Vol. 35 No. 4

KENTUCKY WOODLANDS NEWSLETTER

"BRINGING PEOPLE AND WOODLAND SUSTAINABILITY TOGETHER"

www.kwoa.net

KWOA

Fall 2026



KWOA Member Greg Kuhns Wins Kentucky Leopold Sand County Conservation Award

by Jerry Douglas

Reprinted courtesy Sand County Foundation, KACD, KAC, and American Farmland Trust Dr. James "Greg" Kuhns of Louisville has been selected as the recipient of the 2026 Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award ® .

The award honors farmers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in the management of soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on working land.

Dr. Kuhns, who owns forest and farmland in Bullitt County, was presented with the award at the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Convention on July 28. He receives $10,000 for being selected.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust will present Leopold Conservation Awards to landowners in 28 states this year. In Kentucky, the award is presented annually with the Kentucky Agricultural Council, and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the awards recognize farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to environmental improvement. In his influential 1949 book, A Sand County Almanac, Leopold advocated for "a land ethic," an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage. Kentucky landowners were encouraged to apply, or be nominated, for the award this year. Applications were evaluated by an independent panel of agricultural and conservation leaders from Kentucky. Among the many outstanding landowners nominated for the award were finalists James Benton of Campbell County, and Shane and Felicia Wells of Butler County.

For more information on the award, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org

IN THIS ISSUE:

- KWOA Member Greg Kuhns Wins Kentucky Leopold Sand County Conservation Award
- President's Letter
- Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year
- Jim Vincent Obituary
- Wendell Berry: A Kentucky Voice for the Land
- Kentucky Forest Stewardship Committee Meets



Officers
President: Scott Taylor, and Casey
Vice President: Jimmie Sizemore, Clay
Secretary: Jack Rentz, Lewis
Treasurer: Jerry Brown, Shelby
Assistant Secretary: Jerry Schneider, Kenton
Immediate Past President: Portia Brown, Grayson

Board of Directors
North
Jerry Schneider, Kenton
Rodney Bruce, Greenup
David Wise, Trimble

East
Jimmie Sizemore, Clay
Doug McLaren, Breathitt
Jack Stickney, Estill

Central
Lanny Copeland, Warren
Harry Pelle, Taylor

West
Mike Smith, Ohio
James Vincent, Henderson
Mike Devoto, Hopkins

Board Members at Large
Jerry Brown, Shelby
Portia Brown, Grayson
Frank Hicks, Greenup
Gail Lincoln, Carter
Jack Rentz, Lewis
Jerry Schneider, Kenton
Jimmie Sizemore, Clay
Jeff Stringer, Fayette
Scott Taylor, Casey
Genia Toma, Nelson
Janeen Wise, Trimble NEW ADDITION

Emeritus
Steve Perry, Henry
Karen Marshall, Owen
Henry Duncan, Logan

Kentucky Woodlands Newsletter
Founding Editor: Don Girton (1993-2005)
Past Editor: Karen Marshall (2005-2024)
Current Editor: Bill Furbee

Kentucky Woodlands Newsletter is published quarterly. We welcome submission of articles and information for inclusion in the newsletter subject to review and approval by the executive committee.

Submit copy to:
Bill Furbee, Editor, **editor@kwoa.net**

A Message From Your President

It's fall again, a special time of year. The temperatures are cooler, the fall foliage is beautiful and it's a drier season usually. Great weather for hunting, camping, cookouts, hiking and viewing the scenery of a forest in the fall. It's an opportunity to spend quality time with friends and family (children and grandchildren especially!) in the woods.

Fall is also a good time to fine tune your forest management activities for the coming new year. Do you need to update your Forest Management Plan? Do you have invasive plant problems? Do you have a stand of timber that really should have FSI work done on it? Do you have a stream crossing that needs work? Are you considering a harvest? Talk with your forester about these management issues and layout a plan for accomplishing those management tasks.

I firmly believe that a professional forester is the single most import resource a forest landowner can utilize. I am convinced the best forest management decision our family has ever made was to engage in a long term, working relationship with a professional forester. A strong and functional working relationship with your forester allows you to take advantage of professional, science-based guidance. This allows you to make the best management decisions, to continue to grow your understanding of good forest management and to continue to improve your forest over time.

A professional forester will elevate your level of management. They stay abreast of the science of silviculture and the appropriate technology to implement that science in your forests. They understand your individual limitations and will have solutions that will work for your family in your unique situation. A professional forester can shepherd you through perplexing decisions about managing the forest as a complex biological system.

