May the forest be with you, always – celebrating Stewardship Week

COLLEGE STATION —It doesn't matter where you are, the forest is with you. May the Forest Be with You, Always is this year's Texas Soil and Water Stewardship Week theme and Texas A&M Forest Service encourages all to appreciate the trees, and their abundant benefits, around them.

You don't have to stand in the middle of the woods to be surrounded by the forest. The home you live in, the food you eat, the clothes you wear, the books you read – they all come from trees growing in Texas.

Beyond that, forests provide shelter for animals like birds and deer, they give people a nice place to relax and play and they even help clean the water we drink and the air we breathe.

"Forests provide countless benefits for individuals, communities and the state of Texas," said Hughes Simpson, Texas A&M Forest Service Forest Resource Development Chief Operating Officer. "When we take steps to steward our forests, they provide an even larger impact."

As our world faces environmental challenges, it is important to recognize the solutions that trees can provide. With 59 million acres of forests covering Texas, our forests can make a big impact on our state with the help of our stewardship.

Forest stewardship = increased timber products and economic impacts

Timber from managed forests in Texas creates wood for houses, paper goods and products, clothes and so much more. Forest products also offer renewable and sustainable alternatives to plastic, steel, concrete and fossil fuels.

When landowners steward their land through harvesting, replanting trees, managing vegetation and more, forests can produce up to 53 more tons of wood per acre during their lifetime compared to non-managed forests. This additional wood provides greater financial returns to the landowner, more local jobs and increased economic impact.

The total forestry sector impact to the Texas economy is $41.6 billion and the timber produced on managed forestland directly contributes over $554 million to it.

Forest stewardship = increased biodiversity

Forests that are stewarded well provide critical habitat for wildlife species and promote biologically diverse habitats that support plants, animals and recreational activities.

Good forest management activities, such as leaving Streamside Management Zones (SMZs), planting native mast-producing species, windbreaks and installing supplemental food plots can all help enhance wildlife diversity.

Forest stewardship = clean air

By removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in their wood, forests and trees keep our air clean, decreasing the risk of respiratory illness.

"Without forests, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air would increase to levels where human health would suffer," said Simpson. "Forests that are managed properly reduce the risk of air quality declines and protect Texas lands for future generations."

Texas forests store over 3.7 billion tons of carbon, the equivalent of 2.9 billion gasoline-powered passenger vehicles driven for one year.

Forest stewardship = clean drinking water

In Texas, 17 million people get their clean surface drinking water from forests – 97.8 trillion gallons of clean drinking water.

Forests clean rainwater runoff by filtering out oils, chemicals, pollutants and other elements that contaminate surface water. Water filtration by Texas forests is valued at $4.2 billion.

They also reduce flooding and protect waterways from erosion and extreme temperature changes.

Forest stewardship = soil health

Forests help create new soil, prevent erosion and improve soil fertility. They create new soil by helping break down rock material and decomposing organic matter.

Strong tree roots keep soil in place, preventing erosion. Soil erosion rates from well-managed forests are even less than the geological norm.

Forests also help improve soil fertility by attracting microorganisms that provide additional organic matter and nutrients to the soil.

It doesn't matter where you are, the forest is with you. So, celebrate trees this Stewardship Week by connecting with the products around you, the nature near you, the air you breathe, the water you drink and the soil that is the foundation for everything we do.

To learn more about Texas Forest Stewardship and the many benefits trees provide, visit: *https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/stewardship/values*.

Harmony ends district play with a pair of shutouts

By Charles Johnson

HARMONY – The Harmony Eagles baseball team completed the regular season last week with back-to-back shutouts of 24-0 and 11-0 over the Chapel Hill Red Devils. Harmony finished with an unblemished, 12-0, record in District 13-AAA competition. The Eagles improved to 23-5 overall.

In Tuesday's Game One, the Eagles put up 10 first inning runs and never looked back in the 24-0 rout on "Senior Night" at Eagleland. Harmony pounded out 18 hits In the game including five doubles. Every batter in the starting lineup for the Eagles had a least one hit.

Leading the Harmony offense was Tucker Tittle who was 4-for-5 with two doubles and four RBIs. Other dominant Eagle "sticks" included the following: Boston Seahorn, 3-for-5, RBI, 2 stolen bases; Will Young, 2-for-2, 2 walks,HBP, 2 RBIs; Riley Patterson, 3-for-3, walk, HBP; Braxton Baker, 1-for-3, 2 walks, 2 RBIs; Haden Johnson, 1-for-2, 2 walks, 2 RBIs; Leithen Wilkerson, 2-for-4, 3 RBIs; Jake Rider. 1-for-3, double, RBI; and Ollie Trimble, 1-tor-3, RBI.

Boston Seahorn was the starting and winning pitcher for Harmony. He gave up only 1 hit and 1 walk while striking out 4 Red Devils in three shutout innings. Ollie Trimble pitched the last two innings and retired all six batters he faced striking out two.

Friday's game, originally scheduled for play at Chapel Hill, was moved to Eagle Park due to expected storms in Mount Pleasant. Most of the heavy rained moved north of Harmony, but lightning and light rain caused over a two-hour weather delay.

Harmony took a 1-0 lead in the first inning of Game Two and never trailed. The Eagles extended their lead to 3-0 with a pair of runs in the third inning. After adding a single tally in the fifth frame, Harmony broke the game open with a 7 run sixth inning to take an 11-0 victory.

