



The Voice for Illinois Forests

To act on issues that impact rural and community forests and to promote forestry in Illinois

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****Inside this Issue****

President's Remarks	1
Vice President's Notes	2
Calendar of Events	2
Secretary Report	3
Regional Reports	4-5
Question/Answer on Woodland Taxes	5
Tech Committee Report	7
Features	8

and more....

It's here on the World Wide Web...

IFA Web site
www.ilforestry.org

IFA has a "Wiki" ...
<http://illinoisforestry.pbwiki.com>

President's Remarks

Ray Herman, IFA President

We, as an organization, are into our second year. As I write this, I am recapping in my mind some of the highlights of the past year. However, I realize full well that looking back does not accomplish much for you, our members. So, I'll take this opportunity to express some of your Board's goals for 2007.

First, we must retain and grow membership. While we achieved our goal of 400 members during our first year, it is important to keep growing. I believe we must grow to at least 600 members by the end of this year, and the membership committee has plans to do this.

Of significance, we have revised our brochure, our banner, and our membership form already this year. Our Web site--www.ilforestry.org-- is up and running. This is the best way for you to stay up to date with what is happening in IFA. Our newsletter is costly and will only be published quarterly, so the Web site will keep you better informed and current with IFA's activities. We hope many of you will visit the web site regularly.

Another key area for IFA is to gain recognition of our name and to increase forestry issue awareness throughout the State. Our Legislative Committee is developing a set of actions that will set us on a positive course to make sure that politicians are aware of our position on issues. You, as members, are vital to helping spread the word to your representative and senators. The Committee is also investigating the feasibility of hiring a professional lobbyist to give us a constant voice and guidance in Springfield. Since all of your IFA Board members are volunteers and are essentially novices in the political arena, we may need to hire this help. We certainly need you to call or write your representative and senator once we give you the necessary guidance.

I am hopeful that those of you who do not have a Forest Management Plan for your woodland have taken advantage of the \$400.00 EQIP incentive. The Plan is your ticket for the 1/6 assessment and for making systematic improvements to your woodlands.

Your regional directors are all committed to planning and holding seasonal workshops that will provide you with pertinent, useful information. I hope many of you will attend and interact at these workshops to share your knowledge and learn from others. Watch the Web site or see the Calendar of Events on Page 2 in this newsletter.

The Region 4 Directors are already planning for our annual meeting this fall. I urge you to mark your calendars and plan to attend on October 18 & 19. It promises to be an event the entire family will enjoy.

Lastly, it's not too late to renew your membership in IFA, if that has slipped by you. Your membership, as well as your voice, is important for Illinois Forestry!

Calendar of Events 2007

April 21

Citizen Big Tree Inspector Training Workshop
Kampsville, IL, at the Center for American Archeology and the McCully Heritage Project.
(See article on page 8 for more)

April 22

Earth Day

April 27-28

IL Walnut Council State meeting
Washington, IA
319-653-4959

May 11

IFA Board meeting
NRCS State Office
Champaign, IL
773-327-9221

May 16

IL Forestry Development Council meeting
Location TBD
217-493-6736

May 18

Region 2 Event
Location TBD
217-652-2634

June 5

Timber Management Planning Practicum for SIU students and landowners.
Forbes State Park in Salem, IL.
Sponsors--IFA; Lincoln Heritage, Post Oak Flats, and Wabash Valley RC&D Councils.

June 11-17

International Wood Collectors "Woodfest"
Pere Marquette State Park
Grafton, IL
618-345-3393

August 22

LaMotte Creek Watershed Conservation Field Day in Crawford County.
3 Tours: Agronomy, Organic Beef, & Forestry. Noon lunch will feature State Representative Roger Eddy and State Senator Dale Righter speaking to key issues.

August 28-30

IL Farm Progress Show
Decatur, IL
319-622-6090 or
866-264-7469

October 18-19

IFA Annual Meeting in Region 4

Vice President's Notes

J. B. Gates, IFA Vice President

New Prescribed Burn Association Formed

Part of Region 4 timberland owners are the beneficiaries of a new organization, the Southeastern Illinois Prescribed Burn Association. It is a not-for-profit organization that was formed last fall with an IDNR C2000 grant to the Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission. The project area includes the Saline River Watershed and the eastern portion of the Shawnee Hills. This includes nearly all of Pope, Hardin, Saline, and Gallatin Counties, as well as portions of Hamilton, White, Williamson, and Johnson Counties.

