



Kansas Forest Service

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July 8, 2011

Mary Miller
Lawrence/Douglas County Planning Division
P.O. Box 708
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Dear Mary,

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you and other members of the Lawrence/ Douglas County planning office concerning a federally-funded grant opportunity between your organization and the Kansas Forest Service. After visiting with your organization's staff now several times, it appears that we have similar interests regarding the forest and natural resource.

Eastern Kansas is the most wooded part of Kansas, with Douglas County offering many natural and forested resources to residents and visitors alike. The Kansas Forest Service has developed a Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy that addresses our agency's priorities and helps us identify areas of the state to devote resources to. Douglas County and Lawrence fall within the I-70 corridor that we have identified as a priority area within the state.

The assessment, education and related activities that we have talked about for Douglas County is actually an extension of work that the Kansas Forest Service and our partners there have undertaken in the 9-county metropolitan Kansas City area the past couple of years. The first phase of the Kansas City project was to assess the natural and forest resource using a model called i-Tree Eco. Using this model, field crews collected tree, shrub and groundcover data from randomly gridded plots. We have learned that the forest resource in the metro Kansas City area is comprised of approximately 249,450,000 trees that provide hundreds of millions of dollars in air quality service to the region, more than 14 million dollars in energy conservation benefits and half a million dollars of benefit by avoiding the release of emissions from power plants. The structural value of these trees is placed at 93 billion dollars (structural value is defined as the cost of having to replace a tree with a similar tree). Having a similar understanding of the forest resource in Douglas County would complement the work that your office has already completed with the Environmental Chapter and provide a foundation of understanding based on data for Douglas County.

For a similar project to be successful in Douglas County, the Kansas Forest Service will certainly need your help and support. In the metro area, Mid-America Regional Council is the local planning agency who supplied local coordination, GIS and other local services and will be instrumental in the educational and outreach component of the second phase of the project there. I think we can duplicate to a certain degree the partner responsibilities as undertaken in the Kansas City project.



Your organization has GIS staff and expertise so I would ask for your help in creating plot maps that the data collection crews would use in the field. I currently have forestry contacts in Baldwin City and Lawrence but lack contacts in Eudora and LeCompton and would ask for your assistance in reaching those potential stakeholders. We can team up on the education and outreach to city and county staff, city and county commissions and other interested parties, as well as the development of project materials. It may be that data gleaned from the project could assist in the educational component of the Environmental Chapter as well as providing a base for policy development and implementation. We should plan to maintain regular contact as crews work in the county and the project progresses. There may be unforeseen local issues or details that arise during data collection or project implementation that I may need to request assistance for.

I had originally thought to undertake data collection before leaf drop this fall but the time remaining to do everything required before data collection is just too short. There would be a lot of administrative details that both our agencies would have to complete before crews go in to the field. Instead, I would propose that data collection begin in later May 2012, after leaf out, and finish by mid to late July 2012. It is necessary that leaves be on the trees to collect certain pieces of information required by the i-Tree Eco model.

I look forward to the opportunity to work with your organization, commissions and cities in Douglas County and all other interested parties. Please do not hesitate to let me know of any questions or comments to what I have described or proposed here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kim Bomberger".

Kim Bomberger
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