

# The Southern Perspective

Providing Leadership for the South's Forests

www.southernforests.org

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## FLORIDA SILVICULTURE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES - FORESTERS TAKE INTERACTIVE TRAINING INTO THE WOODS

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In an effort to improve opportunities for providing loggers and private contractors with professional silviculture Best Management Practices (BMP) training, the Division of Forestry is expanding its outreach program. Florida's BMP foresters are taking logger education to the next level, where logging operations have become the "classroom" for a new BMP training approach called "Logger Tailgate Training."

This in-the-field contact with loggers centers around a series of 15-minute DVD programs developed for specific BMP categories, including Special Management Zones, Wetlands, Forest Roads, Stream Crossings and Waste Disposal. Eventually, all 14 categories of Florida's silviculture

BMPs will be available. The BMP foresters use a 21-inch, flat-screen DVD player that can operate on the vehicle's DC power system to deliver the training.

This approach affords loggers an opportunity to review the BMPs that are applicable to their current operation as well as to interact with the BMP forester if questions or issues arise. Loggers have commented that the tailgate training is more convenient and cost effective than conventional training sessions, since they don't have to shut down the operation and incur travel costs. Observations by BMP foresters indicate that loggers feel more comfortable asking questions about BMPs with this approach as opposed to a confined classroom setting. In addition, the tailgate sessions tend to capture all members of the logging crew, and can be conducted more frequently than indoor sessions, since they are tailored to specific operations and require very little logistical and organizational planning or cost. The additional contact time between loggers and BMP foresters maintains a strong "BMP presence" and builds good relationships.

This new outreach approach has been well received by Florida's logging community and appears to be a very cost-effective approach to BMP training.

*The photo depicts a typical logging operation in Florida, with the BMP forester's vehicle in the background. As shown, the vehicle tailgate is down, and the DVD player is showing the video to a group of loggers during lunch break.*



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SOUTHERN GROUP  
OF STATE FORESTERS

The Southern Group of State Foresters is comprised of the state forestry directors from the 13 Southern states, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as well as leadership from the USDA Forest Service Southern Region, the Southern Research Station, and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry. Collectively, they provide leadership for the South's forests.



*Mike Long, chairman,  
Southern Group of State  
Foresters and Florida  
State Forester*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

What exciting and dynamic times we are in. The SGSF is facing more issues than I have seen in awhile. Take a look at some of the things that are happening that will impact all of us during the next few years: the federal budget; the farm bill; the energy bill; bio-mass; the changing face of the southern forest; carbon sequestration; the redesign of State and Private Forestry; fire plan analysis; firefighter liability; state budget reductions; EPA's restrictions on prescribed burning; urbanization of rural areas; Type-III teams for all-risk deployment; the role of forests in watershed management; state assessments, and state and local fire agencies providing initial attack fire protection on federal lands, to name just a few.

We want to be recognized and have a voice in the future of forestry in the South. To do that, you have to be responsive, active and participate when requested. Our staff folks will have opportunities to participate, and we need to be sure they are speaking from the SGSF perspective.

We have moved from an organization that met together, went home, and then did what each of us does independently to an SGSF organization that is recognized and committed to regional success. Our work is not done, as we have to be able to maintain our efforts and still engage with the Southern Governors' Association if we are to have as great of a voice as they do in the West. In addition, we need to find a way to let our Congressional delegation from the entire southern region know what they have been able to do for the region, their state, and their own districts. We must make it personal and important to them when they see funding for state forestry organizations.

I want to thank you for what you have done and what you will be called on to do in the future. It will take all of us working together to meet the demands. What exciting times to be a new state forester willing to become a leader not only in your state but in the Southern Group of State Foresters!

## GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION MARKET STUDY

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In September 2006, the Georgia Forestry Commission received \$75,000 from the USDA Forest Service to conduct a market study into consumer insights about trees and tree benefits. Because the target audience for this study was urban and rural-urban interface residents, the Georgia Forestry Commission partnered with the Georgia Urban Forest Council to oversee the project.

After soliciting proposals from several professional market research firms, (r)evolution partners was selected to design and implement the study. Headquartered in Atlanta, (r)evolution partners maintains a client list that includes: Coca-Cola, Home Depot, Heineken, Delta and many other top-tier corporations. In designing the study, the researchers sought answers to questions including:

- ◆ What are general consumer trends and attitudes around forestry and environmental issues?

- ◆ Who is going to "lead the charge" and get our message out to consumers?
- ◆ What do we want people to know about us and the environment?
- ◆ How do we want to get our message out to the public?

