

Issue 1
Fall 2009

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR
NATURAL RESOURCES



NATURAL RESOURCE REVIEW

- 👉 The Division of Conservation (DOC), with the help of 121 conservation districts, awarded a total of \$5,327,686 in cost share funds during Fiscal Year 2009 to help Kentucky landowners and farmers. September alone saw awards of \$832,183.
- 👉 The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) nurseries will be accepting native tree [seedling orders](#) for fall 2009 and spring 2010 beginning Oct. 1.
- 👉 Fall fire season runs Oct. 1—Dec. 15. Arson accounts for 56.4 percent of wildland fires. Call the [Arson Hotline 1-800-27-ARSON](#) to report suspicious activity. It's anonymous and you could receive a \$1,000 reward if perpetrators are convicted.
- 👉 The Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (HLCF) acquired 450 acres in August and September. HLCF has now conserved and preserved 33,390 acres of unique areas in the Commonwealth.
- 👉 The Office of Mine Safety and Licensing has sanctioned some 891 individuals who have violated the drug and alcohol free status mandated by the 2006 General Assembly. Keeping repeat offenders out of the mining industry is making mines safer.
- 👉 The Division of Oil and Gas (DOG) issues permits and inspects Kentucky's 27,000 producing oil wells and 20,000 producing natural gas wells to prevent environmental harm.
- 👉 The Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) has eight ongoing water-line construction projects totaling \$12 million that will provide coalfield residents with clean drinking water. To date, AML has expended over \$74.5 million dollars for waterline improvements and has provided over 11,316 households with potable water.
- 👉 The Division of Mine Permits issued 323 coal [mining permits](#) from Jan. 1—Sept. 25.
- 👉 The Division of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement's inspectors performed over 21,000 environmental inspections on 1,915 active permitted sites covering 18,705 acres in Fiscal Year 2009.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT: The department, through its divisions and partnerships, provides technical assistance, education and funding to help landowners, institutions, industries, and communities in conserving and sustaining Kentucky's natural resources. In addition, the department inspects timber harvests and mining operations to ensure the protection of our citizens, our environment, and our workers.



Commissioner's Corner

**By Carl E. Campbell, Commissioner
Department for Natural Resources**

As commissioner of the Department for Natural Resources, I'm pleased to present the first issue of the *Natural Resource Review* and thank all those who worked hard to put it together. The name "Natural Resource Review" was the winning submission by Courtney Skaggs in the Division of Mine Permits in a "Name the Newsletter" contest.

The *Review* is part of our continuing effort to let the citizens of Kentucky know more about how our agencies are carrying out our responsibilities for Kentucky's natural resources. This quarterly newsletter will give you some quick snapshots of agency facts and figures along with longer articles that present a closer look at agency activities.

As you read through this newsletter, you'll get a lot of good news. Too often we talk about what's wrong and what needs to be done. Let's not forget that there are many good things being done by the agencies, industries and citizens of Kentucky to make things better for all of us. In this issue, you'll read about five coal operations that went above and beyond reclamation standards, a dam that will provide flood control and a water supply for citizens of Jackson County, and the well-deserved recognition of two of our directors, Steve Hohmann at Abandoned Mine Lands, and Leah MacSwords at the Division of Forestry. And that's just a sampling of what you'll read.

What will be in future issues? Well, we're hoping you'll have a hand in that. If you have a suggestion for a topic that you'd like to hear more about, or even an article you'd like to contribute, we'd like to hear from you. Contact Evan Satterwhite or Linda Potter with your ideas. The deadline for articles for the next newsletter is Dec. 11, 2009.

So, enjoy the newsletter, pass it on to others who might be interested, and let us know when you have natural resources news that you'd like to share.

Carl E. Campbell



Commissioner's Excellence in Reclamation Awards

Coal operators recognized for best management practices

This year marked the reinstatement of the Commissioner's Excellence in Reclamation Awards. An award is given in each of the five coal producing regions to companies nominated by the regional office inspection staff. The regions are Pikeville, Prestonsburg, London, Middlesboro and Madisonville. The purpose of the awards is threefold:

- It recognizes companies whose reclamation efforts have exceeded those required by the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA);
- It recognizes the hard work of our inspectors;
- Acts as an incentive to coal companies to aspire to higher than required levels in their reclamation efforts.

Commissioner Campbell traveled to each region during September and October to present a plaque and personalized poster to each winner.



