Cooperation in Meeting the Forest Resource Management Challenge in Iowa

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States with limited forest resources and a heavy agricultural economy, such as Iowa, make the management and promotion of that forest resource a real challenge. Cooperation and coordination of programs within the forestry community are absolutely necessary if that challenge is to be met. There has been a long history of cooperation between the Forestry Department at Iowa State University and the State Forestry agency. The first State Forester was the head of the Forestry Department and served in both capacities until shortly after World War II. As the state programs evolved a State Forester was hired by the then Iowa Conservation Commission, now Department of Natural Resources. The close ties between the University and the State have always been recognized by both as an essential key to the welfare of the forest resources of Iowa.

The recognition of the need for a close cooperative relationship has resulted in the development of several programs and cooperative projects over the years. The cooperation with the Extension Forestry programs are, as would be expected, the strongest. Here in Iowa, Extension and State Forestry have long recognized their respective roles in serving the citizens of the state. The state has provided the one-on-one forestry assistance to the individual woodland owners while the Extension Foresters have provided assistance by working with groups, the media and the development and distribution of educational publications. There has been very little, if any, duplication of efforts due to the coordination of the two programs. The service foresters rely on Extension publications to provide information to their cooperators on a wide range of topics. If a need for additional publications is identified by the state's foresters, extension has filled that need. Probably one of the most successful cooperative programs that has been developed is the establishment of several annual field days. Currently there are about 20 field days being held each year across the state. Attendance at some of the field days exceeds 100. This has proved to be an excellent forum to provide a lot of people with woodland management information. It allows the attendees to interact with the "experts" to obtain needed management information.

Another cooperative program that has been quite successful has been the development of a Woodland Owner's Newsletter. Forestry Extension developed the newsletter and the state helped to identify woodland owners to receive the publication. In addition the state's foresters have suggested topics and written articles for the newsletter. In recent years the state has assumed the printing of the newsletter while extension has continued to compile, edit and mail it. The newsletter is currently being sent to over 17,000 landowners, interested individuals and organizations. The newsletter provides a direct contact to the owners and managers of the forest resources in the state.

The Forestry Division and the Department work closely in identifying the continuing education needs of professional foresters in the state. Seminars and educational programs are developed, often in cooperation with the Iowa Society of American Foresters, to address these needs. Attendance at these programs usually includes consulting foresters, county foresters and other foresters in addition to the state's foresters. This provides an excellent forum for developing a better understanding among the foresters about their different roles in addition to the education benefits from the programs. The state looks to the Forestry Department at the University as a major source of information and training. In today's fast pace of technological development and unsure economic times it is imperative that we have the latest up-to-date information available in making resource management recommendations to the woodland owners of the state.

Iowa, like any other state, has problems (opportunities) unique to the state in managing the woodland resource. Identifying and finding solutions for these unique problems requires the continuing cooperation of the Forestry Division and the Department. Perhaps the identifying isn't so difficult, but a shortage of monies to carry out the necessary research makes it difficult to find the solutions. In some areas we have been able to find a funding source to enable us to find solutions. A good example, although not limited to just an Iowa problem, is a project underway to develop a method of root grading hardwood seedlings. This will help to provide for a higher quality seedling from the
state nursery which will result in better growth and survival in the field. This project is being funded, in cooperation with several other midwestern states, with State and Private Forestry monies from the Forest Service. The study is being carried out by the Department of Forestry at Iowa State University. Information gained may provide hardwood nurseries with a new tool to help assure the highest quality seedlings possible.

There are several other areas where working together the state and the University have been able to find solutions or develop new tools to better manage the state's woodland resource. Included among these would be the development of computer programs to provide inventory and economic data for Iowa woodlands, improvement of growth models for Iowa, development of information on wood energy sources through short rotation intensive culture, approval of cottonwood for use as studs in construction and many other.

The identification of these opportunities requires close and constant communication between the University and state personnel. To date this has occurred primarily on an informal basis. There is a need to develop a more formal method of communication on a regular basis in addition to what is currently taking place.

There has always been a close tie between the Forestry Department and the State Forest Nursery. In fact the nursery was originally operated by the University. The location of the nursery at Ames has strengthened that relationship. There probably isn't a forestry student that graduated from Iowa State who hasn't had a tour of the State Nursery. The nursery has served as a field laboratory for several graduate students over the years. The state nursery also gains from the research being conducted there. Whether it be the identification of disease resistant species, fertilization in the nursery beds or root grading they all help to provide better plant materials for the landowners. Cooperative projects at the nursery aren't always related to producing seedlings. Other ongoing projects include such things as a solar dry kiln and shiitake mushrooms.

State forestry personnel have been available to the Forestry Department to provide whatever assistance they can in the educational process. This includes lectures to students on state forestry programs, suggesting projects for senior management students, conducting practice interviews and hosting field classes on state forests or the nursery.

The 1985 Iowa Forest Resources Plan calls for the doubling of the state's forest acreage. To attain this goal, 1.5 million acres of additional woodland needs to be established, a large undertaking in a corn, cattle, soybean and hog state. Only through continued cooperative efforts of the University and the state working together in providing the necessary forestry leadership will we even come close to attaining this goal.