of the Year (cont. from front page)

He worked with MDC Resource Forester, Josh Stevens, and together they developed a forest and wildlife management plan for his place. This plan called for forest thinning to improve growth and quality of trees, and glade restoration that called for the removal of cedars and maples that invaded this unique habitat type. He also developed burn plans to run fire through these glades to keep them open and encourage native grasses and forbs. Knowing that all of this work can be costly, John pursued funding from federal programs. Programs such as the USDA NRCS' Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) provided re-imbursment for a portion of the costs to implement the practices.

This management was needed to reach the long-term wildlife and income goals from the timber. Given the hilly terrain and limited food plot potential, John wanted to create as much browse, cover and acorn production that he could to benefit wildlife. Forest stand improvement, where undesirable and/or weak trees were removed, allowed sunlight to reach the forest floor stimulating the understory growth John wanted for browse. The thinning also allowed the remaining tree canopies to grow and produce more acorns (hard mast) for the deer, turkey, and wood ducks who call his Bear Valley Tree Farm their home. And the prescribed burns he conducted in his glade areas gave wildlife prime cover of native warm-season grasses.

Bear Valley is also enrolled in a conservation easement held by the National Wild Turkey Federation. Conservation easements like this are entered into voluntarily by the landowner and helps ensure that the values held by the current landowner will continue forever. The conservation easement put in place by John and Stacy prohibits Bear Valley from being subdivided and restricts certain uses. The easement provides a perpetual plan for the farm and will

help guide his children, Grant, Megan and Trevor, when it comes time for them to inherit the Tree Farm.

John wants his fellow woodland owners to know that they do not have to do everything at once; they just have to get started! In addition to the federal and state agencies that assisted him in his management, John received help and advice from the Quality Deer Management Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Quail Forever, and the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation. These non-profit organizations provide technical advice for habitat work and restoration that John and his family value on their family farm. Sometimes people think they have to be 'older than dirt' and a Tree Farmer for years before even being considered for this top honor. Well, as you can see, that is definitely not the case. John and Stacy are relative 'newcomers', having joined Tree Farm a scant four years ago.

So, if they can do it, you can, too! Want to see for yourself? The Heckmann's would love to show you around Bear Valley at the upcoming annual Missouri Tree Farm Conference, June 2. The Tree Farm is located just seven minutes north of Hermann in the scenic Missouri River Hills. Attendees will have the opportunity to:

- See the effects of several forest and wildlife management practices
- Go on a self-guided tree identification trail
- Learn about Missouri's wood products industry
- Interact with other woodland owners

For registration information, contact Bob Ball, Executive Director of the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri, by phone (855) 843-3926 or email at [fwam.trees@gmail.com](mailto:fwam.trees@gmail.com). Or check out the 'Upcoming Events' section on the Association's website [www.forestandwoodland.org](http://www.forestandwoodland.org).

## New Social Network for Missouri Forest Landowners

MU Forestry Extension welcomes everyone to check out Missouri Woodland Stewards, a new social network specifically for forest landowners. This online network is your natural resource knowledge network to help you become more competent in managing your woodlands and connected to resource professionals and other woodland owners. The network is all about sharing knowledge. You will find no distracting ads!

The network is yours. Don't be shy. Join and use it...you cannot break it! Check out our various groups for discussions on some of the more common forest management topics. Post questions or comments in the blog posts. Post photos or videos of your woodland management activities. And don't forget to check out the events box for upcoming webinars, workshops, and field days. Access Missouri Woodland Stewards at <http://missouriwoodlandstewards.ning.com>.

Welcome aboard!

# Forestry 101: Just Say “No!” to High-Grading

Hank Stelzer, MU Forestry Extension

Many forest and woodlot owners oftentimes learn too late that some forestry techniques can limit options for future benefits and enjoyment -- both in the long run and short term. While well-planned timber harvesting can increase your benefits, “high-grading” and related practices should be avoided.

