Texarkana Log a Load Shoots Trap for Kids

On March 23, teams from Arkansas and Texas gathered in Texarkana to help raise almost $30,000 for Arkansas Children’s Hospital.

Teams of four met at Rocky Creek Outdoors for the Texarkana Log a Load for Kids chapter’s Second Annual Sporting Clays and Trap Shoot. Emily Clontz, one of the organizers of the event said they raised over $27,000 from the silent auction, registration, and a shotgun raffle.

This year, the group went above and beyond their first chapter event last year. Clontz explained that one of the main differences was the addition of the trap event. Most of the teams that participated consisted of high schoolers from the surrounding area that were sponsored by local businesses.

“Adding the trap event not only increased participation but also promoted Log a Load for Kids to the public that was not aware of the organization,” Clontz said.

The chapter is already starting to get ideas for next year that include more communication in the community, more gun raffles and working to get more teams involved.

Clontz said the event would not have been possible without the help of their volunteers, Rocky Creek Outdoors, the Texarkana chapter members and the sponsor.

“We are grateful that the businesses and members of this community support Arkansas Children’s Foundation,” Clontz said.

Night with the Travs Ticket Sales to End Soon

Tickets for AFA’s Night with the Travs on Friday, May 24 are still available, but only for a little while longer.

Last year, over 120 people joined us at Dickey-Stephens Park for baseball and comradery. Executive Vice President Max Braswell said it’s like a family reunion at the ballpark.

“It’s like a family reunion at the ballpark,” said Max Braswell. The last day to buy tickets is May 17.

“AFA Night with the Travs continues to be a big hit with our members, their family, and friends, and is unlike any meeting or event we hold during the year,” said Braswell. “You get to see old friends, eat as much food as you want, and the only agenda is to enjoy the game and the fellowship.”

Each ticket not only gets you into the game, but it also gets you unlimited food and soft drinks for two hours. They cost $10 for each person older than three years old and those three years old and younger will get their ticket for free. Food and drinks will be served beginning at 6:45 p.m. before the Travelers take on the Springfield Cardinals.

The last day to purchase tickets is May 17, a week before the game. You can go to https://www.arkforests.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1209243 to purchase your tickets today.

92nd Arkansas General Assembly Comes to a Close

By: Max Braswell

After 87 days of work, the 92nd General Assembly recessed on April 10 and adjourned on April 24. On the final day of the session, lawmakers completed action on the last of Governor Asa Hutchinson’s 4-T (Taxes, Transportation, Transformation and Teacher Pay), legislative agenda by sending him HB 1763, the 2,049-page state government transformation bill. He signed the bill into law the next day making it Act 910 of the session. In addition, they completed work on a $5.75 billion general revenue budget. Earlier in the week, the Governor signed bills that require out-of-state Internet retailers to collect sales and use taxes; cut corporate income taxes; increase the homestead property tax exemption; and change who oversees franchise taxes.

Over the last few weeks of the session, I shared information on the pro-business tax reforms included in SB 576 by Senator Bart Hester, R – Cave Springs, and we discussed throughout the session, the significant components of HB 1763, by Rep. Andy Davis, R – Little Rock. The bill was a priority for AFA because it will reduce the number of cabinet-level agencies that report to the 12

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Arkansas to Host International Annual Project Learning Tree Conference

Arkansas will play host to the 33rd Annual Project Learning Tree (PLT) International Coordinators’ Conference on May 6-9, in downtown Little Rock. An estimated 120 participants from all 50 states, Washington D.C., Canada, Mexico, and Japan are expected to be in attendance. This conference is a valuable opportunity for PLT program coordinators, facilitators, educators, program sponsors and partners, natural resource professionals, and other environmental education professionals involved in the PLT program to expand their understanding of best practices to advance environmental literacy.

Project Learning Tree is always working to improve best practices to help advance environmental literacy through their annual conference. Innovative sessions and networking opportunities are planned that will provide conference participants with tools and insight to help continue to expand PLT programs locally. The conference will provide opportunities to share knowledge and experiences between program coordinators and partners.

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Poll Yard

It is time for a new Poll Yard question! This month, we are looking at private property security issues so we can provide you with the information you would like to see at the AFA Annual Meeting.

April’s Question:
Private property security issues will be a component of the upcoming AFA Annual Meeting Forest Management Workshop on Tuesday, October 8. Have you had an issue with any of the following on your property?

- Arson
- Timber Theft
- Illegal Dumping
- Logging Equipment Theft or Vandalism
- Trespassing
- Other

What would you like more information on during the workshop on Oct. 8?

