AFA Celebrates 75 Years During 77th Annual Meeting

For our 75th Anniversary, AFA provided some special offerings for our 77th Annual Meeting.

Along with 280 guests, the Arkansas Forestry Association celebrated its 75th anniversary during our 77th Annual Meeting at the DoubleTree in Little Rock on October 11-13.

The association wanted to give our guests something special to celebrate this moment in our history. The first of these new offerings was the location. While everyone visited with exhibitors or fellow members of the community, they had an excellent view of the Arkansas River. The DoubleTree also put us right on the River Market with plenty of recreational activities for everyone to partake in during their off hours.

Our meeting began the afternoon of Tuesday, October 11, with registration and our general session, where AFA had an excellent lineup of speakers. The first of which was Dr. Don Bragg with the USDA Forest Service who provided a history lesson on forestry in Arkansas. A quick break separated Bragg and our next guest Dr. Joe Conrad from the Warnell School of Forestry in Georgia. He provided information on log truck insurance premiums, claims and transportation safety practices.

Our guests enjoyed a nice lunch at the Robinson Center before sitting down for another special event coordinated by the association. Peggy Clark with Clark Timberlands, State Forester Joe Fox, former AFA staff member Susan Glaze, and Frank Wilson with Wilson Bros. Logging all sat down to take a trip down AFA memory lane. The four discussed some of their cherished memories of the association with Brasswell moderating.

Our last two speakers for the afternoon took the stage after one last break. Dr. Melissa Wilson with Wilson Bros. Logging all sat down to take a trip down AFA memory lane. The four discussed some of their cherished memories of the association with Brasswell moderating.

AFA Presents Six Awards to Outstanding Forestry Members

On Thursday, October 13, the Arkansas Forestry Association presented six awards to some excellent members of the forestry community in the Natural State.

Videos for each of our winners can be found on the AFA YouTube page at tinyurl.com/22AFAAwards.

For those unable to watch, we wanted to highlight the winners one more time. Congratulations again to all of our winners. It is people like them who make Arkansas forestry so successful.

Loggers of the Year: Beau & Tyler Jones

Beau and Tyler Jones are fourth-generation loggers from Fountain Hill, AR, who set the standard for professional loggers and business owners. As the leaders of R.D. Jones Logging, Inc., and father and son team, they have adhered to a plan of success since they were young—learning the business in the summer, then on to college to earn their respective degrees in accounting (Beau) and business (Tyler). Today, they operate four crews and a team of 36 employees. The operation includes 10 contract trucks and 10 of their own to haul logs to facilities across the region, primarily from Weyerhaeuser lands.


Our Emerging Leaders Program members along with a few guests gathered at Rock Town Distillery for the annual ELP Social. Our Emerging Leaders Program members along with a few guests gathered at Rock Town Distillery for the annual ELP Social. The group had the opportunity to learn about how some local liquor is made using wood products.

The next morning saw the beginning of our general session, where AFA had an excellent lineup of speakers. The first of which was Dr. William J. O’Brien from RDIV Renewables Resource Development followed providing information on frequent questions and considerations for solar development.

The workshop wrapped up with a talk about forestry ethics with retired U of A Cooperative Extension Service employee Caroll Guffey.

After a quick AFA Board of Directors meeting, everyone gathered in our exhibit hall for the opening reception.

AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell welcomed our guests to this year’s conference and invited Charlie McConnell, our premier sponsor Farm Credit, to say a few words before we parted ways for dinner.

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Kreye from Pennsylvania State University provided her presentation on opportunities for managing forest carbon in the U.S. before U.S. Congressman Bruce Westerman took the stage to provide a federal forest policy update.

For the final event of the day everyone made it across the river to Dickey-Stephens Park for our annual Fish Fry. Once everyone had their fill of Adams Catfish and Loblolly ice cream, AFA started the “Diamonds in the Outfield” event. After all the jewelry boxes had been opened, Lauren Cannon went home with our one-carat diamond necklace from J. Oliviers. It wouldn’t be an AFA Fish Fry without our AFA Education Foundation Gun Raffle. Three decks of cards were sold but only the one card held by April Nappier was the winner.

For our final day, everyone gathered for our Awards Breakfast, where we honored some of the excellent members of the Arkansas Forestry community.