The mission of the Association is to share resources in order to increase the safe use of prescribed burning on member-owned private lands. Members have access to specialized prescribed burn equipment and can obtain help from experienced and well-trained crews as well as professional guidance and assistance in preparing for burns. Members help each other with their burns.

The Association supports four crew coordinators who are responsible for equipment used on the burns and for helping to schedule crew members for each burn. The crew coordinators are Sally Harris and Richard Simpson, both landowners and Association members; Dr. Charles Ruffner, professor of forestry at SIU, Carbondale and leader of the SIU FireDawgs burning team; and Chris Walker, IDNR forestry technician in Dixon Springs. The Board of Directors includes John Hemphill, President; J. B. Gates, Vice President; Dan Price, Secretary/Treasurer; and Bob Buchanan and Jim Walker, Directors at Large. Richard Johnson is the general coordinator.

Annual membership dues for the Association are \$25.00. If you are in the project area or another region and would like more information or have questions, please call Richard Johnson at 618-949-3729 or e-mail richjnsn@shawneelink.net.



**Someone's sitting in the shade today because
someone planted a tree a long time ago.**

-Warren Buffet

Secretary's Report

Dave Gillespie, IFA Secretary

Illinois Forestry Association business has progressed since the last newsletter. Our part-time secretary, Sarah Dillman, has now been on board for a few months and has helped us tremendously. Sarah works for the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts in their state office. If you need to contact her, her email address is sarah.dillman@aiswcd.org.

If you've paid your dues for 2007 and have not received your new IFA membership card, please be patient. It's my fault, and I apologize. I've been trying to develop a program in which I could type the cards on my computer instead on my old typewriter. So far I've been unsuccessful. Therefore, I'm going back to the old way. If you have not received your 2007 IFA membership card, you soon will.

Speaking of 2007 dues, if you have not paid your IFA dues for 2007, now is the time to do so. Without your support, we will not be able to keep up with all of the activities we have plans to accomplish this year.

Recently, we sent letters of support for restoration of adequate funding for the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program. The President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2008 funds puts the RC&D budget at \$14.6 million. The minimum amount needed is \$56 million. If the President's requested amount is passed by Congress, 325 of the 375 RC&D coordinator positions nationwide will be lost. This would mean only one coordinator for each state--an impossible situation when it comes to getting needed work accomplished. If you don't know it, if it was not for the RC&D coordinators in Illinois, the IFA would probably not exist today. They were the core staff assistance for the steering committee that worked to get our association up and working.

If there is something I can do for you, please contact me at dandgisp@aol.com.

FY 2007 Budget Established

Your finance committee, directors, and officers have developed the Association's 2007 budget as follows:

Professional Services	\$12,967	(Secretarial assistance and lobbyist)
Office supplies and printing	10,000	
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>22,575</u>	(Meetings, Web site, trade shows, promotional materials)
Total	\$45,542	

Web sites of Interest

www.committeeforlegislativeaction.org - View special State funds in Illinois.

<http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/familyforests.cfm> - Society of American Foresters

**Do you have
a passion
for trees and
forestry?**

**Are you
interested in
serving on
a regional
committee?**

**Contact an
IFA officer
today to find
out how you
can help!**

Region 1 Report

Mary Duff and Debbie Jones, Directors

It's budget time in Springfield. We are asking each member of IFA to call, email, or snail mail their state representatives and senators to request their support of IFA position papers, including the harvest fee sweeps legislation which will be considered in early May. Please tell your legislators to vote against "sweeping" the Timber Harvest Fee revenues into the general fund. The four percent Timber Harvest Fees revenues are dedicated to the Illinois Forestry Development Fund and are earmarked for cost-share programs for landowners who are carrying out approved Forest Management Plans. Since 2004, over \$3 million has been swept from this fund (Fund 905) into the general revenue fund by statutory transfer.

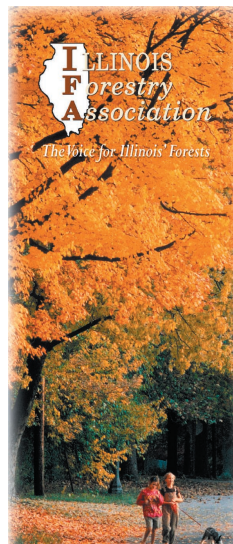
IFA participated in the Chicago Farmers Investment Fair in Joliet on February 3. IFA staffed an exhibit featuring the new IFA PowerPoint presentation, our new brochure, and other informative pieces on forestry programs. Kurt Bobsin and Dave Gillespie made presentations describing IFA and the issues we are working to address. Ray Herman, Jay Hayek, Debbie Jones, and Mary Duff talked with many of the 375 attendees. It was good exposure for IFA with a new partner organization.

