

Ohio Woodlands Journal column
David Lytle, State Forester and Chief
Ohio Division of Forestry

Complicated issues can only be solved by common sense approaches

The writing of this column for *The Ohio Woodlands Journal* comes almost exactly on the anniversary of my first year as state forester and chief of the Ohio Division of Forestry.

It certainly has been an exciting and challenging time to be an advocate for good forest management. The past year has been made all the richer, thanks to the many warm welcomes extended by those of you in the Tree Farm community. Your kindness and advice on many issues are much appreciated.

In my first column for the *Woodland Journal* I commented on how Ohio's forests are as diverse as the *people* who own them. Looking back I could have also added that our forests are as diverse as the *issues* that impact them.

From fragmentation to forest property tax laws to invasive species, a myriad of complex issues impact the quality and health of our forests. In this first year I've listened to your suggestions and those of our staff on ways to be of greater service to Ohio's woodland owners.

Discussions with our Service Foresters have shown they clearly believe they can spend less time writing stewardship plans and spend more of their time in direct support to landowners. I agree.

An additional way we can better utilize our time is in targeting and providing support for tree farm inspections. These are critical for ongoing support of the state Tree Farm program and for future efforts to obtain certification status for the Tree Farm system.

Although the issues affecting Ohio forests are complex, and come with widely ranging views and perspectives, I want to assure you about one basic value I hold in addressing them: regardless of whether you are a tree farmer, a logger, a sawmill operator, a consultant forester or an agency conservationist, we are all in this together, and I value your input.

As we continue to evaluate the direction of our private lands programs I will be consulting with members of the Tree Farm system for their continued advice and input. By working together in a cooperative, positive manner, I believe we can together bring needed support to better care for Ohio's public and private woodlands.