Miller Brothers Coal— The site is 591.27 acres that began in 1992. The post land use is pastureland for the entire mined area, with wildlife enhancement plans near the permit edges. Augmented seeding with a diverse mixture of Fawn-Fescue, Timothy, Orchard, and Weeping Love grasses along with Mammoth red clover, red top and Korean Lespedeza legumes. Trees were windowed near the permit edge to provide shelter for burrowing animals, birds, and reptiles. Invading plant species will be tolerated in areas not maintained for pasturing. Ponds will be retained for watering livestock, amphibians, migratory birds and wildlife.

Jamieson Construction Co. - The site is a 303.7 acre contour and auger mine operation that began in 2000, from which 204,000 tons of coal were extracted. The company has reclaimed the site to a post-mining land use of pastureland. The lush quality grasses will make excellent pasture for this ongoing agricultural business. The company also has done an excellent job of stream reconstruction, ensuring a low flow habitat for aquatic species.





Fleenor Mining Inc. – This 108 acre plot of land has been reclaimed to a wildlife habitat. This land was mined in the late 60s and early 70s before the current regulations and was left in less than acceptable condition. Since then, re-mining was conducted and a great job of reclaiming has occurred. Wildlife that frequent the area include deer, wild turkey and black bear.



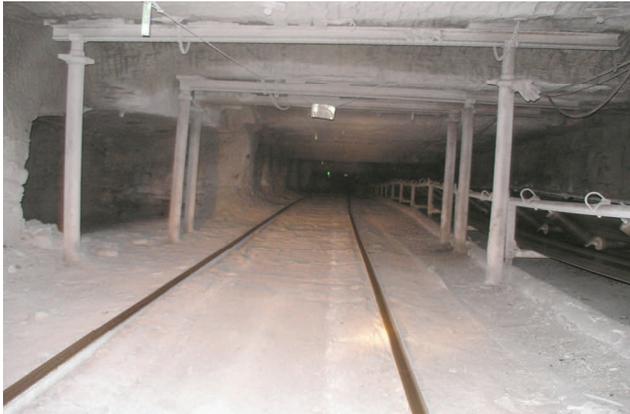
ICG Hazard, LLC– This site encompasses 1850.73 acres of beauty. Post-mining land uses are pastureland, residential, forestland, industrial and fish/wildlife habitat. The reclamation of this site will provide the landowners with long-term benefits, especially in those areas previously mined prior to the federal reclamation law of 1977. Much of the property was unusable due to substandard soil or steep slopes. Pictured left to right: Rep. Fitz Steel, Lt. Governor Daniel Mongiardo, ICG officials and DMRE personnel.



Patriot Coal– Reclamation of 724.2 acres of this Henderson County mine has been completed and developed as a combination of cropland, wildlife development and pasture. Six hundred twenty-four acres of the reclaimed acres are “prime farmland”, requiring restoration of 48 inches of topsoil. The history of the property shows a chain of bankruptcies and changes in ownership. Patriot assumed reclamation liability on this permit. With no further surface disturbances to offset reclamation costs, they did an outstanding job in finalizing reclamation left behind by bankrupt companies. Pictured on the far right: Sen. Dorsey Ridley with Patriot officials and DMRE staff.

Commissioner's Office Tours Eastern Kentucky Coal Mine

What does it feel like to spend the daylight hours working underground with the darkness broken only by the light from your headlamp reflecting off strips on a co-worker's gear? Deputy Commissioner Larry Arnett knows. As a boy, he watched his grandfather return from a day in the mines. His eyes and lips the only discernible features in a coal blackened face. Arnett and others from the Commissioner's Office jumped at the opportunity to go underground in a Pike County McCoy-Elkhorn mine for a first-hand glimpse of the daily operation of an underground mine. The mine foreman, his assistant, and the supervisor of the state inspection office (OMSL), accompanied Larry Arnett, Evan Satterwhite, and Leo Miller to the "working section." During their three hour stint, the group witnessed all facets of the operation. The continuous miner eats away at the seam of coal while men driving underground loaders carry the coal to a nearby beltline, which takes the coal outside for loading into trucks. The process allows a nonstop stream of coal 18 hours a day.



Loaded in the man-trip, the group entered the opening to travel some two miles beneath the surface. A cool breeze hit their faces upon entering. Huge fans mounted outside pulled fresh air through the mine to avoid any contact with toxic gases or low levels of oxygen.

