



Cornell University Cooperative Extension

The Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) Program, FY 2008

Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) program funding is a core element of the Cornell University Cooperative Extension ForestConnect program, which serves private forestland needs through education and applied research programs that target owner, educator, forester, and student audiences. Program activities help ensure private forestland management is more deliberate and based upon scientific principles. RREA Strategic Issues emphasized in FY 2008 include forest stewardship and health, wildlife management, and economic opportunities.

Forest Stewardship and Health

Part of the Regional Forestry Initiative, "Putting Your Woods to Work for You," targets new landowners to develop woodland awareness and enhanced skills. The average ownership was 175 acres (total 13,137); 76% were first time users of Cooperative Extension; 39% plan to develop a forest management plan; 31% will select a forester; and 21% will find and mark their boundary lines.

As a result of visits by Master Forest Owner volunteers during the last 10 years, more than 60% of owners plan to develop management plans and to seek assistance from professionals. The finances of visited owners improved with 64 owners reporting more than \$25,000 gained or saved. More than 40% of visited owners completed or planned thinning in their woods, creating wildlife habitat, building trails, contacting a logger, and harvesting timber assisted by a forester.



Wildlife Management

A popular theme of the web conference seminar series is wildlife habitat creation and maintenance. Three sessions addressed these topics and attracted more than 300 participants representing more than 55,000 acres. Evaluations show that 80% of participants had an improved understanding of simple or complex concepts, and 65% indicated an improved ability with a new skill related to the subjects presented. Twelve Arnot Conservation Education Programs complemented web conferences, reaching 250 owners with 3000 acres.

Economic Opportunities

The Maple confection and value-added project conducted 16 hands-on workshops in three states and Canada in 2008. Producers learned to test syrup for confections and about syrup crystallization, marketing, and pricing value-added products. Of the more than 250 participants, 88% have increased sales of value-added maple products by an average of 32%. The workshops demonstrated new potential products for producers. These new products were developed in cooperation with Cornell Food Venture Center staff. A comprehensive manual complements the workshops.



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