AFAEF Annual Meeting Silent Auction Returns for AFA’s 75th Anniversary

After being gone for the past two years, the Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation (AFAEF) is excited to announce the return of the Annual Meeting Silent Auction.

AFAEF’s Annual Meeting Silent Auction returns in 2022 at AFA celebrating 75 years of being the voice of forestry in Arkansas.

In years past, the AFAEF has held its silent auction starting the Tuesday afternoon of the annual meeting. With the transition to a virtual-only event in 2020 and the uncertainty of COVID-19 in 2021, AFAEF decided not to hold this part of the meeting. As we prepare for the Arkansas Forestry Association’s (AFA) 75th anniversary this year, we would like to announce the return of the auction and ask for your help in making it bigger and better.

There are two ways you can make that happen, donating and bidding. Some donations could include vacation packages, memorabilia, art, gift certificates, etc. No donation is too big or too small. The AFAEF would love to see more “big ticket” items for the auction in honor of the anniversary celebration. All donors will have their name or business name featured on the annual meeting programs and in the program.

All donations are tax-deductible, and a tax receipt can be provided upon request. You can contact Mary Spradlin at the AFA office for those who would like to donate. Send emails to maryspradlin@arkforests.org, or you can call (501) 374-2441. She can also help arrange the pickup or delivery of your donation.

The silent auction will be available to all AFA Annual Meeting guests starting at the Opening Reception on Tuesday, October 11, and last until Thursday, October 13. More information about some of what you can expect to find on those tables will be released later this year. All money raised will be used to continue and expand AFAEF’s service delivery to children, educators, timberland owners, and citizens throughout Arkansas.

“We are very excited to bring back the AFAEF Silent Auction this year as we also celebrate 75 years of the Arkansas Forestry Association,” said Director of Forestry Education Rob Beadell. “Many of our members and guests reached out about the absence of the silent auction over the past two years, asking us to bring it back. We hope to see that continued support this year as it returns, hopefully, bigger and better than before.”

Save the Date for AFA’s Night with the Travs

Keep May 27 open this year because that is when the Arkansas Forestry Association will be holding its annual Night with the Travs event.

Join us on May 27 at Dickey-Stephens Park for AFA’s Night with the Travs Event.

Just like in years past, we will gather at Dickey-Stephens Park that night for food, community, and baseball as the Arkansas Travelers take on the Amarillo Sod Poodles. Gates will open at 6:05 that night, and a buffet of food will be served at the Track’s Inn Picnic Area at the same time. Attendees can watch the first pitch being thrown at 7:05 p.m.

Tickets for this event will be available online soon. Keep an eye on future editions of Tree Talk and our e-newsletter Tree Mail for more information on ticket sales.

One important piece of information to keep in mind this year is that you will NOT be able to purchase tickets at the last minute. You must pre-order all of the tickets you will need for your party before May 13 due to deadlines with the ballpark.

We at AFA are excited to continue this baseball tradition this year and hope to see everyone on May 27. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the AFA office at (501) 374-2441.
T he Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division (hereafter simply the Forestry Division) assists private landowners with forest management decisions. Forestry Division field personnel make forest health recommendations and can respond to reports of tree mortality caused by forest disturbances, such as insects and diseases. This report briefly summarizes the forest disturbances and damage agents in Arkansas that were identified during the 2021 calendar year.

Forest Resource Introduction
Arkansas’s forests cover 19 million acres, which is approximately 56% percent of the state’s land area. Most of the state’s forested land, some 13.1 million acres, is in non-industrial private ownership, with approximately 2.5 million acres is national forest. Major forest types in the state include oak-hickory,lobolly-shortleaf pine, oak pine, and bottomland hardwood. This report will reference the Level III Ecoregions shown in the map below. Loblolly pine dominates the South Central Plains ecoregion, and it is the most abundant tree species by volume, and shortleaf pine follows second in statewide volume estimates. Shortleaf pine is abundant in the Ouachita Mountains. The most abundant hardwood species, listed in order of greatest volume, are white oak, sweetgum, post oak, northern red oak, black oak, and southern red oak.

Freeze Damage
On April 30, 2021, an aerial survey was conducted to observe freeze damage and delayed leaf out in Northwest Arkansas. The Benton Mountain ecoregion experienced the most freeze damage, but effects could be observed statewide. The freeze event occurred from April 20th to 22nd. In all areas flown, lower valleys exhibited freeze damage and an observable delayed leaf out. Damage to the trees was also suspected. Since damage could be seen across all counties flown, no spatial data was collected with Digital Mobile Sketch Mapper. Shown below is a Sentinel II image east of Sulphur Springs; damage can be seen below a distinct elevation level.