Once inside the mine, total darkness was broken by the lights atop the men's hardhats. The coal seam ranged between 5 and 7 feet.



Back to the light of day, the group posed for a picture in front of the continuous stream of coal pouring from the belt. Pictured from left to right: Deputy Commissioner Arnett, Evan Satterwhite, Leo Miller (both from the Commissioner's Office), Kenny Runyon (McCoy-Elkhorn Coal), Mike Elswick (OMSL district supervisor), and Ronnie Hatfield (McCoy-Elkhorn Coal).

Pictures by DNR Staff

Forestry Officials Prepare for Fire Season

Wildfire Risks Expected to Increase for Many Kentucky Communities
Lynn Brammer

In Kentucky, the inconvenience and dangers of wildfire have typically been associated with isolated and rural areas. Most landowners, hunters and other outdoor recreationists are familiar with the recurrence of wildfire each fall and spring. They understand the basics of fire behavior, they obey burning laws and they typically use caution and common sense when it comes to fire. However, wildfire risks are becoming increasingly evident to a larger segment of our population. With urban development encroaching on rural landscapes and more people moving into fire-prone areas, the threat of wildfire to human health, property and natural resources is rising.

Wildfire comes at a high price to our communities, including the danger of being in the direct path of the fire, the expense of suppression and the choking smoke that causes respiratory problems and poor visibility on roadways. The cost of containing and suppressing wildfire is an unnecessary burden to government agencies and fire departments, which are already hindered by tight budgets. Likewise, the thick smoke that rolls into town after an outbreak of wildfire is an avoidable hazard to our health and safety. Small particles found in wildfire smoke can create breathing difficulties, especially for children, the elderly and those with respiratory or heart problems.

This year, there have been four wildfire-related fatalities in Kentucky. Three of the fatalities resulted from escaped debris fires and the fourth fatality resulted from a wildfire of unknown origin. The accumulated tree debris from the winter ice storm and previous wind storms also has increased the fuel load and will likely worsen the severity of wildfires this fall and for many years to come.





Now that there is a growing demand for protecting the homes and people living in forested areas, citizens want to know what they should do to protect themselves and who to contact for help. The Kentucky Firewise program provides information on how you can protect your home and community before a wildland fire strikes. The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF), the state agency responsible for suppressing wildfires, recommends that citizens be aware of fire hazard seasons, outdoor burning laws, campfire safety and precautions to take while burning woody debris.

Fire hazard seasons occur in the fall from Oct. 1 to Dec. 15 and in the spring from Feb. 15 to April 30. During these times, outdoor burning is illegal from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in or within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland. Fire hazard seasons are enforced by KDF; however, additional outdoor burning laws and restrictions may apply. Citizens should contact the Kentucky Division for Air Quality for air pollution regulations and the local judge-executive's office for possible county burn bans.

Safety precautions should always be taken into consideration when burning woody debris or using campfires. Weather conditions are certainly a contributing factor in the number and intensity of wildfires, therefore outdoor burning should only occur when the wind is calm and humidity is high. Other precautions include keeping brush piles and campfires small and contained, keeping a supply of water and a shovel accessible and staying with the fire until it is completely extinguished.

The division also encourages the public to be aware that most of our wildfires are preventable and that forest arson is the primary cause of wildfire in Kentucky. Forest arson is a felony under state law (KRS 149.380) and is punishable by up to five years in prison and/or up to \$10,000 in fines. Suspicious individuals should be reported to KDF, local law enforcement officers or the Kentucky State Police. Citizens may also call the Target Arson Hotline at 1-800-27-ARSON. For more information about wildfire in Kentucky, or the Kentucky Firewise program, visit KDF's Web site at www.forestry.ky.gov.



Loretta Lynn's Birthplace– Butcher Holler– Gets City Water

AML continues to provide potable water to Kentucky residents



The sign at the fork of the road urges residents to “sign up today.” Placed at the entrance to Butcher Hollow, it announces construction of the waterline project funded by the Division of Abandoned Mine Lands. The Butcher Hollow Groundwater Contamination Study identified the area as one impacted by pre-1977 and interim coal mining. Sixty-seven residences of Butcher Hollow, Patterson Creek, Right Fork of Grassy Creek and Sycamore will be served. The home-stead of Loretta Lynn, in Van Lear, will now have available municipal water. This “cabin on a hill” was made famous by Lynn’s recording of *Coal Miner’s Daughter*, when she sang, “I remember well, the well where I drew water.” The division extends waterlines into areas where drinking water has been contaminated by pre-law mining.

