

ARKANSAS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



After a tumultuous COVID-filled 2020, the AFA staff planned for a more normal 2021, a return to in-person events, and a full-scale annual meeting in Rogers. We almost made it! And – what is normal anymore anyway?

The year started quickly with an opportunity to practice our number one priority – advocacy, as the 93rd Arkansas General Assembly convened in mid-January for what would turn into a hectic, unique, and lengthy session. The lingering impacts of COVID-19 created new challenges for both legislators and lobbyists, but that didn't impede the effectiveness of AFA's lobbying efforts. We worked to support bills that created new opportunities for loggers, wood products facilities looking to locate in Arkansas, and landowners battling feral hogs. We also ensured the forestry sector was well-represented on the Arkansas State Plant Board and defeated a measure that would have weakened our long-standing, successful Arkansas Voluntary Best Management Practices for Water Quality.

In addition to advocacy, we know our members place great value on networking and education opportunities. We ramped up in-person events as quickly as possible with a return to the ever-popular AFA Night with the Arkansas Travelers for food, fun, and fellowship at the ballpark in May. Log a Load for Kids fundraising events, Teacher Conservation Tour sessions, and AFA Emerging Leaders tours also returned to face-to-face events, albeit with a slightly smaller attendance and heightened safety precautions.

I'm particularly proud of how the AFA staff is never satisfied with the status quo. Give them a challenge, and they will find a way to deliver even in the face of their own personal challenges – it was frankly a pretty tough year on that account. For example, Jennifer Johnson was asked to take on the Women Owning Woodlands program this year. All she did was implement a monthly WOW virtual workshop and create the first-ever, two-day WOW conference at Lake DeGray Lodge attended by more than 40 female landowners who are clamoring for more! Oh, and she coordinated our Tree Farm team to host the annual Tree Farmer Conference and complete a successful and first-ever virtual Tree Farm Assessment. Thank goodness it only comes every four years.

Traditional landowner education workshops came to a halt during COVID, but AFA Education Foundation Director Rob Beadel said, "no, we're going to find a way to reach people." So, he and Jennifer teamed up to produce a monthly virtual landowner education workshop. Not to be left out, Communications Coordinator Seth Stephenson increased the listenership and support for the AFA Voices of Forestry podcast – the first one ever produced by a forestry association that now has 23 episodes available for download.

We knew that coming into 2021, we needed to tell our story – particularly to those who don't live and work in our world every day. So, we teamed up with KATV Channel 7's "Good Morning Arkansas" crew to produce three segments on working forests' positive impact on our state. We talked about AFA, sustainable forest products during National Forest Products Week, and the importance of forest management and the role of family forest owners. On top of that, AFA worked closely with several partners to raise funds to produce two episodes of "America's Forests with Chuck Leveall," which paint a wonderful portrait of all that the forests of Arkansas provide. For those of you who don't know, Chuck is a national spokesman for the American Tree Farm System and has a little side gig as the keyboardist for the Rolling Stones (a pretty high-profile advocate for forestry, don't you think!).

As we dove headlong into the last quarter of the year, the AFA Annual Meeting was the focal point of our work. The still-lingering impacts of COVID were most notable on this event. We can't say thanks enough to all our sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees for making the meeting a resounding success, but we sure missed the more than 100 members who usually attend but weren't able to make it for a good reason this year.

We enter 2022 with long-range planning on our agenda, dealing with the financial implications of a smaller annual meeting and the need to pay for all of our new and old initiatives. The cost of doing business increases every year. As we achieve more, AFA members ask for and deserve more advocacy, education, outreach, communication, networking, and an opportunity to practice profitable forestry or forest products production. So, we'll be looking at everything we do in 2022 to prepare for the next ten years. I want the AFA of tomorrow to be better than it is today – and with your help, we'll meet that challenge.

For now, please take a look at our 2021 Annual Report for a more in-depth glimpse into the activities, programs, and accomplishments of the Arkansas Forestry Association, the AFA Education Foundation, the Arkansas Tree Farm Program, and more. We hope the results continue to earn your investment in our Vision to be the voice of forestry in Arkansas.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Braswell".

MAX BRASWELL

Executive Vice President

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AFA STAFF



Max Braswell
Executive Vice President



Jennifer Johnson
Director of Business



Rob Beadel
Director of Forestry Education



Seth Stephenson
Communications Coordinator



Mary Spradlin
Administrative Assistant

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW



AFA advocates for the sustainable use and sound stewardship of Arkansas's forests and related resources to benefit members of the state's forestry community and all Arkansans, today and in the future.



