

Local Forestry Organizations in Kentucky: Formation and Organization

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Introduction

A local forestry organization (LFO) can provide a strong support system for local forestland owners and those who simply have an interest in renewable natural resources. Lately, several organizations and groups have realized this and have established a steering committee to help prospective members, at the local level, get these groups started. Specific supporters include: the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Kentucky Division of Forestry, Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, Kentucky Division of Conservation, Kentucky Farm Bureau, and the Kentucky Forest Industries Association.

will argue the need to manage in a sustainable manner. However, an LFO will need to be issue-driven to be successful, and those issues must be locally identified by local people.

Why begin a LFO? LFOs can provide an affective entity at the local level to better facilitate educational programs and technical assistance to those with an interest in forestry. LFOs can also provide an important communication feedback loop between the local and state levels. Regardless of how you proceed in forming a LFO it is important to try to include as many forestry interests in your area as possible.



Kentucky's forests are some of the most diverse in North America. These forests provide countless benefits to society and the more than 430,000 forest owners. In addition, Kentucky's wood industry contributes more than \$6 billion annually to the state's economy. Local Forestry Organizations can play an important role in addressing local forestry issues and promoting sustainable management of Kentucky's forests.

What are LFOs? LFOs are independent local groups, with varying levels of organization, created to address forestry issues in their area. While the statewide LFO steering committee operates at the state-level, the ultimate success of a LFO will depend upon the motivation(s) and interests of local citizens. All agree that, when properly cared for, our forests can provide a multitude of economic and social benefits and none

How Much Structure Does a Local Forestry Organization Need?

Some LFOs are highly structured and others have little formal structure. However, both ends of the spectrum require highly motivated local leadership to be successful. The "right" model for your organization will depend on the number of individuals involved, various interests of the group, and the projects to be pursued. Generally, as these variables increase, the level of structure should increase accordingly to allow the LFO to operate efficiently. The level of structure your LFO chooses should be entirely up to the individuals involved. This fact sheet is intended to provide a potential blueprint for LFO formation

and organization and includes: steps to forming a LFO, potential committees, and officer suggestions.

Steps to Forming a Local Forestry Organization in Your Area

There are a variety of approaches to forming a LFO in your area. Forming a LFO is not a complicated process; however, starting the process with a well thought

out approach can help ensure its success. To aid interested individuals in forming a LFO the following 4-step approach is suggested:

Step 1. Hold a Key People Meeting.

Individuals interested in forming a LFO in their areas should contact the local representatives of the statewide organizations to hold a key people meeting. The primary purpose of the key people meeting is to determine if there is a need and adequate interest to pursue the formation of a LFO. If the LFO will represent more than one county then representatives from each county level organization listed below should be contacted. This is an important first step and should not be skipped.

Contact the local representatives from the following organizations and let them know you are interested in forming a LFO:

- County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Kentucky Division of Forestry District Office
- Kentucky Woodland Owners Association
- County Conservation District Office
- County Kentucky Farm Bureau Office
- Kentucky Forest Industries Association



Local Forestry Organizations can assist in the design and format of forestry educational programs that address locally important issues.

There may be others to consider, but the important thing is to have strong cross-sectional leadership from throughout the area. Others that can be invited to the key people meeting include representatives from the following:

- Those actively managing their forests
- Local foresters, no matter their affiliation or place of employment
- Chamber of Commerce
- Civic groups (such as Rotary, Lyons, Kiwanis, etc.)
- County Judge Executive and Magistrates
- Forest product companies

- Garden Clubs
- Loggers
- Mayor and city Council Members
- Organizations with a forestry or natural resources related mission

Key People Meeting To Do List

Some important items to cover during the key people meeting include:

- Present information about the benefits and purposes of a LFO.
- Address any questions and provide opportunity for discussion.
- After the presentation and discussion conduct a vote to see if the group wants to form a LFO. If so:
 - o Select a temporary chairperson.
 - o Form an organizational planning meeting and dinner committee to handle arrangements for the organizational planning meeting and dinner.
 - o Form a steering committee to develop the organization's structure.
- Brainstorm for names of additional people who might be interested in being involved.

During this meeting the group should begin soliciting and recording issues of importance, related to the local forestry situation. Remember, groups only succeed when they are issue-driven. Issues do not need to be controversial – though some may be. Something as simple as 'learning how to market forest products from very small woodlots' may be of great importance to many in your area.

Step 2. Organizational Planning Meeting and Dinner Preparations

Once a consensus is reached to form a LFO (see Step 1) the next step is to have the newly formed committees begin preparations for the LFO organizational planning meeting and dinner. The newly selected temporary chairperson should facilitate and coordinate activities. Representatives from the local organizations may serve as members of the committees and provide guidance and support.

