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project Learning Tree Awards Gold Star to AFA’s Rob Beadell
By: Vanessa Bullwinkle, Project Learning Tree

Project Learning Tree honored Rob Beadell, Director of Forestry Education at the Arkansas Forestry Association (AFA), with a Gold Star Award. Founded in 1976, Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is an award-winning environmental education program that educates teachers and youth about forests and the environment. PLT is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. The PLT Gold Star Award is the highest honor bestowed by PLT to a PLT program coordinator or partner to recognize their years of exemplary service to Project Learning Tree.

Jaclyn Stallard, PLT’s Director of Curriculum at the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, presented the award to Beadell on May 18 during PLT’s E-Summit.

“There are so many great people doing great things with PLT that I am honored by this recognition,” Beadell said. “It is a privilege to be recognized by my peers for this award. The past 13 years as the Arkansas PLT State Coordinator have been the most fulfilling in my professional career.”

Based in Little Rock, AR, Beadell administers the PLT program statewide for the AFA Education Foundation. He creates environmental education professional development courses and workshops for school teachers and nonformal educators. He develops programming that embraces STEM and art education, such as the practice of Nature Journaling. Beadell also coordinates Teachers Conservation Workshops, week-long events for teachers to see forestry in action, including lumber mills, paper mills, forest management activities, and active logging sites.

“Rob has a genuine love for forestry and environmental education, and he works tirelessly to make sure environmental education is the best it can be in Arkansas and beyond,” said Stallard. “Rob also brings his expertise to many national PLT initiatives. His perspective is invaluable for reaching forestry professionals with environmental education.”

“Rob’s enthusiasm for helping teachers understand the science of forests, forest management, and the forest products industry is contagious and impossible to resist,” said Dr. Tamara Walkingstick, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service (retired).”

Beadell has been the Arkansas PLT State Coordinator and Director of Forestry Education for the Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation since 2008. He has also served on the North American Association for Environmental Education Affiliate Steering Committee, on National PLT’s Education Operating Committee as the PLT Coordinator Representative, and on the Arkansas Environmental Education Association Board of Directors as President for two terms.

Beadell has a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. He is also a Certified Interpretive Guide and has been recognized as the Conservation Educator of the Year by the Arkansas Wildlife Federation.

AFA 76th Annual Meeting Registration Open Online

Registration for the Arkansas Forestry Association’s 76th Annual Meeting is now available online, with printed registration forms to be mailed soon.

This year we are offering multiple ways to register. For those who would like to attend in person, you can purchase an event ticket for the Early Bird Price of $225 for members and $275 for non-members. The final day to take advantage of that discount is Friday, September 3.

After that date, the price for members increases to $275 and $325 for non-members. AFA offers additional ticket choices if you plan on bringing a guest to the meeting. These options include guest tickets for the Awards Breakfast, fish fry, and reception. Each will cost $25 per guest.

Tickets are available for purchase for both of our recreational activities that will take place the morning of Tuesday, October 5.

Registration for golf will cost $100 and take place at Lost Springs Golf & Athletic Club in Rogers. You can also choose to register for our trap shoot activity that will cost $60 and take place in Bella Vista. More information about these events will be available next month.
AFA’s Voices of Forestry Podcast Surpasses 5,000 Downloads, 17 Episodes

There are currently 17 episodes of the podcast. Episode 1 – Pilot: tops the charts as the most popular episode, with Episode 9 – Invasive Species and Episode 6 – Forestry Economics coming in second and third, respectively.

“We at AFA are very pleased with how Voices of Forestry has been doing over the past year,” said Stephenson. “Every day, I keep an eye on the statistics, and I’m pleased with the increase in numbers each month, especially since this is something relatively new for the forestry industry."

At the show has grown in popularity, AFA has offered new sponsorship opportunities to members and purchased new recording equipment for increased audio quality. Stephenson said he continues to look for opportunities to produce a better podcast.

The next episode of Voices of Forestry is scheduled to release on July 2. Stephenson will sit down with a guest from Arkansas Children’s to discuss the Log a Load for Kids organization and all they have done for children in Arkansas since 1993.

You can find that episode on most podcast apps, including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and Stitcher. It is also available to stream on AFA’s website at https://www.arkeforests.org/page/VoicesOfForestry.

