



EOFC Promotes Sustainable Forestry

Living in the Ozarks means being part of a proud tradition of self-reliance. So naturally we're interested in new ideas that will help us to improve our lives and surroundings.

The tools used to practice forestry in the Ozarks have changed – chainsaws and skidders have replaced axes and mules – but the ideas are still pretty much those of our grandfathers, who were preoccupied with survival. We're doing better now and we know more so it's time to change our thinking.

The Eastern Ozarks Forestry Council promotes sustainable forestry and economic development in the timber basket of southeastern Missouri. As a non-profit organization of forest landowners, the EOFC cooperates with land managers, loggers, and industry to upgrade management and harvest practices and thus improve forest health and productivity.

The watchword in this process is “sustainability” – ensuring that our resources are available for future generations and that our forests continue to protect the soil and water while maintaining biological diversity.

For most landowners, the first step toward improved and sustainable economic returns from their woods is getting a road map showing how to proceed from where they are to where they want to be. That's why the EOFC worked with the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service to develop a new EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) practice that

pays for a professional forester to develop an inventory-based management plan.

Some loggers have found that they can make a good living while helping landowners to improve their woods without cutting environmental corners. The EOFC is working with other groups to publicize the work of these exceptional loggers in an effort to raise the game of all. Recalling the adage that you get what you pay for, landowners ought to recognize in turn that a premium should be paid for the extra time it takes to harvest timber carefully.

It would be nice to have some income to fill the gap while waiting for higher dollar timber to grow. Using low-grade timber from forest improvement harvests to produce bio-fuels is just one new market that the EOFC is exploring with the cooperation of industry groups in both forestry and agriculture. To ensure that woody biomass is sustainably harvested, the EOFC is working with state legislators and agencies and regional conservation organizations to develop harvest guidelines and monitoring procedures.

The EOFC welcomes new members committed to its goals. Monthly meetings are held in Ellington, Fredericktown, Piedmont, and Van Buren. Visit our website (www.eofc.org) for further details.

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