



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative Given National Award by the Arbor Day Foundation** *Kentucky Department for Natural Resources accepts award*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (May 10, 2011) – The Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI), spearheaded by the Kentucky Department for Natural Resources, has claimed the prestigious 2011 Arbor Day Award, which is granted annually by the national Arbor Day Foundation.

ARRI, a partnership formed in 2004 to restore the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains, received the “Forest Lands Leadership Award” for advancing sustainable forestry efforts on public forest land. Leaders in ARRI are planting trees in an area of the country known for its bountiful hardwoods and beautiful forests, but seriously impacted by mining coal.

This partnership includes the mining industry, state and federal regulatory authorities and forestry agencies in seven states, and many diverse citizen groups that are interested in restoring areas that have been deforested. With strong involvement and participation from the mining industry, the ARRI has reforested about 45,000 acres with more than 30 million trees since 2007.

The Arbor Day Awards annually honors innovative and extraordinary individuals and organizations that represent the highest standards of tree planting and conservation practices for work done internationally, nationally, statewide and locally. Awards recognize conservation efforts such as tree planting and care, Arbor Day celebrations, education initiatives, community projects that benefit the environment and volunteer engagement.

“The good work being done by our Arbor Day Award winners like the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative serves as great examples of how planting trees is making a positive impact on communities throughout the world,” said John Rosenow, chief executive and founder of the Arbor Day Foundation. “When we plant trees, engage our community to plant trees or give children opportunities to connect with nature, we are leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.”

Paul Rothman of DNR and state forester Leah MacSwords accepted the award on behalf of the partnership. DNR Commissioner Carl Campbell said, "I am extremely proud of Paul and Leah in their efforts to bring back Kentucky's forests. The reforestation of Kentucky surface mining operations is of primary importance and a long-term goal of DNR. Their involvement has made DNR a leader in the reforestation of previously mined lands since 1996."

"This is a tremendous honor for the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative, and I commend them for their dedication to restoring trees to the mountains," said First Lady Jane Beshear. "Preserving forests is vital to our ecosystem and will sustain the beauty that is characteristic of the region."

Since 1972, the Arbor Day Foundation has given Arbor Day Awards to honor America's foremost tree planters and conservationists.

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