The Association’s 2021 Annual Meeting was held August 31-September 2 at the beautiful Sheraton Panama City Beach Golf & Spa Resort. A combined powerhouse of outstanding speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, silent auction donors, and attendees made the event shine. Many thanks to all who were part of its success!

AWARD WINNERS:

**Above & Beyond: Ryan Pavlik**
Ryan Pavlik is the Agency President for AssuredPartners in Monticello. His office specializes in logging, forest products, trucking and agricultural risks in the Southeast.

With 15 years in the insurance industry, he has become a trusted advisor who tries to understand all aspects of an operation before presenting comprehensive risk management solutions. He has achieved the Certified Insurance Counselor designation.

He is a graduate of the University of Florida in Food and Resource Economics. He is currently representing forestry in Class 11 of the University’s Wedgworth Leadership Institute.

Ryan is a current member of the Association’s Board of Directors, a past member of the Executive Committee, and a graduate of the Forestry Forward leadership development program. He has volunteered as a trainer for the Master Logger continuing education programs for many years and was active in the development of the College of Central Florida’s Timber Harvesting Equipment program. He serves on the boards of Team Safe Trucking and the Southeastern Wood Producers Association as well as on the advisory council for the North Florida Community College CDL school.

Ryan is a family man and enjoys spending time with his wife Jennifer and their three boys ages 9, 7 and 4. They like to hunt, fish, explore, play and coach sports and travel.

**Distinguished Service Award: Mike Gaff**
Mike Gaff retired from Georgia-Pacific in 2019 after a 45-year career devoted to Florida forestry. His service to the Association includes chairing the Environmental Committee, serving multiple terms on the Executive Committee, and ultimately leading the organization as its president for two years. Even after retirement, he remains a valued member of its Board of Directors.

During his career, Mike served on numerous task forces, covering a broad spectrum of issues such as prescribed burning, cypress management, biomass and BMPs. He has been a member of the Florida Forestry Council, Florida Silviculture BMP Technical Advisory Committee and Florida’s Working Forests Partners, among others.

His influence was not limited to Florida, however. He was also a member of the Georgia Forestry Association’s Board of Directors.

While Mike certainly has an impressive list of professional accomplishments to his credit, they do not begin to paint the whole picture. Mike is a committed family man. He and his wife Diane have been married for 17 years. Their family includes two daughters, two sons, and five grandchildren. Mike is engaged in his faith and his community as well. He is active in his church and volunteers for various other Christian organizations, including going on international mission trips. He has also been part of school liaison committees and the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce.

**National Logger of the Year: Jerry Gray, Gray Logging**
Jerry Gray and his team at Gray Logging operate 14 logging trucks and semi-trailers, working with a number of mills within a 100-mile radius of Madison. Jerry is known for his extensive knowledge, his strict adherence to professional practices, and his passion for the industry.

All of those qualities are reflected through his outreach and education efforts in his local area. In addition to the logging operation, Jerry is very active in his community. Among many other accomplishments, he was instrumental in launching North Florida College’s Commercial Driver’s License program and also provided a logging truck and trailer for training.

Jerry was honored at the Association’s 2020 Annual Meeting as the Florida Logger of the Year. He previously won that award in 2010 and the regional award in 2011.

While Mike certainly has an impressive list of professional accomplishments to his credit, they do not begin to paint the whole picture. Mike is a committed family man. He and his wife Diane have been married for 17 years. Their family includes two daughters, two sons, and five grandchildren. Mike is engaged in his faith and his community as well. He is active in his church and volunteers for various other Christian organizations, including going on international mission trips. He has also been part of school liaison committees and the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce.

With his family, Mike and his wife also spend a lot of time outdoors. They enjoy hunting, fishing and exploring. They are also very involved in youth sports, coaching boys ages 9, 7 and 4.

**Jon Gould Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year: Ben & Louann Williams, Wetland Preserve (Putnam County)**

The Florida Tree Farm Committee selected Ben and Louann Williams of Wetland Preserve as this year’s award winner for a laundry list of reasons. To name just a few of them:

• involvement with innovative ways to increase prescribed fire on private lands
• involvement in research to advance biological understanding of local wildlife and plant species of interest
• active removal of non-native plant and animal species, while maintaining the ecological balance of nuisance species such as coyotes as an important part of the natural ecosystem
• extensive involvement with outreach and community education and
• eagerness to coordinate recreational use of their property via the Florida Trail and for wounded veteran hunting events.

The Williams came to forestry later in life. Having spent 35 years in the seafood business previously, they understand the value of clean water and how the water cycle relates to their land management practices.

Wetland Preserve exemplifies their passion for land management and their desire to leave a lasting legacy. The Williams are known for their innovation, involvement in outreach and community education, and pride in promoting the stewardship organizations they belong to. They were recently recognized as the Florida Land Steward of the Year as well.

