2022 was a significant year in the life of the Arkansas Forestry Association. AFA celebrated its 75th anniversary – a milestone that was the focus of the association’s 77th annual meeting, October 11-13, 2022. If those numbers are confusing, AFA operated as the Arkansas Wood Products Association before it became the Arkansas Forestry Association, and held two annual meetings before 1947. Support for the informative and fun-filled meeting was outstanding with more than 250 attendees and 61 sponsors/exhibitors helping make our Diamond anniversary a celebration to remember.

The past year also saw AFA implement a long-range plan to ensure the continued growth and relevance of the association over the next decade. A committee of AFA leaders worked for more than six months identifying five key result areas and the strategies, tools and action steps that will be implemented. Public policy advocacy on behalf of our members will continue to be AFA’s top priority, followed by a new area of emphasis – workforce development. We will also strive to grow the impact of the AFA Education Foundation, grow the resources it takes to provide the valuable programs and resources our members deserve, and invest in the human and physical resources of the association. With your help, AFA will be more relevant and effective than ever.

The AFA Board of Directors approved the Long-Range plan at its spring meeting in May. Work began immediately, with emphasis on government relations and workforce development. You’ll see more details in the pages that follow but some of the highlights include growing the AFA advocacy team by contracting with Justin Allen of the Wright Lindsey and Jennings firm to provide government affairs and lobbying services, building relationships and identifying issues with the newly formed Legislative Forestry Caucus; doing the same with staff members of the Arkansas Congressional delegation, and taking proactive steps to advocate for the logging sector by asking Governor Asa Hutchinson to re-implement an emergency declaration that would temporarily increase the weight limit to 90,000 pounds on state highways and county roads.

On the workforce development front, approval of the long-range plan allowed AFA to become a formal partner with Be Pro Be Proud, an initiative led by the Associated Industries of Arkansas that is leading the movement to bring a new generation of pride, progress, and professionals to Arkansas’s skilled workforce. AFA’s goal is to create a coalition of timber and forest products industry workforce development partners who will participate in and benefit from the program that reaches more than 12,000 students each year through school and community mobile workshops that showcase a multitude of technical careers and the skills needed to fill them. In addition to Be Pro Be Proud, AFA Education Foundation director Rob Beadel is utilizing the new Project Learning Tree Green Jobs curriculum and the Foundation’s ForestryWorks partnership, to promote career opportunities in the timber and forest products sector.

There were plenty of new initiatives in 2022, but we also continued to grow some already established programs and services this past year. By-the-way, that’s also part of our long-range plan – continuous improvement of our existing programs. Many of our programs center on telling the forestry story to a variety of publics. Our “Voices of Forestry” podcasts now total 35 episodes with a growing audience across the country and around the world. We educated Women Owning Woodlands members each month through a successful virtual series of workshops, while Rob offered landowners a monthly zoom workshop to help them better manage their timberland. In addition, AFA, Tree Farm and AFAEF again teamed up to with KATV Channel 7’s Good Morning Arkansas crew to produce three segments on the positive impact working forests have on our state. This year we actually brought the reporter out into the field for a more hands-on experience. We showcased the importance of forest management and family forest owners’ roles at the Matson tree farm, demonstrated forestry’s contributions to clean water during a session of our Teacher Conservation Tour, and enjoyed an “on-air” 75th Anniversary celebration during the AFA annual meeting.

Now to this year. Long-range plan implementation will be an obvious priority; in the areas where we’ve already made progress plus expansion into growing the foundation, membership and value we provide to the timber and forest products community. The 94th Arkansas General Assembly convened in early January. AFA will be working to advance issues of importance to our members by working closely with the members of the Forestry Caucus, while also starting an initiative to strengthen the AFA Forest Express Political Action Committee. By the end of 2023, we want to be firmly entrenched in our workforce development partnerships with AFA members actively engaged in recruiting the next generation of workers. We plan to continue telling the forestry story through workshops, tours, special events, social media, the news media and more. The forestry story is your story and it’s a great one. I’m honored that the AFA team gets to be your voice.

Please take a moment to review the 2022 Annual Report for a more in-depth glimpse into the activities, programs, and accomplishments of the Arkansas Forestry Association, the AFA Education Foundation, the Arkansas Tree Farm Program, and more. We hope the results continue to earn your investment in our vision to be the voice of forestry in Arkansas.

