

Kennebec County Woodland Owners Survey

The Kennebec County Woodlands Owners Survey (KCWOS) was commissioned by KWP and conducted in 2011 by University of Maine. Researchers garnered nearly 400 responses. The survey provides KWP and its partner organizations with a clearer picture of what information and tools are needed by landowners to meet the individual goals they have for their forests. Woodland management in Maine is never one-size-fits-all. Working with this data will direct energy into projects and topics that will be the most helpful to individual landowners in the region.

Highlights of the report include:

- About two-thirds of woodland owners own between 1-50 acres of forest land and have owned their parcel(s) for more than 25 years. Almost three-quarters live on their woodland and are between the ages of 51-75 years old.
- The top three reasons why local woodland owners own forest land are: “For privacy,” “To enjoy beauty or scenery,” as “Part of my primary home;” only about 15 percent of participants own land “For production of saw logs, pulpwood, biomass, or other timber products.”
- Nearly three-fourths of respondents do not have a written forest management plan, but two-thirds of these individuals would either consider getting one or are undecided. Asked what would encourage them to acquire a management plan, a little over half said getting “a property tax reduction.” Other major reasons cited were finding “ways to improve wildlife,” and getting “professional advice about how to improve my land.”
- Slightly over half of the respondents have conducted a commercial timber harvest on their woodland at sometime; of these, nearly three-fourths were “somewhat” to “very satisfied” with the outcome and 60 percent said they would be willing to conduct another commercial harvest. Less than 20 percent were “somewhat” to “very unsatisfied.”
- Over two-thirds said they preferred getting information about their forest land from the Maine Forest Service, a forester or other natural resource professional, rather than loggers, neighbors or family members.

The survey and report were conducted and compiled by UMaine Associate Professor Jessica Leahy at UMaine, and her colleagues Kathleen Bell Patrick Lyons and Michael Quartuch. The project was supported by the Maine Forest Service, the National Science Foundation and the Maine EPSCoR Sustainability Solutions Initiative at UMaine. A full copy of the technical report is available online at http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/kennebecwoodlands/downloads/documents/final_kwos_technical_report.pdf.