Details for Annual Meeting ‘Virtually’ Complete

By: Max Braswell, AFA Executive Vice President

Registration information will be available soon through the mail and online.

This year was to be AFA’s 75th in-person annual meeting. My, how times have changed. It will still be the 75th meeting, but now, the components of the first-ever virtual AFA annual meeting are in place. Members will soon receive registration information for the event, which takes place Tuesday and Wednesday, September 29 – 30 via Zoom, in cooperation with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. AFA will premiere a special awards video at 9 a.m. Thursday, October 1 to wrap up the meeting, which will be available on the association’s website and social media platforms.

“We very much appreciate the Cooperative Extension Service for partnering with AFA to provide the virtual platform, and for working with us to ensure CFE’s are available,” said Max Braswell, executive vice president. “In addition to CFE’s, the Arkansas Timber Producers Association will provide ArkPro Logger Continuing Education credit for those interested.”

Attendees will be able to participate in a forest management workshop on Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon. Then the AFA Board of Directors will meet from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. On Wednesday, the AFA staff and Program Committee has lined up a list of excellent speakers to participate in the meeting’s general session, which will be held in two sessions beginning at 8:30 a.m. In session one, attendees will hear from Heidi Brock, president and CEO of the American Forest & Paper Association, Aurelia Skipwith, Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Arkansas 4th District Congressman Bruce Westerman. After a short break, session two begins at 12:45 p.m. and includes Hardy Wentzel, president and CEO of Structurlam, and Pete Stewart, president and CEO of Forest2Market. More in-depth information about each speaker will be included in the August edition of Tree Talk.

“I am very excited about the quality of speakers we have lined up for the 75th AFA Annual Meeting and their willingness to adapt with us to a virtual setting,” said Braswell. “The topics they will share couldn’t be more timely as we seek to understand how the timber and forest products sector is surviving during the COVID-19 pandemic, how it is impacting public policy issues, our markets, the new Structurlam CLT plant in Conway, and our ability to implement successful, visionary partnerships.”

Registration information will be available soon through the mail and online. The cost of attending the Forest Management Workshop session is $25. Wednesday’s general session price is $100. If AFA members choose to participate in both, the fee is $125. All registrants will receive login instructions for each session closer to the meeting.

AFA is seeking sponsors for the meeting, and a number of companies have already stepped up to lend their support. Over the past few years, sponsorship of the annual meeting has grown to more than 40 companies and organizations with more than 20 more participating as exhibitors. Combined with attendance of almost 300 people, the AFA Annual Meeting is a major fundraiser for the association.

“We know everyone is facing difficulties this year, so we are even more appreciative of the support we receive for the annual meeting,” added Braswell. “We had big plans for an in-person 75th annual meeting, but we’re excited to offer three days of excellent speakers, information, and a salute to a very worthy slate of award winners, for an excellent price. All of which will continue to position AFA as the voice of forestry in Arkansas.”

We want to thank those that have already committed to sponsoring the virtual 75th AFA Annual Meeting.

Platinum:

Gold:

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Iberia Bank/First Horizon
Kingwood Forestry Services, Inc.

The Price Companies

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The Price Companies
Glade, Woodland Restoration and Management

By: Ciera Rhodes, Quail Forever Farm Bill Biologist II
Jesica Cox, Quail Forever Farm Biologist II

When you hear the word glade, most people’s minds immediately jump to the words “cedar glade.” Well, believe it or not, those words should never have been put together to begin with. The actual definition of a glade is “a rocky outcropping,” which means a very open area with shallow soils and lots of sunshine. These glades provide unique habitat to lots of different wildlife species, but also one that is in decline called the Eastern Loblolly. One would be able to see a plethora of native grasses and forbs on a properly managed glade that all come up from the seed bank. All those species are just lying dormant in the soil and probably have been there for a hundred years. Eastern Red Cedar was not historically present on our glades we have here in Arkansas. With the loss of fire on the landscape, cedars have been able to encroach on our glades and thrive. With the encroachment of cedars, they have shaded out and driven to the ground to germinate most of these species in the seed bank have the right conditions to germinate.

Lots of people, on both private and public lands, are seeing the benefit of managed woodslands transitioning into the closed-canopy systems we often see today. Despite these setbacks, there is still hope for our woodslands. Using a combination of tools from the land managers toolbox, we can help to reclaim and restore these incredible and priceless ecosystems. When planning your woodland restoration, it is important to remember that each site is not created equal. Existing vegetation, fuel load, slope, aspect, historic land use, soil, and management objectives all need to be considered before any final decisions are made. Generally, however, woodland management consists of thinning and burning. When applied correctly, selective thinning of a forest improves forest health by reducing competition between trees for valuable resources, reducing plant pest pressure, and reducing wildfire hazards. Many species of wildlife also benefit from the effects of forest thinning. Healthier trees produce more masts and the grasses and forbs that will grow as a result, provide cover and food for wildlife. Thinning can also be viewed as light management. By removing trees and reducing ground cover density, we are also creating openings in the forest canopy that will allow light to penetrate to the forest floor, giving native seed the opportunity to volunteer from the seed bank. Planting in a woodland should be done if the site has been degraded to the point where only non-native or invasive species will take hold. When selecting trees for removal, undesirable species such as red cedar, locust, and elm, should be top priority. If desirable trees, such as white oaks and red oaks, need to be removed to further decrease stand density, those that are least productive or unhealthy should be removed first. A few other important things to note are 1) that the species you select to keep are native and adapted to the site conditions, 2) maintain a mixed aged stand to ensure adequate regeneration, and 3) timing of the thinning and prescribed burn is critical. Thinning can be completed using a variety of methods. The two most common types of tree removal are “hack-and-squirt” and single-stem hand tool removal (chainsaw). If you want to read the rest of this article, you can find it online at the Arkansas Forestry Association website. Visit arkforests.org/page/Media and you will find a link to it under the July 2020 heading.

Arkansas Governor Reappoints Frank Wilson to Arkansas Forestry Commission

On July 18, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson reappointed Frank Wilson, the owner of Wilson Bros. Lumber Company, to a nine-year term on the Arkansas Forestry Commission. For the past eight years, Wilson has been serving on the commission, but his time in forestry goes back much further. Wilson has been working in his family business since he was 10 years old. He first started with his father and then started a sawmill in Rison with his brothers in 1972. A few years ago, he told AFA Executive Vice President Max Braskell that they were running cows at the time and wanted to sell out and get their money back. That eventually became a full-time job in 1983. A new facility recently replaced the mill in 2017.

“Forestry is my life,” Wilson said.

Wilson says it was an honor to be chosen by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson to serve. He added that he is honored that Governor Hutchinson chose him to continue serving for another nine years.

“The commission does the work that helps landowners and the forest industry,” Wilson said. “It provides fire protection for all, and works with rural fire departments. The commission also has a tree nursery that helps reforestation and provides a forest inventory for the state. This makes you feel good knowing you can help.”

His appointment is scheduled to expire on January 14, 2029.

“It is so important to have experienced leaders with a passion for the timber and forest products community serve as members of the Arkansas Forestry Commission,” said Braskell. “That’s why I’m so pleased that Governor Hutchinson has reappointed Frank to serve another term. He cares deeply about the forestry sector in Arkansas and is a strong, respected advocate for private forestry, as well as the importance of the work of the commission and Arkansas Department of Agriculture Forestry Division.”