MAX BRASWELL
Executive Vice President
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Max Braswell
Executive Vice President
Government Affairs

Rob Beadel
Director of Forestry Education
AFA Education Foundation

Seth Stephenson
Communications Coordinator
AFA Communications

In Memoriam

Jennifer Johnson
Director of Business
Arkansas Tree Farm Program
AFA advocates for the sustainable use and sound stewardship of Arkansas’s forests and related resources to benefit members of the state’s forestry community and all Arkansans, today and in the future.

AFAEF serves as an information and education source to Arkansas landowners, teachers and students. It provides educational workshops across the state and publishes educational guides to provide landowners the information they need to make sound forest management decisions.

The Arkansas Tree Farm Program is affiliated with the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). ATFS is a program of the American Forest Foundation and is committed to sustaining forests, watersheds, and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship.

Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an award-winning environmental education initiative designed for teachers and other educators, parents, natural resource professionals, and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12.

The Forest Express PAC was formed to provide financial assistance to candidates for statewide political office who support forestry and the forest products industry. It is non-partisan and not affiliated with any political party.

Since the program began in 1993, loggers and members of the forestry community have demonstrated their commitment to Arkansas’s children by raising millions of dollars for Arkansas Children’s Hospital at events throughout the state.
Forestry Caucus

Work with the newly created Arkansas Forestry Caucus picked up speed in 2022. The association began to develop relationships with Caucus leadership through a series of meetings and hosted a luncheon for the group to introduce them to members and partners within the timber and forest products sector. As the session approached AFA met several times to develop legislative priorities and strategies for accomplishing AFA’s goals for the session.

County Judge Visits

Joined by members of the AFA Logging Committee, Executive Vice President Max Braswell completed the first in what we hope is an ongoing effort to sit down with County Judges across the state to listen to their issues and concerns. The majority of Arkansas’s 75 counties have some forestry presence so it will be a challenge to get to everyone quickly, but AFA is committed strengthening its relationship with these important leaders and finding ways to partner with them.

Westerman Forestry Tour

It was an honor to be a contributor to the success of U.S. 4th District Congressman Bruce Westerman’s forestry tour in April. Congressman Westerman welcomed fellow members of the House Western Caucus to Arkansas to see examples of the partnerships that help make the state one of the nation’s most collaborative and successful working forest states. Along the tour route, Caucus members got to see work done by family forest owners, state partners and activity on our Federal forests.
Sen. Boozman Ag Tour with Goggans

Each August, U.S. Senator John Bozeman, ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, holds an agriculture tour. This year, AFA was honored to work with his staff to include two timber and forest products stops during the week-long event. Stop number one was a tour of the West Fraser sawmill in Russellville to see the production of southern yellow pine lumber from the woodyard to the finished product. Stop number two showcased the Goggans Family Tree Farm in south Arkansas and all that makes it worthy of being the 2022 Arkansas Tree Farm of the Year.

Hiring Justin Allen

AFA expanded its government affairs and lobbying team in September with the hiring of Justin Allen, a partner in the Wright Lindsey & Jennings law firm. Allen will provide contract services to assist AFA with state and local government issues on matters of policy, regulation and legislation. Allen practiced law as a litigator for almost eight years at Wright Lindsey & Jennings before joining the Arkansas Attorney General’s office as Chief Deputy Attorney General. During that time, he gained experience in a wide range of government relations matters. He is a life-long resident of Sheridan, AR, and is well-versed with both the people and issues that make up the timber and forest products sector. He earned his Bachelor’s degree from the University of Arkansas and his J.D. from UALR’s Bowen School of Law.

Weight Limit Request

AFA lead an effort to request that Governor Asa Hutchinson reinstate a short-term Emergency Declaration that was implemented during the early stages of COVId-19 that allowed trucks carrying pulpwood and wood chips to do so at 90,000 pounds. AFA made the request during the height of skyrocketing fuel prices as a way to help off-set high gas and diesel prices. The request was ultimately denied by the Governor, but AFA is proud to have taken this bold step on behalf of the logging sector.
Communications

Responsible Staff: Seth Stephenson, Communications Coordinator

Total Posts: 207
Page Reach: 26,475
Tweet Impressions: 16,516
Twitter Followers: 4,018