Cutting the best trees (those of highest value) and leaving the rest (those of low-value, often diseased or malformed trees) is a common practice. This type of forestry is called “high-grading”. By cutting only the largest and most valuable trees, you remove those best suited to that site. The trees that are less well adapted remain as the next forest and the seed source for future forests. The financial gain of high-grading exists only briefly, yet ownership objectives can be sacrificed for decades. A similar analogy from livestock is the farmer who shoots the blue ribbon bull and uses the losers for breeding stock. The quality of the herd, just as the quality of the forest and woodlot, declines rapidly!

## The many faces of high-grading...

In addition to high-grading, similar practices exist with different names. High-grading is often disguised under the name of “diameter-limit cutting.” This is a practice that removes all trees above a certain minimum diameter. In some rare situations diameter-limit cutting is appropriate. For example, if old pasture trees are shading the growth of young hardwood saplings. Often however, diameter-limit cutting removes trees of commercial value (say above 12 or 14 inches in diameter) before these trees can attain a more valuable size and add seed and seedlings to the forest.

Selective cutting is another technique where high-grading can occur. Selective cutting differs from the selection system of silviculture (a legitimate technique). Selective cutting, as commonly practiced, involves selecting the highest quality trees and cutting them. The selection system involves a professionally trained forester to select trees from all age and size classes, both high and low quality to produce an uneven-aged forest.

Diameter-limit cutting and selective cutting are often rationalized by arguing to remove the bigger trees so the smaller trees can grow. However, the smaller trees may be undesirable species, poor form, or poor health. By any name, high-grading degrades the value of the forest regardless of the “logic” used by those trying to make a quick buck.

## Why does high-grading happen?

A common cause for high-grading is greed to maximize immediate profits. Demand for high-value timber produces strong markets for high-value species compared to markets for lower value species. Further, it costs about the same amount of money to cut and haul a \$10 tree as it does to cut and haul a \$300 tree of the same size. These factors might help explain high-grading, but they do not excuse it.

## What are the consequences of high-grading?

Is it really that bad? One result is that the trees left behind won’t grow as quickly as better quality trees and the time until the next harvest is lengthened. In addition, the next harvest will remove the low-quality trees previously left so the value at the next harvest will be reduced. If you magnify the practice of high-grading across a region, assuming the demand for wood products remains steady, then more acres must be harvested to meet the same demand. While timber harvesting is not bad, accelerated harvesting is not in the best interest of our natural resources and conflicts with a growing demand by the public for accountability of natural resource management. As the value of the land to produce timber crops decreases, the incentive to subdivide and develop increases.

Although high-grading usually leaves a forest of tall trees behind, there are other hidden ecological costs. Because the healthiest trees with the fewest defects are harvested, the overall health of the forest is reduced. The remaining trees may be more susceptible to the effects of insects, pathogens, strong winds or ice-storms and less able to recover after these disturbances occur.

(See *Forestry 101*, pg. 9)

# Summer Forestry Workshops for Agriculture Teachers

Hank Stelzer, MU Forestry Extension

Last year, MU Forestry Extension conducted two forestry workshops for high school agriculture teachers. This coming summer the program expands statewide and participants will learn basic forestry concepts as they are guided through each section of the FFA Forestry Career Development Event (aka FFA Forestry Contest). Information will also be provided on the Forest Management Proficiency Award. This award recognizes individual excellence in what FFA calls a supervised agricultural experience. Not many field foresters are aware of this award because in the past the Missouri Forest Products Association has handled judging these individually-submitted projects. But, now that the Missouri State Tree Farm Committee is more involved (through the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri), MU Forestry Extension looks to better support students wanting to learn more about forestry through this program.

