



Kentucky Tree Farm Committee Newsletter

What does it take to become a National Tree Farm Champion?

by Pam Snyder

The title question of this article has been asked by many Kentucky Tree Farmers over my career as a forester with the Kentucky Division of Forestry. There is not a simple answer, however the first step is to become a Kentucky Tree Farmer and win the state Tree Farmer of the Year competition. Previous Kentucky state winners are often nominated for the regional level competition. If they win, they are entered into the national competition where they compete against Tree Farmers from across the United States. The steps seem fairly straightforward and easy, but the competition is usually stiff. Winning the state competition is a significant accomplishment and the regional is an even bigger accomplishment, but winning the national competition is exceptionally challenging—so far, the only Kentucky Tree Farmer to win the national competition was Pete McNeill of Fleming County.

The Kentucky Tree Farm Committee has profiled state and regional winners through the Kentucky Woodlands Magazine over the years, and while their Tree Farms may be different, they are all committed to managing and caring for their land. From a forester's perspective, it takes a long-term commitment on the part of a Kentucky Tree Farmer to manage his or her forest land sustainably. The diversity of forest-management activities completed by Tree Farmers may seem astronomical and daunting at times, but it does have its rewards. Tree Farmers do much more than just tree planting, timber stand improvement, or wildlife and recreational activities on their property. They also exhibit the devotion of being Tree Farmers and passing that knowledge and aspiration of forestry onto the next generation and the public alike.

In addition to properly managing and caring for his or her land, a national Tree Farm champion must also be able to demonstrate fervor for forest management, outreach, education, and legislative and grass-roots activities over his or her time as a Tree Farmer. Again, it is not an easy question to answer because every Kentucky Tree Farmer is unique. Fortunately, there are plenty of resources and people available to assist Kentucky woodland owners. The Kentucky Tree Farm Committee and the whole Kentucky forestry community are resources for all woodland owners, whether they just want to have healthy and productive forests or they someday want to be a National Tree Farm Champion. These folks are willing and able to assist you in the care and management of your land, and all you have to do is ask.

Tree Farmer of the Year Field Day

Join us on October 3, 2013 at the Sebaugh Tree Farm as we tour and celebrate the 2012 Tree Farmer of the Year winner. The Sebaugh Tree Farm lies in the southeastern part of Edmonson County. For details about the free field day and to register call 859.257.7597 or visit www.ukforestry.org.

Congratulations - 2012 Kentucky Tree Farmer, Inspector, and Logger of the Year!

Photos courtesy: Kentucky Forest Industries Association

2012 Kentucky Tree Farmer of the Year:



Perry and Margaret Sebaugh, Edmonson County

2012 Kentucky Tree Farm Inspector of the Year:



Hagan Wonn, Pulaski County

2012 Kentucky Logger of the Year:



French Logging, Breckinridge County