We are about a month away from AFA’s Virtual 75th Annual Meeting. To get prepared for this year’s event, get to know the speakers that will be featured at both our Forest Management Workshop on Sept. 29 and the General Session on Sept. 30. You can register at arkforests.org/event/AFA2020.

Chandler Barton, AR Dept. of Agriculture - Forestry Division

Chandler has the role of Forest Health Specialist for the Division, and is the Chair of the Forest Health Committee of the Southern Group of State Foresters. Chandler earned a B.S. in Forest Resource Management from Virginia Tech and a M.S. in Forest Entomology from University of Arkansas. He began working with the Forestry Division in 2014.

Austin Klaas, Quail Forever

Austin is an Arkansas native and received his B.S. in fisheries and wildlife sciences from Arkansas Tech University. After graduating, he became a wildlife technician in Kansas before returning to Arkansas. Upon his return, he became an ecologist with a private consulting firm working with wetlands, water quality, and endangered species. His next move took him to Monticello, AR as a biologist with Quail Forever for two and a half years before transitioning to a biologist position with Quail Forever in Louisiana. During his time with Quail Forever, he has been fortunate to work closely with landowners, consultants, and state/federal foresters with a goal of helping better manage our forests for wildlife.

Clint Johnson, AR Game & Fish Commission

Clint works with private landowners in Central Arkansas that are interested in managing forested lands for wildlife, including plan writing, navigating government funding and technical assistance. Most projects involve conversion of old pastures to quality prairie/quail habitat and managing forested lands to balance forestry production and wildlife habitat. He specializes in restoring prairie and woodland plant communities and in teaching prescribed fire and other forestry techniques to private landowners. Clint also serves as a Burn Boss for AGFC and assists with fire management and habitat restoration on public lands throughout the Arkansas River Valley and the Ozarks.

Vic Ford, UA Cooperative Extension Service

Vic is the Program Leader for Agriculture and Natural Resources for the Cooperative Extension Service. Dr. Ford grew up working in tobacco, vegetables, forages, and cattle. His academic training is in forestry, soils, and mycology with a B.S. and M.S. from the University of Tennessee and a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech. He has been involved in research for over 20 years and has been working with private landowners for over 13 years. He has worked 20 years in forest research with Westvaco Corporation and later MeadWestvaco and 17 years for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. His research has focused on soil management and classification, weed control, tree improvement, and ecological management of forest stands. He has had research in multiple states including Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee. He was Director and Professor at the Southwest Research Extension Center in Hope, AR for 8 years before taking his current position.

Heidi Brock, American Forest & Paper Association

Heidi Brock is the President and CEO of the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), serving as the chief advocate for the paper and wood products industry which accounts for approximately four percent of the U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures $300 billion in products annually and employs approximately 950,000 people. Prior to joining AF&PA, Brock served as President and CEO of the Aluminum Association from 2011 to 2019. She also had an 18-year career at Weyerhaeuser, working in various roles before eventually serving as Vice-President of Federal and International Affairs. Brock also served on the staffs of former U.S. Senators Dan Evans and Slade Gorton. Brock received a bachelor’s degree in English literature and economics from the University of Puget Sound and a master’s degree in business administration from Georgetown University. She is married to the Reverend Charles Brock and they have a son, Samuel.
Drew Co. Log a Load Social Distances for Arkansas Children’s

In order to comply with COVID-19 regulations, Drew County Log a Load for Kids leadership faced new challenges as they organized their 2020 event.

On August 1, the chapter held their annual fundraising event for Arkansas Children’s, but this year, some things looked a little different. In order to make sure attendees were safe, the group had to make some changes.

Due to space limitations, the event was moved to McCloy Park, an area where people could social distance. Gay Pace, a committee member for the chapter, said other organizers were worried about asking for donations this year since many were severely impacted by COVID-19.

“That first couple of no’s shut some folks down,” Pace said. “Fortunately, a few of us did not get many or we are just hardheaded enough to not let COVID win!”

This year people were encouraged to grab a pre-packaged fish dinner and head home. Rather than to eat at the event, as long their group remained at least six feet apart from others. Instead of a longer live auction, the group held an online auction that lasted during the week leading up to the dinner. Pace said with all the changes, they decided to sell tiered sponsorships and were able to make some changes.

Participants could take their pre-packaged dinner home or social distance at the park pavilion.

September 5-11
Bradley County Log a Load for Kids Online Auction

September 7
AFA Office Closed for Labor Day

September 10
10 a.m. - Program Committee Meeting
AFA Office
Little Rock

September 29 - October 1
25th AFA Annual Meeting
Virtual, Zoom

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

November 26-27
AFA Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December 9
1 p.m. - Executive Committee Meeting
AFA Office
Little Rock

December 23-25
AFA Office Closed for Christmas Holiday

Please Note:
For meetings not 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.