We have sent out workshop invitations to every agriculture teacher in the state and registrations are beginning to come in. If you know of agriculture teachers in your area, please encourage them to attend. The cost is \$40 per person and covers lunch, breaks, and educational materials including reference materials, a USGS topographic map, and Biltmore sticks (to take back to their team). Here are the workshop dates and locations:

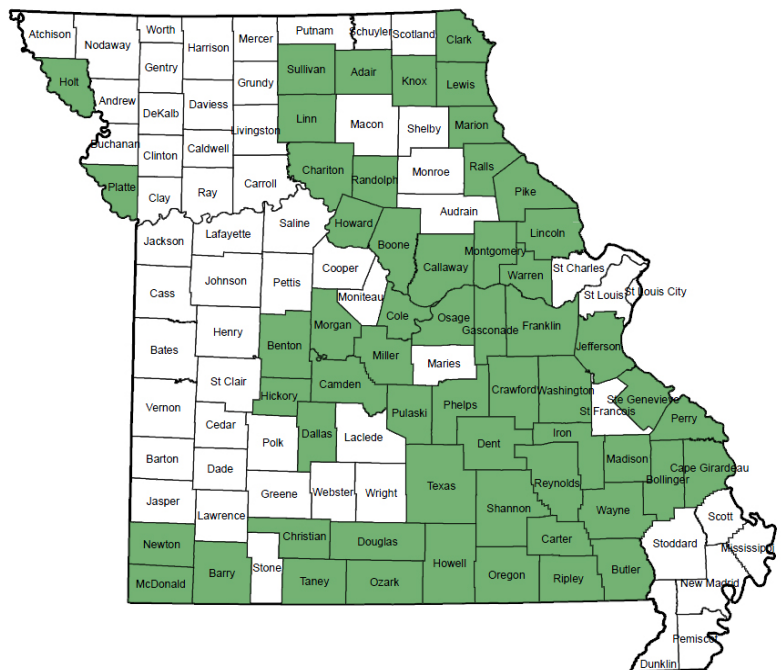
July 10 (Tuesday)	Jefferson City	MDC Runge Nature Center
July 12 (Thursday)	Blue Springs	MDC Burr Oaks Nature Center
July 17 (Tuesday)	Springfield	MDC Springfield Nature Center
July 18 (Wednesday)	Winona	MDC Twin Pines Education Center
July 19 (Thursday)	Cape Girardeau	MDC Cape Girardeau Nature Center
July 31 (Tuesday)	Spickard	MU Thomson Research Center
August 2 (Thursday)	Eolia	Malinmor Hunt Club

The doors will open at 8:00 AM for each workshop will and teachers will be on their way home by 3:00 PM (unless they stick around for questions). We will cover Tree ID, TSI (The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly), Map Reading, Timber Cruising (Just what IS merchantable height?), and General Forestry Knowledge (Jeopardy-style!). For more information, contact Hank Stelzer, stelzerh@missouri.edu.

## Cost Share Funds (cont. from page 1)

The concept behind splitting the incentive is that the logger has the equipment to implement the BMPs and the responsibility for establishing erosion prevention measures, and the landowner owns the property and is responsible for maintenance of the BMPs for a reasonable period of time. To participate, loggers should sign up for the cost share program at their local MDC office. The program requires that the logger has been through the Professional Timber Harvester course, offered by the Missouri Forest Products Association, or attend a BMP training class with the Department of Conservation.

To find a Department of Conservation office, go online to [www.mdc.mo.gov](http://www.mdc.mo.gov). To find scheduled Professional Timber Harvester training classes go online to [www.moforest.org](http://www.moforest.org). See map to right of counties eligible for forestry best management practices cost share (high-lighted in green).



Does the future of our trees, woods and forests concern you? Several major issues that will affect Missouri's woods are looming on the horizon. Do you want a voice in these discussions? Consider the following questions and statements surrounding the issues facing your forests and woodlands:

**Clean Water** - Are you concerned about how to manage your woods and still maintain water quality? Wooded lands produce clean, quality drinking water. Incentives are available to help you manage your woods to protect water quality.

**Bioenergy** – Can woody biomass be sustainably harvested from my woodlands? FWAM members will learn more about bioenergy and receive updates on new developments.