Early research analyzed the gap between consumer feelings and consumer action. A key deliverable for the study was to determine the most important benefits that trees provide to consumers, and whether, in fact, consumers actually accept that trees provide many of these benefits. The consumer segment most likely to be early "adopters" was identified and termed LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability.) Because LOHAS is a market segment focused on health and fitness, the environment, personal development, sustainable living and social justice, LOHAS consumers will

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## GREENING KENTUCKY'S BLUEGRASS REGION

*Sarah C. Gracey, urban forestry coordinator, Kentucky Division of Forestry*

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For the past decade, the Bluegrass region of Kentucky has been greening up thanks to the volunteer effort of the Reforest the Bluegrass program. Reforest is an annual event that takes place within the urban service boundary of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.

The Reforest event was the brainchild of municipal engineer David Gabbard. Gabbard had noticed poor water quality along streams where there was no tree canopy. Manicured open spaces on private and public open spaces left streams with little to no tree cover. The answer was a simple one – plant more trees! He realized, however, that the change from manicured open spaces to thickets of young trees would involve a drastic change in public perception. To accomplish several tasks at once, Gabbard decided that Reforest would be a community effort of volunteer support.

Reforest has evolved over the years from its first event in 1999 where 600 volunteers planted trees at Coldstream Park. The event has now become an annual tradition for many citizens and civic organizations, such as scout groups and neighborhood associations. Groups of approximately 20 volunteers are led by crew leaders from the University of Kentucky Department of Forestry, Kentucky Division of Forestry and other veteran Reforest volunteers. Seedlings are planted on a spray painted, species-specific grid laid out within a week of the event. Volunteers all receive lunch, T-shirt and a seedling to take home and plant. Large tents provide a break area for volunteers as well as exhibit space for local environmental organizations.

Reforest is not only an excellent program for its ecological benefits to Kentucky, but for the public as well. Through the program, the public has been

empowered to take a more active role in the conservation of the natural resources that make the Bluegrass region world renown as a beautiful place in which to live, work and play. To date, accomplishments of the program include:

- ◆ 150+ acres of restored floodplains;
- ◆ More than 5,000 volunteers involved;
- ◆ More than 130,000 tree seedlings planted, and
- ◆ Approximately 75 percent first-year survival rate.

The Reforest event has gone a long way towards reestablishing streamside forests in Fayette County. These forests are just one step in protecting valuable water resources and enhancing living standards to central Kentuckians. Perhaps most importantly, Reforest provides a hands-on approach to land stewardship in an urban environment. Who said there aren't "real forests" in the city?

*Seedlings being planted at a Reforest event.*

*Sarah Gracey, urban forestry coordinator, stands beside trees planted 8 years ago at Reforest.*

*A volunteer receives his T-shirt after planting seedlings.*



## VIRGINIA URBAN FORESTRY SUCCESS

*Paul Revell, urban and community forestry coordinator, Virginia Department of Forestry*  
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The Virginia Department of Forestry's Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) Program undertook its first cooperative project with Virginia Tech's Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) in 1999. That effort has blossomed into a continuing partnership that has served numerous communities across Virginia.

CDAC is an outreach effort of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Virginia Tech. CDAC provides conceptual planning for communities for open/greenspace, landscape design, streetscapes, outdoor environmental classrooms, greenways and trails. The partnership with the Department of Forestry (VDOF) has been beneficial for both as the Agency has provided CDAC with numerous community contacts to initiate projects through the involvement of its field staff. In addition, VDOF provides the technical urban forestry expertise that is incorporated in CDAC planning. For its part, CDAC provides exceptional design expertise so critical to successful projects. Further, CDAC has a process whereby it involves local citizens in the planning process.

"Having CDAC as a partner is like having our own landscape design firm on retainer," said U&CF Coordinator Paul Revell. "We get numerous calls from communities who say they want to plant some trees. When we visit, we find that their needs go way beyond tree planting. CDAC involvement helps to broaden a community's perspective on what is possible to accomplish."

CDAC's first cooperative project with VDOF was in the Town of Mt. Jackson. The conceptual plan for

a streetscape renovation was the catalyst for a more comprehensive downtown renovation that generated more than \$1 million in funding from various agencies. The next project was in the City of Radford where CDAC did planning work on 55 acres of woodland that was on the block for commercial development. Citizens involved with a local university saw this property as a scenic park along the New River. The citizens' vision won out, and CDAC's work was the starting point for the development of a forest park with an extensive trail system. Today, the park is a regional amenity and is used by local high schools, Radford University and Virginia Tech for outdoor labs and environmental research.

