

Alabama Forests Forever

Foundation Board Awards 2008 Grants

By Rick Oates, Alabama Forestry Association



Thanks to your support of the Alabama Forests Forever license plate, many valuable projects will be conducted this year which have the goal of teaching Alabamians about the importance of forestry to our environment and economy. What's more, this marks over ten years that money from the sale of this tag has been given to worthy forestry education projects. During that time, almost one and a half million dollars have been given to such important causes.

You know what this plate looks like... it has Alabama's state bird, the Yellow Hammer, on the right side. What you may not know is how the money from this tag is spent and why you should get a tag and help support the cause of forestry education.

If You Purchased a Forestry Tag in 2007, Here's Where Your Money Went...

Each year the forestry license plate provides grants to forestry education projects throughout the state. In fact for the last eight years we have awarded approximately \$150,000 annually to great projects. These projects must support the two goals of the foundation, which are to:

1. Promote healthy and productive rural and urban forests, clean water, and abundant wildlife.

2. Educate the citizens of Alabama about the contribution that forests make to the environmental quality and economy of the state.

In December of 2007, the Board of the Alabama Forests Forever Foundation awarded \$140,000 to several organizations that carry out forestry education projects across the state, including:

•Forestry Awareness Week Now

(FAWN): This program, sponsored by county forestry planning committees, SAF Chapters, and other local organizations gives school kids, generally 4th graders, an opportunity to get out in the woods and see what forestry is all about. Students go to several different stations where they learn about tree identification, soils, products, wildlife, water, and many other topics. This is a great way to introduce students to forestry. It takes hundreds of volunteers across the state to organize this massive effort.

•Chambers County Educational Programs for Landowners, Teachers, and Students:

The Chambers County Forestry Planning Committee brings in several expert speakers for different conferences throughout the year. These take the form of lectures, hands-on activities, and field trips. They host specific events for county educators, 10th grade students in the county schools, area landowners, and 3rd graders from across the county. Over 500 people each year are exposed to sound forestry education through this program.

•Project Learning Tree & Teachers Conservation Workshops:

These two programs, well known in the forestry and education communi-



Taking a hands-on approach, both Project Learning Tree and Teachers Conservation Workshops are responsible for bringing good conservation education to teachers across Alabama.

ties, are responsible for bringing good conservation education to thousands of teachers across Alabama. Taking a hands-on approach, both of these efforts utilize volunteers to teach individuals who will impact generations of future voters about forestry.

Alabama 4-H Environmental Field School Watershed Project: Through this grant, the Environmental Field School at the Alabama 4-H Center purchased equipment to enhance their Forest Ecology Class, providing hundreds of kids each year an opportunity to hike through a watershed and see the benefits of forestry to clean water and wildlife.

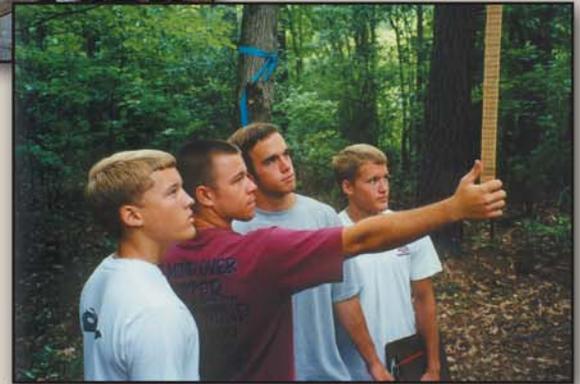
Butler County Natural Resources Youth Camp: This three-day, two-night camp helps 6th graders in Butler County become more aware of Alabama's natural resources. Students get hands-on education in forestry, wildlife, tree identification, fire protection, soil and water conservation, and forest products from qualified professionals in the forestry community. The focus of the program is multiple-use management of our forests.

forestry community evaluates the grants and makes recommendations to the Foundation Board for their approval. The selection committee includes the Alabama Forestry Commission, the Alabama Forestry Association, the School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences, the



Funded programs such as the Butler County Natural Resources Youth Camp, FAWN, the 4-H Environmental Field School Watershed Project, and Chambers County student field trips give Alabama kids an opportunity to get out in the woods and see what forestry is all about.

Alabama Forest Landowners Association, the Alabama Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, the Alabama Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters, and others.



Grant Program Attracts Many Applications

This grant program is highly competitive, and these are just a few of the grants given of a total of \$258,000 requested last year. A cross section of the

Tag Sales & Revenue

If you purchase a tag for \$50 above the regular cost of your license plate, the Foundation receives approximately \$41 dollars. A portion of your \$50 also goes to the Penny Trust Fund which is a special fund created by

How Can You Get in on the Action?

There are two ways you can get involved:

1) When you renew your tag in 2008, buy one of the great Forestry tags. Think about putting them on your company vehicles too. Remember, it's tax deductible!

2) Apply for a grant to support some of the forestry education projects you are working on this year. Grant applications will be available on September 1st, and grants will be awarded in January of 2009. 🌲

Tag	2005	2006	2007
Wildlife Federation	25,129	23,016	23,371
Environmental (Legacy)	15,741	13,416	12,577
Forever Wild	5,615	6,140	6,586
Alabama Forestry	6,434	5,881	5,546
Ducks Unlimited	5,225	4,505	4,654
ALFA	3,536	3,506	3,797

In 2007, among tags that support causes related to forestry and environmental issues, the Forestry license plate ranked fourth, substantially behind both the Alabama Wildlife Federation and Legacy.

the Alabama Legislature for educational projects.

For that \$50, you are also allowed to personalize your tag at no additional cost. If you currently have a personalized tag, you are already paying the \$50, so a Forestry tag will not cost you any extra! Plus, you will get a tax deduction.