**Carbon Credits** - What are carbon credits? How can I get them? Is it worth my time and effort to pursue this source of income? Do these credits limit the management options for my property? These are just a few of the questions FWAM is monitoring to keep its members informed.

**Tree Health** - Are you aware of Thousand Canker Disease attacking black walnut and the threat the Emerald Ash Borer poses to ash trees in our communities? While our native trees have adapted to native pests, unfortunately these and other exotic, non-native pests are on the rise. FWAM will help keep you abreast of any late-breaking news through the bi-weekly Canopy newsletter.

**Forest Management** - Do you find it alarming that 90 percent of our privately owned woodlands receive no management advice from a professional forester? Are you aware of financial assistance programs available from USDA, Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Department of Conservation? FWAM can be your link to the latest opportunity.

**Invasive Species** – Have you noticed bush honeysuckle, Callery 'Bradford' Pear, autumn-olive, and ailanthus (tree-of-heaven) encroaching in even well-managed woodlands? FWAM members receive updates on how to manage invasive plants.

**Timber Harvests** - Are you thinking of selling timber? Are you looking for information on conducting a timber sale that will preserve what is important to you? Do you know that a number of loggers have invested in classes to improve their professionalism and stewardship in the woods? FWAM members are informed of how to contact Master Loggers and professionally trained loggers.

**Education** - Do you need information about your trees? Would you like to know what others have done on their properties to care for their trees? Do you need information for students? Are you interested in seeing more interaction between children and trees and appreciating the value of trees to our environment? FWAM supports the efforts of state and federal agencies and MU Extension in their outreach and education efforts.

With your support the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri will provide timely information to our members on forestry related issues and opportunities in person, via email, newsletters, and on our website. In addition, we will sponsor in-the-woods field days and workshops, support the American Tree Farm System and the American Forest Foundation.

The Association will also become an advocate and a voice for our forests and woodlands to organizations, agencies and legislative bodies as well as providing members with news about federal and state legislation that could impact our woodlands and ultimately your personal, family, or business income. We will inform and educate adults and children in both rural and urban areas.

A portion of our time will focus on helping woodland landowners with marketing timber today and in the future. Timber has an economic VALUE. Following proper management and marketing advice from professional foresters can grow that value at a faster rate. Ultimately our larger objective is to promote healthy, productive and sustainable forests and trees for future generations.

Becoming a part of this decision making process is easy. Visit our website at: [www.forestandwoodland.org](http://www.forestandwoodland.org) and click on the "Join Us" feature in the left margin. Either complete the membership application online or request one via email, phone or regular mail using my address at the bottom of our home page.

Take a walk in the woods at the John Heckmann Tree Farm Saturday, June 2nd north of Hermann in Warren County. John is the Missouri Tree Farmer of the Year! He is also a commercial member of FWAM. Come to John's tree farm prepared with questions. Like most Tree Farmers, John is anxious to tell you about their operations and their experiences. Look elsewhere in this issue for details about this event. You will not want to miss it!

# What Would the Latest Green Building Rating System Mean for Tree Farm Wood?

By Melissa Harden, American Tree Farm System

These days, who doesn't want to build green? And since wood, especially wood from American Tree Farm System certified forests, is one of the greenest building materials out there—this should be a boon for timber markets for Tree Farmers right?

Well, not if the US Green Building Council (USGBC) has anything to say about it. And unfortunately, they do. USGBC is home to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green building rating system (LEED), one of the most widely used green building rating systems—a tool that builders use to show their buildings are “green.”

As your voice in Washington, the American Tree Farm System has been fighting to get your wood products recognized by LEED, and we'll continue the fight! We know that healthy markets mean healthy forests and Tree Farmers need all the tools and resources they can get to keep their forests healthy and keep them intact for future generations.

USGBC recently released a new rating system, LEED 2012, which would take effect in 2012. The changes proposed are significant—unfortunately, it doesn't change the story for wood or increase recognition of American Tree Farm System wood.