Annual Meeting Registration, con’t.

AFA offers a virtual option for those unable to travel or would like to watch from their home. Virtual registration will only give you access to the Forest Landowner Workshop on October 5th and/or the General Session on October 6th.

The price for a virtual ticket for the entire event is $125. If you would only like to attend one day, the price will be $75. Virtual registrants will be emailed log-in information closer to the event.

You may find more information on the Annual Meeting and lodging at https://www.arkeforests.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1522980#group=

We will be staying at the Embassy Suites located at 3103 S Pineville Mills Parkway in Rogers. AFA is offering a special room rate at the hotel until Friday, September 3rd.

Printed registration forms will be mailed to AFA members next month. If you do not receive one, please contact the AFA office at (501)374-2441.

AFA’s Voices of Forestry Podcast continues to see an increase in downloads worldwide.

It has been a little over a year since the Arkansas Forestry Association (AFA) introduced the Voices of Forestry Podcast. Since then, the show has 17 episodes that have been downloaded across the globe.

The show is an educational podcast designed to inform people in and out of forestry on various aspects of the industry. On the first Friday of each month, Host and AFA Communications Coordinator Seth Stephenson sits down with a professional guest to discuss a new topic.

Voices of Forestry has been going strong since its inception in February 2020. As of June 21, it has received over 5,000 downloads and can be found on over 20 different sites.

The podcast has been downloaded in many other countries worldwide with the top five being the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Germany.

First 2021 In-Person Log a Load for Kids Event Raises Around $15,000 in Central Arkansas

For the first time in 2021, Log a Load for Kids of Arkansas gathered in person for a fundraising event to help the patients of Arkansas Children’s.

While this amount is only an estimate, Taylor said they might have raised as much as $13,000 on this event alone. He added that he knows that this could not have been possible without everyone who volunteered.

“A huge thank you to Malvern National Bank for their sponsorship and volunteers, Malvern Country Club, Eldor’s Garage, all of our hole sponsors, and all the people who volunteered their time,” Taylor said.

The golf tournament is the first event Central Arkansas LAL has scheduled for 2021. They have their dinner/auction fundraiser planned for October 30 at the Sheridan High School Arena. Taylor explained that guests could expect to see the usual live and silent auctions, raffles, and much more.

A golf team from Central Arkansas LAL’s golf tournament finish up Hole 16 during the fundraising event. The Central Arkansas Log a Load for Kids chapter held their annual golf tournament at the Malvern Country Club on June 17.

Eighteen teams of four took to the greens for some friendly competition, all with the same goal of helping children in need.

“We were so excited to get back to somewhat normal again,” said Central Arkansas Log a Load Coordinator Bobby Taylor. “Everyone was just happy to be able to be back together for a good cause.”

The chapter would like to thank all sponsors, including MNB and the Malvern Country Club.

A group of over 100 AFA members, friends and family gathered on May 28 at Dickey Stephens Park to enjoy an evening together.

“The Arkansas Travelers may have lost, but our guests sure didn’t!” said Communication Coordinator Seth Stephenson. “It was great to finally get together again after a year apart to hang out and enjoy each other’s company.”

Guests enjoyed burgers, hot dogs, and barbecue before the first pitch against the Tulsa Drillers. The night ended with a beautiful fireworks display at the park.

The Arkansas Forestry Association is excited to start having more events in person as restrictions are lifted. There are already a few planned throughout the rest of the year so long as it is safe to gather in person.

More future in-person events can be found on the calendar on the AFA website.

A group of over 100 Arkansas Forestry Association members, friends and family gathered for the AFA Night with the Travs.

“Log a Load for Kids of Arkansas has five other chapters across the state for those interested in getting involved but don’t live in Central Arkansas.

The next scheduled event will be with the Drew County chapter on August 7 in Monticello.

You can find more information on Log a Load for Kids and our various chapter events by visiting https://www.arkeforests.org/page/legaload.

Les Ann Fitzgerald, for right, welcomes and thanks the teams for their support of Log a Load for Kids.

Greate weather, great food, and great baseball were just a few of AFA’s 2021 Night with the Travs event highlights.

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