Another interesting project was the Carter Pines Project in the Town of Hillsville. The town property had an over-mature stand of white pine badly in need of harvesting. CDAC developed a plan for a community park and trail and the plan was implemented with the proceeds from a very lucrative timber sale.

The VDOF and CDAC approach fills a critical need for many communities. While there are state and federal funding sources available for open space preservation, park and greenway development, streetscape renovation, etc., there are few sources that financially support start-up planning. Often the element that a community needs to qualify for funding from state and federal sources is an initial conceptual plan. This is exactly the element that work through the VDOF and CDAC partnership provides. Several communities have been able to leverage a start up plan into significant community resources. For example, the Town of Pennington Gap in far Southwest Virginia was able to leverage a plan prepared for greenway development and streamside protection into more than \$250,000 of grant funds for implementation. The U&CF grant that funded the planning for the project was for less than \$10,000.

The VDOF and CDAC partnership has been able to bring services to underserved communities

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## VIRGINIA URBAN FORESTRY SUCCESS...

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that otherwise could not afford the services of a consulting firm. Several projects have been conceived and implemented in economically challenged Southwest and Southside Virginia.

There have been a variety of projects developed through this partnership including: streetscape designs, outdoor environmental classrooms, park plans, open space plans, trail/greenway designs, street tree planting plans, beautification plans, water quality improvement projects using riparian buffers and rain gardens, and landscape design plans for specific public buildings. There is usually a two- to three-year lag time between plan development and implementation, but most of the plans have some degree of implementation.

According to VDOF Partnership Coordinator Barbara White, "Even if plans are not immediately implemented, landscape architecture students are learning valuable information about urban forestry concepts that will help them later in their careers." CDAC has benefited from seminars from urban forestry notables, such as Jim Urban, Dr. Bonnie Appleton and Dr. Kim Coder, as an education component which is included in each year's grant agreement.

VDOF and CDAC recently reviewed the projects completed as part of the partnership effort. There were more than 40 projects on the list. In the spirit of community forestry, most of these were in Virginia's smaller cities and towns. To learn more, please contact Paul Revell at 434.977.6555.



## GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION...

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be the citizens who communicate the community forestry message to the rest of the public.

Subsequent research involved the development of a series of concept statements that were presented to consumer focus groups for evaluation. The highest scoring concept statements were then refined and formatted for an online survey of the broader Georgia populace.

The final analysis considered 15 separate data points for each concept. The concept of "Create Your Legacy" resonated the strongest among all consumers and scored highest in 14 of the 15 data points. "Connection with the Environment" was the second-most motivating concept among non-Atlantans, while "You Can Make a Difference" was the second-most motivating concept among

non-Caucasians. One striking result of the study showed that messaging should focus on the positive benefits of taking action, rather than on the negative impacts of not taking action. Negatively themed concepts rated very poorly among consumers.

What do the results of this survey mean for urban and community forestry efforts in Georgia? Actually, the state of Georgia is already in an ideal position to take advantage of this market study. The Georgia Urban Forest Council's mission statement is "to sustain Georgia's green legacy by helping communities grow healthy trees." In addition, the Council has formed a partnership with The Home Depot Foundation to provide tree planting grants to communities in Georgia through the Tree Legacy Grant Program.

The Georgia Forestry Commission is working

with a professional media specialist to incorporate "Create Your Legacy" into a long-range communications plan using key message points. Opportunities also exist to reach the LOHAS marketing segment through non-traditional, Web-based venues, such as Facebook and My Space. With the completion of this study, (r)evolution partners has delivered a quality marketing product that will enable Georgians to create their own legacy in our ever-changing community forests.

## URBAN FOREST CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT FOR FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

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The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA) is a nonprofit corporation comprised of citizens dedicated to conserving natural areas of Fayetteville, Ark., and its environs. As a result of an Urban and Community grant awarded to this group, a mapping system was developed to help identify green spaces in and around the city that are key to providing multiple benefits, such as water quality protection and recreational opportunities. The project was guided by a Science Advisory Committee (SAC) that included representation by the University of Arkansas, the City of Fayetteville, the Beaver District Watershed, Illinois River Watershed Partnership and the Arkansas Forestry Commission.

vegetation types. Members of the SAC walked 34 of the top 100 sites to ensure the accuracy of the GIS analyses (excellent) and to assess things the GIS analyses could not address, such as recreational possibilities.

The resulting Urban Forest Conservation Assessment has been adopted into the City's 2025 plan. The project results were used in the green belt (natural/agricultural) planning around the city that will assist in managing the urban/wildland interface.

