Arkansas Forestry Association Board of Directors Gather in Hot Springs

The Arkansas Forestry Association’s Board of Directors met early May to hear updates on the actions of the association during the Spring Board Meeting.

That meeting started Thursday, May 2 aboard the Belle of Hot Springs. Board members gathered for an evening of dinner and networking before the discussions began the next morning.

During the meeting, members first heard from District 13 State Senator Alan Clark, R - Lonsdale. The senator reviewed some of the legislation that passed during the 92nd General Assembly, which ended a few weeks earlier.

The AFA staff then gave their reports, which included information concerning promotional material for various AFA events, plans for the Teacher Tours, activities with the Tree Farm Program, and increasing opportunities to promote AFA.

The US Forest Service and the Arkansas Forestry Commission also gave their reports to the board. State Forester Joe Fox discussed topics including the current fire season and the impact of recent staff changes. Fox also talked about forestry partners working together to draw more young people to the industry.

Surprise guest and board member, 4th District U.S. Congressman Bruce Westerman attended the meeting. He updated the board on current legislative initiatives he is working on at the national level.

Gordy Mouw, the SFI Program Participant Relations Director, along with Scott Meek, Arkansas’s SFI/SIC Chairman, presented information on the SFI program on a national and state level.

To wrap up the meeting, George Lease provided the Arkansas Timber Producer Association Logger Training and Education Report. He announced that at the end of August, he would be retiring. Arnold Hameister, the former BMP Coordinator for the Forestry Commission, will replace him at that time.

AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell also provided a quick update on planning for the AFA Annual Meeting scheduled to take place in Little Rock October 8-10.

International Educators Meet in Little Rock for Project Learning Tree Conference

The week of May 6, over a hundred environmental educators from all over the world gathered in Little Rock for the Project Learning Tree (PLT) Conference hosted by Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation’s own Rob Beadel.

Educators from all 50 states and multiple countries spent the week at the DoubleTree on Markham Street discussing ways to educate teachers and students better.

For each conference that an educator attends, they get a bead to put on their tree cookie nametag necklace. Michelle Youngquist, the PLT Coordinator in Idaho, is a “24 beader.” She said the information gathered at this meeting is invaluable to keeping the program going.

“You know it’s hard to believe a whole year has gone by between when you saw some of these people, but we’re all on the...”
Emerging Leaders Take First Tour at Magnolia Seedling Nursery

A group from the second Emerging Leaders class traveled to Magnolia this month to take their first tour at Weyerhaeuser’s Seedling Nursery.

The team met in the morning of May 15 to start with a quick rundown of how the nursery worked from Doug Shelburne, the Nursery Teams/Distribution Manager.

The group then met with Gretchen Schafer, who explained what it takes to acquire and prepare the pine seeds for planting. From there, they had the opportunity to see the process it takes to get the beds ready for sowing.

Very few visitors have the opportunity to experience the process seen by the Emerging Leaders, a point Shelburne reiterated throughout the tour.

“It was very impressive,” Emerging Leader Rachael Godwin said. “Before then, I had no idea what steps it took to plant a seed. The process from planting to harvesting...”

Annual Meeting Landowner Workshop to Address Forest Security

We also asked what other issues you would like to hear addressed by Black and Woodson. Some answers included the best security cameras or locks to use, how to obtain a copy of the laws, and how they could be enforced for both in and out-of-state landowners.

These questions and more will be addressed at the Forest Security section of the Landowner Workshop, which will also include a discussion on herbicide application with Kevin Tucker of Red River Specialties as well as forestry ethics with Dr. Matt Pelkki and Rebecca Montgomery.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 5
10 a.m. - Tree Farm Committee Meeting
AFA Office
Little Rock

June 8
South Central Arkansas Log A Load For Kids Dinner/Auction
Feaster Park
Arkadelphia

June 13-14
10 a.m. - TCT Workshop Series Session 2 Logs to Lumber
PotlatchDeltic Headquarters
Warren

June 14
Central Arkansas Log A Load For Kids Corporate Golf Challenge
Malvern Country Club
Malvern

July 2
9 a.m. - PLT - Project WILD Pollinator Workshop
Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center
Ft. Smith

July 4-5
AFA Office Closed for 4th of July holiday

July 9
10 a.m. - Executive Committee Meeting
AFA Office
Little Rock

Please Note:
For meetings that are held at the AFA Office, please park on the street or in one of the area lots -- do not park in the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce parking lot.
Tree Farmer Conference, con’t.

discussed, one thing he wanted these landowners to take away from this conference is knowing there are many new tools available and soon to be available.