Overall, we had an excellent event this year, which could not have happened without the support of our sponsors. Their help allowed us to make this year’s event one to remember. A special thank you to everyone who joined us this year to celebrate 75 years of AFA.

Planning for our 78th Annual Meeting is already well underway. We will gather in Hot Springs at the Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort from September 26-28. Keep an eye on 2023 Tree Talks for more information.

AFA Celebrates 75 Years During Annual Meeting, con’t.

Educator of the Year: Dr. Becky McPeake

Dr. Becky McPeake is the Professor of Wildlife Extension Education for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service and Arkansas Forest Resources Center.

In this capacity, she has served county extension agents and their clientele for 23 years providing advice on wildlife damage management, habitat enhancement, wildlife enterprise, and 4-H youth education. Her passion is connecting people with wildlife and nature, and helping resolve conflicts with wildlife using science-based data in presentations, demonstrations, workshops, exhibits, trainings, seminars, videos, news releases, and social media.

AFA Presents Six Awards, con’t.

AFA President’s Award: Rep. Ken Bragg

Representative Ken Bragg is serving his fifth term in the Arkansas House of Representatives. He represents District 15, which includes portions of Grant, Hot Springs, and Jefferson counties. For the 93rd General Assembly, Rep. Bragg serves on the Arkansas Legislative Council, House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, & Economic Development, House Education Committee, and the Joint Committee on Energy. He served as majority leader from 2014-2016. Since beginning his work at the capitol, Bragg has been a champion for the forestry community.

AFA President’s Award: Joe Fox

As Arkansas’s State Forester, Joe Fox directs the Forestry Division of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. He joined the Division in May 2012. Preceding the appointment to State Forester, he was the Director of Conservation Forestry for the Arkansas Field Office of The Nature Conservancy. He directed and promoted conservation forestry project development, conservation planning, and forest land acquisition throughout the state. Fox is a native Arkansan who worked as a procurement forester in a family-owned lumber business in Pine Bluff and Sheridan for over 20 years.

Tree Farmer of the Year: The Goggans Family

The Goggans Family Tree Farm is a 500-acre, 6th-generation farm located in Cleveland County. The original section of the farm was settled in 1856. The farm is now owned by Miles Goggans and his sister, Johnna Goggans Novak. Miles currently manages the property. Their parents, Beverly and John Goggans, initially enrolled the land in the Tree Farm Program. In 1988, they planted pine plantations on the ground that had long been row crops. The camp regularly houses family, friends, and neighbors, and educational events. Several miles of trails allow access for visitors to explore the property and see ongoing management work.

Communicator of the Year: Leslie Cooper

Leslie Cooper is the Arkansas Monarch and Pollinator Coordinator, which is a partnership position with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Quail Forever. She assists the Arkansas Conservation Forestry for the Arkansas Forestry Division in May 2012. Preceding the appointment to State Forester, he was the Director of Conservation Forestry for the Arkansas Field Office of The Nature Conservancy. He directed and promoted conservation forestry project development, conservation planning, and forest land acquisition throughout the state. Fox is a native Arkansan who worked as a procurement forester in a family-owned lumber business in Pine Bluff and Sheridan for over 20 years.

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Leslie Cooper is the Arkansas Monarch and Pollinator Coordinator, which is a partnership position with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Quail Forever. She assists the Arkansas Monarch Conservation Partnership to work toward the strategic goals of the Arkansas Monarch and Pollinator Conservation Plan.

Before joining Quail Forever, she was previously employed with the Bureau of Land Management, first as a wildland firefighter for several fire seasons, and later as a fuels crew lead.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 9
10 a.m. - PLT Steering Committee
AFA Office/Zoom
Little Rock

November 18
11:30 a.m. - Landowner Zoom: Management Considerations for Species of Concern
Zoom

November 24-25
AFA Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December 7
10 a.m. - AFAEF Board Meeting
AFA Office/Zoom
Little Rock

12:30 p.m. - AFA Executive Committee Meeting
AFA Office/Zoom
Little Rock

December 15
11:30 a.m. - WOW Lunch & Learn: Prescribed Fire Effects on Wildlife Habitat
Zoom

December 22-26
AFA Office Closed for Christmas Holiday

December 30
AFA Office Closed for New Year’s Holiday

Please Note:
Please visit our calendar at arkforests.org for information on the above Zoom meetings.

For meetings 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.