



A Letter From The President

Greetings TREASURE Forest Association Members,

As your newly elected president, I look forward to serving you and the ATFA for the next two years. I am a 40-year resident of Cherokee County in northeast Alabama and am retired from 30 years of service with the Farm Service Agency. My wife Jan and I have one daughter, Jessica and five grandchildren who have become the center of our world. Jan and I have a TREASURE Forest in Cherokee County called Critterwoods Farm. As the name implies, our farm is heavily timbered and has lots of wildlife. We spend our days tending to our place and watching the kids grow. I have been a member of ATFA for about 10 years and believe in the organization's motto – "Taking the land that God loaned us and making Him proud that He did."

I am very excited to be in this new leadership position and to have the opportunity to continue to serve this great organization. It is doing some great things to help forest landowners in Alabama. The recent ATFA Annual Meeting was a great success and a fantastic way to spend a weekend. The educational sessions were superb, as were the meals, meetings and field tour. I encourage each of you to consider attending next year to see what you missed!

We are very excited by the progress our organization made under John Frank Farrow's presidency and look forward to continuing his hard work and growing the association even more. One of the ways we can best do this is through your involvement. I

urge all forest landowners to participate in the ATFA at the county and state levels. More involvement means more members, which ultimately means more land that is cared for under our good stewardship principles.

Check out our website, TreasureForest.org, to see all the great things your association is doing. If you have any particular questions or concerns for me, I will be happy to answer them. Send me an email at critterwoods@tds.net or call Rick Oates at (334) 613-4305.

Sincerely,

Billy Joe Johnson



ATFA President Billy Joe Johnson, left, presents outgoing president John Frank Farrow with a special plaque during the group's annual meeting.

New TREASURE Forest Owners Recognized At Annual Meeting



TREASURE Forest owners certified in the past year were recognized during the annual meeting.

The Alabama Treasure Forest Association (ATFA) Annual Meeting was Oct. 16-17 at the Central Alabama Community College in Alexander City. More than 100 landowners representing over 25 organizations attended. At the Oct. 16 luncheon, multiple award winners were recognized, including Jack Warbington of Livingston and Eddie May of Oxford who received Gary Fortenberry Awards.

This honor is given annually to those around the state who have shown exemplary support of ATFA. Later in the presentation, Joel Glover of Rockford received the Bill Moody Award for his dedication to the multiple-use land management philosophy found in the TREASURE Forest Program.

Additionally, all TREASURE Forest owners certified in the past year (listed below) were recognized during the meeting and received awards.

- Billy & Becky Strickland; Blountsville
- Eubie Dean Trawick, Sr.; Atmore
- Walter Cartwright; Greenville
- Dr. William Davis; Athens
- Horace & Linda Horn; Greenville
- Dr. John & Sharon Finklea; Montgomery
- Don Coley; Centre
- David Farnsworth; Sylacauga
- Ronald Dewberry; Hoover
- Sharon Hyde; Jasper
- Mike Birge; Florala
- Andrew Williams; Safford
- Mike Hattaway; Longwood
- Jamestican Parham; Jackson
- Ben Moore; Dozier
- Lowell Helms; Clio
- Hodges Smith; Eutaw

The annual meeting also featured six educational sessions. Speakers covered a variety of topics including Alabama's wildlife populations, drone usage in forestry, property beautification, timber contract legal advice and endangered species in the state. A tour of Bobby Jennings' Tallapoosa County TREASURE Forest was held Oct. 17. See more event photos in this newsletter or go to the "Conference" page on the ATFA website, TreasureForest.org, or visit Flickr.com/AlabamaFarmers. Be sure to like the Alabama Treasure Forest Association Facebook page and watch for news about next year's conference.

Annual Meeting Awards



Above, from left, Eddie May of Oxford receives the Gary Fortenberry Award from Alabama Treasure Forest Association (ATFA) Board Member Jimmie Jimmerson and ATFA Executive Director Rick Oates at the ATFA annual meeting Oct. 16 in Alexander City. Jimmerson nominated May for the Award. Below, from left, ATFA Vice President Meador Jones with Jack Warbington of Livingston, who also received the Gary Fortenberry Award, and Oates. Jones nominated Warbington for the award.



