

Ohio Woodlands Journal column  
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## Ohio's Woodlands Are An Invaluable Resource For All Ohioans

Across our state, the quality and health of Ohio's 8 million acres of forests are as varied as the people who own them. Our forested landscape makes up a third of Ohio's total land base and ranges in quality from the vigorously growing and diverse woodlands that characterize an Ohio Tree Farm, to the sadly diminished potential of a high-graded woodlot.

The long term value these forests provide to their owners, and to the greater public, are profoundly impacted by landowner decisions. Ensuring landowners have access to sound advice and assistance is therefore of critical importance, especially as the number of people owning forest land increases each year.

As Ohio's recently appointed State Forester and Chief of the Ohio Division of Forestry, one of my top goals is to promote the importance of managed woodlands. Sustainable management of our forests not only provides a valuable source of income to woodland owners and supports Ohio's \$15 Billion wood industry, but also leads to improved water quality and provides habitat for Ohio's native plants and animals.

I am an advocate of the wise use of our woodland resources. As such, I also look forward to working with our Service Foresters and in assuring the critical financial and administrative support for their efforts in providing landowners with the information they need to make good decisions about their woodlands.

I thank Chief Dorka for his 33 years of service to the Division. His outstanding record of accomplishment, including his recent efforts to protect the Raccoon Ecological Management Area, are a lasting legacy, and are of great benefit to the people of Ohio. His advice during this transition period has been much appreciated.

My role will be to build on the long history of the Division in ensuring the sustainable management of public and private forest lands in Ohio. Visiting our staff in the field, meeting with forest industry leaders and talking with woodland owners will be high priorities as I begin my duties.

I look forward to an ongoing conversation about our shared goals and visions and in how we can continue and improve Ohio's woodlands.