My advice to you, as one forest landowner to another, is to utilize professional foresters as your primary guide for forest management. Professional foresters are the right choice to guide and assist you in accomplishing your goals as a forest landowner. You will find the relationship to be rewarding and empowering.

Resources: The Kentucky Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters https://kyacf.org

The Kentucky Division of Forestry https://eec.ky.gov/Natural-Resources/Forestry/forest-stewardship-program-and-landowner-services/Pages/default.aspx

Scott Taylor

-Scott Taylor
KWOA President



Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year *STANDING TALL*

by Mike Devoto

Portia and Jerry Brown Named Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year for Kentucky and the North Central Region



Portia Contemplating Loblolly Pine Harvest.

The American Tree Farm System, a program of the American Forest Foundation, recognizes excellence in forest stewardship. In April, the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee named longtime KWOA directors Portia and Jerry Brown as the 2025 Kentucky Tree Farmers of the Year and nominated them for regional recognition.

Their selection recognizes a long-term model of stewardship: restoring damaged land, working with forestry professionals, investing in access, and letting each property's natural conditions guide management decisions.

After national judges toured the Browns' Grayson and Shelby County tree farms in August, Jerry and Portia Brown were selected as the 2026 Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year for the North Central Region. As regional winners, they are one of four finalists for the national award, which will be presented at the National Leadership Conference, April 15-17, 2027.

What Sets the Browns' Stewardship Apart

In conversations with the Browns and Chris Will, their consulting forester and president of Central Kentucky Forest Management Inc., three stewardship themes stood out:

- Support natural regeneration by improving existing conditions, encouraging native trees suited to the site, and monitoring results.
- Work with forestry professionals to set priorities, choose sound practices, and connect with cost-share programs.
- Invest in access and infrastructure to reduce erosion, support harvests, and make long-term stewardship practical.

Grayson Woods: Restoring Eroded Cropland

Visitors to the 2026 Tree Farmer of the Year Field Day will see Grayson Woods, the property Portia's mother bought in 1947 as severely eroded cropland. Years of plowing had left deep rills in the property's highly erodible silt loam soils.

With technical guidance and a management plan, she planted pine to stabilize the slopes and restore the site. The farm entered the American Tree Farm System as Farm #216 in 1955.

continued on page 4

Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year *STANDING TALL*

A New Generation of Management

Portia and Jerry inherited Grayson Woods in 1993. Drawing on his engineering background, Jerry redesigned the eroded downhill entrance road to follow the land's contours, improving access and reducing damage.

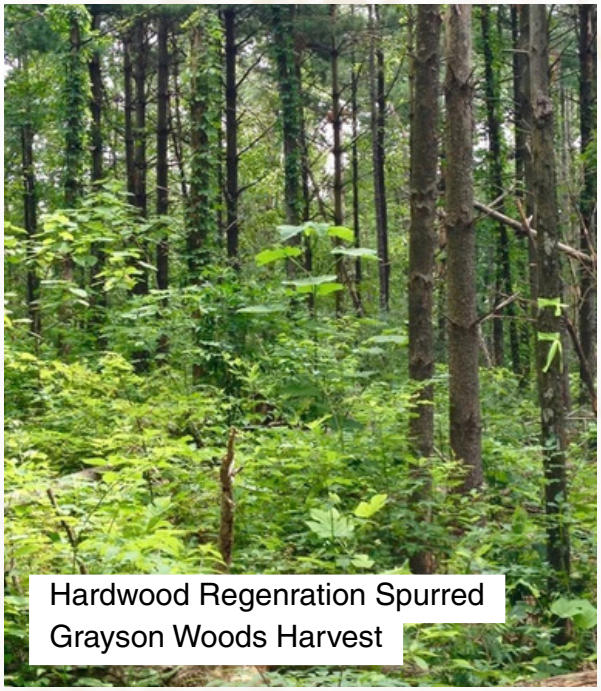
KDF Forest Stewardship Plans followed in 1996, 2006, and 2011. The Browns converted cropland to hardwood plantings, replanted walnut, completed Timber Stand Improvement work, and managed pine and hardwood regeneration after harvest and wildfire.