Ecological quality is significant for highly ranked sites, and the project's impact will come from preserving a site (by purchase or conservation easement) or by guiding development in an attempt to preserve the section of the site with the highest ecological value.

FNHA has now contributed to the conservation of more than 110 acres of mature urban forest plus two acres of wetlands. A number of highly ranked parcels have a forested corridor that can be integrated into the Fayetteville Master Trail Plan providing greenway connectivity while allowing thoughtful development of the main parcel. The project's results will also be used by the Parks and Recreation staff as a guide to help pinpoint the areas of new developments that are best used for parkland dedication as required by ordinance.

A new approach has been created to identify opportunities for conservation that begins with defining high-priority characteristics (ecological value, human use potential, size, etc.) and then ranking all parcels of land in the study area on these characteristics. This process promotes achieving community-wide goals and generates the political support necessary for elected officials to take action.

The report was written with enough detail that any organization or governmental agency with GIS capabilities could design and implement a study specific to their requirements and it can be used as a model by other communities in their land use planning process.

AGIS methodology was developed by a specialist at The Nature Conservancy, the Ozark Society Highlands Office. It used available GIS databases from local, state and federal sources to generate indices that would indicate the ecological health and condition of parcels of land. These data were used to develop a questionnaire to obtain input at five public meetings and on the city Web site. Results were prioritized to begin development of a Conservation Priority Ranking for land parcels in Fayetteville and the outlying areas.

Some of the top-weighted characteristics are topographic diversity and rarity, diversity of forest type, and predicted species diversity for terrestrial sites. For aquatic sites, characteristics are stream length, forest extent in riparian zone, and diversity of

*John Crone with university students.*

*Annual meeting.*

*Mayor and PAB chair.*



## FLORIDA'S CHAMPION TREE WARRIORS

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Florida's soils and climate vary considerably as one travels the 575-mile expanse between the Georgia state line and the southern terminus of US Route 1 in Key West. Along the way, plant communities change from temperate to tropical. Once you get south of Lake Okeechobee, where freezing days are rare to non-existent, the landscape contains a variety of tree species that are not found anywhere else in the United States.

As a result, American Forests' National Register of Big Trees lists more national champion tree species from Florida than from just about any other state in the US. There are 176 species whose national champs reside in the Sunshine State. Half of them are found in the southeastern counties between Palm Beach and the Keys. These vary in size from the impressive Shortleaf Ficus (511 points) to the diminutive Bay Cedar (26 points). Some are prominently displayed in public parks, while others require trekking through dense swamps to find.

The Florida Division of Forestry has actively participated in certifying and maintaining champion tree records since the 1970s. When the call went out last year to update records for the 2008 national register, our champion tree warriors responded. Senior Forester Mark Torok and Field Coordinator Micah Pace shouldered their backpacks full of measuring tools and tree record forms and headed for the woods. After several months of effort, they returned with updated records and photos of 88 national champions, plus 55 other champions (non-native species) that are recognized only in Florida's state registry.

Some readers may think that this was easy duty, spending time outdoors in the Florida Keys and getting paid for it. Well, it wasn't as easy as it

sounds, folks. Even in March, the temperatures in Monroe County climb high into the 90s. Natural areas contain well-established populations of insects, poisonous plants, and vines with big thorns. Trees, such as the poisonwood, made the warriors regret touching their bark. Some trees had not been measured since the widespread use of GPS began, and the location maps were sketchy (pardon the pun) at best. However, the warriors persevered, and completed their task on time.

Unfortunately, they discovered 37 national champion trees no longer existed. The three hurricanes that struck South Florida in 2004 and 2005 took their toll on many of them. Others succumbed to development, and still others just don't have a long lifespan anyway. They did find some replacement champions during their travels, and our agency will actively look for more replacements in time to include in the 2010 register.

Kudos also go to people from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Florida Division of Recreation and Parks. Other Division of Forestry personnel from the local area also lent them a hand on a number of occasions.

To find out more about the champion tree program, visit the American Forests Web site, [www.americanforests.org](http://www.americanforests.org).



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*Champion tree warriors  
Mark Torok (left) and  
Micah Pace in front of  
the champion Cluster  
Fig (Ficus racemosa) at  
Flamingo Gardens near  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL.*



## ARKANSAS STATE PARKS PARTNER TO MAKE HOMES FIREWISE

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In the fall of 2007, Arkansas FireWise – a wildfire mitigation effort of the Arkansas Forestry Commission and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism – began an effort to ensure all structures within Arkansas State Parks are protected from wildland fire.