“Also, technology is becoming a big part in forest management, and I hope it can be used to spark interest in younger generations to become involved in the family tree farm,” Cook said.

One of the challenges to making sure these events are beneficial to tree farmers is finding a balance between speakers, networking time, and field time.

“All three are important to keeping landowners engaged for the entire conference,” Cook said.

He heard a lot of good feedback from tree farmers. For some, it was their first time to attend. Cook added that Laura Bosworth’s talk on the changes in the tree farm system was a big highlight.

“It sparked the most questions,” Cook said. “Tree farmers seem to like getting new information that is coming from the national office. The Landscape Management Plan is a new idea, so to speak, and to have tree farmers hear what is happening and why from national is a big deal and means a lot to the landowners. Especially how it will affect them in the future.”

The Tree Farm Committee works hard each year to make sure these gatherings are unique. That includes identifying topics that are relevant and important to tree farmers.

The Tree Farmer Conference is ultimately about landowner education. There will be more opportunities to learn later in the year, like at AFA’s Annual Meeting during the Landowner Workshop. Watch for future editions of the Tree Farm Newsletter to learn when other events will take place.

International Project Learning Tree Conference, con’t.

Educators work together to practice one of the new PLT curriculum modules used during workshops.

same team, and it’s good to get together with them and share what you are doing in your own states because we all have individual programs,” Youngquist said. “To find out what is happening nationally and internationally in the program is always energizing.”

The exchanging of ideas is a big part of this weeklong meeting for many of the educators. That is the case with Beth Foley with the South Carolina Forestry Commission and Matt Schnabel, the South Carolina PLT Coordinator.

One of the things they were excited about was the Green Careers PLT Curriculum Module presented by the national PLT group.

“I think what the commission and our state is really wanting, is to get more high school students and more young people interested in green careers,” Foley said. “So I think that is something we can really incorporate into our programming.”

Schnabel added that he liked that the idea of green careers was going to be introduced to students at a younger age with some of these changes.

The conference was more than just meetings in a hotel throughout the week. Those in attendance had the opportunity to experience what Arkansas has to offer. Many were excited to have the Arkansas River Trail so close to the hotel.

On the second night, the group walked down to the Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center for an Arkansas fish fry.

They also had the opportunity to visit two of Green Bay Packaging’s (GBP) facilities in the Morrilton area with the help of Tim Kibe and Scott Meek, both employees of GBP.

On the final night, it was time for baseball. Those still in town went to see the Arkansas Travelers play at Dickey Stephens Park against the Tulsa Drillers.

ELP Tour, con’t

deploy new ideas to advance the forestry industry in Arkansas,” said Emerging Leader Jessica Clowser. “It is my hope to learn more about the diverse marketing avenues available to small, private landowners and work collaboratively with AFA to harness these opportunities.”

This was just the first tour this group of emerging leaders will be a part of over the next two years. Other possible tours include looking at mills, training in Project Learning Tree and touring family owned tree farms.

Schnabel and Foley said they were surprised at how much Little Rock reminded them of home. Both wished they had more time in the area to see more of the city.

“This year’s PLT conference went off without a hitch,” Beadel said. “Everything went as planned except for the weather. Rain and storms affected our Wednesday field trip to the woods, but we were able to adjust our other tour schedules to accommodate the change. Thanks to local conference planning team members and National PLT staff for working together to make this event a huge success.”

The conference is set to take place in Washington State next year.

Rachael Godwin (left) and Jessica Clowser (right) examine a bed of seedlings.
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