Woodland Mentor Promotion

Over 35,000 timber sales are estimated to have taken place in Missouri over the last 5 years on private land. Yet only, 9% of landowners sought assistance from a Department of Conservation forester and 4% from private consulting forester. (According to the National Woodland Owners Survey)

Landowners often look to other landowners for information. That is why MU Extension, and the Missouri Department of Conservation have partnered to form a Woodland Mentor Program. Missouri's woods are one of our greatest natural assets, but good stewardship doesn't happen by accident. The Missouri Woodland Mentor program will connect landowners with others who have real, on-the-ground experience and a shared passion for healthy forests. George Kipp, Forestry Program Supervisor with the Missouri Department of Conservation, is excited about the program. "By pairing passion with practical know-how, we can help more Missourians care for their forests for generations to come".

The program will leverage the outreach efforts of Call Before You Cut (CBYC) to assist in identifying landowners looking for a mentor. Kipp states that 44% of landowners requesting CBYC information also express interest in a landowner mentor.

Woodland Mentors are:

- Landowners with experience caring for their woods
- They are Knowledgeable about Missouri woods
- And most of all, they are passionate about nature and helping others take care of nature.

Mentors can share their experiences with landowners. Answer questions or address concerns landowners may have. They may also recommend appropriate resources for further assistance. To be a mentor, landowners must be actively engaged in managing their lands and attend a series of training sessions. Ten sessions have been developed to run once a month via webinars or Zoom meetings. Sessions will begin in January. According to Brian Schweiss, Sustainable Forestry Specialist with MU Extension, the training will offer a statewide perspective of resource concerns from endangered species to forest products and provide tools for mentors to assist landowners in planning and deciding how to implement practices.

Connecting with a forester or experienced landowner can help ensure good management is taking place. Perhaps becoming a woodland mentor is right for you. Consider taking our survey. Let us know what you think. The survey will help us understand the level of interest people have in the program and how we can best deliver the program. To access the survey, use the QR code.

Not a fan of on-line surveys no problem, email me at schweissb@missouril.edu or call 573.882.4775 and I will be happy to assist.

Not sure you want to be a mentor. The training is open to all, and you can decide later.