



# ALABAMA TREASURE FOREST Association Newsletter

In partnership with the Alabama Farmers Federation

June 2017

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## A Letter From The President

ATFA Members,

As the school year comes to an end, so does another successful season of Classroom in the Forest. I hope each of you who hosted children on your TREASURE Forest was as pleased as we were with this year's events. When former students tell us how much they enjoyed their visit, I'm reminded what we do is extremely valuable to these young people. Without teaching the future generation to be stewardship-minded men and women, our hard work to better our properties would be lost.

Exciting things are happening with our association! As you know, we successfully reached the production mark for our new vanity license plates. This was a tremendous feat for the ATFA, and I thank each of you who participated. Tags will be available this month, and I hope to see you proudly displaying them on your vehicles. If you were previously unable to commit to a tag, I encourage you to purchase one when your renewal month arrives. Remember, all funds generated from these license plates help us cover the costs of educational programs like Classroom in the Forest.

Last month, the TREASURE Forest subcommittee, which certifies private landowners to become TREASURE Forests, held its quarterly meeting to review new nominations and certified an impressive 44 new landowners. We support continued efforts to promote TREASURE Forest ideals, as well as the certification of as many worthy landowners as possible. I commend the committee on a job well done and offer congratulations to our new TREASURE Forest landowners.

I'd also like to thank interim State Forester Gary Cole for emphasizing private land certification during his tenure with the Alabama Forestry Commission. With his direction, our new landowners reached this impressive goal.

Finally, on behalf of the ATFA, I extend a thank you to former Executive Director Rick Oates for his hard work. We are grateful for his leadership and friendship and wish him well as he begins a new role as state forester. After working with Rick for many years, we're confident the Alabama Forestry Commission is in good hands.

Sincerely,

Billy Joe Johnson



Johnson

## Oates Appointed State Forester, Green Is ATFA Executive Director

**F**ormer Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) Resource Coordinator William Green has been named the organization's executive director, as ATFA's Rick Oates began duties as state forester April 10.

In his new role, Oates oversees the Alabama Forestry Commission's (AFC) 240 employees whose mission is to protect and sustain Alabama's forest resources. Oates replaced interim State Forester Gary M. Cole.

"Our state is blessed with more than 23 million acres of timberland, and about 87 percent belongs to private landowners," said Oates, 49. "Alabama forests are an economic engine providing hundreds of thousands of jobs in our state. They provide endless recreational opportunities for hunters and outdoorsmen and are a renewable natural resource."

In addition to his duties as ATFA executive director, Green is the Alabama Farmers Federation's Forestry and Wildlife Divisions director.

Oates formerly held both titles. Previously, he was chief of staff for Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries Commissioner John McMillan and held several positions with the Alabama Forestry Association.

A native of Corpus Christi, Texas, Oates has a bachelor's degree in natural resources from The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, in addition to a master's degree in forestry from Auburn University. Oates and wife Kelly live in Montgomery and have two children, Andrew and Lauren.



Oates



Green

Green is a Pintala native and a 2014 Auburn University graduate in wildlife sciences. He interned with the Federation for several months before becoming a commodity director in April 2016. William and his wife, Mallory, live in Montgomery, where she is a fifth-grade teacher at St. James School.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to continue working with the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association as well as the Federation's Forestry and Wildlife Divisions,"

Green said. "I've enjoyed my time with them so far, and I'm looking forward to seeing what we can accomplish in the future."

For more about the AFC, visit [forestry.alabama.gov](http://forestry.alabama.gov).

46TH ANNUAL

COMMODITY PRODUCERS

CONFERENCE & EXPO

Don't miss the Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Producers Conference Aug. 3-5 in Birmingham. Register by June 16 at [alfafarmers.org](http://alfafarmers.org).

Keep reading for legislative updates, award information and Classroom in the Forest coverage!

## Rileys Named Alabama Tree Farmers Of The Year

Henry County's Glenn and Scarlett Riley are Alabama's Tree Farmers of the Year, thanks to a love of and dedication to the land and desire to use their property to educate others. Their approximately 300-acre farm is in the Barnes community just south of Abbeville.

The Rileys joined the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association and developed a property management plan in 2003. For 12 years, the Rileys have hosted Classroom in the Forest for nearly 250 Henry County fifth-graders annually.

As Alabama's 2016 Tree Farmers of the year, they are finalists for the 2017 Southern Tree Farmers of the Year Award, a preliminary of the National Tree Farmer of the Year Award.

"I think when God gives you something or puts something in your hands, it's for you to manage the very best that you can," Scarlett said. "The more I learn about the forest, I realize it's so much more than just a tree growing. We believe this is what God wants us to do."