AFAEF serves as an information and education source to Arkansas landowners, teachers and students. It provides educational workshops across the state and publishes educational guides to provide landowners the information they need to make sound forest management decisions.



The Arkansas Tree Farm Program is affiliated with the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). ATFS is a program of the American Forest Foundation and is committed to sustaining forests, watersheds, and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship.



Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an award-winning environmental education initiative designed for teachers and other educators, parents, natural resource professionals, and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12.



The Forest Express PAC was formed to provide financial assistance to candidates for statewide political office who support forestry and the forest products industry. It is non-partisan and not affiliated with any political party.



Since the program began in 1993, loggers and members of the forestry community have demonstrated their commitment to Arkansas's children by raising millions of dollars for Arkansas Children's Hospital at events throughout the state.

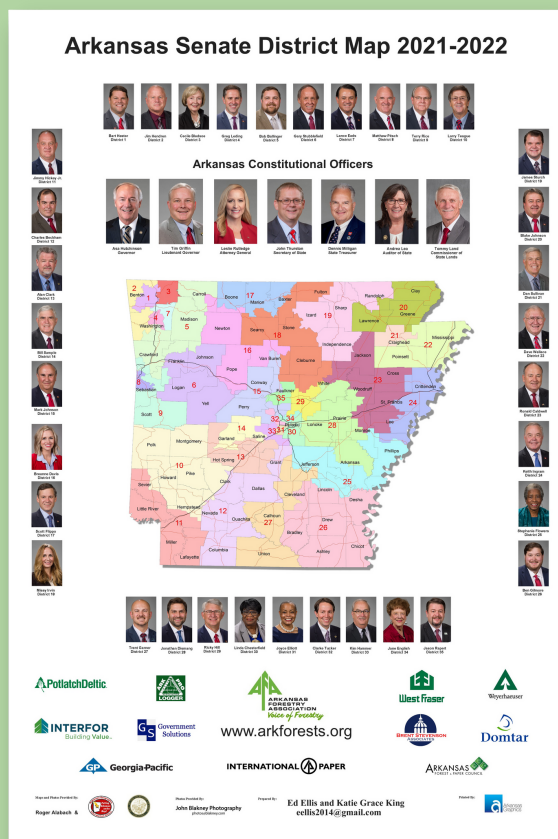
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Responsible Staff: Max Braswell, Executive Vice President

Legislation Supported

- **Act 361** that maintains AFA's ability to recommend qualified members to serve on the Arkansas State Plant Board
- **Act 399**, which creates the Foresters for the Future Scholarship program administered by the Arkansas Agriculture Department – Forestry Division
- **Act 451**, which authorizes the creation of a special permit to transport forestry equipment
- **Act 594**, which creates the Logging and Wood Fiber Transportation Job Creation Incentive Act and the Arkansas Wood Energy Products and Forest Maintenance Income Tax Credit
- **Act 692**, which further improved the Arkansas Feral Hog laws by deeming feral hogs an imminent threat to public health and safety
- **Act 901**, which clarifies that the Arkansas Agriculture Department now administers the Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program
- Supported the effort to secure one-time funding for the creation of a Center for Forest Business at the University of Arkansas-Monticello Forest Resources Center





Legislation Opposed

- Opposed a bill that would have given the Governor sole authority to appoint all Arkansas State Plant Board members, removing the opportunity for AFA to make recommendations of qualified candidates.
- Opposed a bill that would have amended the law concerning foreign entities' ownership and possession of real property.
- Opposed a bill that would have established a residential community logging permit and required an individual logging in a gated community to certify that they would implement voluntary best management practices for water quality – infringing on the long-standing, successful voluntary BMPs.

