

The Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) Program at Michigan State University, FY 2008

The Renewable Resources Extension Act funds allocated to Michigan State University are vital to delivering forestry programming and education to citizens and organizations in Michigan. Each dollar of RREA funding is leveraged with approximately \$6 of state and private funds. The following are examples of successful programs benefiting directly from RREA support.

Family Forest Succession. As in many other states, the Michigan forest owner population is aging. Nearly one-third of all family forest owners are estimated to be over the age of 65. General workshops on family forest succession are now being offered to family forest landowners and technical providers throughout the state. Partnering with extension educators specializing in farm financial management and Michigan Department of Natural Resources forestry staff, forestry Extension is developing an in-depth forestry succession module that can be delivered by any forestry professional. To assure consistency and quality in the module, Michigan is working with the U.S. Forest Service to hold quarterly, informal networking conference calls among the Northeastern states to share the latest efforts being made in their respective areas on this topic.

Woody Biomass Energy. Michigan, along with other forest-rich states, has the potential to take advantage of the explosive interest in woody biomass energy. To do this effectively, it is important to assess the status of existing efforts that have been made. Forestry Extension received an RREA Focus Fund grant to articulate issues and establish program priorities for woody biomass energy Cooperative Extension programs. The first step included convening a panel of 23 extension natural resource educators from across the nation to use an in-depth logic model process to produce the inputs, outputs, and desired outcomes related to biomass energy Extension programs.

Forest Landowner Education. Michigan has two important programs that directly serve family forest landowners: the Master Woodland Steward and the Conservation Steward programs. Participants in the 2008 Master Woodland Steward Program expect to actively manage their woodlands in the next year, with an average of six new practices per respondent. Said one participant “[The program] has given me more confidence in talking with a forester and maybe changing what I thought would be quite simple to

something more complex.” The companion program, the Conservation Stewards program led by wildlife Extension partners, was offered in two southern Michigan counties. Participants received more than 40 hours of training on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems during weekly evening sessions and two field sessions. The Conservation Stewards program results in collaborative efforts among community-based volunteers, conservation organizations and agencies, and educational institutions to lead conservation management activities on public and private lands in the state.



Master Woodland Stewards practicing forest inventory techniques

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