



A Letter from the President

They say time flies when you're having fun — well, I guess that's true. I can't believe it's been almost 18 months since the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) and the Alabama Farmers Federation joined together to help forest landowners. We've come a long way, but we've still got a lot to do.

This newsletter marks our first attempt to speak directly to ATFA members about what's going on from the state perspective. We want to make sure our members know what the association is doing to help them.

Cash Back

We'll pay \$5 to the county chapter for every paid member in that county, no matter how many members there are. In June, a rebate form will be sent to county chapters. When the county officer checks one box to ask for the rebate, a check will be on the way. Also, ATFA will pay \$250 to every county that conducts a Classroom in the Forest program. A reimbursement form will soon be available on the new ATFA website.

Insurance

The state association has an umbrella insurance policy to protect ATFA members when their property is used to conduct events such as field days, tours or Classroom in the Forest. There's a form on the ATFA website; complete it at least 14 days before the event, and we'll send a certificate guaranteeing \$2 million in liability coverage protection.

Publicity

We will help advertise county meetings, tours, field days and other events. Information will be sent by email or postcard to members in the area. Information will be posted to the website and in the newsletter—so please send in the information. ATFA will help get the word out about all of the great things going on in your county.

County Visits

We want to visit all county chapters to let you hear directly from us about what's going on. If Executive Director Rick Oates can't attend, he will send new staff member Boyd Christenberry or a member of the board of directors. Let us know when you've got an event you'd like us to attend, and we'll make sure to get someone there.

Your help is needed!

ATFA asks two things of county chapters and individual members: 1) Let us know what's going on in your county. Email event info and pictures to bchristenberry1@alfafarmers.org, so county's can be recognized. 2) Send your email address. ATFA would like to improve its email database, so please go to TreasureForest.org and click "follow" in the bottom right corner to receive timely information.

Thanks for all of your support. Stay tuned, and watch for great things from your association.

The Story Of The TREASURE Forest Program, as told by its founder Bill Moody

Bill Moody, now retired, spent his career helping landowners. He worked for the Alabama Forestry Commission as state forester 23 years. Prior to that, he worked with International Paper Company as a consulting forester and the Florida Forest Service. Among his accomplishments was conceiving the TREASURE Forest Program and successfully implementing it in Alabama. To commemorate ATFA's inaugural issue, Moody gave a special interview on the beginning of the TREASURE Forest program.

What inspired you to create the TREASURE Forest program?

This requires a rather long answer, but it has to do with the history of forestry in our country. When we first arrived on these shores, the sawmill people and the wood industry started clearing the forests as required to provide the materials needed to build a nation. They were beautiful virgin forests with vegetation underneath for animals. They protected the waters, animals, soil and environment — perfect harmony. Then the forest industry began harvesting trees from these

forests and became a dynamic part of our growing nation — and what a nation we became!

The forest industry would cut a tract of land, then move on to the next one. When all forest lands had been harvested in the Northeast, where all this activity started, the industry then moved toward the South and West. Finally, most of the available timber resources in the nation had been cut. The forest industry organized a program called Tree Farm, which was a wonderful program to restore timber trees to the land.

This preoccupation with timber trees became very successful over time. At one point, environmental, water quality and wildlife support groups began attacking — through the media and other sources — the practice of reforesting land with the primary objective of growing timber species. This created a major uproar, which resulted in a kind of national war between the forest industry and environmental, wildlife and water quality groups. In Alabama, we organized and implemented a program designed to unite these forces for the betterment of the forests, wildlife, water quality and environment. The TREASURE Forest Program was born.





From left, former State Forester and TREASURE Forest Program creator Bill Moody stands with Alabama Commissioner of Ag and Industries John McMillan; close friend and supporter of Moody, the late James Hughes; and former Alabama TREASURE Forest Association President Billy Blackwell at the 2013 ATFA annual meeting.

Was there any resistance when the program was created?

Not a great deal. As people began to figure out what it was about, the environmentalists and water quality and wildlife supporters began to be less vocal in criticizing TREASURE Forest and became more supportive of efforts to regenerate forests so they would provide all needs of nature and humans.

