

For Immediate Release

The Arkansas Forestry Association (AFA) recently honored Charles Purtle, of Prescott, as its 2011 Communicator of the Year during the group's annual meeting in North Little Rock. The award recognizes someone who has done an outstanding job of promoting forestry in Arkansas.

In 2010 and 2011, Purtle traveled to Washington D.C., with other family forest owners as part of an American Forest Foundation Fly-In to meet with the state's congressional representatives and their staff members about forestry related issues. Also, as a tree farmer, Purtle has been instrumental in helping other forest owners learn the value of forest management.

"We are pleased to recognize Charles for reaching out to our elected officials and forest landowners to ensure that Arkansas has healthy, productive forests," said AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell.

As a child, Charles Purtle would have never believed that planting a tree would dramatically shape his life. When a nursery was giving away pine seedlings at school, Charles and his brother planted one acre of their family farm into pine and didn't give it another thought.

After high school, Charles moved away to follow life's path, but he landed back on the family farm where he and Jane chose to raise their three children.

They had their share of successes and failures. Charles is the first to admit, "We have made every mistake we possible could on this farm. High-grading, diameter-limit cutting, you name it, we've done it, but not anymore."

One decision the whole family valued was keeping the farm together. To do this, the Purtle family incorporated the farm, making 10 family members shareholders and Charles and Jane the managers. About 700 acres have been planted to pine plantations and the rest of the land is in bottomland hardwoods.

Today, Charles and Jane see a beautiful farm built on years of practical experience, asking many questions, successes, failures, hard work and faith. They hope their work can encourage others to be good stewards of their land, whether they have a few acres or a large farm.

For more than 60 years, the Arkansas Forestry Association has been the only nonprofit association representing the state's entire forestry community. With more than 1,200 members, the organization promotes the wise use and management of forestland. For more information about AFA programs, look online at www.arkforests.org.

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Caption: (Left to right) AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell presents the Communicator of the Year award to Charles Purtle, of Prescott, with AFA President Allen Morgan, of Arkadelphia.