



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

Steven L. Beshear, Governor

Leonard K. Peters, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Diana Olszowy
502-564-4496**

Landowners Honored as Outstanding Forest Stewards *Hart, Mason and Butler county landowners win awards*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 12, 2011) –Three Kentuckians were honored today for their stewardship of forest and land resources during the annual meeting of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) annually presents the Outstanding Forest Steward Award to a forest landowner for his or her exceptional stewardship accomplishments.

Forest stewardship involves cooperative planning and management of natural resources in an effort to prevent loss of habitat and promote sustainability. The recipients of the award are nominated by natural resource professionals from the Kentucky Division of Forestry, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Dr. James W. Middleton from Hart County was selected as the 2010 Outstanding Forest Steward. Middleton owns more than 5,000 acres of land with 3,300 acres of woods, and his family has practiced forest management on the property since the 1950s. In 1996, he was certified as a Kentucky Forest Steward after signing up for KDF's forest stewardship program, which provides free technical advice to landowners.

Over the years, Middleton has implemented numerous forest management practices, including planting more than 500,000 trees, converting over 600 acres of fescue field into warm season grasses and completing over 800 acres of timber stand improvement. Middleton also maintains five miles of access roads and trails and is currently restoring cedar glades to protect rare and endangered species. He has hosted

numerous field days on his farm and is an active member in the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, American Chestnut Foundation and the Black Walnut Council.

KDF also recognized Joseph Brannen and Rodney Givens as Outstanding Forest Steward state finalists. Brannen owns and manages 112 acres of land in Mason County and has practiced forest stewardship on his property since 2006. His accomplishments include planting nearly 7,500 trees, conducting timber stand improvement activities, creating wildlife food plots, improving wildlife habitat and eradicating non-native, invasive bush honeysuckle.

Givens owns and manages a 626-acre farm in Butler County and has conducted forest stewardship activities since 1960. He was recognized as a Kentucky Forest Steward and certified as an American Tree Farmer in 1989. He has planted more than 40 acres of trees, conducted timber stand improvement activities, planted wildlife food plots and warm season grasses and maintained several miles of access roads among other forest stewardship activities.

“Private landowners own the majority of forestland in Kentucky. In fact, 78 percent of forestlands in our state are privately-owned; therefore, individuals like Middleton, Brannen and Givens play a significant role in conservation. Their accomplishments help sustain forest resources that are beneficial to us all,” said state forester Leah MacSwords.

Landowners interested in the forest stewardship program should contact the division at 1-800-866-0555 or visit the division’s website at <http://forestry.ky.gov>.

###