Dillon Gifts Endowed Chair, Entrance Hall for Timberlands Center

By: Jennifer Holland, University of Arkansas

Ray Dillon, a former AFA President and current Executive Committee Member, and his wife, Deborah, are supporting timber initiatives at the University of Arkansas with a $1 million gift that will name the Ray C. and Deborah Dillon Entrance Hall in the Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation.

Dillon considers Arkansas to be his adopted home state and loves what is being developed in timber innovation and wood design. With this gift, the Ray C. Dillon Chair in Arkansas Timber and Wood Design and Innovation is also being created.

The Little Rock couple’s gift counted in Campaign Arkansas, the university’s recently concluded capital campaign that raised nearly $1.45 billion to advance academic opportunity at the U of A.

-Ray Dillon has been the stalwart, enthusiastic friend and supporter of the Fay Jones School’s initiatives in timber and wood design and innovation since the moment we first spoke in the spring of 2016,” said Peter Mackey, dean of the Fay Jones School. “Ray’s work on our behalf, and on behalf of the future of Arkansas forests, during these last four years has only further deepened our friendship and the overall impact of the initiative. The contributions that he and his wife, Deborah, are making to the Anthony Timberlands Center project, and to the leadership of the academic programs which the center will house, reinforce that support tangible and durably, for the benefit of our students, our faculty and the environmental and economic betterment of the state. I look forward to entering into the Ray and Deborah Dillon

This rendering shows Grafton Architects’ conceptual design proposal for the center. PHOTO CREDIT: Grafton Architects

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Annual Meeting Speaker Spotlight, con’t.

Aurelia Skipwith, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Aurelia Skipwith was confirmed on December 12, 2019, as the 23rd Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the nation’s principal Federal agency dedicated to the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitat. Her appointment by President Trump marks the first time in history that a Black American has been selected to be the Service’s Director. Aurelia Skipwith’s interest in the outdoors and wildlife began at an early age. She spent her summers in Mississippi where she helped her grandmother on the hog farm, in her garden, and with the hound dogs. It was there that she was taught by her grandpa that, “If we didn’t grow it, catch it or kill it, we didn’t eat it.” Prior to her appointment as Director, Skipwith served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior for nearly three years, where she was responsible for ensuring the protection and stewardship of wildlife, fish, plants lands and waters within the national park and wildlife refuge systems. As Deputy Assistant Secretary, Skipwith supported the Assistant Secretary in overseeing policy, planning, and regulatory actions for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. Skipwith’s journey to the National Capital is marked by a diversity of work experiences, including agriculture, science and research, and law. She earned her B.S. degree in biology from Howard University, a M.S. degree in molecular biology from Purdue University, and J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law. Skipwith is active in her community and an avid marathon runner.

The Ray C. Dillon Chair in Timber and Wood Design and Innovation is also being created in timber and wood design and innovation, and Weyerhaeuser Building Materials, Canada, the U.S. and Europe, and in other positions with Weyerhaeuser’s OSB business and its European operations with Trus Joist in Belgium. Based on his extensive industry experience, Hardy has developed strategic plans to drive CLT growth, identify target market and customer segments and introduce developer outreach programs that validate midrise construction.

Pete Stewart, Forest2Market

Pete Stewart is a 26-year veteran of the forest products industry. As President, CEO and Founder, Forest2Market®, he continues to take the lead in developing new products for the global forest products industry. As a result of Forest2Market’s unique approach to collecting only transaction-level pricing, the company has become the standard pricing service in North America, Latin America and Europe. Stewart has led acquisition due diligence projects in the United States, Argentina and Brazil and has been responsible for forest planning and harvesting services and in other markets. He is a trusted advisor to the executive management of the major forest products companies worldwide.

He was named Engineer of the Year by the University of Arkansas General Assembly, where he was Leadership of House Minority Whip Steve Westerman was confirmed on December 2, 2019, as the 116th Congress following the 2013 GOP takeover of the Arkansas House of Representatives. As an engineer and event by trade, Westerman worked for 22 years at Mid-South Engineering in Hot Springs. He was named Engineer of the Year by the Arkansas Society of Professional Engineers in 2013.

Chief Executive Officer
Hardy Westerman brings extensive experience and depth knowledge of engineered and composite wood products to Structuram Mass Timber Corporation. Having served in key positions in some of the industry’s largest companies before joining Structuram early this year, Hardy’s previous experience includes senior executive positions with Tolko Industries and Weyerhaeuser Building Materials, Canada, the U.S. and Europe, and in other positions with Weyerhaeuser’s OSB business and its European operations with Trus Joist in Belgium. Based on his extensive industry experience, Hardy has developed strategic plans to drive CLT growth, identify target market and customer segments and introduce developer outreach programs that validate midrise construction.

Garvan Woodland Gardens as an academic practitioner, as well as an educational resource for the state while planning, leading, developing and advancing the Arkansas Forest Academy.

If you would like to read more about the role the chair will play at the Anthony Timberlands Center, you can visit the AFA’s website at https://arkansasforests.org/page/media for a PDF of the full article.