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**In This Week's Issue:**

AFA EVP Selected for Leadership Role in New Federal Timber Purchasers Coalition (FTPC)

Farm Bill Advances Out of House Agriculture Committee

'It's Time to Build It': Standard Lithium's \$1.5B Plant Moves Closer to Reality

Register Now for the 2026 Forest Landowner Forum

SFI Releases Regional Climate Risk Summaries to Support Climate Smart Forestry

**Your Weekly News & Updates**

**AFA EVP Selected for Leadership Role in New Federal Timber Purchasers Coalition (FTPC)**

*Federal Timber Purchases Coalition*

This month, the **Federal Timber Purchasers Coalition (FTPC)** was officially launched as a 501(c)(6) organization with the goal of improving the quality, quantity, and operational viability of timber sales from Federal lands.



The FTPC Mission is to serve as a national unified voice of federal timber purchasers and contractors. The Coalition will work to improve the effectiveness, scale, and contract design and implementation of Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management timber programs through partnership and communication with the agencies, and through education and advocacy before Executive and Legislative officials.

The Federal Timber Purchasers Coalition will also carry on the important work of the Federal Forest Resource Coalition (FFRC), which allied with industry, conservation, and local government groups to support a growing and sustainable federal timber program in Washington, D.C. over the last decade.

The launch of the FTPC comes at a pivotal moment as bipartisan leaders and the Administration prioritize active management of federal forests, expand domestic timber supply to support American workers and manufacturing, and wildfire resilience.

FTPC leadership and members will be engaged in helping implement the direction in the President's 2025 timber Executive Orders ([EO 14225](#), [EO 14223](#)) and passing bipartisan legislative reforms to increase active management included in the Fix Our Forests Act and Farm Bill.

#### **Background and Next Steps**

The FTPC was originally formed in 1962 (called the Federal Timber Purchasers "Committee") at the behest of then-Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman who sought a group to be the principal point of contact and communication between the Forest Service and the forest products industry relating to timber sales and timber sale contracts.

Over the last 50+ years, the Committee served as an informal, but effective, forum for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and federal timber purchasers to convene and discuss issues relevant to the federal timber program. For decades, and across Democratic and Republican Administrations and Congresses, the Committee worked together to solve technical and contractual challenges to help improve stewarding federal forests and the working relationship between federal agencies and private sector partners on the ground.

Since its creation in the 1960s, the Committee was managed under the umbrella of various forest products industry trade associations, including most recently by FFRC. In January 2026, the FFRC Board of Directors voted unanimously to transition FFRC into FTPC complete with an organizational name change, updated Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, and a new governance structure. FTPC will now be governed by a five-person working Board of Directors with national reach and representation, including:

**Travis Joseph**, FTPC President-elect of the Board, President/CEO of the American Forest Resource Council

**Tim O'Hara**, FTPC Vice President-elect of the Board, President of the Forest Resources Association

**Ben Wudtke**, FTPC Board Member, Executive Director of the Intermountain Forest Association

**Max Braswell**, FTPC Board Member, Executive Vice President of the Arkansas Forestry Association

**Richard Schwab**, FTPC Board Member, Schwab Brothers Hydraulics, representing the American Loggers Council

The newly launched and reinvigorated **Federal Timber Purchasers Coalition** formalizes and builds upon the important work of the original Committee. FTPC will be a nationwide membership organization consisting of individuals and businesses "engaged in harvesting of federal timber or in the processing of logs from federal lands into lumber or other forest products in the United States."

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## **Farm Bill Advances Out of House Agriculture Committee**

*Forest Resources Association*

On Wednesday, the House Agriculture Committee completed its markup of the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026. The Committee vote was 34-17, with 7 Democrats joining all Republicans on the committee to pass the legislation.



The Farm Bill is home to several programs that are critically important to the entire forest products value chain. This Farm Bill reauthorization cycle has been extraordinary in that the two main drivers of a Farm Bill rewrite—Title 1, which addresses row crop and dairy subsidies, and Title 4, which houses the nutrition programs—were cleaved off and passed as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act that was signed by the President on July 4 last year. This development left a number of forestry and forest products sector-supported programs authorized by the Farm Bill in limbo. Among those programs left out of H.R. 1—the One Big Beautiful Bill Act—are the Wood Innovation Grant and Community Wood Grant programs, as well as all of the biomass energy incentive programs in the Farm Bill’s Energy Title.