The forest industry began to understand the overall benefits of TREASURE Forest. In fact, at one point, I was called to Washington, D.C., to work with Congress to redefine the Tree Farm program so it would provide the timber needed, plus other benefits. So at this point, it is my impression

the Tree Farm program is very similar to the TREASURE Forest program in that it considers all aspects of forestry, not just the trees.

Over its 40-year history, what are the factors that made TREASURE Forest successful?

Mainly, the support of all facets of people who depend on the forest. In Alabama, we had a Forestry Planning Committee made of government agencies including the Alabama Forestry Commission, Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, Farmers Home Administration, the Alabama Fish and Game Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and others. That's who gave birth to the TREASURE Forest program in Alabama. We began to invite other people to participate with us in support and guidance of the program. The Alabama Forestry Association and Alabama Farm Bureau joined in. As a matter of fact, environmentalists were less vocal and became more supportive of the program, too. It was a program that sold itself.

Not long after Alabama's TREASURE Forest Program started, the U.S. Forest Service reviewed the TREASURE Forest concept and, along with the National Association of State Foresters, developed and passed legislation to extend this type of program. Nationally, it became known as "Stewardship Forest." It focuses on privately-owned forests and operates across the nation.



Above: The original TREASURE Forest sign. It was later changed to an acorn and the "E" was added for legibility. Left: Moody presents Iron Eyes Cody with the Support Award after Cody filmed a public service announcement supporting the TREASURE program.

What is the most important thing the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association does for landowners?

It helped landowners feel good about what they do. At one point, landowners began to feel bad about planting trees because they were attacked by environmentalists and others. Being a TREASURE Forest owner and displaying a TREASURE Forest sign lets others know they're doing a great job of managing all the resources on their land.

Has the program met the expectations you had when you began?

It greatly exceeded my initial expectations. One time I talked to James Hughes*, a very good TREASURE Forest owner in Houston County, and we agreed when we're both gone, we can take great comfort in knowing our spirits will be intermingled — with each other and other TREASURE Forest owners who have gone on — in the forests of Alabama. We can take much peace in knowing we made a significant contribution to the well being of all Alabama citizens.

How will the merger of the ATFA and Alabama Farmers Federation strengthen each organization?

I think the Alabama Farmers Federation is a wonderful organization. It works for the wellbeing of the people of Alabama who own and manage land — the farmers, forest owners, cattle ranchers and others — as well as all citizens of Alabama and the nation who benefit from TREASURE forests. In fact, many Federation members worked to make TREASURE Forest successful from its inception.

The merger helps all aspects of TREASURE Forest and the Federation because it represents both groups as good stewards and helps ensure Alabama forests make maximum contributions to our state and nation. ▲

Editor's note: Bill Moody's vision has created a great legacy, which will carry forward as generations of forest landowners who seek to implement his dream of managing a truly multiple-use forest on their land. Our thanks to Mr. Moody for sharing his legacy with the forest landowners of Alabama.

**Mr. Hughes passed away in July 2014. He wrote the following in the forward to the History of TREASURE Forest booklet: "TREASURE Forest is not just a concept, a program or a philosophy. It's a way of life...It sharpens awareness of life's real blessings, God's goodness, and all of the intricacies of His creation."*

Mr. Hughes understood Bill Moody's passion for forestry, especially TREASURE Forest.