COMMUNICATIONS

Responsible Staff: Seth Stephenson, Communications Coordinator

AFA Social Media

Total 2021 Facebook Posts

219

Facebook Page Reach

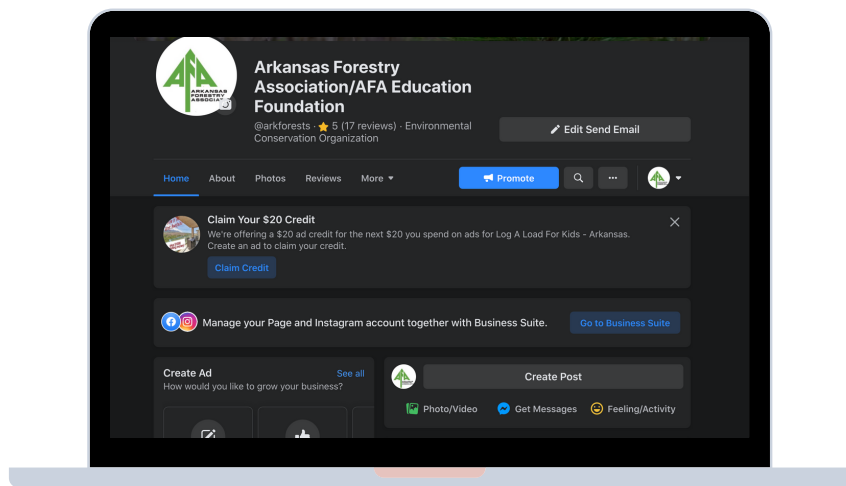
17,251

Total 2021 Tweet Impressions

28,324

Twitter Followers

4,027



Voices of Forestry Podcast

Total Episodes Since Feb. 2020

23

Total Downloads

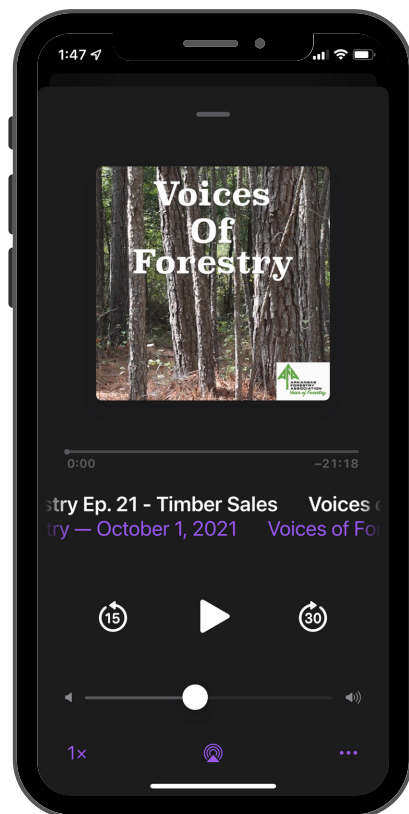
8,430

Sponsored Episodes in 2021

7

Countries/Territories Reached

26



KATV Segments

3 Interviews on "Good Morning Arkansas" Aired in 2021

**AFA & Arkansas Forestry
National Forest Products Week
Benefits of Forest Management**

AFA Newsletters

Tree Talk-12 Editions
Sent to 1,024 People
Each Month

Tree Mail-52 E-mails
Sent to 1,194 People
Each Week

Emerging Leaders Program

New 2021-2022 Class

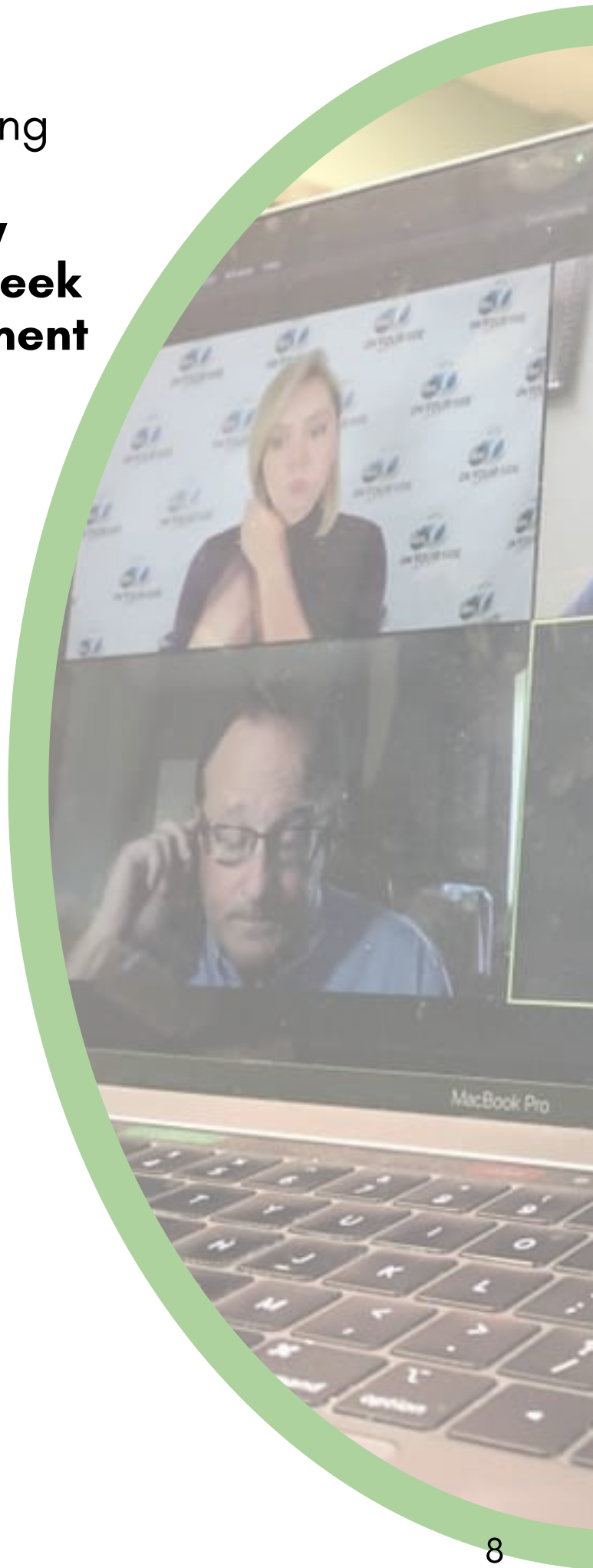
7 members

Class Meetings

3

Graduated Members

8



ARKANSAS TREE FARM PROGRAM

Responsible Staff: Jennifer Johnson, Director of Business

Program Overview

Certified Tree Farms in AR
2,587

Certified Acres
489,443

Counties with a Certified
Tree Farm
60

Active Tree Farm Inspectors
75



Outreach

Tree Farm E-news Sent
12

Quarterly Newsletters Mailed
5

Tree Farm Inspector Newsletters
Sent
12

Total 2021 Facebook Post Reach
6,932



Forests & Families

Your Monthly Tree Farm Newsletter

2021 - Tree Farm Activities

Number of Tree Farms in 3rd Party Assessment
32

Virtual Women Owning Woodlands Workshops Conducted
12

Total WOW Workshop Attendees
207

2-Day WOW Conference
Oct. 21-22

Conference Attendees
42

Tree Farm Inspector Trainings
3

Standards Trainings Conducted
2

Tree Farm Inspections Conducted