Voices of Forestry

- 36 total episodes
- 15,200 total downloads
- 10 sponsored episodes in 2022
- 26 countries reached
Three stories aired on Good Morning AR

- AR Tree Farm Program
- Teacher Conservation Tour
- AFA Annual Meeting

**AFA Emerging Leaders Program**

Graduated six members of the 21-22 class

Offered four tour opportunities

- Baucum Nursery
- Domtar's Ashdown Mill
- Structurlam's Conway CLT Facility
- Goggans Family Tree Farm Tour
Arkansas Tree Farm Program

Responsible Staff: Jennifer Johnson, Director of Business

- **2,584** Certified Tree Farms in AR
- **502,169** Certified Acres
- **95** Tree Farm Inspectors

**2022 Tree Farm Activities**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Women Owning Woodlands Workshops Conducted</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Farm Inspections</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total WOW Workshop Attendees</td>
<td>116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tree Farm Inspectors Trained</td>
<td>26</td>
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In the midst of so many outstanding accomplishments, 2022 will also be remembered for the profound sadness the AFA family experienced through the passing of a beloved member of our staff, Jennifer Lambert Johnson. Jennifer was AFA’s director of business and coordinator of the Arkansas Tree Farm Program. Jennifer was a bright light that touched many, many people both inside and outside of her work at AFA. Throughout her four-year battle with cancer, she was such an inspiration to others. She kept a smile on her face, never complained and continued to work for the members of the association and Tree Farm program.

Jennifer was posthumously honored with the 2022 American Tree System National Leadership Award at its annual leadership conference in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Her husband, Chris Johnson, accepted on her behalf. The American Forest Foundation (AFF) sponsors the American Tree Farm System® National Leadership Award as a way to recognize the efforts of key Tree Farm volunteers who have been instrumental in accomplishing on-the-ground goals, motivating their peers, and educating landowners.

“Jennifer was a beautiful soul and a kindred spirit,” said Angela Wells, Director, Community and Sustained Engagement & ATFS. “I got to know her first as a fellow state Tree Farm program administrator and later as ATFS Director, and always felt a little braver whenever she was in the room. It takes a special person to hold us accountable and do so with compassion.

“Jennifer was such an amazing human. We were so blessed to know her and work with her, such a positive light in the forestry and ATFS community, added Rita Hite, president & CEO, American Forest Foundation. “Thank you to her family for sharing her with us.”

Thank you Jennifer for allowing us to know you, to work with you and to call you our friend. We are all better for having you as part of our AFA family for the last 12 years.
AFA Education Foundation

Responsible Staff: Rob Beadel, Director of Forestry Education

- Hosted and/or participated in 54 landowner events statewide & online
- Engaged over 1,506 landowners and landmanagers
- 50,700 total acres of forestland represented

- Hosted 277 students from 10 schools during Green Careers Expo in April 2022
- 23 businesses, industries, governmental agencies, academia, & conservation organizations exhibited
- AFAEF joined Be Pro Be Proud, which is another tool along with ForestryWorks for workforce development
• 35 professional development workshops held
• 536 formal & non-formal educators trained
• 22 education & community programs reached 189 schools, 1,145 students & over 681 adults

June 6-7 Pollinators & Pollinator Habitat: 25 attendees

June 23-24 Prescribed Fire: 24 attendees

July 21-22 Woods & Watersheds: 12 attendees

TCT Program Partners
AR Dept. of Ag - Forestry Division
AR Game & Fish Commission
AR Project Learning Tree
Beaver Watershed Alliance
Central Arkansas Water
Pheasant Forever & Quail Forever
AR Dept. of Natural Heritage
AR Dept. of Energy & Environment
AFA's 77th Annual Meeting

- Logger of the Year: Beau & Tyler Jones
- AFA President's Award: Rep. Ken Bragg & Joe Fox
- Outstanding Forestry Educator: Dr. Becky McPeake
- Tree Farmer of the Year: The Goggans Family
- Communicator of the Year: Leslie Cooper

- 61 sponsors/exhibitors
- More than 250 attendees
Join us Sept. 26-28 at the Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort for our 78th Annual Meeting!

When:  
**Sept. 26-28, 2023**

Where:  
**Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort**  
2705 Central Ave.  
Hot Springs, AR 71901

Keep an eye on AFA publications throughout the year for more information on how to register.