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ELLIS AND SARA SMITH ARE FLORIDA TREE FARMERS OF THE YEAR

TALLAHASSEE—Ellis and Sara Smith, owners of a 99-acre tree farm east of Tallahassee have been recognized as the 2011 Florida Tree Farmer of the Year. On the eve of their 61st wedding anniversary, the Leon County couple was recognized with the award at the Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting on September 8th in St. Augustine.

In presenting the award, Bryan Olmert, President, Florida Forestry Association said “for 31 years the Smith’s have managed their tree farm for timber and wildlife under the American Tree Farm System’s certification program. They have shared a commitment to protect the ecological value of their land, while producing wood that north Florida needs for many useful products. While actively managing their land, they have also been advocates of private property rights with their elected officials so management options continue to be available for economic viability of timber and environmental benefits as well.”

“Ellis and Sara Smith are postcard examples of families that find many benefits from owning and managing forests,” said Jeff Doran, Executive Vice President, Florida Forestry Association. “We can all learn from their example of being good land stewards with core values of hard work, community responsibility and commitment to protecting Florida’s forest legacy. Their upcoming tour on October 18th will give others a chance to see many of the outstanding conservation practices that make them so worthy of this honor,” Doran concluded.

The American Tree Farm System is a nationwide community of more than 96,000 individuals and families joined by their desire for excellence in forest stewardship. These landowners do right by their land, to meet the highest standards of sustainability and to be good stewards for the future.

The Florida Forestry Association is the oldest state-wide, forestry trade organization to represent the interests of forest landowners, wood producers, foresters and the wood-using industry in Florida.

For more information visit www.floridaforest.org.

PHOTO CAPTION: Ellis and Sara Smith, pose on their award winning Tree Farm in Leon County Florida.