325

AR Landscape Management Plan Implemented in 2021
Available at arkforests.org/Imp



AFA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Responsible Staff: Rob Beadel, Director of Forestry Education



Landowner Education & Outreach Program

Hosted and/or Participated
landowner events across
Arkansas

49

Total Landowners/Land
Managers Reached

1,082

Total Acres of Forestland
Represented

30,909

Project Learning Tree

PLT Workshops

38

Formal & Non-Formal Educators
Trained

524

Forestry Education and/or
Community Programs

11

Program Reach

229 Students

135 Schools

1,959 Adults

Teacher Conservation Tour

Jul. 14 & 27 – Forest Health –
Online/Bismarck

12 Attendees

Oct. 14 & 15 – Prescribed Fire –
Columbus

18 Attendees

Nov. 4 & 5 – Pine to Paper –
Russellville

12 Attendees





Number of
In-Person
Attendees
152

Number of
Sponsors
30



Number of
Virtual Attendees
37

Number of
Exhibitors
18

AFA 2021 Award Winners



Logger of the Year
Justin Kirksey



Educator of the Year
Raven Lawson



Communicator of the Year
Chandler Barton



LAL Volunteer of the Year
David Smith



Outstanding Legislator
Ronald Caldwell



Outstanding Legislator
Ben Gilmore



Outstanding Legislator
DeAnn Vaught



Outstanding Legislator
Jeff Wardlaw

Join us Oct. 11-13 for our AFA Annual Meeting in Little Rock as we celebrate 75 years of the Arkansas Forestry Association!

When:

Oct. 11-13, 2022

Where:

The DoubleTree

424 W. Markham St.
Little Rock, AR 72201

Keep an eye on AFA
publications throughout the
year for more information on
how to register.



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