



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Shannon Ramsay, Trees Forever 319-981-6257
Paul Millice, Iowa Woodland Owners Association, 319-331-1238

Iowa Tree Advocates Call for Action after Iowa Forestry Bureau is Dissolved

MARION, Iowa (July 6, 2017)— Iowa Woodland Owners Association (IWOA) and Trees Forever are disappointed with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (Iowa DNR) decision to dissolve its Forestry Bureau and calls on Iowa DNR leadership to reconsider its course of action.

“Breaking apart the forestry bureau and spreading staff across three different existing bureaus diminishes services,” Trees Forever Founding President and CEO Shannon Ramsay said. “It will create a lack of continuity for services. We’re concerned about the effectiveness of this approach when forestry professionals are put under the supervision and budget constraints of bureaus with different priorities. For example, Iowa DNR forestry funds could be siphoned to other department activities that don’t align with the needs of Iowa’s trees and forests. In addition, we are concerned about the potential for a lack of transparency in the future with funding streams earmarked for forestry.”

Iowa Woodland Owners Association (IWOA) and Trees Forever asks for these actions:

- Keep all forestry positions under one department
- For that department to have “forestry” in the title.
- Take measures to ensure that federal grant dollars will not be lost due to any restructuring.

“It’s important to keep forestry together within one bureau and to keep forestry in the title of the bureau because the mission of Iowa DNR forestry shouldn’t be distracted by other department priorities,” IWOA President Paul Millice said. “We fear that water quality, Iowa woodland owners and the Iowa forestry industry will suffer under the recent decisions.”

As members of the Coalition for Iowa’s Woodlands and Trees, IWOA and Trees Forever will be working with Coalition members to advocate for Iowa forestry.

“At a time when Iowa is besieged with emerald ash borer (EAB), forestry needs to be a priority. Iowa communities need help. We understand budget concerns, but we don’t agree this is the best course of action for Iowa,” Ramsay said. “The Iowa forestry industry as a whole employs more than 33,000 people and generates \$4 billion annually, and this includes many small family-owned businesses. Forestry landowners contribute to better air and water quality, pollinator habitat and provide many other benefits.”

The Coalition for Iowa's Woodlands and Trees includes Trees Forever, IWOA, Iowa Nut Growers, Iowa Tree Farm Committee, the Iowa Urban Tree Council and Amana Forestry. Together these partners voice concerns about trees and forests.

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Trees Forever, a nonprofit organization nationally headquartered in Marion, Iowa, is dedicated to planting trees, encouraging volunteer and youth involvement and environmental stewardship. For more information, visit www.treesforever.org.