

12 THINGS

AFA did for its members in 2019...



January – The 92nd Arkansas General Assembly convened January 14. The association coordinated multiple special events and projects to heighten the forestry profile in the state including Forestry Day at the Capitol, a luncheon for members of the General Assembly and staffers, the always popular Legislative Maps, and weekly Legislative Updates. AFA was successful in advocating for a forestry position to be maintained on the Arkansas Pollution Control & Ecology Commission.

February – AFA supported the logging and forest landowner community in and around Lincoln County to develop win-win solutions to road damage issues. AFA joined an overflow crowd at a Lincoln Country Quorum Court meeting to voice concerns over a proposed permit and bonding ordinance on all loggers entering the County. The cooperative effort of loggers, landowners and the County Judge, helped develop a set of requirements that better protect county roads while not overburdening loggers.

March – AFA's second Emerging Leaders Class of 13 young forestry professionals kicked off its two-year program with an introduction to all things AFA. The group participates in timber and forest products tours, interacts with public policy leaders, is introduced to AFA committees, and creates its own group priorities for leadership growth. In addition, the Log A Load for Kids Program's 2019 fundraising campaign kicked off March 1 at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock to celebrate 2018's donation of \$600,000 and reveal plans for their special events in 2019.

April – AFA participated in a panel discussion hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) as part of the American Congressional Exchange. Arkansas Fourth Congressional District Representative Bruce Westerman hosted Congressman Jared Huffman (D, California), as part of the innovative initiative that enables members of Congress to spend time together learning about each other's districts and leading discussions on shared interests.

May – The Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation hosted the 33rd Annual International Project Learning Tree Coordinators' Conference in Little Rock on May 5-10. A total of 113 PLT professionals from 39 states, Washington DC, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Japan attended the conference. Rob Beadel, Director of Forestry Education for AFAEF, coordinated the week-long conference, a first for Arkansas, and received rave reviews from the participants.

June – AFAEF partnered with the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock on their temporary exhibit "Finding Freedom in the Forest". The multi-faceted exhibit explored the historical role and contribution of African-Americans to the timber and forest products industry in Arkansas. AFAEF Forestry Education Director Rob Beadel provided the first of several educational workshops for kids during the month.

July – AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell moderated a "Connecting Educators to Industry" panel of forestry experts at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia in partnership with the University and Economics

Arkansas. AFA leaders Mark Karnes, with the Ross Foundation; Allen Morgan – Hunter-Wasson, Inc., and Pete Prutzman – Kingwood Forestry Services, Inc., shared insight on the employment needs of the forestry community, identified challenges in finding qualified employees, discussed misconceptions about forestry and discussed strategies with the educators on how to encourage students to seek natural resource careers.

August – AFA coordinated the publication of a new "Landowner's Guide to Sustainable Forestry." The 16-page full-color brochure is designed to help forest landowners find the resources they need to prepare a management plan, implement voluntary best management practices for water quality, identify threatened and endangered species, forests of exceptional conversation value and more. In addition to a printed version, the publication is also available on the AFA website at www.arkforests.org.

September – Seven members of the Arkansas forestry community, including AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell, participated in the annual Forest Resources Association (FRA) Fly-In, September 17-19 in Washington, DC. While there, the group met with members and staff of the Arkansas Congressional delegation to advocate for support of three important issues: The Safe Routes Act, H-2B Guestworker Visa Program, and Forest-Based Carbon Neutrality – all of which saw progress by year-end.

October – The 74th AFA Annual Meeting "Seasons of Change", once again attracted more than 280 attendees from all sectors of the timber and forest products community October 8-10, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Little Rock, highlighted by a keynote address from Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson. AFA also participated in a "Future of Forestry" roundtable discussion, facilitated by the University of Arkansas Sam. M. Walton College of Business. In several hours of discussion, the group identified global trends affecting the industry and offered insights into how forestry leaders can respond and grow with the times.

November – AFA was an integral partner in Arkansas's 3rd statewide forum on forests and drinking water, November 4-5 at The Lodge at Mount Magazine. During the forum, Max Braswell, AFA Executive Vice President, moderated a panel discussion on the state's updated Forest Action Plan. State Forester Joe Fox, Doug Zollner with The Nature Conservancy and Scott Meek of Green Bay Packaging provide insight into the history and purpose of the plan, its focus areas – including water quality protection, and why it is important to both the forestry and drinking water communities.

December – Jennifer Johnson, AFA director of business, coordinates one of the nation's largest and best Tree Farm Programs. 2019 was an exceptional year. The program completed 1,367 tree farm inspections and experienced continued growth. As of December, there are 2,578 certified Tree Farms in Arkansas representing 480,441 acres in 62 of the state's 75 counties. Those certified acres are owned by 633 Tree Farmers. Thanks goes out to the volunteers who serve on the committee and do the inspections, the organizations that support Tree Farm, and the Tree Farmers who invest their time and money to sustainably manage their timberland.