From Pine to Hardwood Regeneration

After storms damaged the pine stand, the Browns worked with Chris Will to evaluate harvesting 73 acres of pine, prepare the timber sale, and build access roads before seeking bids.
During 2013 and 2014 assessments, Chris noted pockets of white oak and other hardwoods where storms had opened the pine canopy—evidence for his simple lesson: "If you want hardwoods, plant pine."

At the 2026 Field Day, visitors will see how pine stabilized degraded ground and created conditions for a young, diverse hardwood forest. Jerry describes the result as a lively competition among seedlings, with white oak thriving in some places and poplar gaining ground in others.

Portia sees the Browns' work as part of a larger shared responsibility: landowners, forestry professionals, and the wood industry all help sustain managed forests that provide jobs, wood products, wildlife habitat, recreation, and beauty for future generations. Their example shows that lasting stewardship depends on patient observation, professional guidance, and practical investments that make good management possible.



Hardwood Regenration Spurred Grayson Woods Harvest



Building Access Roads Prior to Bid Process

JIM VINCENT OBITUARY



KWOA board member James "Jim" Frank Vincent, 82, of Robards, Kentucky, passed on Friday, July 31, 2026, after a brief illness at Deaconess Gateway Hospital in Newburgh, Indiana.

Jim was an avid outdoorsman who loved to hunt, boat, fish, and spend time on his farms. He was passionate about woodland preservation and management. As a member of the American Chestnut Foundation, he worked with arborists from around the country to breed a new species of blight-resistant the American Chestnut tree. Jim was actively involved with the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association as a member and board member. Locally, he served on the board of the Friends of Audubon.

Jim also served on multiple boards in the community and took various leadership roles; his contributions and services included the Henderson Rotary Club (Paul Harris Fellow), the Henderson Chamber of Commerce (Vice Chairman of Economic Development), the Boy Scouts of America (District Chair), Junior Achievement (President), Henderson Community College Foundation, Henderson YMCA Board of Directors, and Henderson Municipal Power and Light Board of Directors. Beyond his local community, he was a Kentucky Colonel and NRA benefactor life member.

Jim served for multiple years on the Community Methodist Hospital Board of Directors. He continued to serve on the Henderson Deaconess Hospital Board of Directors following the acquisition of Community Methodist Hospital by the Deaconess Health System.

Jim enjoyed traveling and seeing the world. He was insistent that no place in the world was as beautiful as Kentucky, "God's country" as he always called it. One of his greatest pleasures later in life was when the house was full of his sons and their families. He would sit for hours and listen to whatever stories his grandchildren had to share with him.

In lieu of flowers, family requests donations be made to First United Methodist Church at www.hendersonfirstumc.org or Kentucky Woodland Owners Foundation at www.kwoa.net.

Wendell Berry: A Kentucky Voice for the Land

By Mike Devoto

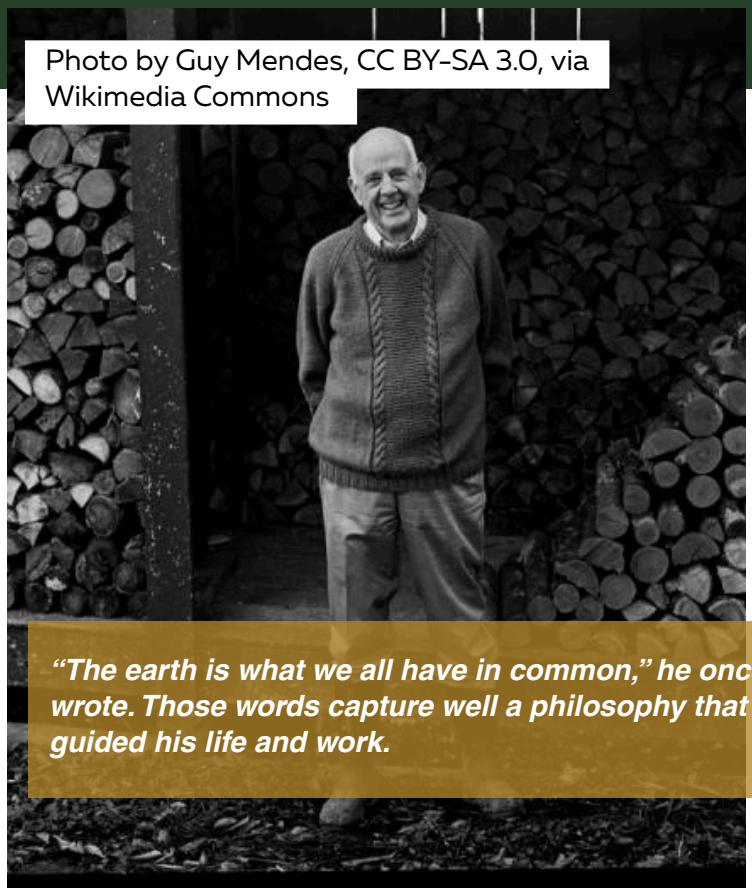


Photo by Guy Mendes, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

"The earth is what we all have in common," he once wrote. Those words capture well a philosophy that guided his life and work.

