



## “Tree Man” Finds Fulfillment in his Kentucky Woods

On June 3, 1796, Andrew Lang, a young merchant from Wakefield, England, purchased 19,425 acres of land in what is now Hart County, Kentucky.

Over the years, some of the property passed out of Lang’s immediate family but much of the original tract is still owned by his descendants.

On July 2, 1963, 167 years after Lang’s original purchase, the Kentucky Division of Forestry mailed a Timber Management Plan to a 16-year-old named Charlie Williams, from which sprouted a passionate, teenaged woodland steward. Williams is Lang’s great-great-great-grandson.

Williams is known around Munfordville, Kentucky as “the tree man.” The Tree Farmer currently lives on West Wind Farm, 1,100 acres of which are within the original 19,425-acre tract that Lang purchased 215 years ago.

In addition to sustainable management of his land, Williams takes pride in educating the next generation of woodland owners and conservationists. **He has held more than 4,000 Forestry Field Days—a day of work and learning—on West Wind Farm.**

“If you can teach young people who come to your farm that day something they never knew about trees, you’ve had a successful Forestry Field Day. If you’ve taught them well, they will teach others,” Williams said.

“I love teaching others. My family is full of teachers. It’s in my blood.”

For Williams’ exemplary commitment to his land, “the tree man” received the 2005 Tom Wallace Farm Forestry Award, sponsored by The Courier-Journal. The next year, Williams was honored with the Outstanding Forest Steward Award from the Kentucky Division of Forestry, and was Kentucky’s Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year in 2006.



In December 2010, the Hart County Chamber of Commerce awarded Charlie its “Lifetime Achievement Award,” citing his lifelong commitment to the community where he was born. In particular, the presenter noted his deep interest in the woodlands of Kentucky.

The author takes time to describe the context (or set the stage) on how the protagonist came to own his Tree Farm – a nice back story.

The author jumps right into the many accomplishments of Mr Williams. While these are amazing accomplishments, these don’t ‘sell’ Tree Farm. What would make this story stronger is to add details such as:

- What obstacles did Mr. Williams encounter during his 50+ years owning the property?
- How has his involvement in ATFS helped him overcome these obstacles?
- As an expert Tree Farmer, what advice has he shared with new landowners at his 4,000 Forestry Field Days?
- How many landowners, who have attended his Forestry Field Days, have joined ATFS because of their experience with him?

Listing Mr. William’s experiences or his impact on others, would help to sell ATFS value to the community.

This year, the Arbor Day Foundation announced that Williams won a 2011 Arbor Day Award for his dedication to planting and celebrating trees and conservation efforts. Williams received the foundation's Good Steward Award, which recognizes landowners who practice sustainability on private lands from which others can learn.

Williams has planted trees on his Tree Farm every Good Friday since 1976. While serving as Munfordville's city attorney from 1987 until 2004, he started the community's Arbor Day program and Munfordville's designation as a "Tree City USA."

"I am profoundly thankful for the meaningful and fulfilling work and play that West Wind Farm has afforded me all the days of my life," Williams said in a 2010 Thanksgiving greeting card.

Since his teenage years, the Tree Farmer has found purpose and joy in his woods. Through on-the-ground education and outreach, Charlie Williams helps empower the next generation of woodland stewards to discover meaningful work and play through nature.

The author hints on Mr William's impact here, but more details on this would be help make the story stronger.