



# NWOA News

## Winners Announced for the Family Forest Education Program Awards

Each year, National Woodland Owners Association and the National Association of University Forest Resources Program (NAUFRP) jointly sponsor an awards program that recognizes the best individual educational project and the best comprehensive educational program conducted by a NAUFRP member university. There are 80 universities in the organization which was formed in 1981.

### Submissions for the 2022 Awards

High quality submissions were received for both the Individual Project and Comprehensive Program Family Forest Education awards this year. An individual project can include specialized courses, workshops, webpages, materials, etc. that address a specific family forest issue or problem. The comprehensive family forest education program is one that includes a broad educational effort to address a diverse array of family forest issues and problems using a wide range of educational approaches and programs.

Announcements for award nominations were circulated in March with a submission deadline of August. Nominees submitted materials including a cover letter and project/program materials that were evaluated by three nationally recognized forestry extension leaders using a numerical ranking tool focused on nine attributes associated with excellence in programming and impact.

### The Individual Project Award Winner

The Individual Project Award goes to Virginia's Generation NEXT Team (Virginia Department of Forestry + Virginia Cooperative Extension) whose project addressed critical aspects of intergenerational transfer of forest lands. To date, the project generated "Legacy Planning: A Guide for Virginia Landowners," a 56 page book to guide landowners in intergenerational transfer along with a website, the Generation

NEXT YouTube Channel, and over 35 events for hundreds of landowners, resource professionals and attorneys since its inception in 2009. Award evaluator's praised the project:

- "Excellent submission. Impacts are well-documented and the external documents/publications are outstanding, particularly the barriers and benefits booklet. Women and minorities were included in the project."
- "I am highly complementary of the project: products, process, and impacts."
- "This is a very high quality program with tons of innovation and impact."

### The Comprehensive Program Award Winner

The Comprehensive Program award is presented to University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) for their Forest Stewardship Education Initiative. The Initiative, developed in 2019, was focused on educating private forest landowners to "better understand, manage and protect their forests by developing a forest management plan, engaging with natural resource professionals, and taking advantage of cost-share opportunities that can help them meet their management goals." The program was implemented using three-day workshops prior to COVID and a virtual flipped classroom construct involving self-study in advance of on-line sessions with resource educators during the pandemic. Currently the program involves 9 weekly online sessions and one in-person field day. Completion of the workshop series entitles participants to an initial site visit by a resource professional. In total 335 individuals attended, with 98% indicating improvement in the understanding of forest management planning, 89% planning to consult with a professional, and through May of 2022 49 had site visits from professionals using the programs

\$800 stipend that supported the visit. Evaluator's comments included:

- "Excellent submission and programming. Highly complementary that personnel follow-up with participants AFTER the program to determine impacts cited."
- Also impressed with recognition in the narrative that program managers would like to reach

more private landowners about participating in the program with a benefit/barrier assessment."

- "This is a very high quality program. It easily rates very high in each of the criteria categories. The nomination package was thorough and it is evident that those involved in the development and delivery of these workshops are knowledgeable and passionate about landowner and professional education. **Kudos to California!**"

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## Georgia's Timber Harvest Notification Act Named the NWOA National Outstanding Forestry Law of 2022

The winner of the Outstanding Forestry Law for 2022 is Georgia HB 897, The Timber Harvest Notification Act. It is a straightforward effort to standardize the timber harvesting notification process statewide, and it took a lot of effort and cooperation to pass. The State of Georgia has 159 counties, more than any state except Texas. Of these, some are small, one with only 1,700 residents. Over the years, some 89 counties or cities have enacted individual timber harvest permit requirements deemed necessary to meet local needs (road damage, erosion control, etc.). This meant that landowners and loggers had to determine which jurisdiction needed to be individually notified in addition to the state.

The resulting confusion led the Georgia Forestry Association to call together a special timber harvest ordinance working group in partnership with the Georgia Forestry Commission. The Association of County Commissioners of Georgia was instrumen-

tal in the design of the timber harvest notification process and helped get the votes to pass it in the legislature. All the major stakeholders were at the table, because of the importance of the \$36 billion forest industry. Passed in 2020, the law gave the Forestry Commission two years to develop a statewide timber harvest notification website which went online in January making 2022 the year of implementation of the law.

With HB 897, landowners and loggers can file notifications of intent to harvest timber on a statewide website which forwards the notices directly to the counties or cities that require timber harvest notifications. The website is [www.gatrees.org/timber-harvest-notification](http://www.gatrees.org/timber-harvest-notification). It is accessible and easy to use. NWOA anticipates that the essentials of this law, including the informative website, will be a model for other states to follow.

### **Early on NWOA developed a system to evaluate forest legislation and regulations based on three criteria:**

1) Innovation, 2) Practicality, and 3) Fairness to All Concerned. Known as the National Outstanding Forestry Law of the Year Award, 39 laws have been honored representing 23 states. The first were recognized in 1986, with the certificates presented at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Foresters., an important high visibility annual event attended by most all the state foresters. NASF has continued to offer this national venue ever since, an honor appreciated by NWOA. This is the 36th year the award has been presented by NWOA co-founder, Keith Argow, with the last two years with executive director Mark Megalos.

Back in 1986 there was a flurry of legislation, with two stand outs for recognition. The Arkansas Purple Boundary Paint Law scored high for innovation and practicality. It is a lasting alternative to "hunting by permission only" signs used by landowners which tend to disappear during hunting seasons. It has also been copied by more states (32) than any other law cited by NWOA. The second winner was the Oregon Forest Practices Act of 1986, one of the first to recognize the uniqueness of small forest owners within the context of industrial forestry. It scored high on the category of "practicality."