Will Young went the distance on the mound for Harmony tossing a one-hit, shutout. The lefty struck out 4 batters, gave up one walk and surrendered only one-hit.

Tucker Tittle continued his torrid pace at the plate by going 4-for-4 for the victorious Eagles. Other leading hitters in Game Two for Harmony included: Boston Seahorn, 3-for-4, triple, 2 stolen bases; Will Young, 2-for-3, sacrifice fly; Haden Johnson, 2-for-4; Ollie Trimble, 2-for-3; and Blayne Hart, 1-for-3.

Harmony moves on to the bi-district round of the state playoffs against the Redwater Dragons, the same team they met in the first round in 2023.

Redwater is the fourth place team from District 14-AAA. The playoff will be a best-of-three series with game one on Thursday, May 2, 5 p.m., game two on Friday, May 3, 5 p.m., and game three (if necessary) on Saturday, May 4, noon, all at Marshall High School Park.

Senior Night loss ends Buckeye baseball season

By Mary L. Kirby

Gilmer fell to Henderson, 11-1, Friday after five innings as Senior Night ended as many had this season.

Henderson beat the Buckeyes, 12-0, when Gilmer visited the Lions on Tuesday.

Henderson got off to a hot start with three runs in the first and four in the second. After adding a run in each of the third and fourth innings they tacked on two in the fifth.

Gilmer answered with their only run in the bottom of the fifth but could not score enough to prevent an early demise.

Brantly led the Lions in scoring Friday with three RBIs on two hits and he scored one run.

Fabbiani, Butler, and Howard each had doubles and D.l Jackson hit a triple for Henderson's extra base hits. Henderson had their 11 runs on eight hits.

C. Foster got the win and he had two strikeouts. He was relieved after four innings.

Schwettermann pitched the fifth inning and hit two Buckeyes with pitches. The first player, D.K. Griffin, was forced out when Eliez Castillo hit a fielder's choice. Joseph Moreno was the second player who was hit.

After Brayden Pate walked to load the bases, Harrison Lofton notched his last RBI as a Buckeye when he walked, forcing home Castillo for Gilmer's only run.

Aron Bell hit into a double play, ending the game.

Bell, Lofton, J. Moreno, D.J. Moreno, Castillo, and Justin Jones were celebrated in pre-game ceremonies with their parents as seniors playing their last game.

Lofton pitched the first three innings and got the loss. He gave up eight runs on five hits and six walks. Aiden Davis entered in relief in the fourth inning and gave up three runs on three hits with one walk and one strikeout.

On Tuesday, Klein Lindsey, Ryder Lange, and D.J. Moreno got Gilmer's three hits in a game which ended after four innings on the mercy rule.

Lindsey pitched two innings and gave up 9 runs on nine hits and Gilmer had six errors. Lange relieved him in the third inning, giving up three runs on two hits and two walks. Each had a strike out.

Henderson had 12 Runs on 11 hits and three walks. Fabbiani and Jackson each hit a double. Henderson had two errors.

The season for the Buckeyes ended with a 3-22 record, 1-15 in District 17-4A play.

Gilmer ISD to host roundup

Gilmer ISD will host Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Round-up on Wednesday, May 29, from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. and Thursday, May 30, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. at Gilmer Elementary.

Required documents include a copy of student's birth certificate, student's social security card or number, copy of parent's driver's license, immunization records, proof of residency in Gilmer ISD (utility bill, mortgage or lease agreement).

Pre-K and Head Start applicants extra requirements include two most recent check stubs, tax return, SNAP, TANF or SSI benefits - need card/ number.

Women's Center offers support

Women's Center of East Texas is offering support to abused women through HEART—"Help End Abusive Relationship Tendencies."

Call Barbara Henderson at 903-680-2441 to sign up, and learn the confidential meeting location.

The Women's Center's 24-hour hotline is 1-800-441-5555 or email www.wc-et.org.

Storytime sessions slated on Thursday

By Phillip Williams

Two books will be read to small children Thursday (today) at both of the Upshur County Library's "Storytime" sessions.

"Hug Me" by Simona Ciraolo, and "How to Hug a Cactus" by Emily Smith and Aleksandra Szmidt, will be presented at the 10 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. gatherings.

A craft will follow each Storytime at the library, 702 W. Tyler (which is also Texas 154).

The events are free to the public, but children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information, call the library at (903) 843-5001 or visit its website at www.youseemore.com/upshur.

Library Friends planning two fundraising efforts

By Phillip Williams

Friends of the Upshur County Library are holding two fundraising events there this week, said library spokeswoman Victoria Antonmarchi.

A sale of "gently used" fiction and non-fiction books is in progress daiily through Saturday, while a crafts fair, featuring sale of various items, is scheduled Saturday.

The library is on Texas 154.

Book sale hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday (today), 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.

Book prices, which decrease each day, ranged opening day Wednesday from 50 cents to $3. The paperback and hard-bound items include both donated books and used library books.

The fair, to be held rain or shine, features vendors with such items as jewelry, leather, soap and more. Some sellers will be inside and others will be outside under tents in case of rain.

In addition, a free raffle will be held for a free Mother's Day-related photography session to be scheduled with Reel Neat Film Co., said Antonmarchi.

A face painter for adults and children will also be present from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., she added.

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If you are sending a group picture, identify the people by rows, *starting front row from left.*

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