

2010 TREE FARMER OF THE YEAR

By: Tom Kain, Tree Farm Committee

Bob and Laura Qualman



The Tennessee Tree Farm Committee received four nominations for the state Tree Farmer of the Year. A sub-committee was established to pare that list down to two. The sub-committee members included myself, Kerry Livengood, John Ross, and David Mercker. The finalists were the Qualman and the Benjamin tree farms, which are both located in West Tennessee. The committee toured the two farms on August 4th and were impressed with both properties. In the end Bob and Laura Qualman were selected as the recipient of the Outstanding Tree Farm award for this year.

They are involved in many natural resource organizations including the Tennessee Forestry Association, American Tree Farm System, Houston/Humphreys County Forestry Association (where Bob is chairman), Wild Turkey Federation and Quail Unlimited.

The Qualmans have owned their 289 acre Tree Farm since 1992. Bob and Laura longed to own a piece of land for hunting and recreation,



but were having difficulty locating the right property. They intended to go to a land auction one Saturday in 1992, but Bob had to work overtime and Laura could not go with small children at home. Bob was surprised when he got home from work and learned that Laura had bid on a few parcels at the auction. Bob was confused and asked how did you do that? Laura replied I bid using the internet! The purchase quickly led to many questions mainly: "what do we do now"?

To answer those questions the Qualmans actively sought and received professional advice from a number of sources: industrial foresters, Tennessee Division of Forestry, Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency and the American Tree Farm System. This diverse group of professionals has helped the Qualmans craft a management plan that includes creating wildlife openings, planting wildlife crops, pre-

commercial hardwood thinning, pine tree planting, and erosion control.

Some upcoming activities on their Tree Farm include a pine first thinning, a hardwood patch clearcut and an understory prescribe burning. By following their tree farm plan, their woodland investment will soon provide income to offset past and future investments, while providing an enjoyable get-away.

The Tennessee Tree Farm Committee is proud of all of Tennessee's Tree Farmers and their efforts to get more good forestry on more acres and keep it there.

Congratulations Bob and Laura!

