

# FWTI Director Receives FFA AWARD



Maggie Pope, Director of Education and Industry Relations for the Forest Workforce Training Institute (FWTI), an affiliate of AFA, received the prestigious “Honorary State FFA Degree” from the Alabama Future Farmers Association (FFA) at the 94th Annual State Convention on June 8 in Montgomery.

The “Honorary State FFA Degree” is the highest honor awarded by Alabama FFA.

The award acknowledged Maggie’s “outstanding aid to education in agriculture and for her interest in the development of youth.”

Maggie has worked since 2018 to expand forestry education in Alabama schools through the Forest Worker Career Readiness Indicator (CRI) program. The program provides an opportunity for FFA, career tech, and high school science students to receive a certification in forestry by completion of coursework in ten educational modules. Subjects include an introduction to sustainable forestry, dendrology, logging, silviculture, best management practices, timber measurements, and prescribed fire, among others. Each module is self-contained and students must pass an exam to receive the certification.

Maggie has created an awareness and expanded the program by making contacts with high school teachers, career coaches and counselors across the state. Teachers are trained to use the curriculum via workshops held several times a year, with each participant receiving instruction on the forestry curriculum content as well as how to guide their student through the process. Teachers also receive a number of copies of “Managing Forests on Private Lands in Alabama and the Southeast” (Alabama Forestry Foundation, 2010) to use as a textbook and to provide supplemental material.

From the inception of this program in 2017 to present, 126 teachers have been trained and over 2,500 students have successfully completed the program.

In addition to continuing to grow the Forest Worker CRI, Maggie is currently working to create an Agricultural Industrial Maintenance CRI program to prepare students for careers as Industrial Maintenance technicians in the forest products industry. This new program will prepare high school students for potential careers in the forest industry.

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