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Arkansas Tree Programs Open to New Nominations: Arkansas Champion Trees and Arkansas Famous and Historic Trees

STATEWIDE, ARK. – The Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) and partner agencies open two premier tree recognition programs to Arkansans for new nominations and stories. Arkansas Champion Trees is a list of the largest trees of each species in Arkansas. The Arkansas Famous and Historic Tree Program accepts nominations for trees of famous, historic, or cultural significance to Arkansas.

Both programs are meant to engage Arkansans in the recognition, protection and management of trees/forests and their stories across the Natural State. Trees recognized by either program remain the property and responsibility of their owners. Both programs are for recognition purposes, only. Trees listed are also not necessarily viewable by the public, as most trees featured are located on private property. Landowner permission is required for inclusion in either program.

Arkansas Champion Tree Program forestry.arkansas.gov

The Arkansas Champion Tree Program currently lists 112 trees nominated by Arkansas landowners that represent the largest trees of each species based on the Bigness Index from American Forests. Trees are measured according to three dimensions: the trunk circumference, height, and average crown spread. The circumference is taken at chest height, 4½ feet from the ground level. To be accepted as an Arkansas Champion Tree, nominated trees must be measured by an AFC official. All current Arkansas Champion Trees, as well as Champion Tree Nomination Forms, are listed at forestry.arkansas.gov. Champion Tree nominations can be submitted at any time.

If residents nominate a tree species with a Champion already on the list, their tree must be larger than the current Champion to make the list. If a tree is nominated without a current Champion for that species, that tree becomes the Champion. Champion Trees are listed at forestry.arkansas.gov, receive possible nomination as a National Champion Tree, and some are commemorated by Champion Monument Stones donated through a partnership of the Ross Foundation, AFC, Arkansas Forestry Association, and the U.S. Forest Service. Several native Arkansas tree species are currently without Champions including the Loblolly Pine, Persimmon, Sugarberry, and others.

Arkansas Famous and Historic Tree Program **arhistorictrees.org**

The Arkansas Famous and Historic Tree Program was begun in 1997 to help preserve historic trees of Arkansas through recognition and documentation, and to educate Arkansans about the importance of Arkansas trees and forests. There are currently 44 trees on the register, with no new additions since 2011. A committee has recently revamped this program, comprised of forestry/conservation organizations including the AFC, Arkansas Urban Forestry Council, Arkansas State Parks, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Arkansas History Commission, Arkansas Historical Association, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, The Nature Conservancy, Arkansas Forestry Association and the Arkansas Federation of Garden Clubs. Trees are listed at arhistorictrees.org, receive a public ceremony honoring inclusion in the program, and receive a marker commemorating their status as a Famous and Historic Tree. Nominations are accepted twice each year, in the spring and winter. Spring, 2016 nominations are being accepted through June 30.

To nominate a tree for consideration as an Arkansas Famous and Historic Tree, the following criteria must be met: 1) Trees must be living, and more than 5 years old; and 2) The tree must be associated with a significant event in local, state, or national history; OR be associated with a significant person, institution or landmark in local, state, or national history; OR be significant with respect to horticultural, ecological, or structural characteristics for local, state, or national region; OR be able to yield significant cultural information in local, state, or national history. Tree nominations are reviewed by a committee of the above mentioned agencies for meeting program criteria, and then are voted upon in a final round by forestry and conservation officials for inclusion onto the Famous and Historic Trees register. Find nomination forms, and an archive of all trees on the register at arhistorictrees.org.

The mission of the AFC is to protect Arkansas's forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development, and conservation for all generations of Arkansans. To report a wildfire, or inquire about wildfire danger, call the AFC Dispatch Center at 1-800-468-8834. To report an emergency, dial 911. Stay updated on AFC updates and warnings at www.arkfireinfo.org or www.forestry.arkansas.gov.

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The Arkansas Forestry Commission offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.