



**Megan Biesele, Land Conservationist, and Bill Zappe, Tyler County Game Warden**

### **Tyler County Forest Landowner Association Meeting**

Megan Biesele, Ph.D., and Co-manager of the McAfee Nature Preserve Stewardship Committee, explained conservation land easements to those attending the Tyler County Forest Landowner Association meeting Saturday, March 29, 2008 at the Tyler County Extension Office, 201 Willow Street in Woodville. Dr. Biesele, niece of Jerry and Geraldine McAfee who donated the 67-acre McAfee Nature Preserve to the Natural Area Preservation Association (NAPA) in 1992, is exploring a conservation easement to protect the preserve. The property is located just west of Woodville, Texas city limits between Cobb Mill Road and Spring Valley Road (CR 1020). A conservation easement, unlike an access easement, is a legal agreement between a landowner and the holder of the easement that may provide substantial income, property and estate tax benefits to the landowner. A conservation easement enables the landowner to protect the land in perpetuity and is irrevocable, even if the land is sold or bequeathed. A conservation easement may permit such activities as recreation, farming, hunting, fishing, bird watching, or scientific research while prohibiting development of the land.

On a different topic of interest to forest landowners, Bill Zappe, Tyler County Game Warden, explained the rights, liabilities and responsibilities of landowners relative to hunters and hunting leases. Hunting leases, selling for \$600 to \$2000 per hunter, can be a source of income to landowners. The landowner is required to purchase a Hunting Lease License which he can photocopy and distribute to each of the hunters on the lease. The landowner is strongly encouraged to obtain secondary insurance and to set guidelines for the hunters. Since most disputes occur on property lines, it is advisable to specify an appropriate distance back from the fence for hunting. Landowners should mark property lines with fences, "no trespassing" signs, and/or purple paint. It is illegal to fire across a property line. If a landowner sees an unauthorized hunter on his property or shooting across the property line onto his property, the landowner may call a Game Warden. Tyler County's two game wardens issued over 100 tickets in November, 2007.

Relative to harvesting trees, Richard Scott, from International Paper's Mansfield, Louisiana office, described a selective thinning strategy for pine plantations, which are tree farms that are uniformly planted with nursery-grown seedlings. Mr. Scott showed pictures of equipment with track rotation maneuverability and with a cutting head on a knuckle boom that can reach into the stand to select specific trees. The expensive track machines allow loggers to work when rubber tire machines would sink because of wet ground conditions.