You can submit your answer by visiting http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eg7udiosjstup27/start. If you would like your name published, make sure you add it to your answer.
International PLT Conference, con’t.

The support and leadership of PLT State Coordinators, state sponsoring organizations, facilitators, and steering committee members make this conference an unparalleled opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and continue to learn and grow. Staff and volunteers from Arkansas and Washington, D.C., have worked throughout the year to make this conference a signature event. The Arkansas PLT Conference Planning Committee has organized exciting educational adventures as part of the conference, including field trips to Green Bay Packaging mills and forestland sites, dinner at Arkansas Game and Fish Commission’s Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center, and an all-in-all, it was a successful session for the forestry, agriculture and general business community. AFA works hard to be the eyes and ears of forestry, but it takes a collective effort to ensure our interests are protected when thousands of bills are filed. Here is a sampling of the bills we tracked during the session and their status at the time lawmakkers recessed on April 10.

HB 1423 by Rep. Ken Bragg, R – Sheridan is now Act 257. It makes two changes to the law concerning the Arkansas State Board of Registration for Foresters. It deletes language that specifies that a two-year associates degree in forestry must come from a community college or junior college, and removes the timeframe of six months before a candidate who fails an examination may apply for another examination.

HB 1796 by Rep. Jana Della Rosa, R – Rogers was withdrawn by the sponsor. It would have required an applicant to notify adjacent property owners of a permit application or modification before approval by ADEQ.

HB 1833 by Rep. John Maddox, R – Mena is now Act 794. It concerns ATV use on private property and defines protections and responsibilities regarding private

Assembly Comes to a Close, con’t.

The Governor from 42 to 15 and retains a forestry representative on the Arkansas Pollution Control & Ecology Commission, currently filled by the State Forester. In addition, Act 910 lays out the plan for the formal creation of the Arkansas Agriculture Department, which includes the Arkansas Forestry Commission.

The new Act modifies the law concerning the Arkansas Agriculture Department, which includes the Arkansas Forestry Commission.

SB 166 by Sen. John Cooper, R – Jonesboro would have repealed the Nursery Fraud Act of 1919 and eliminated the license requirement of persons operating or working in a nursery. AFA caught this bill early and joined numerous organizations to express concerns. Senator Cooper later pulled the bill.

SB 282 by Sen. Trent Garner, R – El Dorado is now Act 451. It amends the law concerning the sale of timber by a co-owner or coheir to state that a buyer may purchase the timber from unknown or unlocatable co-owners or coheirs of land and remove the timber without the consent of the unknown or unlocatable co-owners or coheirs when at least 60 percent of the ownership interest in the land has consented.

SB 377 by Sen. Missy Irvin, R – Mt. Home is now Act 695. It amends the law concerning the collection and distribution of solid waste disposal and transportation fees. As a component of the bill, $300,000 of the money collected annually will be used to support the Unpaved Roads Program.

SB 408 by Senator Matt Pitsch, R – Ft. Smith is now Act 515. It will require a real estate closing agent to disclose that agriculture operations are near real property located in a rural area and protect the agriculture operation from being considered a public or private nuisance if it employs methods or practices that are commonly or reasonably associated with agriculture production. Silvicultural operations are included in the definition of agriculture operations.

AFA, Partners Discuss Issues with Reps Westerman and Huffman

An estimated 120 people from all 50 states, Washington D.C., Canada, Mexico and Japan are expected to gather in Little Rock for the Conference evening at the ballpark with the Arkansas Travelers.

This event would not possible without the conference sponsors for their generous financial and in-kind support.

AFA was honored to participate in a panel discussion hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) on Friday, April 5 at Garvin Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs, as part of the American Congressional Exchange.

Arkansas Fourth Congressional District Representative Bruce Westerman, a member of the AFA Board of Directors, 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. Like Congressman Westerman, Huffman’s district in northern California, includes some of the state’s most distinctive forests, including giant Redwoods in the Humboldt State Forest.

AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell joined State Forester Joe Fox, Larry Boccarossa, executive director of the Arkansas Timber Producers Association, and Scott Simon, Arkansas director for the Nature Conservancy, in sharing information on forestry and the unique partnerships that typify how work is accomplished in the state. Congressman Westerman is scheduled to travel to Congressman Huffman’s district later this year. BPC plans to conduct 20 similar trips in 2019 with a goal of building mutual respect, decency and civility and to encourage members of Congress to work together based on a common set of facts, shared respect and a better understanding of one another’s perspectives.
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