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Although the Forest Resources Association presented the national award to Jerry earlier this year, the Florida Forestry Association wanted to recognize this notable achievement as well!

**Legislator of the Year: Senator Jason Brodeur**

Senator Jason Brodeur is a key “go-to” in the Florida Senate when issues arise. Though only a freshman, he was tapped to serve as the chair of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee and serves on the critically important Appropriation Sub-committee for Agriculture, Environment and General Government.

During the 2021 session, he navigated challenging policy issues before his committee as well as passed significant legislation of his own. Most notably, he sponsored SB 88, which strengthened and modernized Florida’s Right to Farm Act. SB 88 reinforces protections for customary practices such as burning, placing caps on attorney’s fees, and expanding the protections of the law to agritourism operations.

Senator Brodeur represents Seminole and Volusia Counties. His district includes timber and wood products manufacturing, farms and nurseries. He lives in Lake Mary with his wife Christy, and he is a proud Alumni of the University of Florida with a degree in Food and Resource Economics.

Notably, Senator Brodeur is not only a member of the Florida Senate, he is also a member of the Florida Forestry Association.

**Legislator of the Year: Representative Jayer Williamson**

Elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2016, Representative Jayer Williamson has been a friend and supporter of Florida forestry from day one.

His commitment to silviculture was underscored in 2021 when he chose to sponsor legislation strengthening and modernizing Florida’s Right to Farm Act. Without question, this legislation sent a clear signal of the importance of silviculture in Florida by clarifying and reinforcing timber operations’ protection from nuisance lawsuits.

Representing Santa Rosa and parts of Okaloosa Counties, Representative Williamson’s district has a significant share of timber and other agricultural land uses. This drives his commitment to strengthening silviculture and agricultural as key drivers of Florida’s economy.

Representative Williamson lives in Pace, Florida, with his wife Linsey and their children Brooks and Rylin.

**WAYNE SMITH TO BE INDUCTED INTO FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME**

Dr. Wayne Smith, Emeritus Professor and past Director of the School of Forest Resources and Conservation, UF/IFAS, was selected for induction into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2020. Unfortunately, the induction banquet had to be cancelled due to Covid-related concerns.

We are excited to share that the induction ceremony for both 2020 and 2021 inductees will be held at the Florida State Fair’s Agricultural Hall of Fame Banquet on Tuesday, February 16, 2022. Tickets will go on sale January 1, 2021.

Learn more on the Ag Hall of Fame website at floridaaghalloffame.org.

**SECHRIST HONORED AS 2020 FORESTRY FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR**

Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried has recognized Florida Forest Service (FFS) Senior Forest Ranger David Sechrist as the 2020 Forestry Firefighter of the Year.

“David’s service to his fellow firefighters through teaching, mentoring, training, and helping his colleagues recover from Hurricane Michael are exemplary, as are his professionalism in protecting not only life and property in Florida, but in the ongoing western wildfires, as well. I am grateful for Forest Ranger Sechrist’s outstanding integrity and service, and we are honored to recognize him as the 2020 Forestry Firefighter of the Year,” she said.

**MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER!**

We are excited to announce that Brittany Varn has joined the Association team as Director of Forestry & Regulatory Affairs.

Through her previous work as an environmental engineer in remediation clean-up and later as an environmental inspector and manager for Leon County, Brittany has gained considerable knowledge in environmental regulations through both local and state governments. A native of Tallahassee, she graduated from the FAMU/FSU College of Engineering with a Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering.

Brittany lives in Havana with her husband, Blaine, and their three-year-old son, Tucker.

**JOHNSON JOINS UF AS EXTENSION DIRECTOR**

By J. Scott Angle | jangle@ufl.edu | @IFAS_VP

Dr. Andrea Johnson starts as dean of UF/IFAS Extension on Nov. 1. He knows trees. Johnson’s Ph.D. and master’s degree are in forest resources and environmental science. His bachelor’s degree is in urban forestry. He’s a member of the Society of American Foresters.

Here’s why I chose him:

**He wants your agent to stay your agent.** Johnson has a vision for reducing attrition.

**He knows all three land-grant mission areas.** He has led in Extension, taught extensively, and secured funding for research.

**He’s an aggie.** Johnson grew up in a family that raised cattle, cotton and corn. He was influenced by an aunt who has worked for the USDA’s Forest Service for more than 30 years.

J. Scott Angle is the University of Florida’s Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources and leader of the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

**MASTER LOGGERS & OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

As we enter the last few months of 2021, please remember to sign up for your CLE certification class if you have not already done so! We only have one class left for this year, and it will fill up quickly: **Thursday, December 9, at 8 AM (EST)**

Please note that this training, which was previously scheduled to be a live training in Blountstown, FL, will now be held on Zoom instead, due to the continuing circumstances of Covid-19.

