

## **Forest Management**

Have you ever thought about what you would most like from your forest or woodland? Are you a hunter? Do you like to photograph birds and other wildlife? Do you just want a peaceful retreat? Do you want to cut some firewood or generate periodic income from your woods? Are you concerned about maintaining your woodland's health and how that influences LaBarque Creek? Our woodlands in Missouri and in the LaBarque Creek watershed are constantly changing. Trees get older, some die and new ones take their place over time. There are also introduced exotic species such as bush honeysuckle, vining Japanese honeysuckle, and others that out compete and displace native species over time. The decisions you make and actions you take with your woods can make a profound impact on whether they will meet your goals in the future or not. Even the decision not to do anything can have a profound impact, and sometimes active management is critical to meeting your future wishes.

Good management decisions can be used to maintain or improve habitat for wildlife, to sustainably produce timber or firewood, to manage for species diversity, and provide for scenic beauty. The good news is that many objectives overlap. For example, a healthy woodland provides excellent habitat for animals, is aesthetically pleasing, and can produce good wood for heating or wood products. Overall, our woodlands depend on us and our management decisions to ensure their future health and the health of the LaBarque Creek watershed.

Managing your woodland can be a rewarding and sometimes even profitable activity which will enhance its health, productivity, and your enjoyment. Protect your woodlands for future generations. The best way to get started is to seek advice from a professional forester who will help you get the information you need to make your management decisions. Jason Villwock is the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)'s new Resource Forester covering Jefferson County – including LaBarque Creek watershed, and is available to provide such assistance. If you have 10 acres of woods or more, Jason can come out and visit your property with you if you like. If you have less than 10 acres of woods, he is happy to visit with you over the phone or in person at his office at Rockwoods Reservation. Jason can be reached at (636) 458-2236 extension 228.