LEED is widely recognized and frequently used in construction of government buildings and commercial buildings. In fact, 30% of LEED certified buildings are government buildings. While wood is an energy efficient, renewable, carbon sequestering material, LEED has historically done very little to promote the environmental benefits of wood or to encourage builders to choose wood products—essentially blocking wood from the growing green building market.

Builders and architects can collect few credits under LEED for using wood, and the credits that are related to wood products are restrictive. For example, the forest certification credit does not recognize the two largest forest certification standards in North America, the American Tree Farm System® and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

The LEED 2012 proposed changes continue to discriminate against wood products compared to other materials. While manufacturers of materials that are mined/quarried, extracted, or biobased have to meet basic responsible sourcing requirements, additional standards are placed on

wood products. In the proposed LEED 2012 changes, the old “Certified Wood” credit is gone, replaced with a credit for “Responsible Sourcing of Raw Materials.” Wood can only earn this credit by qualifying as “FSC Pure” (meaning 100% FSC), which excludes the majority of certified products on the market today and continues to ignore three quarters of North America's certified forests. While other materials get credit for responsible sourcing, the majority of forest products cannot, including wood products from ATFS® certified forests.

While LEED 2012 does offer some new changes with potential for increased recognition of wood products, these new changes come with additional questions. For example, LEED 2012 would allow materials, like wood, to achieve recognition through performance-based Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs). LCA and EPDs are tools that scientifically measure and describe the environmental impacts of materials. However, there are more questions than answers for these new tools in LEED, so it is not possible to determine how wood will be treated.

LEED 2012 also proposes to recognize materials for their “biobased” content, and what building material is more biobased than wood? Unfortunately, LEED 2012 relies on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Biopreferred database. Very few forest products and no wood products for building are recognized in this database because of USDA's rules for the database.

The American Tree Farm System continues to fight for Tree Farmers in this debate. We know that Tree Farmers need strong markets to grow healthy forests. LEED is a barrier to strong healthy wood markets.

Because the government is one of the largest users of the LEED system, we've turned our efforts to asking Congress to provide some stronger direction to the federal agencies, agencies like the General Service Administration and the Department of Defense, who build a lot of buildings and have a big impact on building markets. So far, we've had over 100 elected officials helping us out with this! In fact, because of our efforts to fight for wood products, the US Department of Agriculture announced a new effort to build green and build with wood earlier this year. (See *Green Building*, pg. 8)

## Green Building (cont. from page 7)

Green building should offer a wealth of opportunities for wood products from ATFS certified forests, providing Tree Farmers with resources to continue to invest in good management on their woodlands. The American Tree Farm System is your voice in Washington, D.C., urging the U.S. Green Building Council to give wood more recognition in its LEED system and working with government agencies and champions in Congress to recognize multiple green

building rating systems in policies. To help us get your wood recognized in Green Building markets sign up for our Grassroots Action Network at [www.familyforestaction.org](http://www.familyforestaction.org)

*Melissa Harden is Public Affairs Manager with the American Tree Farm System. She can be reached at [mharden@forestfoundation.org](mailto:mharden@forestfoundation.org) or (202) 463-2456.*

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## NRCS Develops Online Tool to Help You Make Wise Land Management Decisions

Lauren Cartwright, NRCS

Every landowner faces a finite amount of land with an infinite amount of choices and opportunities to manage that land. Land management decisions are made based on each landowner's goals, which can also vary widely. Some landowners only want to maximize profits from their land. Some landowners are only interested in the aesthetic attributes that their land offers. Many landowners fall somewhere in between and are interested in both profit and aesthetics in some balance.

Missouri is graced with vast forestland and a climate suitable for growing trees as well as grass and cropland. As a result, Missouri landowners have many options available for managing land to meet their goals. The challenge arises however when trying to assess the economic impact of land use decisions when the time horizon of land use decisions are so different. Specifically, the benefit of the decision to plant trees or maintain and manage an existing stand of trees versus managing that land as pasture or cropland is challenging to assess economically because the trees grow over a much longer time period and provide returns to producers in lump sums versus pasture or cropland that provide returns annually.