On August 31, Kentucky lost Wendell Berry at 92. One of our most enduring voices for the land, Berry was a writer, farmer, conservationist, and neighbor. His words encouraged generations to think differently about the ground beneath their feet and their responsibility to care for it.

Berry wrote from a farm in Henry County. He knew firsthand the importance of Kentucky's fields, woods, streams, communities, and people. His message was simple but profound: the land has been entrusted to our care.

"The earth is what we all have in common," he once wrote.

That thought has personal meaning for my family. My mother-in-law, Eloise Maloney, was a devoted admirer of Berry. She sought him out at gatherings, programs, and conventions and collected virtually every one of his books. To Eloise, Berry was more than a celebrated Kentucky author. His writings reflected values she deeply believed in —respect for the land, conservation, community, and responsibility to those who follow us.

For Kentucky woodland owners, Berry's message has particular meaning.

A forest is more than trees or a future timber harvest. A well-cared-for woodland protects soil and water, provides wildlife habitat, supports Kentucky's rural economy, and creates lasting value for future generations.

Berry asked us to approach land use with restraint, knowledge, and respect—to receive its benefits without diminishing its ability to provide for those who come after us. That is the heart of good forest stewardship.

One of Berry's greatest lessons was that conservation begins at home. It happens on a hillside in Henry County, in a hardwood stand in eastern Kentucky, on a family farm in western Kentucky, and in privately owned woodlands across our Commonwealth. It happens whenever a landowner leaves a place healthier and more productive than they found it.

Those of us involved with the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association share that responsibility. We may manage our woodlands for timber, wildlife, recreation, water quality, family heritage, or simply because we love healthy forests. Whatever our goals, we are temporary stewards of something that can outlive us by generations.

Remembering Berry also brings to mind Eloise and the many Kentuckians who read his words, heard him speak, and took his message of stewardship to heart.

A fitting way to honor his legacy is to continue the work: plant the tree, protect the stream, improve the woodland, teach the next generation, and leave our small piece of Kentucky better than we found it.

To learn more, visit www.BerryCenter.org.

Kentucky Forest Stewardship Committee Meets

By Steve Kull



Director Brandon Howard hosted the annual meeting of the Kentucky Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee on October 5 at the division's headquarters in Frankfort. The division provided an update on the Forest Stewardship and Forest Legacy programs.

Agencies present included the University of Kentucky Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Kentucky Farm Bureau, the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves, the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust, the Kentucky Association of Consulting Foresters, the Kentucky Division of Conservation, the Farm Services Agency, the United States Forest Service, and the Kentucky Forest Industries Association; KWOA was represented by President Scott Taylor.

After the Division of Forestry program and partner updates were completed, discussions then focused on opportunities to increase landowner participation in forest management. Conversations also included ideas to address common landowner issues such as taxes, access to technical assistance, federal cost-share availability, forest practice vendors, and access to educational opportunities.

KWOA will continue to be involved in discussions and keep members informed of opportunities as they arise.

HELP SUPPORT US

MAKE A DONATION

to the Kentucky Woodland Owners Foundation

www.kwoa.net/donate

KWOA

MAKE A DONATION

to the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association

JOIN KWOA

or Renew Your Membership by visiting:

SCAN ME

www.kwoa.net/joinrenew-kwoa

KENTUCKY WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 1201
Frankfort, KY 40602

FROM THE WOODS TODAY

From the Woods Today is a weekly, livestreamed on-line program produced by the University of Kentucky's Forestry and Natural Resources Extension team.

The show, held each Wednesday at 11 a.m., features current information on woodlands and wildlife topics including woodland management, tree ID, invasive species, forest health, wildlife habitat management, and many other forestry-related segments.

Learn more at the website below or sign up for weekly show reminders.



https://forestry.mgcafe.uky.edu/woods-today