Organizational Planning Meeting and Dinner Preparations To Do List

- The temporary chairperson should assist both newly formed committees as they undertake preparations for the organizational planning meeting and dinner.
- Committee members should begin making

arrangements for the meeting.

- o Choose a meeting location, date, and time (plan for at least two hours).
- o Select a menu and sponsor if necessary.
- o Develop agenda for the meeting and dinner.
- o Consider developing a membership application, typical membership fees can range from \$0 to \$20 a year to cover the cost of doing business and conducting programs. Most local banks will be happy to assist the LFO in setting up a checking account.
- o A special letter of invitation to all locally elected officials.
- o Advertisements should be prepared and sent to local radio stations and newspapers. Local television stations may also assist in advertising.
- o Work to include the advertisement in existing newsletters (ex. county Extension offices, civic groups, etc.)
- Steering committee members should work on the temporary organizational structure of the LFO. To ensure that the organization can begin activities immediately it is important to have a temporary structure in place. Consider potential committees to encourage active participation from the membership. A sample list of committees and their potential activities is included at the end of this fact sheet.
- Recruit nominees to serve as temporary officers and board members. A list of potential officers and their duties is included at the end of this fact sheet. Depending on the size of the LFO, consider three to seven board members.
- Form the temporary executive committee. The executive committee is normally comprised of the officers and board members. This may seem a little aggressive but will help ensure that the LFO has leaders that want to be there to get the effort off to a strong start.
- Develop an invitational list for the Organizational Planning Meeting and Dinner. The local representatives of the statewide steering committee can assist in the development of the list and should be able to assist in sending out the invitational letter. Send an invitational letter or make personal contacts as soon as possible but at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. A reminder phone call the day before the meeting can also be very beneficial.

Step 3. Day of Organizational Planning Meeting and Dinner

Reaching this step represents significant progress in establishing a LFO in your area. The organizational planning meeting and dinner may be the first time many potential members or those with an interest in forestry have heard anything about a LFO and what it can do for them. A well prepared and presented program will give the budding LFO an excellent opportunity to “sell” the concept to the public and recruit members.

Organizational Planning Meeting and Dinner To Do List Registration

- Set up a table near the door, have at least two people to register people as they enter. The registration table should be ready to go at least one hour in advance of the scheduled meeting time to accommodate early arrivals.
- Have people sign in with name, address, phone number, and email address.
- Have plenty of registration materials, name tags, markers, and receipts on hand.
- Hand out an information packet to include:
 - o The program agenda. The dinner and meeting should be scheduled for approximately two hours.
 - o A membership application may also be developed if desired by the group.
 - o The list of proposed officers and board members.
 - o Other forestry related materials.

Program Agenda

- The temporary chairperson should welcome the participants; acknowledge any special guests, meal sponsors, and host of the program. (10 minutes)
- Dinner. (40 minutes)
- After the meal, the temporary chairperson should again thank the meal sponsor and introduce a speaker for a short program. (20 minutes)
 - o The after meal program should be a program that will be of general interest to most participants. Solicit ideas for the program from the newly formed committees and the local representatives from the county level organizations.
- The purpose and goals of forming the LFO should be reviewed. (10 minutes)
- One of the steering committee members should lead a discussion on the highlights of the officer duties and potential committees. Following the

discussion conduct a vote on the following. (30 minutes)

- o Do they want to have an LFO in their area?
- o Do they approve the temporary officers and directors? Nominations can also be accepted from the floor.
- o Discuss the next meeting date and potential frequency of meetings.
- After the votes, remind everyone to fill out the membership application and thank them for their attendance. Be sure to have people at the registration desk to accept applications. (5 minutes)

Step 4. Beginning LFO Activities

Immediately following the organizational planning meeting and dinner send a follow-up letter to those invited, but could not attend the meeting. Review what was accomplished at the meeting and send them a membership application. Also send information about the meeting outcomes to local media.



The effectiveness of a LFO can be measured by the involvement of its members. At the next meeting, plan to establish standing committees. Forming committees can allow the LFO to gather data, seek opinions of members, plan and conduct programs or projects, and make recommendations to the executive committee for action.

Potential LFO Committees

The following is a list of potential LFO Committees and activities. Your LFO may want to create all of these committees, just a few, or create entirely different ones. There is no single right answer as each LFO will have its own interests.

Membership Committee

- Provide leadership in recruiting new members.

- Work on membership retention issues.
- Provide leadership in annual membership drives.

Education and Communication Committee

- Ensure LFO meeting notices are placed in local newspapers.
- Ask local papers to report on educational programs, local forestry news, and local forestry awards.
- Develop a regular “forestry page” in your local newspaper.
- Display LFO information at local events like the county fair.
- Plan to host a number of programs each year which may include a short course, workshop, field day, and speakers for regular LFO meetings.
- Set up a “forestry library”, including books, videos, etc. for check-out to be housed at the county extension office or local library.