ATFA Launches New Website

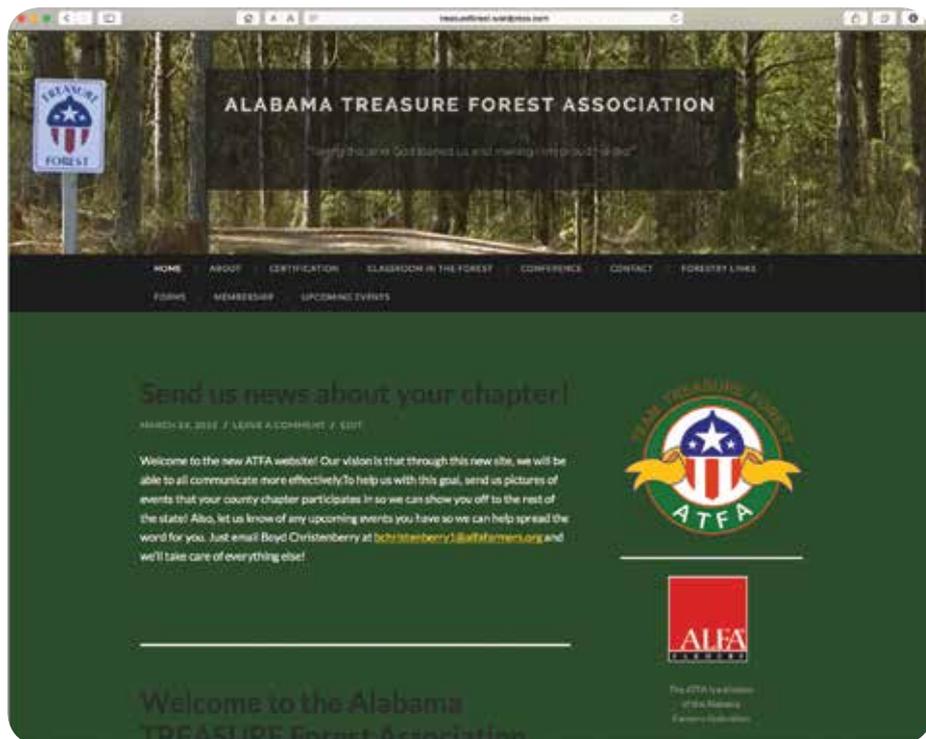
Over the last month, ATFA has been working to develop a new, more efficient and interactive website. The site is live at TreasureForest.org, but needs suggestions for improvement.

Please send pictures or stories from recent ATFA events by email to bchristenberry1@alfafarmers.org, to share them on the new site.

Submit upcoming chapter activities for promotion on the website.

If you didn't receive a digital copy of this newsletter, submit your email address to bchristenberry1@alfafarmers.org or go to TreasureForest.org to send your email address. ▲

www.TreasureForest.org



News Briefs

Pike County Tree Give Away



Members of the Pike County TREASURE Forest Association joined the Alabama Forestry Commission in Troy to give away nearly 1,000 free trees in March. Oak, ash, red bud, crape myrtle, slash pine and more will help beautify the landscape, provide wildlife habitat and improve the environment by cleaning the air. This is the 15th year the groups have joined forces in celebration of National Arbor Day, which was April 24.

License Plate Reimbursement!

Getting a FREE custom license plate has never been easier. When purchasing a new "I'd Rather be in the Woods" tag, send a copy of the receipt along with the form from TreasureForest.org to receive a check for \$50. That's the entire cost



of buying this specialty plate. No tricks. This is ATFA's way of saying thanks for supporting the educational aspect of the ATFA and its tag.

Proceeds from the tag sales allow ATFA to expand the reach of Classroom in the Forest throughout the state. Funds also help the association reach thousands of landowners who have never been exposed to the stewardship ethic of TREASURE Forest. It will help train, equip and empower forest and farm owners to be more self-reliant and sustainable through hands-on training and learning sessions. Money raised from the sale of this tag helps develop a strong voice to tell the story of the irreplaceable value that privately owned forests and farmland provide all members of society.

2015 Annual Conference Oct. 16-17

The annual ATFA Conference will be at the Betty Carol Graham Center on the campus of Central Alabama Community College in Alexander City. The meeting will include educational seminars, an awards banquet, auctions and more. Watch for registration details to be announced this summer. ▲





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Upcoming Events

- May 14** Tallapoosa, Clay, & Talladega counties ATFA meeting, 6 p.m. Hackneyville Community Center
- June 1-3** Butler County Summer Camp for county 6th graders
- June 15** Shortleaf Pine Field Trip; Cullman area. Details to come
- June 18-19** Talladega County Wildlife Workshop for landowners. Contact Tim.Albritton@al.usda.gov for information
- June 20** Pike County "Take a Kid Fishing Day." Contact John or Carol Dorrill at (334) 403-0158 for information
- July 30-Aug.2** Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Conference Montgomery
- Oct. 16-17** ATFA Conference – Alexander City Registration opens soon