Registration is available online through our website, FLForestry.org. Simply go to “Master Logger” under the Programs tab. If you have already registered for this class, you do not have to do anything! You will automatically be enrolled in the virtual class and will receive information on Zoom to your email a couple of weeks before the training.

As a friendly reminder to those who were unable to take a class in 2020, per the FL-SIC you must take 2 CLE classes (8 credit hours) in 2021 for your certification to stay current. If you fall into this category and have NOT completed both classes for this year, you must do so before December 31, 2021. Otherwise, your certification will expire. To verify your certification status, please check the Master Logger Search Tool on the home page of our website, FLForestry.org.

If you have any questions, please email Krista Harvard at Krista@FLForestry.org or call 850.222.5646.
2021 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN ENDS NOVEMBER 1

Recruit members. Help your association grow. Win a $500 gift card!

Every $1 in dues generated = 1 point
The recruiter with the most points (500-point minimum) on 11/21 wins!

PRIZE COMPLIMENTS OF OUR FRIENDS AT FLAG CREDIT UNION.

CONTACT WHITNEY@FLFORESTRY.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION.

WANT MORE BUCKS?

Saving money is always a good thing! Partnering with Outdoor Underwriters, Inc., the Association offers our members special reduced rates for liability insurance for hunting leases and timberland. Contact our office for more information (850.222.5646 or Info@FLForestry.org).

FUNDING AVAILABLE TO TREAT COGONGRASS

The Nature Conservancy North Florida Program has funding for 120 total acres of cogongrass treatment in counties surrounding the Apalachicola National Forest. Private landowners in Calhoun, Gadsden, and Liberty Counties who would like to be considered for this funding should contact Brian Pelc at bpelc@tnc.org or call 850.222.0199 x103.

TREEPAC NEEDS YOU!

TREEPAC, the Association’s political action committee, helps elect candidates who will protect your ability to grow, harvest and use forest resources in Florida.

With a whole slate of elections on the horizon, please help make sure that forestry has a voice in the capitol. Contribute to TREEPAC!

Learn more under the Advocacy tab at FLForestry.org.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR FORESTRY IN FLORIDA VIRTUAL WEBINAR

The Florida Forest Service is hosting a free technical training designed to educate forestry professionals, landowners, and land managers about Florida’s Silviculture Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water quality and the Forestry Wildlife Best Management Practices for State Imperiled Species (WBMPs).

The training will be held December 1, 2021, 8:30 AM-4 PM EST.

To register: gotomeeting.com/training/join-training
Training ID: 974-473-004

For more information, contact Jordan Kimball at Jordan.Kimball@FDACS.gov or call 850.681.5942.

This webinar has been approved for 5.5 hours of Society of American Foresters Category-1 CFE credits.

FORESTRY FORWARD CLASS 13

We are excited to announce the members of Forestry Forward’s Class 13:

Richard Bertrand
Vulcan On-Board Scales

Bryan Camposano
Florida Forest Service

Milli Jones
AgAmerica Lending

Shawn Lewandowski
Florida Forest Service

William McCrea
Legacy Wildlife Services – NRPS Inc.

JT McUmber
Utah Park Service

Blake Reese,
American Forest Management, Inc.

Aaron Smith
Four Rivers Land & Timber, LLC

Jeremiah Thompson
SVN Saunders Real Estate

William White
West Fraser, Inc.

PRESCRIBED BURN ASSISTANCE

These organizations are available to meet onsite with landowners to discuss their goals and assist with prescribed burn prescription and implementation:

ATTACK-ONE FIRE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Attack-One Fire Management Services is grant-funded to assist landowners with current NRCS contracts with prescribed fire planning and implementation throughout Florida and Georgia. They can also assist landowners who have former NRCS contracts with prescribed fire consultation, planning and implementation with active Gopher Tortoise habitat present. For more information, email Kevin Carter at kevin@attack-one.com or call 850.926.6534.

TALL TIMBERS RESEARCH STATION

Tall Timbers Research Station is funded by a Longleaf Legacy Landscape project to provide fire consultation, planning, and implementation to private landowners in the Florida Panhandle from Pensacola to Lake City and in west Georgia as far north as the Chattahoochee Fall Line (Columbus, GA). For more information, email Jeremiah Cates at jcates@talltimbers.org or call 850.381.8707.

ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST

Alachua Conservation Trust has a prescribed fire specialist available to assist private landowners with burn planning, including that associated with NRCS contacts, in Alachua, Putnam, Marion, Levy, Bradford, Clay and portions of Flagler, Volusia, Lake, Sumter, and Citrus Counties. Email Barry Coulliette at act.barryc@gmail.com or call 904.838.8591. Barry is also the coordinator for the North Florida Prescribed Burn Association.
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Official Publication of the Florida Forestry Association
Post Office Box 1696
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1696
Address Service Requested