

Press Release: Feb. 14, 2008

Contact: Steve Stasny, Landowner Assistance Forester, West Virginia Division of Forestry, (304) 872-0830, wvstasny@verizon.net

Lois June Bailes Named West Virginia Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year

Summersville, W.Va. - Lois June Bailes of Nicholas County has been named the 2008 West Virginia Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. The award was presented to her on Feb. 7 at the A.B. Brooks Forestry Symposium in Charleston by Division of Forestry Landowner Assistance Forester Steve Stasny.

“A tree farm is living proof that a well-managed forest is a better forest,” said Stasny, Bailes’ inspecting forester and one of the American Tree Farm System’s 7,000 volunteers. “Ms. Bailes deserves to be recognized for more than 25 years of excellent forest management and her commitment to forest stewardship.”

The Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year competition recognizes private landowners for the exceptional job they do enhancing forests on their properties. Winners are chosen based on their efforts to foster and promote the practice of sustainable forestry to other landowners and the public. Ms. Bailes now will go on to compete for National Tree Farmer of the Year.

To be a certified Tree Farmer, a landowner must manage his or her forest in an environmentally-sound manner in accordance with the American Tree Farm System’s standards and guidelines.

“Tree farmers provide Americans with a renewable supply of essential timber and wood products,” Stasny said. “Their forests help clean the air we breathe, protect the watersheds we depend on for clean water and provide homes for wildlife. By constantly seeking expert advice on sustainable forestry practices, tree farmers like Ms. Bailes make good decisions for their land that will sustain their forests for generations to come.”

Established in 1941, the American Tree Farm System is the oldest and largest forest-certification program in the United States. Today, 65,000 certified tree farmers are managing 26 million acres of nonindustrial private forestlands. There are 665 tree farms in West Virginia that together encompass 1,560,590 acres.

For more information about tree farms in Braxton, Clay, Fayette and Nicholas counties, contact Landowner Assistance Forester Steve Stasny at (304) 872-0830, or wvstasny@verizon.net.

###