A Local Forestry Organization website has been developed to promote and support LFOs in Kentucky (www.ca.uky.edu/forestryextension/LFO.php). LFOs can list contact information, meeting announcements, activity updates, images, or other information useful to the LFO.

Forest Industry Committee

- Recognize annually an Outstanding Logger of the Year for the county; the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee (www.kytreefarm.org) has nomination forms that can be adopted for local use.
- Work with the education and Communications Committee to get annual local newspaper publicity or a feature article about a logger.
- Organize a field trip for your members to the annual Kentucky Wood Expo.
- Encourage local loggers to join your LFO.

Youth Forestry Committee

- Sponsor and assist a 4-H Forestry Team.
- Provide assistance to local high school teachers that may cover forestry in their curriculum.
- Plan and conduct an Arbor Day/Tree Planting Week program at local schools.
- Plan, coordinate, or support other opportunities for youth involvement in forestry such as school field trips or nature trails near schools.

Government Affairs Committee

- Monitor current statewide legislative issues and keep local LFO members informed.
- Monitor local issues, inform members, and formulate strategies for voicing concerns to local officials.
- Contact State Representatives and Senators about

legislation affecting forestry.

- Work with LFO executive committee and other appropriate committees to conduct a forestry program (tour, field trip, etc.) for local government officials.

Tree Farm Committee

- Recognize annually an Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year for the county; the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee (www.kytreefarm.org) has nomination forms that can be adopted for local use.
- Include a Tree Farm Awards program in one of your LFO meetings.
 - Recognition of local Tree Farm Inspectors
 - Awards for tenure in the Tree Farm Program (10 years, 25 years, 30 years, etc.)
 - Recognition of Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year.
- Remind LFO members of seedling orders, cost-share applications, etc.
- Select someone to stay in contact with the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee.

Officer Duties and Responsibilities

A LFO will only be as successful as the leadership allows it to be. With many demands for LFO members' time, they will participate only if the LFO has a purpose for existing and a process for action. If each LFO would identify one issue of importance and do something to address the issue, the entire state would benefit. One success will lead to increased involvement. It is very important to establish and achieve LFO goals by involving as many members as possible.

LFO Chairperson

Duties and Responsibilities

- Schedule regular LFO executive committee and membership meetings.
- Preside over LFO meetings.
- Serve as Chair of LFO Executive Committee and ex-officio member of all committees.
- Oversee the business affairs of the LFO.
- Appoint standing committees and other special committees within the LFO, as needed.
- Delegate LFO activities and programs to committees.
- Monitor the progress of LFO committees; when appropriate call for committee reports at LFO meetings.
- Make sure business is conducted at LFO meetings.
- Give other LFO officers and committees the opportunity to make appropriate reports during LFO meetings.

- Provide energy which LFOs run on, make sure something is happening. The best way to accomplish this is by establishing and maintaining an effective committee structure.
- Serve as LFO spokesperson or designate one from the Education and Communication Committee.
- Keep LFO members informed on important issues.
- Raise concerns about local issues.
- Give members a chance to voice their concerns about forestry issues.
- Create a productive atmosphere in the LFO.

LFO Vice-Chairperson

Duties and Responsibilities

The Vice-Chairperson may not have specific duties other than to preside in the absence of the chairperson. However, these are some duties and responsibilities that could be handled by the Vice-Chairperson to better distribute the workload.

- Plan programs for LFO meetings; get input from board members in selecting topics and speakers.
- Involve local forestry and natural resources related agency representatives in LFO meetings.
- Coordinate local LFO Committees.
- Work with LFO committees in activities such as field days, special projects, and award programs.
- Represent LFO Chairperson at meetings when necessary.

LFO Secretary/Treasurer

Duties and Responsibilities

- Maintain current list (including names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses) of members.
- Record and maintain minutes of executive committee meetings.
- Keep financial reports current.
- Give financial report at LFO Membership and executive committee meetings.
- Send out meeting minutes to members and include next meeting details.

Summary

Forming and organizing a LFO in your area can have significant benefits to members, the local community, and the state overall. Call on the group of supporting organizations at the state and local level to assist your efforts. Teamwork will allow your LFO to become a vibrant part of the community and allow you to accomplish much more than an individual could do alone.

This fact sheet provides guidance on the formation and organization of a local forestry organization (LFO) in your area. Additional information on LFOs can be found in companion fact sheets FORFS 07-01 Local Forestry Organizations in Kentucky: A Growing Idea and FORFS 07-03 Local Forestry Organizations in Kentucky: Project Ideas.

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The Mississippi State University Extension Service and Mississippi Forestry Association have worked for more than fifteen years to encourage and form county forestry associations in Mississippi counties with much success. They have produced a number of materials on the subject and with their permission some of those were revised for this fact sheet.

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