A Forestry Herbicide Workshop was held in Morrison on February 16. The sponsors were the Illinois Walnut Council, IFA, Northwest IL Forestry Association (NIFA), Blackhawk Hills RC&D, and Townsend Chemical Co. It was an interesting and informative workshop with 42 paid attendees. Many positive comments were received. According to IFA Treasurer Bob Sloan, the registration fee of \$20 paid for refreshments, lunch, and other incidentals. A small profit was also earned for the hosting NIFA. Bob says he has organized many workshops and has found that by charging a participant fee, workshops can be self supporting. He urges the Association to consider this plan, both as a service to our membership and as a way to attract new members. He has also offered his help if you want to tap into his experience in holding these events.

Jay Hayek, IFA Technical Advisor, was the speaker for the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Northwest Illinois Forestry Association (NIFA) in Mount Carroll, IL, on March 20. His topic was "The Responsible Steward:

Understanding Forest Stewardship in Illinois." A highlight of the meeting was Jay's presentation of an IFA charter membership plaque to Tom Arnold, NIFA president. The Association became a charter member of IFA in November 2006. "Thank you NIFA, for becoming a charter member of our growing organization and for being a valued conservation partner", Jay said.

For those of you who have not seen the winter issue of The Illinois Steward, it's well worth a read. The entire issue focuses on Illinois forests and includes articles about our ancient forests, our state forests, the Illinois Big Tree program, and a very readable article on forest management plans and the property tax issue. And as always, the magazine features breathtaking photographs. Check it out by calling (217) 244-3650 to order the issue or preview at <http://ilsteward.nres.uiuc.edu>.



New IFA Brochure



also available for you to give to prospective members.

New IFA Banner

From Region 2

Lee Rife and Susan Romano, Directors

West-central Illinois finally got an old fashioned winter after starting the year with many days exceeding 50-degree temperatures, bringing about some concern that trees and shrubs would start bud swell. All of this changed in the middle of January. The temperature dropped drastically, and we experienced ice storms, blizzards, and sub-freezing cold for days on end. The temperature in Springfield dropped to 11 below zero around February 14. I wonder if any of this bone-chilling weather had an effect on emerald ash borer eggs or larvae in the northeastern part of the state. If it killed either or both, then the extra low temperatures were worth it!

Region 2 has been quiet since our meeting at the Mason Tree Nursery in the fall. However, we plan on conducting another event on May 18 at a place to be determined. We want to offer some "hands-on" activities. Small engine (chain saw) maintenance and repair or a similar subject has been suggested. If anyone has suggestions for other subjects they would like to see presented, please contact me at 217/652-2634 or send an e-mail to rife@springnet1.com. We are open to any and all ideas for a program.

Also, IFA has a new banner which can be used as a backdrop for an information booth. If any Region 2 members want to set up an IFA booth at a county fair, festival, or other local event, please contact me. I will try to schedule it for you and arrange delivery and pick up after the event. In addition, IFA has developed a new brochure which can be used as handouts. Membership applications are

From Region 4

Joe Newcomb and Stephanie Brown,
Directors



IFA member Dan Schmoker (left) presenting Region 4 Director Stephanie Brown with a beautiful walnut bowl, handmade by Dan, in appreciation for her efforts last year in getting IFA started.

WHAT is this I hear about TAXES going up on Woodland?

Following is a transcript of an interview with Nancy A. Winter, White County Supervisor of Assessments, conducted by Joe L. Newcomb, IFA Region 4 Director and Herald's Prairie Township Trustee, on March 7, 2007. It may help answer some of the questions you have about this sudden increase in forestland values and resulting tax assessments.

Question. (Joe L. Newcomb) What has changed in the tax assessment world to cause landowners to become anxious about future tax bills on wooded acres?

Answer. (Nancy A. Winter) Traditionally, little value was placed on wooded tracts, because they produced little income. Even if the timber was harvested, the gain realized would only be seen once in a generation. Now, with wooded acres being bought and leased for hunting and recreational purposes—it has driven up the price of wooded land, causing officials to look differently at the way it's assessed.

Question. I read in the paper that the Illinois Department of Revenue and the Illinois Legislature came to some kind of agreement about a tax freeze. Can you tell us about that?

