

Illinois' 188,000 private woodland owners, who control an estimated 82% of the state's 4.86 million acres of forestland, are the primary audience targeted by RREA funds. In Illinois, RREA funding is leveraged with state monies and private gifts estimated at around \$50,000 per year.

Extension Forestry addresses forest moths in research and outreach

Moths are critical parts of forested ecosystems and vital food sources for many wildlife species. The Extension Forestry Program has started a research project to better understand the implications of forest management on moths. Using demonstration sites at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center and the Trail of Tears State Forest, Extension Specialist Kevin Rohling set moth traps in thinned, burned, thinned+burned, and unmanaged forests. Moth diversity and abundance is being investigated along with functional groups. As a companion to the research, Extension forestry offered educational moth hikes to help landowners and the public better understand and recognize moths and their importance to Illinois forests. Through these events, the public learned how moths can be striking in appearance, important forest pollinators and herbivores, and food sources for species of conservation concern, such as bats and nightjars.



Luna moth

New white oak plantation provides research and educational opportunities for southern Illinois

Extension Forestry partnered with the University of Kentucky and the Shawnee National Forest to host a White Oak Genetics and Tree Improvement Program progeny study/demonstration site. 1,100 white oak seedlings were planted on the 3.5-acre site protected by an 8' tall



White oak seedling

“After 30 years on my tree farm, I’m turning it over to my granddaughter and her partner. They signed up for your seminar and I attended with them. It allowed us to have a robust conversation after the seminar about how the various topics applied to our farm. It was the perfect educational experience to get them started. They commented that they felt much more comfortable about what they are undertaking.” Forest Management Webinar participant, Sept. 2023

fence. Data will be collected on the trees for 15 years; afterwards, the planting will continue as a demonstration site and seed orchard. As well as quantifying the variation in white oak and identifying improved traits that have economic and ecological value, the site will provide landowners an opportunity to learn more about tree planting, managing a plantation, and white oak conservation and management. Extension Forestry Specialists have already led field tours at the site and included it in tree planting workshops. 400–500 more white oak seedlings from 18 new locations will be added in the spring.

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