Forest Health Highlights for 2021
By Chandler Barton, Arkansas Department of Agriculture - Forestry Division

CALANDER OF EVENTS
March 9
9:00 a.m. - PJT Steering Committee Meeting
AFA Office/Zoom
Little Rock
March 14
10:00 a.m. - Program Committee Meeting
AFA Office/Zoom
Little Rock
March 17
11:30 a.m. - WOW Lunch & Learn: Managing Forests for Ecosystem Services Zoom
March 23
8:30 a.m. - Tree Farm Inspector Training Zoom
1:00 p.m. - LMP Training Zoom
March 25
11:30 a.m. - Landowner Zoom: Forest Pests, What’s Causing Concern? Zoom
April 6
10:00 a.m. - AFA Executive Committee Meeting
AFA Office/Zoom
Little Rock
April 15
AFA Office Closed

This graphic shows the Level III Ecoregions discussed in this report.

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Satellite image of freeze damage in the valleys of Sulphur Springs.

Needlecast
Browning needles were reported on lobolly pine (Pinus taeda) in eighteen counties including Calhoun, Clark, Cleveland, Dallas, Garland, Grant, Howard, Hot Springs, Howard, Little River, Montgomery, Ouachita, Perry, Pike, Polk, Saline, Sevier, Scott, and Yell. The unhealthy appearance of these pine stands was observable by aerial survey (see the locations of affected stands in the map on page three) and a ground survey was needed to determine the cause. Samples were collected in the counties of Grant, Lafayette, Montgomery, Howard, Ouachita, and Sevier. These samples were sent to pathologists for laboratory diagnosis. In 2020, researchers in Georgia and Florida confirmed the presence of brown spot needle blight, (Leucothecia acicola), and the pathogen is potentially a contributing factor in the disturbance. L. acicola, previously known as Myrothecium ramosissimum, is a known as a serious pest in longleaf pine as well as Christmas tree plantings of Scots pine. Several landscape-scale issues with needle blight are not discussed in scientific literature, especially with respect to lobolly pine. Another needle cast fungus (Rhytisma acerinum) was isolated from these samples. The black sporulating structures found on browning needles disperse spores onto newly developed needles, and the disease also infects needles when environmental conditions favor the fungus. The widespread nature of infected continued on page 3

Forest Health Highlights, cont.

sites may have resulted from the amount of heavy rain fall, record high snow falls, and a freeze event within a span of three months. Moreover, high temperatures between these events allowed the disease to progress.

For simplicity, the identified species are collectively referred to as “needlecast” in this report. Many affected stands of lobolly had already been thinned and stem density was not overstocked. The open structure of these lobolly stands allow wind to pass through easily, thus dispersal and success of needlecast infection throughout the stand could be increased with rainy and stormy weather. It could also be assumed that these planted lobolly stands feature susceptible genetic properties.

The map shown below are the total sites of needlecast recorded between March and July in 2021. The needlecast surveys covered 4,494,309 acres of land across the south-western counties of the state. In total, 34,168 acres of forest was recorded with needlecast infections. In the map below the points shown in purple were the locations were samples were collected and confirmed to have brown spot needle blight (L. acicola).

This map shows the area that had 50% or more discoloration and the location where the peak was located.

The recovery of vegetation following anhydrous ammonia damage isn’t well documented, but the Forestry Division is continually monitoring the affected vegetation for signs of mortality. The Forestry Division will routinely visit each month to monitor for secondary issues such as bark beetle activity or other signs of distress. The event happened at the end of the growing season when most trees were preparing for winter dormancy, so the true effects of the disturbance may not become apparent until spring leaf out. The previous map shows the area that had 50% or more discoloration as well as the location where the pipeline leaked occurred.

This is only part of Barton’s report into Arkansas’s Forest Health in 2021. To continue reading about topics including common residential issues, Lns Eagrher Beelte and Deodar Weel, just to name a few, you can visit arkforests.org/page/media to find the full PDF.

The Arkansas Forestry Association would like to thank Barton and the Forestry Division for all of their work and research that went into creating this report.

This year’s Tree Farmers Conference will be similar in style to the 2020 session.

“We have a very exciting lineup of guests and presentations for this year’s conference,” Arkansas Tree Farmers Program Administrator Jennifer Johnson said. “We hope tree farmers from around the country will be able to join us as we learn together.”

This event will be free but will be virtual-only via Zoom. You must register for this event to receive the log in information. To do so, visit the calendar at arkforests.org or call the AFA office at (501) 374-2441.

Calling all tree farmers! The 8th Annual Arkansas Tree Farmer Conference, is scheduled for Friday, May 20.

The event, starting at 8:30 that morning, will begin with the assessment results of the Arkansas Tree Farm Program with Program Administrator Jennifer Johnson. Talitha Hollaway with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division follows with a discussion on pesticide usage and tracking. After a quick break, ArbenC’s Greg Hay will present information on the power and performance of advanced genetics.

Beginning at 11:00 a.m., district tree farmer awards will be presented by the Tree Farm Program. Attendees will enjoy a lunch break before both Tim White, with Golden Oak Forestry, and Jeff Denman, with NCX, discuss forest carbon in Arkansas, both past and present. Their presentation will highlight how landowners an overview of forest carbon programs and what they should consider when evaluating if any of these programs are optimal for their land owners. There will then be one more break before our final presentation on drone usage in today’s forest management with Budo Rakicovic from IVM Solutions.

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