Answer. It really isn't a freeze on the tax. It's a freeze on the initiation of converting wooded acres from the preferential farmland assessment to fair

Legislative Committee Report

Dr. Susan Romano, Legislative
Committee Chair

Your IFA Legislative Committee has been hard at work making legislative contacts, finding tax benefit support for landowners with forest management plans, working on increased funding for forestry personnel, and protecting Illinois Forestry Development Act harvest fee funds.

We began the New Year with the Illinois Agriculture Legislative Roundtable on January 2. This was an important meeting of agriculture leadership that provided an opportunity to identify key issues supported by the agricultural community. All of our position statements were part of the discussion and were included in the final list of important issues for agriculture in Illinois. We also supported forestry incentive funding in the 2007 Farm Bill and emerald ash borer eradication. Results of this meeting can be found at <http://www.ilfb.org/viewdocument.asp?did=12921&rid=0.6915399>. The link for the file is at the bottom of the page and is titled IALR_2007_Priorities.doc".

The IFA Board welcomed guest speaker Dr. Maureen Magliocco, who is a lobbyist, at the board meeting on February 27, 2007. It was evident from her presentation and the discussion that followed that

having a lobbyist in Springfield is a very effective way to bring our issues to the attention of the legislature. Board members are currently considering this option. We also need to meet with our senators and representatives in person and maintain communication with them. Each member is encouraged to set up a meeting with their state legislators. Decisions will be made in April and May concerning the 2008 budget. They often need more information to make these decisions, and you are a valuable resource. Contact information can be found at http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/handbook/legislative_branch/general_assembly.pdf.

A map is available for identifying your district or your representatives at http://www.illinoisatlas.com/illinois/political/pdf/il_legdist_state.pdf. The Illinois Farm Bureau also has a Web site for identifying your elected officials at <http://capwiz.com/ilfb/state/main/?state=IL&view=myofficials#0>.

Please contact your elected state senator and representative as soon as possible.

"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." (Andy Warhol)

market value. The Woodlands Task Force issued a resolution urging the Department of Revenue to accept preferential assessments on these wooded tracts through the 2007 tax year.

Question. There are a lot of farms in White County that include woodland acres. How are these wooded acres taxed in relation to the rest of the farm?

Answer. Most farms in White County will retain the preferential assessment on their woodland, because the cropland acres outnumber the wooded acres. The wooded tracts are assessed at 1/6th of the debased productivity index for the underlying soil type. It becomes an issue when the opposite is true. If over 51% of the farm is wooded, then it will be assessed at 1/3rd of fair market value. In the assessment field, land is always valued at its "highest and best use".

Question. What if I own land in more than one county?

Answer. Your assessment can be based on your total land ownership. But it's up to the landowner to inform the Assessment Office of land owned in other counties.

Question. How does the assessor know how many acres on my farm are classed as woodland?

Answer. We have aerial maps that we can refer to, but the Township Assessors are familiar with their area and are the best source to classify the wooded tracts.

continued on page 8

Forest Facts

from Private Forests Are at Risk; The Need for Action in the 2007 Farm Bill

- **Clean water** - 2/3s of the Nation's drinking water comes from forests.
- **Clean air/stable climate** - A single tree can absorb more than 10 pounds of carbon dioxide per year. It takes approximately 1000 trees to absorb the average annual carbon emissions from one car.
- **Jobs and thriving rural economy** - U.S. paper and wood manufacturing generates 1.2 million jobs and \$230 billion in annual sales.
- **Endangered species habitat** - Over half of endangered species rely on private lands, including private forests.
- **Part of farm life** - More than 75 million acres of forests in the U.S. are part of a farm.
- **Places to enjoy wildlife** - 66 million people enjoy watching wildlife across the country, including on private forests. Wildlife watching generates over 1 billion jobs and \$38.4 billion in direct retail spending.

Keep in Touch with Your Board of Directors!

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"What's Happening"

GRT may be bad for your pocketbook!! GRT is the Gross Revenue Tax proposed by the Governor. Although it is currently aimed at businesses having gross revenues in excess of \$1 million, who really knows how low it will go! Maybe you should voice your thoughts to your representative and senator. Go to www.ilga.gov for information about how to make these contacts. Or, call 877-422-8424 toll free, and ask the operator to transfer your call to your legislators. While there, voice your thoughts relative to our three position statements--4% timber fee sweeps; timberland assessment; and IDNR Division of Forestry staffing. The three position papers are on the IFA Web site at www.ilforestry.org. Copies of the position papers were attached to the last issue of the newsletter.