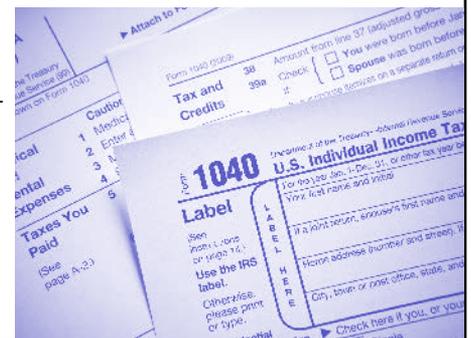
Above, Melanie and Joel Glover of Rockford receive the Bill Moody Award at the Alabama Treasure Forest Association (ATFA) annual meeting. From left are the Glovers, ATFA Executive Director Rick Oates and ATFA Board Member Tim Albritton, who nominated the Glovers.

Forest Landowner Tax Tips

Dr. Linda Wang, national timber tax specialist for the U.S. Forest Service, recently published Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2015 Tax Year.

To help woodland owners in filing their 2015 tax returns, this publication explains the federal income tax laws on timber. The information is not legal or accounting advice, but is an excellent guideline.

Being well-versed in the tax system, Wang highlights topics such as property classifications, timber sales, reforestation costs, management expenses and theft losses. The document also lists examples of common landowner transactions and practices using different tax strategies. Read the full article at TREASUREForest.org.



Endangered Species Act Lawsuit Takes Aim At Alabama Landowners

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) is under a Federal court order to determine if 111 species of plants and animals in Alabama should be listed as threatened or endangered.

The possible listings are the result of a recent lawsuit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) against FWS, which claimed 404 Southeastern species should be added to the Endangered Species List.

While the determination must be completed by 2027, the Alabama Farmers Federation and Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) are working with groups to help the FWS obtain the data needed for the determination. Already, the number of species that could be listed has been reduced to 376.

"While there are certain risks associated with inviting the federal government onto your property to look for potentially endangered or threatened species, there are also risks in FWS not having accurate data to make the determination," said the

Federation's Rick Oates, who also serves as ATFA executive director. "It's a win-win situation if we can help determine a species is not threatened or endangered. That would allow property owners to continue to manage their land as best meets their individual goals."

From a biological diversity standpoint, Alabama is blessed, Oates said. The state has the fifth-largest number of species of plants and animals found in any state. Unfortunately, Alabama also has the third-largest number of species on the Endangered Species List, and the greatest number of aquatic species on the list.

ATFA and the Federation will continue to keep members apprised of the situation, including necessary reporting as the determination surveys move forward, Oates said.

For more information, including a list of the species being considered, go to www.fws.gov/endangered/improving_ESA.

Smith, Jones Become Newest Members Of ATFA Leadership

Meador Jones, a member of the ATFA Board of Directors, recently was elected as the organization's vice president. Jones, a TREASURE Forest owner for more than 15 years, said he is honored to serve in this role.

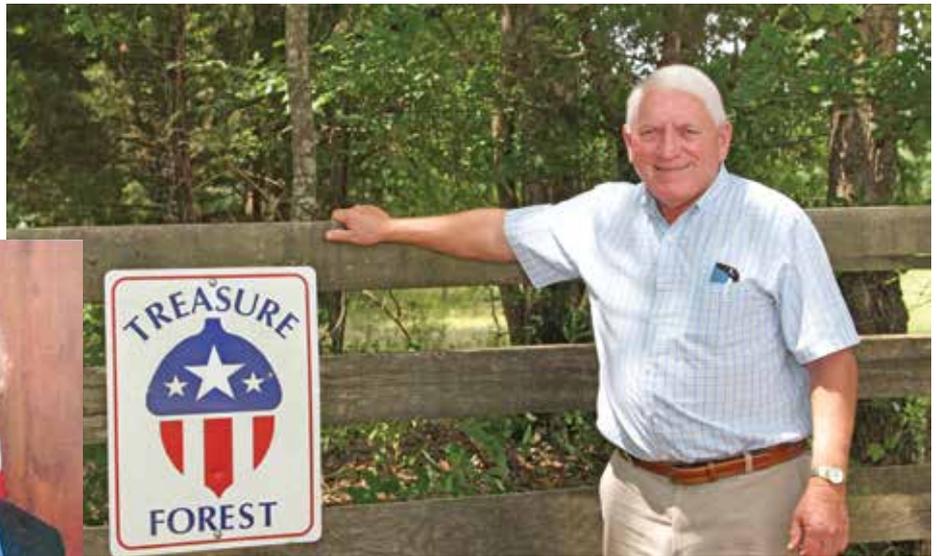
"With the merging of Alfa and ATFA there is a renewed enthusiasm about the program," Jones said.

