A Letter From The President

ATFA Members

I’ve been the ATFA president for five months now, and every day I see things we can do to help make our association grow. With that thought in mind, I feel sure you also have ideas that would improve and enhance our ability to serve our members. Meeting the informational and educational needs of our membership has made us the great forest landowner organization we are. As with every organization, we have the responsibility to incorporate change to meet your needs.

In joining any organization, we ask ourselves “Why should I join?” or “What’s in it for me?” So, I ask you to consider the following questions: What do you want the ATFA to be? How can this organization help you better meet your land management goals? How can it help grow the TREASURE Forest Program? How can we educate the public and our children about the importance of properly managing our forests? So, we are asking for your input and ideas on how we can make our organization more relevant to you.

I want to see an organization that helps landowners take better care of the land entrusted to them. We have a duty to care for our property while managing it with the most sustainable, environmental methods available. We want to divide our focus — meeting our current needs, and what we are leaving for the next generation. I want to see us grow membership so we can be better positioned to offer landowners the information they need!

Over the coming year, look for us to do some important things: Incorporate new ideas; grow membership; and develop new programs that are both educational and enjoyable. In addition, we have started a new automobile tag campaign. On page three, learn about the new “I’d rather be in the Woods” tag. You’ve all seen the blue tag with the ATFA logo on it. Well, you’ll see the tag has been redesigned. Nice, right? You may very well hear more from your board members who have been challenged to get the word out about the new tag program. The program offers a way for local ATFA chapters and/or forestry planning committees to partner and earn revenue through the tag campaign. The money goes to support the educational goals of the ATFA. To find out how to get the new tag, go to TREASUREforest.org and let the world know “You’d rather be in the woods!”

Sincerely,

B.J. Johnson

Board Members Recognized For Outstanding Stewardship And Educational Practices

Board members Jimmy Jimmerson and John Sudduth were honored at the Alabama Natural Resources Council Awards ceremony at the Alabama Wildlife Federation’s new Natureplex facility in Prattville Feb. 5. Pictured above with State Forester Greg Pate, center, is Jimmy and Sue Jimmerson, of Cleburne County, who were awarded the North Region’s Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award. The annual award recognizes outstanding TREASURE Forests with a focus on educational value and use.

The W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Award was presented to John and Marry Sudduth of Winston County. From left, the Sudduths’ grandson, Will, and daughter, Sonda, accepted the award on their behalf. They are shown with Mike Henshaw, who nominated the Sudduths, and Auburn University professor, Ken McNabb. The W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Award seeks to publicly recognize achievements that result in the wiser use of Alabama’s renewable natural resources. A fundamental mission of the award is to identify and reward “unsung heroes” who voluntarily make significant contributions to the better stewardship of Alabama’s natural resources. Congratulations to both the Sudduths and the Jimmersons for these great achievements!
Mandatory Harvest Recording System Supported Survey Says

The Alabama Department of Conservation of Natural Resources recently released results of the January 2016 Hunter Survey distributed to nearly 130,000 people. Of the 10.1 percent who responded to the survey, most favored a mandatory harvest recording system to collect data for better wildlife management in Alabama. Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated they would support a mandatory reporting of deer and 48 percent favored turkey harvest reporting. Interestingly, 23 percent and 34 percent for the respective groups indicated they were indifferent to a mandatory harvest-recording system. With the recent success of Snapper Check, a harvest-recording program for Alabama gulf red snapper, look to see a revamped version of Game Check in the near future.

The Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources currently ask hunters to voluntarily report deer and turkey harvests. Visit OutdoorAlabama.com and click on the Game Check logo to report turkey harvests during this year’s season. This data will help improve our turkey management and population.

Board Member Receives TREASURE Forest Designation

At the Feb. 4 Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Organizational meeting Dr. Ted Vaughn was presented his TREASURE Forest Certification. Vaughn’s property in Sumter County was approved for the designation when the TREASURE Forest Certification Committee met in January. The property is managed for multiple uses and Vaughn receives considerable enjoyment from his TREASURE Forest.

If your property isn’t certified and you’d like to pursue this award, please contact an ATFA board member, your county forester or William Green at the ATFA office (334) 612-5235 or email WMGreen@alfafarmers.org.

Dr. Ted Vaughn is presented his TREASURE Forest Certificate by AFC Stewardship Forester Allen Varner.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2016 Alabama TREASURE Forest Association Annual Meeting • Oct. 13-15 • Wind Creek, Atmore, Alabama
The Alabama TREASURE Forest Association is redesigning our “I’d Rather be in the Woods” license plate. ATFA has to pre-sell 1,000 tags before the state will start producing these great new tags that showcase Alabama’s forests. What this means is we need people to commit to putting these tags on 1,000 vehicles. It’s easy to make this commitment, just go to TREASUREForest.org and click on the tag image. Fill out the pre-commitment form, and mail it along with $50 to the indicated address. You’ll get two receipts — one from the ATFA and one from the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADR). When you’re notified the tags are available, you can either take the ADR receipt to your county probate office and transfer your current tag to the new ATFA tag (a $4 transfer fee applies) or you can wait until your normal tag renewal month and get a new tag with the ADR receipt.

If you already have a “I’d Rather be in the Woods” tag, thank you for your past support. Please take this opportunity to continue supporting our tag by filling out the form and reserving your tag now. If you’re unable to order a tag by computer or have a question about the tag or this process, call William Green at (334) 612-5235 and he’ll mail you a form.

It’s easy to do, and the money goes to great programs like Classroom in the Forest and other educational efforts to help the public learn about sound forestry. We need your support to make this new design a success. If you have any questions, please call William or an ATFA board member (see page 4 for a list of board members).

So, where would you rather be? Will you be one of the first people to make this commitment and get your “I’d Rather be in the Woods” tag?
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**ATFA North Alabama Meeting**

The TREASURE Forest Association of Northeast Alabama met Feb. 12, at Gibson’s BBQ in Huntsville. The program included Matt Brock with the Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources who discussed the status of game species in north east Alabama. Rick Oates and William Green with the ATFA state office also attended the meeting.

Cleve Humphrey (below) was elected “co-president” along with David Edwards. If you are an ATFA member in northeast Alabama, we urge you to contact Mr. Humphrey at currunchumphrey@aol.com and participate with this group.

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**Tax Time Considerations**

As forest landowners, there are things you may want to consider while working on 2015 income taxes. Did you spend money on herbicides? What about recurring activities like prescribed burns? Or reforestation activities? What do these have to do with your taxes?

Check out an online tax content guide from the American Forest Foundation at MyLandPlan.org to learn more about how woodland expenses can affect your taxes. You’ll be asked to provide an email address to access the content from the website.

Other information on the site that could be helpful to forest landowners include:
- Forest management expenses
- Reforestation tax benefits
- Capital Gains
- Understanding your basis
- Conservation easements and taxes
- Your state and local tax laws