Missouri NRCS has a user friendly planning tool available that provides a quick economic analysis of forestland management decisions. The tool, entitled "The Economics of Converting Cropland or Grassland to Forestland" is run in MS Excel, and is available to download from <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/technical/econ/stateresources/?&cid=stelpdb1044088>.

For producers considering converting cropland or pasture to forestland, the tool captures the costs of tree establishment and management and compares those costs to the benefits

the forestland will return in future years through saw timber, veneer and pulpwood harvest. Users will benefit from the input of a forester to help assess the estimated yields from a stand based on stand composition and location. The model returns an Investment Evaluation for the landowner to use to compare with other possible land use options, such as maintaining the land in its current land use as cropland or pasture.

For producers who have an existing stand of timber, the tool can also be used to assess the potential value of that existing stand. In this scenario, the only cost the landowner may have is associated with managing the stand through timber stand improvement to maximize the future yield potential. Again, the tool will compare any management costs to the expected returns from the stand and return an Investment Evaluation. This aspect of the tool may be helpful for landowners considering converting an existing stand of timber to another land use, such as pasture. The investment evaluation will provide the producer with information on what potential income can be expected from the existing timber.

Missouri landowners are faced with decisions every day on the best management of their land resources to meet specific goals. With all the choices possible, decision making can be challenging and overwhelming. Ultimately, the final decision on how to manage the land and its resources lies solely with the landowner. However, there are many resources available to provide information to landowners that may assist decision making. The tool described above is one example of a resource available to help landowners.

*For more information or questions, please contact Lauren at (573) 876-9415, [lauren.cartwright@mo.usda.gov](mailto:lauren.cartwright@mo.usda.gov).*



## Forestry 101 (cont. from page 4)

Often high-grading emphasizes cutting of a few species and leaves behind other species. This reduction in tree species diversity can have negative consequences for wildlife that depended on the harvested species for food or shelter. Species such as red oak and white oak are economically valuable and produce seeds that are valued by wildlife. In any particular year, only one or a few species may produce an abundant crop of seeds. If those species were removed by high-grading, wildlife that used those seeds will need to find alternative food sources and that seed source may be permanently gone from the woodlot.

### **So what can you do to avoid high-grading?**

One step is to work with competent and professional forester and loggers. When you select a new refrigerator or car you likely consider several features, including price, reputation, service after the sale, and other long-term benefits. You'll certainly go see what the refrigerator looks like. You should use at least these same criteria when you select your forester and logger. Ask for references, find out if the forester participates in continuing education programs and whether the logger has completed the Missouri Forest Products Association's "Professional Timber Harvester" program. Better yet, ask if they are a certified as a "Missouri Master Logger" (see the last issue of GH for an explanation of this valuable program). Make a visit to forests or woodlots where they have worked.

Know this: the best price may not provide the best treatment for your land. The logger who out bids his competitors for a timber sale by a few percent may not devote enough effort to ensure your property is left in good condition. Similarly the forester or logger who promises you maximum short-term profit likely doesn't have in mind the best interests for you and your land. The consequences of selecting an incompetent forester or logger will exist longer than a bad choice on a refrigerator.

Another step to avoid high-grading is to have a written management plan. Your management plan will state your objectives and help keep you on track. The harvesting schedule in your management plan will help you decide when harvesting is appropriate. Just because a forester or logger offers to cut your timber doesn't mean it's the best time for your interests. The value of trees increases greatly as trees get bigger, and it's probably a safe assumption that good markets will continue to exist for high-quality trees (although markets fluctuate). You may be advised that the

trees are "over-mature" or "need to be cut". Know that these labels are subjective and they are only accurate in the context of your ownership objectives.