"This, coupled with the new State Forester Greg Pate, will allow us to accelerate the program and educate more landowners."

Jones has served as Marengo County Farmers Federation president and president of the Marengo County ATFA and Cattle-men's Association.

After retiring from 30 years in the banking industry, Jones focused on the conservation of natural resources. Because of this, he was selected to serve on the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation District board.

Billy Smith of Southwest Alabama was recently elected to the ATFA Board of Directors. He is a member of the federally recognized Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribe.



Above, Meador Jones of Marengo County was elected ATFA vice president at the annual meeting. Left, Billy Smith of southwest Alabama was elected to the ATFA Board of Directors.

Smith has been an active member of the tribe for 45 years, serving 18 years on the Tribe Council, 10 years as vice chairman and 12 years on the Creek Indian Enterprise Board of Directors. Smith is general manager for Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve.

The reserve includes about 6,000 acres devoted to recreation including camping areas, canoeing and tubing, horseback riding, fishing, hunting and hiking trails.

Land within the reserve is dedicated to educating and enhancing the significance of native plants and wildlife species important to the American Indian culture. Smith also oversees the management and harvest of timber at Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve.

"We are excited to have Meador and Billy working with us in these new leadership roles," said ATFA Executive Director Rick Oates. "Great things are sure to come in the future of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association."

Georgia-Pacific Invests In Southwest Alabama

Georgia-Pacific announced plans Oct. 21 to invest \$110 million in the Alabama River Cellulose Mill in Monroe County.

The mill currently has two wood yards. One will be upgraded, and the other will be replaced.

This investment will bring Georgia-Pacific's total investment in Alabama over the last decade to more than \$2.3 billion.

The Monroe County operation provides over 440 jobs and \$55 million in benefits to the area each year. In 2014, Auburn University conducted a study that found the operation provided an additional 1,000 indirect jobs

throughout the county. The project also is expected to employ 65 people for its 18-month construction phase.

"This continued investment in Alabama bodes well for the future of our state as well as the forestry industry," said Alabama Treasure Forest Association Executive Director Rick Oates.



Executives from Georgia-Pacific stand with Gov. Robert Bentley during the recent mill expansion.

A Special Thanks to Boyd Christenberry

Many of you had the opportunity to meet Boyd Christenberry who worked for ATFA as an intern during the summer of 2014 and then worked for us again from February until November this year. Boyd did a great job, and we hate to see him go. We wish him well in his new endeavor at the American Forest Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Washington D.C. Boyd will be one of their regional representatives for the Southeast. Hopefully we will still see him around. Thanks Boyd for all of your hard work, and good luck at the AFF.



Christenberry

Sincerely, Rick Oates



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Troy International Students Visit Pike County Forests



A group of international students attending Troy University got a first-hand look at the role woodlands play in southeast Alabama during an Oct. 29 tour in Pike County.

The day was similar to an Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) "Classroom in the Forest" program. It was altered from its usual fifth-grade curriculum to better suit college students. The agenda included a forest tour, pond management session and a walk through Pike County Soil and Water Conservation District's soil tunnel trailer. In addition to the Pike County ATFA, event sponsors included the county's Farm-City Committee.

Special thanks to ATFA Board Member Carol Dorrill and her husband, John, for hosting the event on their property. Visit the ATFA website to view a news story by Jaine Treadwell about the event.