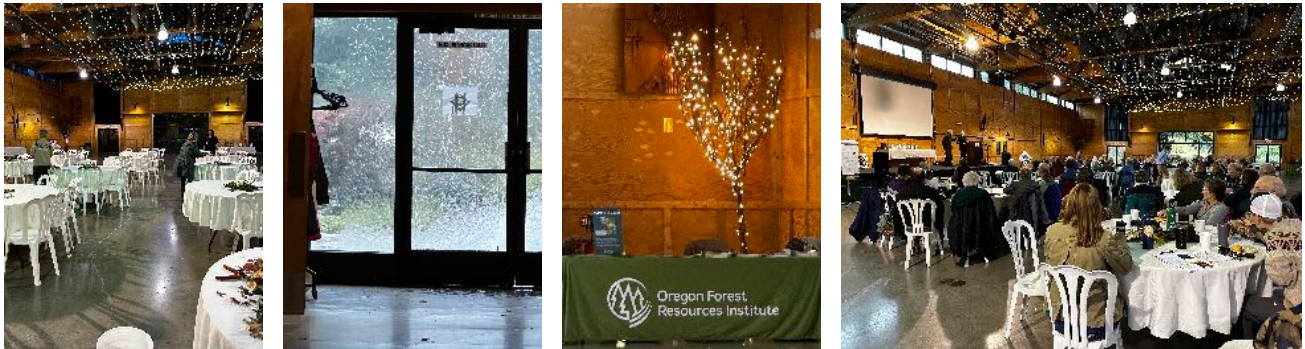


OTFS 2023 Annual Meeting | What a Great Time it Was!

Our November 4 Annual Members Meeting at the Oregon Garden was well-attended and festive. Even the grey skies and occasional downpours that threatened to drown out all voices didn't dampen the good spirit that characterized the people gathered and the gathering itself. The tables were arrayed with fall foliage from (OTFS Board Secretary) Mary Chamness' property. Morning snacks and lunch were equally scrumptious, catered by the local Lily Cafe. Strings of fairy lights swooped across the ceiling expanse, adding a whimsical touch and making the large space feel cozy.



But the highlight of the morning was the departure from the “usual.” Rather than an education speaker, we were dazzled by an array of poetry, story-telling and song shared by OTFS members: from why even us “old folks” still plant trees to off-season encounters with Santa to the opposing memories of a bear encounter in the wilderness—plus a duet by our Co-Chairs that had folks alternately chuckling appreciatively or singing along. Like icing on the cake, this fun was followed by a concert from Ken Bevis, Washington DNR wildlife biologist and songwriter. Accompanied by a wildlife slideshow, multiple forest critters had their chance to shine—or, in the case of the raven, remind us of their superiority to mere humans. Some in the crowd were even inspired to dance.



The required business meeting was brief but substantive, including a few words from Parks Brigman, our ATFS liaison, and Julie Woodward of OFRI, followed by a buffet lunch and more time for socializing around the round tables.



The afternoon program was all about recognition, from inspectors to county tree farmers. Dave Hibbs and Rod Bardell were recognized as Inspectors of the Year for 2022 and 2023 respectively. Retiring District Coordinator Pete Mastenbroek was recognized with special gratitude. Dick Beers received the Hagenstein Family Forestland Achievement Award and Neil (and Valerie, in absentia) Bell received their 50-year Tree Farm sign. Karl Dalla Rosa, Deputy Director of State, Private and Tribal Forestry, PNW Region and Nate Agalzoff, ODF Family Forest Landowner Coordinator all shared words of acknowledgement of and gratitude for the stewardship efforts of family forest owners, epitomized by OTFS members. Second only to the joy of celebrating our own in person was the video portion of the afternoon: from the wonderful video about OTFS spearheaded by the Board's Landowner Journey working group to the premier showings of the 2022 County Tree Farmer of the Year videos from Yamhill, Washington, Polk, Linn and Lane counties, it was an opportunity to honor and applaud each county's nominee, each with a unique story to tell about the woodland they manage and love.





At the conclusion of the event, while attendees were invited to enjoy a stroll around the Oregon Garden, the OTFS Board remained behind for its last meeting of 2024, which included formalizing the approval of Darren Goodding as Chair-Elect and the sharing of lots of gratitude for the good work of the Board and its Committees, individually and collectively, over the past year.

All in all, it was a great day of celebrating Forests and Forestry in Story, Song and Verse—and offering all the assembled a tangible reminder of the good work we do, every day, to care for our piece of Oregon woodlands.

To watch the videos, check out our [Family Forests of Oregon YouTube channel](#)—and maybe even subscribe while you’re there! The OTFS video is at the top of the page, the TFOY video for 2023 State Tree Farmers of the Year, Jim and Ed Merzenich, is in the TFOY 2022 playlist, and the 2023 County Nominee videos are in the TFOY 2023 playlist. We’re working on updating and organizing the channel, so feel free to “poke around” and check out the wide variety of videos from both OTFS and OSWA. And for more pictures of the event, check out our website (otfs.org) under Get To Know Us | Tree Farm Events.



photos by Jordan Banner (OFRI) and Kate McMichael