Mike Keifer (left), Director at Large, receiving a charter-member clock from IFA Technical Advisor Kurt Bobsin

Tech Committee Report

Jay Hayek, IFA Technical Advisor

2007 Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference Recap

The 2007 Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference, held at Sinsinawa Mounds in Wisconsin on March 20 was another great success. Over 520 citizens from Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin attended the annual event. Thirty natural resource professionals addressed numerous natural resource topics, including backyard wildlife, forest interior birds, forest management, estate planning, invasive species control, carbon credits for forestry, timber sale basics, agroforestry, wild turkeys, grouse, and much more. Bob Sloan graciously volunteered his weekend to staff the IFA booth. Thanks Bob for your continued support and volunteer efforts. It is greatly appreciated!

(Editor's Note: Bob attended a session at the Conference about teaching landowners to prepare their own forestry plan. The presenter was a forester and forest manager from Wisconsin, who said he would be willing to come to Illinois to teach a class. Bob will present this idea to the IFA Board.)

Technical Action Committee (TAC)

With spring officially upon us, we as an organization need to finalize our 2007 technical workshop/field day calendar. Volunteer TAC members within each region need to assemble and poll their regional membership to ascertain local technical needs; e.g., forest management plans, forest stewardship planning, tax assessments, timber marketing & sales, tree identification, tree planting, crop tree management, etc. In order to reach a broad audience, it is strongly recommended to align our efforts with allied conservation organizations; e.g., IL DNR, local Soil Water Conservation Districts, Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Tree Farm, Walnut Council, National Wild Turkey Federation, The Nature Conservancy, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Illinois Extension, etc.

Contact me or your regional directors if you are interested in developing a workshop in your region.

What's In Your Wallet?

Kurt Bobsin, IFA Technical Advisor

...or so the commercial for VISA inquires. The more pertinent question for forest landowners is, "What's in Your Plan?" Do you have one, can you find it, have you read it? Forest management plans have gained new recognition and prominence lately due to the woodland tax assessment issue in which many forest landowners find themselves embroiled. Forest management plans, in many cases, convey to the local taxing bodies that you are systematically managing your forest land for the production of a timber crop. That is the litmus test a landowner must pass in order for his woodland to be classified as agriculture and receive a preferential tax treatment under current farmland assessment rules. It gets more complicated from here but that is sufficient for you to get the point. It is a good idea to have a plan to guide and direct the management of your forest land.

What about a plan? What is involved, what's in it, and why should you have one? First the **why**. In addition to the obvious tax benefit, a plan can focus your attention and resources (time & money) on areas and projects that have the best potential for meeting your goals in some kind of systematic order. This enables you to "get the biggest bang for the buck", so to speak. Do you like to shoot a squirrel or two, hunt turkey, ride through your woods, bird watch, enjoy a fall color hike? Maybe you have been thinking about using some of the trees on your property for that new hardwood floor or fireplace mantel you have been wanting? Perhaps you are interested in teaching the next generation about the forest, or you want to gather the family for a stroll through the woods. All of these things are compatible with growing and harvesting trees. Did you know that a plan can save you income taxes when you sell timber from your forest? Forest practices can be designed to enhance these forest values by laying them out in a plan that provides for diverse, healthy forest systems. A plan becomes proactive when you implement forest practices that take advantage of natural processes to create the kind of structure and species composition that are most compatible with the reasons you own and enjoy your woods.

Now for the **what** part. What is in a plan? These days a plan must serve many masters...you, the landowner; potential forestry contractors; and other foresters who will work with you in the future. This situation requires a level of information that can be understood clearly and concisely by the layman yet provide enough technical data for professional foresters and contractors to understand what is needed and where. No easy task. A schedule of practices and cost estimates should also be included. Remember about focusing resources? A well crafted forest plan will qualify you for federal and state forestry program benefits. These should be spelled out along with any restrictions or obligations you would have to meet as well.

The **how** is the last part of the equation here. Due to the technical nature of forest plans, a professional forester is needed. He or she will work with you to craft a document that is realistic and workable. Foresters are available in the public and private sector to write your plan. Go to the links on the IFA Web site (www.ilforestry.org), where you will find contacts to get the ball rolling. Due to heavy demands these days for developing forest management plans, it may take a while to get a forester out to your place. So call now and be patient. This plan will serve as the road map of where you are now and where you will be going for the next 10 years.

