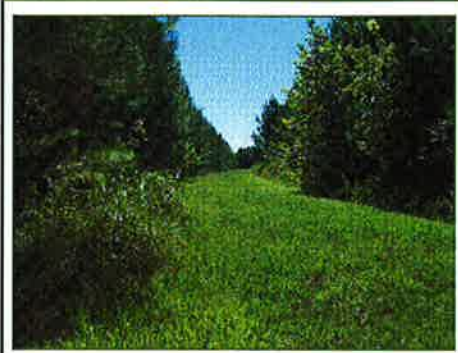


2012 Tree Farmer of the Year

By: Jay Wolfe, Hankins Forest Products
Mr. and Mrs. Elton Coley & Kosmo, 2012 Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year

Tennessee's 2012 Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year

The Tennessee Tree Farm Committee is pleased to introduce you to Elton and Patricia Coley, Tennessee's Tree Farmers of the Year. This annual award recognizes tree farmers who are doing an outstanding job in timber and wildlife management as well as promoting the Tree Farm Program. The Coley's Indian Creek Tree Farm located in Hardin County, Tennessee is a working example of dedication and love of the outdoors combined with excellent natural resource management practices. Elton is a practicing consulting forester, as well as wearing many other hats, and Patricia is a retired school teacher. Spending time on their "dirt" is always a welcome break, and as Aldo Leopold said, "Footprints of the owners are considered to be the best fertilizer."



Grass roadway in pine plantation

The property has been under Quality Deer Management (QDM) guidelines for the past fifteen years with a goal to create a haven for both the hunter and the hunted. Timber management and stand improvement are ongoing and never ending tasks. The property consists of 3,070 acres. There are 865 acres of mature upland hardwood and hardwood plantation. The Coley property also has 2,000 acres of pine plantation, Stream Management Zones (SMZs), and wildlife openings. Indian Creek flows through the property for approximately four miles providing recreational opportunities for fishing, canoeing, and wildlife observation. Timber management practices include thinning, prescribed burning, mid-rotation release to control undesirable species, fertilization, road maintenance, and fire break construction. Approximately 80 acres of openings and wildlife food plots are intensively managed to provide both winter and summer food sources. Supplemental food is provided throughout the year with wildlife feeders strategically placed throughout the property.



Indian Creek flows through property for 4 miles

Over the years, Elton and Patricia Coley have opened their property to many groups of children and adults to provide an outdoor experience. For the past twelve years, they have sponsored, in cooperation with the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA), a youth deer hunt that offers 12-15 children in Hardin County the opportunity to spend a day deer hunting with a mentor from the TWRA. After an early morning hunt, the youth are instructed on various topics from identifying animal tracts, field dressing deer, to target practice. After lunch, the hunters return to the stands for an evening hunt. Local processors have contributed to the processing and handling of the meat, thereby providing food for the youth hunters' families. Each spring, up to 3 youth along with a guide visit the property to participate in the Hardin County St. Jude Hunting for a Cure turkey hunt. Local 4-H groups also have field days for timber and wildlife studies. Mossy Oak has filmed turkey hunts on the property in recent years.

The Tennessee Tree Farm Committee is proud of all of Tennessee's Tree Farmers and their efforts to provide sustainable forest products and wildlife management to the great natural resources of Tennessee.



Thinned and burned pine plantation



Winter wildlife food plot