The House Agriculture Committee-approved bill would do the following:

- Renews and updates both the Wood Innovation and Community Wood Grant programs. Both of these initiatives have pumped meaningful dollars into the rural economy to stand up innovative wood manufacturing facilities, upgrades at existing sawmills, and deployment of biomass combined heat and power projects, among other things.
- Alters the Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE), a workforce development grant program, to include the forestry and forest products manufacturing sectors. This approach effectively bolts the Jobs in the Woods Act language onto an existing, nearly identical worker pathway program.
- Codifies the concept of biomass carbon neutrality and binds the U.S. Department of Agriculture to assign a greenhouse gas emissions factor of no more than zero to emissions from forest-based biomass energy. While the language does not cover the most critical agency—the EPA—FRA will be working with our allies to expand this language to cover all of the federal government footprint as the bill proceeds.
- Reauthorizes and improves the Forest Inventory and Analysis program. FIA monitors the health of our country’s forest resource, and its credible data is the centerpiece of our sector’s sustainability claims.
- Renews Energy title programs incentivizing biomass heat and power projects. Among those programs are the Rural Energy for America Program and the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, which is a direct payment program for producers of advanced biofuels, including wood pellet producers. This title also reauthorizes the Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

While the legislation received bipartisan support in committee, its future is uncertain as it moves forward in the legislative process. Ranking Member Angie Craig (D-MN-02) was critical of the measure leading up to and throughout the committee markup. Democrat Members of Congress have opposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that were made as part of H.R. 1 last year.

In the Senate, Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee Chairman John Boozman (R-AR) has signaled that he intends to mark up a Farm Bill reauthorization measure in the coming months. However, legislating in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress will slow to a halt the closer we get to the November mid-term elections. Nevertheless, the FRA team will continue to work the process to secure our priorities in whatever Farm Bill product emerges later this year.

## 'It's Time to Build It': Standard Lithium's \$1.5B Arkansas Plant Moves Closer to Reality

*American Forest Foundation*

Four years ago, Standard Lithium Ltd. was the target of a scathing 10,000-word [report from Hindenburg Research](#) suggesting the Vancouver startup's lithium brine work in south Arkansas might be just a stock scam.

But now, Standard's joint venture, Smackover Lithium, is on the cusp of a final investment decision to build a [\\$1.5 billion lithium extraction](#) plant in **Lafayette County**. And with growing investor interest in project finance, a new \$130 million round of equity financing, and a \$225 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, "it's time to build it."

That's the conclusion of CEO David Park, a longtime Koch executive who took over leadership of Standard in [September 2024](#). Park helped finalize a [55%-45% partnership](#) with Equinor of Norway to launch Smackover Lithium, as well as a strategic partnership with Aquatech of Canonsburg, Virginia, to use its advanced direct lithium extraction technology.

Aquatech's lithium selection sorption process proved successful in pulling battery-grade lithium products from brine pumped from miles beneath south Arkansas, Standard reported in September.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE.](#)





# 2026 Forest Landowner Forum



## Hardwood Forest Management



Tuesday, May 12, 2026  
10:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Farm Credit Services of Western Arkansas  
Corporate Headquarters  
5177 US-64, Russellville, AR 72802

Cost: AFA members FREE; non-members \$10 includes lunch, handouts, and door prizes

Register and pay online at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/2026AFAForum>  
or call (501) 374-2441 to register by phone.

From oaks and hickory to cottonwoods and walnut, Arkansas' hardwood forests provide critical wildlife habitat, protect water quality, and supply high-value timber that supports jobs and rural communities across the state.

This workshop will explore the fundamentals of hardwood forest management in Arkansas, highlighting how thoughtful stewardship can improve forest health while increasing long-term economic returns. Participants will learn about the ecological benefits of hardwood forests, market opportunities for hardwood products, and practical strategies for growing and managing hardwood trees suited to Arkansas soils, climate, and landscapes.

### Session Topics Include:

*Arkansas Hardwoods: Then & Now*

*Managing Hardwood Timber*

*Hardwood versus Softwood:  
an Economic Comparison*

*Forestry Division's Hardwood  
Reforestation Program*



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OF WESTERN ARKANSAS



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## SFI Releases Regional Climate Risk Summaries to Support Climate Smart Forestry

*Sustainable Forestry Initiative*

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) announces the release of the SFI Regional Climate Change Risk Summaries.

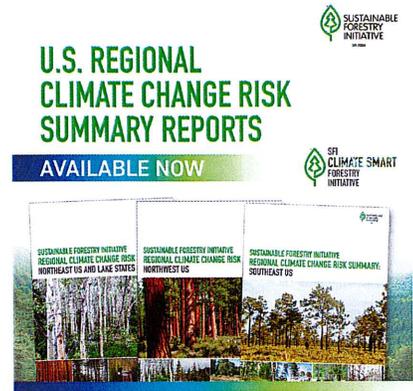
Available United States summaries include the Northeast and Lake States, Northwest, and the Southeast regions. The new science-based resources are designed to support the identification and prioritization of climate risks to forests in the United States. These summaries have been developed as part of the [SFI Climate Smart Forestry Initiative](#) in collaboration with the Michigan State University Forest Carbon and Climate Program and with support from the Doris Duke Foundation.