## Regional Meeting Series A Success Statewide



The ATFA hosted a series of regional meetings this year, with each meeting consisting of an educational program and dinner. Topics ranged from efforts to establish a viable American chestnut tree population to black bear populations and managing property from a Realtor's perspective. Six meetings have been held so far, with over 180 attendees overall. More information will be available soon regarding the ATFA's two remaining regional meetings. Contact William Green at [wmgreen@alfafarmers.org](mailto:wmgreen@alfafarmers.org) with questions or meeting suggestions.

## ATFA Vanity Plates Ready For Pick Up

Thanks to everyone who pre-committed to the newly redesigned "I'd Rather Be in the Woods" license plate. The tags were available starting June 1.

### VOUCHERS

If you provided a valid email address with your application, you should have received a pre-commitment redemption voucher from the state of Alabama April 19. If you did not provide a valid email address, you should receive a voucher in the mail soon.

### NEXT STEP

To receive your tag, present your voucher at your county's licensing office. Remember, your free tag is only valid for 2017. If your normal tag renewal month is June or after, redeem your voucher when you would normally renew your tag. If your renewal month has already passed, you may redeem the voucher at any time for a small fee. To personalize your license plate, visit <https://pros.mvtrip.alabama.gov> to reserve your message.

### NEED A TAG?

If you were unable to pre-commit to the tag, have gotten a new vehicle or would like an additional plate, you may purchase one for \$50 whenever you renew your tags. Thanks for your support, and we hope you enjoy showing everyone where you'd rather be!



"Like" Alabama TREASURE Forest Association!

Check out [TREASUREforest.org](http://TREASUREforest.org) for news, information on upcoming events and more.



## Legislation Aids State Forest Agency And Timber Industry

Legislation simplifying the timber severance tax to prevent double taxation of materials from a single log received the governor's signature this session. The bill also allows the tax to be calculated based on tonnage rather than board feet. Rep. Elaine Beech, D-Chatom, sponsored the legislation.

The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) received \$7.5 million from the Education Trust Fund and General Fund budgets. The appropriation included an additional \$99,100 for rural and community fire protection.

The Legislature also approved a \$550,000 supplemental appropriation to the AFC from the Emergency Forest Fire Fund. Rep. Kyle South, R-Fayette, and Sen. Trip Pittman, R-Montrose, sponsored the bill, which aims to offset wildfire-related costs from 2016. The agency incurred more than \$1.5 million additional expenses in man-hours and equipment costs last year. Gov. Kay Ivey also released nearly \$500,000 from her discretionary departmental emergency fund to help the AFC.



## Henry, Pike County Students Learn In The Great Outdoors

County TREASURE Forest chapters held multiple Classroom in the Forest (CITF) events throughout the 2016-2017 school year. CITF educates fifth-graders and their teachers about multiple-use forest resource management, the importance of private landowners and the valuable resources found in Alabama forests.



Two hundred fifty fifth-graders from Henry County Schools and Abbeville Christian Academy attended Classroom in the Forest May 12 on Glenn and Scarlett Riley's TREASURE Forest. Students learned about pond management, wildlife, tree health and forest ecology.



Pike County and Pike Liberal Arts schools fifth-graders learned about wildfires and prescribed burns from the Alabama Forestry Commission at Classroom in the Forest April 4 on Gene and Jana Renfro's TREASURE Forest near Troy.



Charlie Clark and his wife, Lynn, own a TREASURE Forest in Crenshaw County just south of Luverne, where they focus on wildlife management. Charlie said he has always felt that properly managing wildlife paves the way for successful timber management. The Clarks have two children, Adam and Arin, and two grandchildren, Parker and Macie. They live in Brewton.

### 1) When did you get involved with the ATFA?

I got involved with the ATFA in the late '90s. I was originally the Crenshaw County Forestry Committee chairman, and we made the move to become an ATFA county chapter. Involvement with the ATFA ended up being a positive decision, as 75-80 landowners attended each of our meetings. Since then, I've been a big supporter of the association and its stewardship-centered mission.

### 2) Why is TREASURE Forest important to you?

It recognizes landowners for properly managing their land and gives their neighbors something to strive for. It's always positive to show others the good work an individual is doing. I also think it's a great benchmark. It's good to see landowners have a goal in mind when they manage their property.



# MOVING FIREWOOD TRANSPORTS TREE-KILLING INSECTS AND DISEASES



Tree-killing pests hitchhike on firewood . . . spreading insects and diseases that destroy our trees, forests, and natural areas. Protect your favorite places from this threat:

- Buy locally harvested firewood.
- Tell your friends not to move firewood.
- Ask a park ranger or campground host about where to get local firewood when you travel.
- Use firewood from nearby sources to heat your home or cabin.

Buy it where you burn it.





**SAVE THE DATE**

**ATFA Annual Meeting**  
**Oct. 26-28**  
**Muscle Shoals**

**Annual Meeting Planning Already In Motion**



*The ATFA Executive Committee was hard at work in April preparing for regional meetings and planning for the annual meeting this fall. The committee also readied for the certification subcommittee meeting, the May board meeting and other business.*

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