Illinois Forestry Association

A non-profit, tax-exempt organization under IRS 501(c)3

Here They Come!!

...from U of I Extension

The northern Illinois brood of the periodical (17-year) cicada, which will emerge in late May 2007, has a reputation for the largest emergence of cicadas known anywhere according to entomologists Monte Lloyd and Henry Dybas at the Field Museum in Chicago. During the 1956 emergence, they counted an average of 311 nymphal emergence holes per square yard of ground in a forested floodplain near Chicago. In 1990, there were reports from people in Chicago having to use snow shovels to clear their sidewalks of dead cicadas.

The periodical cicada female uses her ovipositor to make a slit in small twigs of trees and then lays her eggs in these slits. The eggs hatch, and the nymphs fall to the ground and tunnel down through the soil to feed on sap in a root until they emerge 13 or 17 years later. Although their feeding on the tree's roots has an impact on the growth of the tree, it does not cause enough damage to justify control measures. The egg-laying slit made in the twig may cause the twig to dry and break off. This damage, too, is not harmful enough on an established tree to justify trying to control these insects. However, small transplanted trees, particularly fruit trees, commonly have a trunk diameter small enough that egg slits made in the trunk may result in the tree snapping off.

NOTICE!

If you have experience in lobbying and are interested in lobbying for the Illinois Forestry Association, please contact one of the following Legislative Committee members:

Susan Romano (s-romano2@wiu.edu)

Mary Duff (Mdscottie@aol.com)

Ray Herman (ILLINIBEV@aol.com)

Rollie Spaniol (cfrds1@consolidated.net)

Big Tree Inspector Workshop Scheduled

Attention nature lovers and big tree hunters! The "New & Improved" Illinois Big Tree Register, the McCully Heritage Project, and the University of Illinois are hosting a Citizen Big Tree Inspector Training Workshop on Saturday, April 21, 2007, from 10 am to 1:30 pm in Kampsville, IL, at the Center for American Archeology and the McCully Heritage Project. Pre-registration is required by April 16, 2007. Cost to attend the workshop is \$10. The afternoon portion of the workshop will be held outdoors; therefore, proper outdoor attire is recommended.

This exciting, interactive workshop is open to all citizens and big tree enthusiasts. Prior experience with the Big Tree program or with tree measurements is not required. Participants will learn the history of the Illinois Big Tree program and how to properly nominate, measure, and certify Illinois Big Tree nominations. All participants will receive hands-on training from members of the Illinois Big Tree technical committee. According to Jay Hayek, coordinator of the Illinois Big Tree Register, "The Illinois Big Tree Register has been around since 1962. Due to its growing popularity, the program has developed a strong need for a volunteer network of citizen Big Tree inspectors to assist us with Big Tree nominations and with verification of Big Tree measurements."

To register for the workshop, please contact Michelle Berg Vogel at the McCully Heritage Project at 618-653-4687 or by email at info@mccullyheritage.org. Visit the McCully Heritage Project Web site at www.mccullyheritage.org. If you would like more information about the Illinois Big Tree program, contact Jay Hayek at (217) 244-0534 or visit the Illinois Big Tree Register Web site at http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/forestry/il_big_tree.html.

continued from page 5 - Q&A - Taxes on Woodlands

Question. Does it make a difference in the tax assessment if it has been logged recently?

Answer. Yes, it could make a difference in the value of the land after logging has occurred.

Question. About what percent of the land in White County will be affected by this change in assessment of wooded acres?

Answer. Six percent, or 19,300 acres, of White County's 321,360 acres are woodland. At this point, because of the freeze on converting the wooded tracts to fair market value, I don't have an answer as to how many of those wooded acres would be affected by the change in assessment.

Question. I've heard that if the woodland is covered by a forest management plan, taxes may be reduced. Does White county have any acres covered by forest management plans, and how did it change the tax assessment?

Answer. White County has 6,924 acres covered by forest management plans, about two percent of the county. These acres receive the preferential assessment of 1/6th of the debased productivity index as farmland. That continues for the life of the plan, which is usually ten years. A lot of concerned taxpayers have expressed interest in forestry management plans as a way to continue to receive preferential assessment. I look for the number of plans to increase.

Question. How does one obtain a forest management plan?

Answer. Call your local DNR District Forester's office. The IDNR forester for White County is David Johnson in Fairfield at 618 847 3781.