

F I N A L R E P O R T

JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTRY
OF THE
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON NATURAL RESOURCES

January, 1981

The Subcommittee was authorized by the Legislative Council to hold two meetings to study the status of forestry in Iowa. The members of the Subcommittee include the following:

Senator Dale Tieden, Co-chairperson
Representative Sonja Larsen, Co-chairperson
Senator James Gallagher
Senator Arthur Gratias
Senator Elizabeth Miller
Senator Berl Priebe
Representative Hurley Hall
Representative Kyle Hummel
Representative James O'Kane
Representative Phil Tyrrell

The Subcommittee held its first meeting on October 16, 1980 and received testimony from the forestry section of the Iowa State Conservation Commission, the Department of Soil Conservation, the Department of Forestry at Iowa State University and several other citizens including members of forestry, outdoor and conservation groups and the wood industry. The Subcommittee learned that Iowa is losing twenty thousand acres of woodland each year. The Subcommittee was informed that between 1954 and 1974 Iowa's woodland declined from 2.5 million acres to 1.5 million acres. They also learned that the State Nursery, which is located on 100 acres at Ames, sells two million tree seedlings annually and has sold out its entire stock for the past five years. The forestry section has a two to three month backlog in requests for assistance. Persons appearing at the meeting related that Iowa's woodlands have been lost primarily through conversion to agricultural use and poor management. They noted that the conversion of hillsides from woodland to row-crop farming greatly increases soil erosion.

The second meeting of the Subcommittee was held on November 14, 1980. State Forester Gene Hertel spoke to the Subcommittee. He related that the budget of the State Nursery is \$250,000, that \$75,000 are realized from the sale of their stock and that their price is about one-third that of commercial nurseries. The Subcommittee discussed the subsidy of the seedlings and the minimum purchase requirement of the State Nursery. The Subcommittee also discussed possible incentives for persons to plant or preserve woodlands.

The Subcommittee made the following recommendations:

1. That a state nursery be established in southern Iowa if possible on existing state-owned land to expand production and to take advantage of an earlier growing season and lower land prices if land must be purchased.

2. That up to one-half or one-third of an acre per farmstead which is planted in trees or shrubs be exempt from property taxes with the state funding the revenue loss to the political subdivisions.

No bill drafts were requested.