Third, look for creative solutions to remove the low-value trees at the same time the high-value trees are harvested. A harvest that removes high-value and low-value trees provides financial benefits from the high- and low-value trees and improves the quality of the residual forest. One way is to have the forester mark and the logger skid the low value trees to the log landing. Then you can cut them yourself for firewood, or sell them to a firewood processor. This will require extra effort on the part of the logger and forester, which means you might not make as much money, but the benefits, including even greater profits, will exist a few years down the road.

Finally, get assistance from people focused on your interests to help you develop long-term objectives and management plans. Missouri Department of Conservation resource foresters are available for free consultation and can provide technical expertise and guidance on forest management. Consulting foresters are private individuals who, although charge a fee for their services, work for you and can usually respond faster than a resource forester. Another source of assistance can come from fellow landowners who have been down the same road you are traveling. The Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri is a new landowner group dedicated to helping landowners enjoy their forest land.

### **What can you do if your woodlot was previously high-graded?**

In simple terms, you need to have a vision for what you want your forest to look like and then a planned set of actions to move you towards that goal. Of course, how you reach that goal will depend on what you have to work with in your forest. A lightly high-graded forest may need only some thinning around the best trees and steps to ensure the forest can be effectively regenerated when the time comes. A heavily high-graded forest may no longer have the tree species you desire which will require you to create openings that you then plant to your desired species. The size of the openings and the species to plant will depend on the specifics of the site. A competent forester and your willingness to invest time and probably money are necessary to move a high-graded forest back to a sustainable forest.

# Timber Management Boosts Wildlife and Crop Trees

Bill Graham, Missouri Department of Conservation



*Thinning trees in a woodland can boost wildlife and the most desirable trees. MDC Resource Forester Audrey Beres, left, helped John Anderson develop a forest stewardship plan for his farm to achieve those goals. Missouri Department of Conservation photo.*

John Anderson enjoys hunting in woodlands. But he also wants a healthier white-tail deer herd and perhaps a return of bobwhite quail at his DeKalb County farm. So he gave his property the chainsaw treatment to boost bucks and birds.

Down came honeylocust and small, shingle oak trees in carefully selected areas. Still standing amid those cuts are white oaks and the healthiest black oaks. But by thinning timber he's made room for the most desirable trees to grow bigger and stronger, such as oaks that produce acorns. Native grasses and wildflowers also get enough sunlight to grow. Deer and wild turkeys eat acorns and greens, and birds like quail feed on bugs on flowers.

"Instead of just a tree canopy overhead and leaf litter on the ground, you'll get plants that grow after they get enough light," said Audrey Beres, a resource forester for the Missouri Department of Conservation. "It's not just food for deer. You get plants that help songbirds and gamebirds. There are a lot of wildlife benefits from thinning and opening the woods."

But Anderson, of Kansas City, didn't start cutting trees at random.

Beres helped him develop a long-range forest stewardship plan for his property. First they walked the farm and did an inventory of trees. They found "soft" hardwoods such as elm and locust along with "hard" hardwoods such as hickory and oaks. In some places, thick stands of ironwood trees crowded out valuable hardwoods. Then they selected

areas where openings could be created or where small and less desirable trees could be removed near a mast producing trees such as oaks.

"To have somebody walk the property with me who has expertise was a big help," Anderson said.

Besides guidance, Beres also helped Anderson obtain a cost-sharing grant from a program for wildlife habitat improvements on private lands. That money helped pay for costs such as fuel or the herbicide sprayed on locust tree stumps to keep them from re-sprouting.

Woodlands and forests change continually, Beres said. Forest management directs change to benefit wildlife and trees.

Anderson's long-range plan also calls for some native prairie grass restoration. Only a portion of Anderson's 108-acre farm is wooded, and much of the timber is on hillsides near a creek. The rolling-hills countryside was originally prairie with trees and woodlands on slopes and near streams. He plans to switch some pastures on his farm with non-native fescue to crops for a few seasons. Eventually he will put some acreage into native grasses that are friendly to wildlife.

Anderson may see some immediate wildlife benefits from selective tree cutting and management changes on his land.