The SFI Forest Management Standard requires assessing climate-driven forest vulnerability and taking steps to address risk. These summaries will advance the interpretation and implementation of Climate Smart Forestry across the SFI footprint by supporting COs in meeting these requirements.

"I am proud of the SFI Regional Climate Change Risk Summaries – a collaborative effort to translate complex climate science into actionable information that forest managers can use to inform on the ground management decisions," said Lauren T. Cooper, Chief Conservation Officer at SFI.

"By grounding climate risk assessments in North American-specific data and forest-specific vulnerabilities, SFI is supporting certified organizations as they take proactive, science-based steps to strengthen forest resilience, protect biodiversity, and sustain the many benefits forests provide," said Greg Cooper, Director of Conservation Implementation at SFI.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE.](#)



**March 11**  
Program Committee Meeting  
10:00 a.m., AFA Office/Zoom, Little Rock

**March 19**  
ELP Center for Forest Business Tour  
10:00 a.m., Monticello

**March 31**  
Forest Protection Committee Meeting  
9:30 a.m., AFA Office/Zoom, Little Rock

**April 3**  
Office Closed for Good Friday

**April 10**  
[Tree Farm of the Year Tour: Matson Tree Farm](#)  
9:00 a.m., Little Rock

**April 16**

**BE PRO BE PROUD**  
**B E P R O B E P R O U D . O R G**

**Conway High School - Conway**  
March 3, 2026

**Central Arkansas Draft Day - Pulaski Tech**  
March 3, 2026

**Conway High School - Conway**  
March 4, 2026

**Horace Mann Middle School - Little Rock**  
March 4, 2026

**Pottsville High School - Pottsville**  
March 5, 2026

**Forest Heights Middle School - Little Rock**  
March 5, 2026

**Pottsville Junior High School - Pottsville**

**2026 TCT Forestry is for the Birds Workshop**

8:00 a.m., Warren

May 12

**2026 Forest Landowner Forum: Hardwood Forest Management**

10:00 a.m., Russellville

**CLICK HERE TO SEE  
AGFC EDUCATION  
OPPORTUNITIES**

March 6, 2026

**Marion G Lacey Middle School - Little Rock**

March 6, 2026

**Sloan Hendrix High School - Imboden**

March 10, 2026

**Berryville High School - Berryville**

March 11, 2026

**Sloan Hendrix High School - Imboden**

March 11, 2026

**Harrison Middle School - Harrison**

March 12, 2026

**Harrison Middle School - Harrison**

March 13, 2026

**Marked Tree High School - Marked Tree**

March 17, 2026

**Northeast Arkansas Draft Day - Blytheville**

March 18, 2026

**Arkansas Northeastern College - Blytheville**

March 19, 2026

**Arkansas Northeastern College - Blytheville**

March 20, 2026

## **New Voices of Forestry Looks Back at 2025 March Wildfires**

A new episode of Voices of Forestry is our now! For March, Seth sits back down with Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Robert Murphy to revisit the devastating amount of fires that took place this time in 2025.

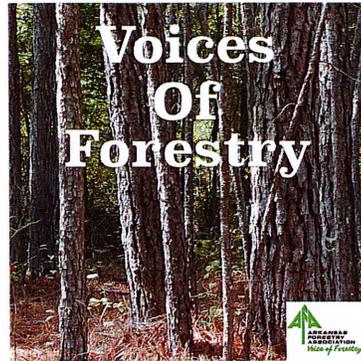
March's episode of Voices of Forestry is sponsored by **Caribou Software**! Thank you to them for their support of the show.

You can always catch the current episode or any of our older episodes on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and the **AFA site**.

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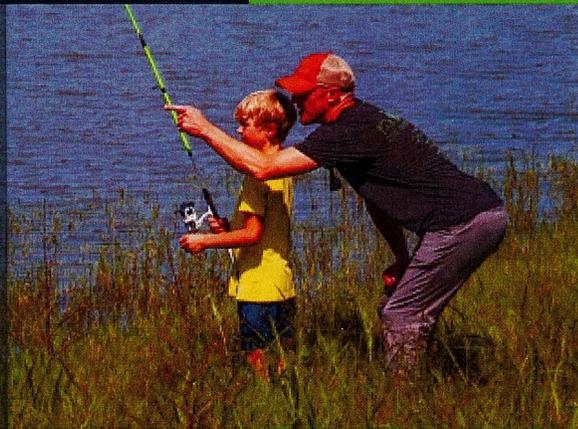




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