Division of Oil and Gas Realized Savings of \$670,000

Implementing Orphaned Well program proves to be win-win

Innovation, strong markets, and vision are aligned to save the Division of Oil and Gas thousands of dollars in plugging abandoned wells through the orphaned well program. Officially called the Testing Permit program, it allows oil and gas operators to test an abandoned well before assuming any liability. Although the Testing Permit program has been around for 10 years, it was not fully utilized until the price of oil and gas started climbing a few years ago. This program is a win-win situation for the division and oil and gas operators. If production potential is found and an orphaned well is placed back in production by an active operator, the state is no longer liable for plugging the well. However, if the well exhibits no potential production, the operator is not obligated to assume liability of the well.

To receive a permit to test a well, an operator must file a testing permit application form and a \$25 fee. The one-page form asks the operator for basic well information such as the permit number, mineral owner name, well number and location. The well must be in abandoned status before the division will approve a testing permit. Wells are considered abandoned when the original bond has been forfeited due to non-compliance. Wells drilled prior to bonding must have an existing violation on file.

Once the testing permit is approved, the operator has 60 days to test the well. The operator cannot drill the well deeper or re-open new production zones during the test period. When testing is complete, a Report of Investigation form must be filed indicating what was done to the well during the testing period and what the operator found. This report is a useful tool to the division as it may provide additional well information, such as total depth and casing string data, which may not currently be on file.

The division has seen success with this program over the last 10 years with 223 wells back in production and assigned to an active operator. With an average well plugging cost of \$3,000, the state has saved nearly \$670,000 by not having to plug these abandoned wells.



Kentucky DNR Employee Protects Endangered Indiana Bat from Surface Coal Mining Impacts

Kentucky's own, **Dr. Richard J. Wahrer** knows bats. So extensive is his bat expertise, that he was appointed to a team of national experts charged with developing national guidance for their protection. Oct. 1, 2009 marked the date that implementation would begin for the new coal mining guidelines developed to conserve and protect the endangered Indiana bat. The bat's habitat stretches from the eastern United States through the Midwest, including 13 states with coal mining operations. The Indiana bat was one of the original mammals included on the federal list of endangered species.

Dr. Wahrer, Richard to his colleagues, is an environmental scientist with the Kentucky Department for Natural Resources. He teaches the class on Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) permitting and the endangered species act for the federal Office of Surface Mining. He holds a B.S. in Zoology and an M.S. in Limnology from Stephen F. Austin University. He received his PH.D. in Aquatic Biology from Texas A&M University.

"Richard Wahrer was instrumental during the development of the Rangewide Indiana Bat Protection and Enhancement Plan Guidelines by providing detail and real world knowledge of the SMCRA permitting process, as well as some much needed comic relief," says Lee Andrews of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Kentucky Field Office.

"Richard also has been at the forefront of getting the guidelines implemented in Kentucky by arranging training sessions for the industry, regulatory authorities, and the bat biologists/ environmental consultants. Because of his efforts, Kentucky is likely to be the first state to incorporate the guidelines into the SMCRA review process. His dedication will ultimately help improve the efficiency of the SMCRA review process while providing much needed protection for the Indiana bat."



Photo credit: endangeredanimals.com

The guidelines provide coal mining companies a set of consistent and reasonable protective measures they can use when their proposed operations could impact the Indiana bat and its critical habitat.

Dr. Wahrer has also written the Reclamation Advisory Memorandum (RAM) that informs Kentucky coal operators about the new guidelines. He recently conducted training with the permit review staff and coal industry to ensure a smooth transition.



Dr. Richard Wahrer, Environmental Scientist

Taylor County's Conservation District Helps Family Farms

Representatives from the Commissioner's Office and Division of Conservation (DOC) staff recently visited Taylor County to view examples of DOC's State Cost Share and Green River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) practices in the area. The more critical part of the trip was to show the unique partnership of the Kentucky Division of Conservation, Taylor County Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Neil Wayne, a 24-year-old farmer, exemplifies the sophistication and intellect required to make farming profitable these days. Neil and his father, Merlin, produce cattle, forage and grain crops on their farm. The Waynes know to the penny how much they need to spend per head of cattle to maximize their profits when it comes time to market them. Neil explained his operation and how the variety of programs offered through the Taylor County Conservation District has contributed to more effective production and natural resource conservation.