"People are sometimes afraid to cut trees because they're afraid they'll lose the deer," Beres said. "But sometimes these openings are the best place to hunt."

However, trees grow slowly. The most benefits from forest management will be reaped in decades to come.

But that's okay with Anderson. "I've got two boys," he said, "and I want to pass this on to them 20 or 30 years down the way."



# The Back Page

## Deadlines for Newsletter Submissions

Spring Issue: March 15  
Summer Issue: June 15  
Fall Issue: September 15  
Winter Issue: December 15

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## Look 'Ma, No Staples!

In an effort to curb costs (and keep *Green Horizons* a free newsletter), we have made a few changes. First, we have eliminated the staples and gone to what is known in the trade as 'flat sheet' production. By doing so, we get around a few USPS requirements (like the number of tabs required to secure each mail piece) and added charges (seems as though they do not like staples in their automated systems). We have also switched to outside vendors; General Printing of Columbia and AAA Mail Services of Jefferson City. All these changes result in a savings of over \$750 an issue.

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## Calendar of Events

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**May 5: Missouri Nut Growers' Association Spring Grafting Meeting, near Collins, MO.** This year's outing will be at Sara Jean Peters' First Fruits Farm. Sara Jean has several plantings of black walnuts which KSU Extension Nut Specialist Bill Reid will use to demonstrate various grafts. Following lunch and the annual exchange of scion wood, MU Extension horticulturist Patrick Byers will lead a tour of several alternative crop plantings, including elderberries, pawpaws, and Aronia. Coffee is served at 9:00 AM and the program begins at 9:30. Contact Sara Jean Peters, 417-275-4422 for details after April 1st or visit the MNGA web site at [www.missourinutgrowers.org](http://www.missourinutgrowers.org).

**May 8: Missouri Nut Growers' Association Spring Grafting EAST, near Washington, MO.** MNGA is pleased to offer a second opportunity for individuals to learn grafting techniques. Vern and Bee Spaunhorst will host this session at their Heritage Valley Tree Farm. Vern and Bee are revamping their 10-acre pecan planting, replacing cultivars that are most subject to scab by grafting onto the stumps of cut trees. The outing will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 PM and KSU Extension Specialist Bill Reid will be demonstrating grafts. Contact Vern Spaunhorst for details at 646-239-7479 or visit the MNGA web site at [www.missourinutgrowers.org](http://www.missourinutgrowers.org).

**May 11-12: Spring Missouri Walnut Council Meeting, Edina.** The meeting will begin at 2:00 PM on Friday and 8:00 AM on Saturday; both will start at the Edina Community Center, 207 North 4th Street. Topics covered during the two-day event will be what to do with a mature stand of mixed mature hardwoods; how to manage young and newly-planted black walnut stands; what assistance is available through MDC and consulting foresters; and marketing and harvesting timber. For more information, contact Dennis Evans at 417-451-7862.

**June 2: Missouri Tree Farm Conference, Hermann.** The Heckman family will be hosting the 2012 Tree Farm Conference. Their farm is located 7 minutes north of Hermann in the scenic Missouri River Hills. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet Missouri Tree Farmers and other landowners interested in learning how to manage their woods. It will be an excellent chance for MOSAF members to promote the forestry profession. Walking tours will highlight forest ecology (one stop dramatically illustrates the difference between north-east vs south-west aspects), forest stand improvement, glade/savannah management, and pond management. For more information, contact Bob Ball at 855-843-3926, [fwam.trees@gmail.com](mailto:fwam.trees@gmail.com).

**June 7-8: Comprehensive Elderberry Workshop and Farm Tour, Hartsburg, MO.** Terry Durham invites you out to tour his elderberry farm in Hartsburg and attend a number of workshops focusing on the cultivation of elderberry crops. Guest speakers will cover topics ranging from the different varieties of elderberry cultivars to how to market the finished product. For more information, contact Contact Terry Durham at 573-999-3034, [info@elderberylife.com](mailto:info@elderberylife.com).