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Alabama Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters Named 2026 Large Chapter of the Year

[Lynchburg, VA] - [The Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc.](#) (ACF) is pleased to announce the Alabama Chapter as the recipient of its 2026 Large Chapter of the Year Award. ACF is a national organization committed to serving independent consulting foresters who manage forests and market forest products for private woodland owners. The association annually recognizes a Large and Small Chapter of the Year for their outstanding contributions to the forestry profession, the broader community, and the mission of ACF.

The Chapter of the Year Awards are sponsored by the [Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#) (SFI), whose partnership with ACF reflects a shared mission to advance responsible forest management and promote professional excellence in forestry. The Large Chapter of the Year Award honors one of ACF's chapters with 20 or more members for excellence in engagement, outreach, and leadership and includes a \$1,500 honorarium.

Selected by a vote of ACF's Executive Committee based on annual reports submitted by chapters, the Alabama Chapter was recognized for its exceptional commitment to education, student mentorship, landowner outreach, and leadership within the forestry profession. Chapter members continued their significant involvement with Auburn University's Consulting Forestry course, with twelve members serving as instructors and mentors to students pursuing careers in consulting forestry. The chapter also remained highly engaged in continuing education, landowner programs, prescribed fire training, wildlife management outreach, and professional development activities throughout the state. They have also strengthened their role within the state SFI Implementation Committee (SIC), helping to advance shared priorities around sustainable forestry, logger education, and landowner engagement across the state.

Alabama Chapter members are active in leadership roles throughout the forestry community, serving on numerous boards, committees, and advisory groups while promoting consulting forestry through educational programming, student engagement, landowner assistance, and public outreach. The chapter also continued its longstanding partnership with the Alabama Forest Owners Association, supported forestry education initiatives, and expanded efforts to strengthen connections between consulting foresters, landowners, students, and other professionals.

"This recognition reflects the dedication of our members and their commitment to serving landowners, mentoring future forestry professionals, and advancing the practice of consulting forestry," said Alabama Chapter Chair Brandon Smith, ACF. "Our chapter is fortunate to have members who are actively engaged across the forestry community, and we are honored to receive this award."

"We are proud to recognize the Alabama Chapter as ACF's 2026 Large Chapter of the Year," said Gerald H. Grossman, ACF, President of ACF. "This chapter continues to set an extraordinary standard for member engagement, leadership, education, and service to the profession. Earning this

recognition for a second consecutive year reflects the sustained commitment of its members to advancing consulting forestry and supporting the next generation of professionals.”

The Wisconsin Chapter received the Small Chapter of the Year Award, exemplifying similar excellence within a smaller membership base.

“I congratulate the Alabama Chapter on being selected as the Large Chapter of the Year and appreciate all the chapter has done to further the association’s mission,” said Shannon McCabe, CAE, ACF’s Executive Director. “The chapter’s commitment to education, outreach, and leadership continues to benefit not only ACF, but the broader forestry community as well. I also thank SFI for its continued sponsorship of these awards.”

The Large and Small Chapters of the Year were announced and presented by Buck Vandersteen, Executive Director of the Louisiana Forestry Association and Louisiana SFI Implementation Committee Coordinator, during the Awards Banquet at the recent 2026 ACF National Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Chapter members present during the event accepted the award on behalf of the Alabama Chapter.

“We’re proud to sponsor these awards and celebrate the outstanding work being done at the local level to advance sustainable forestry,” said Nadine Block, Senior Vice President of Network Initiatives at SFI. “ACF and SFI share a commitment to helping forests stay healthy and supporting foresters who are doing this important work on the ground.”

ACF provides professional development, networking opportunities, exclusive communications, tools, and resources to consulting foresters. ACF members are the gold standard of forestry consultants because they meet rigorous educational, experience, and reference requirements as well as adhere to a Code of Ethics ensuring loyalty to landowners and their land.

For additional information about ACF, visit www.acf-foresters.org.

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About the Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc. (ACF):

Founded in 1948, the Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc. (ACF) is a professional organization dedicated to advancing the practice of professional consulting forestry and promoting the highest standards of professionalism and ethics among its members. ACF members can benefit forest landowners by enhancing property value, optimizing timber growth through sustainable harvests, maximizing the value of timber, enhancing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and protecting family forest legacy. Learn more at www.acf-foresters.org.

About the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI):

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) advances sustainability through forest-focused collaboration. We are an independent, non-profit organization that leverages four interconnected pillars of work: standards, conservation, community, and education. SFI works with the forest sector, conservation groups, academics, researchers, brand owners, resource professionals, landowners, educators, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and governments. Collaborating with our network, we leverage SFI-certified forests and products as powerful tools to help solve sustainability challenges such as climate action, conservation of biodiversity, education of future generations, and sustainable economic development. Learn more at forests.org.

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