Water tanks placed in his field through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has improved his cattle operation by enabling him to use city water, which is much cleaner than the creek water used previously. State Cost Share funds allowed him to construct a stream crossing buffer to protect the Green River by keeping his cattle out of the creek. Both practices have resulted in more weight gain and healthier stock. The Waynes want their cattle to exercise enough to build muscle mass, but want to avoid the weight loss that occurs when traveling to their food and water sources.

The Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program helped them build a stack pad. This is recycling at its best. The manure captured on the stack pads is spread in the fields as fertilizer. Its cleaner, drier and healthier for the cattle. The fields were lush, green and beautiful.

"We have to make every penny count and that means we have to know exactly what it takes to raise cattle to their goal weight of 800-850 pounds." said Neil Wayne. Neil and Merlin Wayne partnered with district conservationist Kathy Hodges to assist with technologies to improve their farm and community through conservation. Neil exudes enthusiasm and intelligence and his father looks on with pride. They plan to work with NRCS and the Taylor County Conservation District to continue the success of this family farm.



Left to right: Steve Coleman, Kathy Hodges, Larry Arnett, Neil Wayne, Merlin Wayne



Hazard Mine Rescue Team Wins Statewide Competition

Emergency drills vital to mine rescue preparedness

Energy and Environment Deputy Secretary Hank List presented the winning trophy to the Hazard District Office Mine Rescue Team in the first annual Office of Mine Safety and Licensing (OMSL) interagency mine rescue contest. The statewide competition took place Sept. 23 on the 23-acre OMSL mine rescue field in Pikeville.

The district office teams from Pikeville, Madisonville and Hazard vied for the statewide title after winning regional contests. OMSL has six district offices, each housing experienced mine rescue teams. Harlan, Barbourville and Martin district offices participated in the earlier events. The Hazard team members are David Mullins, Bob Banks, T.K. Hays, Mike Eldridge, Rodney Eversole, Randy Campbell, Gary Fugate, Leon Mullins, Daniel Bentley and Jeff Brock.

These contests prepare OMSL mine rescue personnel with training for command center and mine rescue operations in order to respond to major mine emergencies that may occur.

Kentucky has had mine rescue teams for 28 years. They have improved significantly over the years and are now prepared for virtually any emergency situation.



Pictured from left to right: Deputy Commissioner Larry Arnett, Hazard District Supervisor David Mullins, Deputy Secretary Hank List, and Executive Director Johnny Greene.

“I am very pleased with the progress that our six mine rescue districts have made. Our goal is to remain vigilant and always ready to react when Kentucky coal miners are missing and to provide mine rescue services to Kentucky’s coal industry,” said Johnny Greene, executive director of the Office of Mine Safety and Licensing.



Hazard team dons their rescue gear.



Back row: Dave Mullins, Gary Fugate, Jeff Brock, T.K.Hayes, Leon Mullins, Bob Banks.

Front row: Randy Campbell, Mike Eldridge, Daniel Bentley, and Rodney Eversole.



Jackson County Flood Control Structure is 200th in Kentucky



The Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Division of Conservation celebrate the Pigeon Roost Structure as the 200th such structure in Kentucky since 1950. The Floodwater Retarding Structure (FRS) No. 3 of the Pigeon Roost Creek watershed is the final project planned for Jackson County to provide flood control and municipal water to the city of McKee. A flash flood in 1981 left water standing 3-4 feet deep in downtown businesses. This structure is the final of several projects designed to protect McKee, whose citizens had suffered repeated flooding in residential and business areas. The projects completed include a floodwall in 1988, an impoundment in 1994, a multi-purpose structure in 1998 and now the 2009 structure. The 200 structures have been built as a result of Public Law 566, which provides federal funds for the construction of the watershed projects. The original bill was sponsored by Congressman William Natcher from Kentucky. The NRCS provides federal funding, design, and oversight of the projects.

Upcoming Events:

- Oct. 20:** DNR/OSM quarterly meeting
- Oct. 22:** NKUCFC's Annual Fall Dinner Event, Twin Oaks Plantation Golf Course, Covington
- Oct. 28-29:** ISA's Certified Tree Worker Exam, Bowling Green, cert@isa-arbor.com
- Oct 30:** Kentucky Coal Association Annual Meeting
- Nov. 16:** Soil and Water Conservation Commission at DOC Office, Frankfort, 9 a.m.
- Nov. 17:** KACD Board of Directors meeting at DOC Office, Frankfort, 9:30 a.m.
- Nov. 17-19:** KSU Small, Limited Resource, Minority Farmers Conference at Capital Plaza Hotel
- Nov. 18-19:** KAA's Annual Urban Forestry Conference, Shepherdsville
- Dec. 3-4:** DNR/ U.S. Office of Surface Mining/ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/ U.S. EPA Meeting
- Dec. 10:** Agriculture Water Quality Authority Meeting, USDA Office in Louisville, 10 a.m.



Abandoned Mine Lands Director Receives Highest Honor *Steve Hohmann gets award at National Conference*



Pictured: Glenda Owens, acting director of the U.S. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Mary Stephens, Steve Hohmann, director of Kentucky Abandoned Mine Lands, Sarah Donnelly, OSM technical training.

Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Director Steve Hohmann is the recipient of the Stan Barnard Memorial Award, the highest honor of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs (NAAML P).

The award is presented in memory of Stan Barnard and is bestowed upon individuals who exhibit qualities of outstanding dedication, commitment and hard work toward the enhancement of the association. Hohmann received the award at the 2009 NAAML P Annual Conference held Sept. 27-30 in Rogers, Arkansas.

Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Carl Campbell said, "The citizens of Kentucky are blessed to have an individual with such a caring attitude and strong vision working on their behalf. Steve is a true leader."

"I have known Steve for many years and I know firsthand what a tireless worker he is on behalf of AML," said Kentucky House of Representatives Majority Leader Rocky Adkins. "Steve runs his division like a true professional and treats legislators, contractors and my constituents with the utmost respect. It's gratifying to see his hard work and years of service to state government so richly rewarded by his own peers, and I congratulate him on this outstanding accomplishment."

The Division of Abandoned Mine Lands works throughout the coalfields of Kentucky to protect the public from health and safety hazards caused by mining that occurred prior to 1982, when mining laws changed.



*Kentucky State Forester Honored
State Forester Leah MacSwords Receives 2009 American Tree Farm Systems
Award for Sustained Excellence*



MacSwords, an adamant supporter of the Kentucky Tree Farm program, currently serves as a co-chairman for the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee. Under her leadership, she promotes the Tree Farm program at the state and national level and provides for over 95 percent of re-inspections through KDF's forestry field staff. MacSwords is also a member of the Society of American Foresters and has served as the chair of the Southern Group of State Foresters and of the National Association of State Foresters.

MacSwords is past head of the Southern State Foresters group and past president of the National Association of State Foresters where she continues to promote support for the Tree Farm program to her colleagues throughout the United States. Her efforts were instrumental in getting stakeholders together to ensure the modification of state regulations to allow certified Tree Farm wood to be given credit in the state approved system.

Listing the attributes of a leader in forestry, would include words like, "leader, advocate, promoter, supporter, chair, co-chair, volunteer, and participant." Or, you could simply say 'Leah MacSwords.' MacSwords has served as the director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) for the past eight years.

The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) recently recognized MacSwords with their Tree Farm Sustained Excellence Award. This national award recognizes a state forester who has been instrumental in accomplishing the vision and goals of ATFS – sustaining forests, watersheds and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship.

"I am honored to receive this recognition from the American Tree Farm System, and I'm very proud of the work we do in Kentucky to support our tree farmers," MacSwords states.

Her commitment to sustaining the Tree Farm Program provides the foundation for a sustained forest for present and future generations of forest landowners and their families. To that end, MacSwords instituted a policy to include Tree Farm brochures in all stewardship plans for landowners who work with the division throughout the state.

The ATFS program, a national program of the American Forest Foundation, promotes the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to private forest landowners. Founded in 1941, ATFS has 24 million certified acres of privately owned forestland and 90,000 family forest landowners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship. Tree farmers manage their forestlands for wood, water, wildlife, and recreation.

MacSwords is the first female president of the National Association of State Foresters and the first female state forester in Kentucky history.

Commissioner Campbell is extravagant in his praise. "Thanks to Leah MacSwords, Kentucky is considered a national leader in forestry issues. I am extremely proud of her tireless efforts on behalf of the Commonwealth, forest industries and woodland owners across the nation."



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