“It is important that our agencies work together in reducing the risks from wildland fires to the hundreds of structures – many historic – in our state parks,” said David Samuel, Arkansas FireWise coordinator. “In addition, we are pleased that Arkansas State Park leadership has directed that all residences within the parks be Firewise [low risk] this year.”

The Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism operates 52 parks visited by nearly 10 million people every year – a \$260 million annual economic impact in the state.

Greg Butts, Arkansas State Parks director, said, “The Arkansas FireWise program complements key components of Arkansas State Parks Mission: preservation/conservation and education. With 955 buildings (including 183 historic structures) insured at \$283 million, reducing fire danger near state park structures just makes good sense. Arkansas State Parks are about the ‘forever business,’ and the Firewise program is important in protecting structures for today’s and tomorrow’s generations. And, the program is a good fit in our parks’ visitor educational programs.”

Prior to 2007, seven Arkansas State Parks had made efforts to create defensible space around park structures.

However, there had not been a coordinated effort to ensure all park facilities were Firewise. This partnership formed as preparations were underway for FireWise on the Mountain, the

largest ever Arkansas FireWise event, held Oct. 23, 2007.

Prior to the event, FireWise Coordinator David Samuel visited Mount Magazine State Park’s superintendent Becky Bariola to discuss the possibility of recognizing the park as an Arkansas FireWise Community, due to the significant number of homes within the park boundaries. To receive this distinction, the park must have three or more residences within the park boundary. Parks with fewer homes are listed on the Arkansas FireWise Honor Roll.

Parks designated as Arkansas FireWise Communities are required to complete risk assessments on all homes; develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and take steps to begin reducing the wildfire risk to structures within the park – similar actions required of communities to earn National FireWise Communities/USA recognition.

Mount Magazine and Lake Catherine state park’s staff completed the steps necessary to earn recognition, and, on Oct. 23, the parks’ superintendents and rangers were presented plaques noting their wildfire mitigation efforts.

Arkansas State Parks designated as Arkansas FireWise Communities include Devils Den, Lake Catherine, Mount Magazine, Prairie Grove Battlefield and Queen Wilhelmina. Other participating state parks include Petit Jean, Lake Dardanelle, Lake Ouachita, Crowley’s Ridge, Arkansas Post Museum, Hobbs Conservation Area, Bull Shoals-White River, Old Davidsonville, Fort Smith, Woolly Hollow, Withrow Springs State Park and Lake Poinsett.

Samuel said, “It is an outstanding partnership that is now affecting adjacent communities, and encouraging them to begin the process to earn Firewise Community/USA recognition.”

To learn more about FireWise efforts in Arkansas, visit [www.arkansasfirewise.com](http://www.arkansasfirewise.com).

*Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe presented plaque to Mount Magazine State Park representatives Becky Bariola, park superintendent (left), and Doug Carter, park ranger.*



## OPERATION GREEN STREETS

*Linda Moon, communications and marketing specialist, Texas Forest Service*

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Homes belonging to thousands of people were damaged by Hurricane Rita in 2005, just three weeks after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. According to the National Weather Service, the storm caused \$11.3 billion in damage to states along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. More than two years have passed, and many people still find themselves picking up the remains of their lives, trying to piece their homes and families back together as best as they can.

Texans were among those to experience the destruction of Rita. Citizens fled as the hurricane devoured the state's southeastern neighborhoods. The cities are slowly rebuilding their infrastructure, but foresters are realizing that not all things are easily rebuilt. Trees, both large and small, were uprooted or removed due to severe damage from the chaos of up to 180 mph winds.

Texas Forest Service (TFS) did not allow this loss to go unnoticed. Recently, with the help of a grant from the USDA Forest Service and corporate sponsors, TFS launched a program called Operation Green Streets – an initiative to give away 10,000 trees to hurricane victims in Southeast Texas. More than 80,000 postcards were sent out to households across a six-county area, where hurricane damage was most severe. Those eligible then contacted Texas Forest Service to place a tree request.

“Many of these cities lost up to 60 percent of their crown coverage. Whatever we can do to help replace that is a step in the right direction,” said John Giedraitis, TFS manager of urban forestry.

The program planned two distribution dates: Nov. 10, 2007 and Feb. 9, 2008. During the November giveaway, Operation Green Streets handed out more than 5,600 trees at 13 locations across Southeast Texas.

TFS employees gathered with volunteers from companies, organizations, and even high schools, to lend a hand at the sites and saw thousands of people come to collect their free trees, even staying to deliver trees in the rain. They were greeted with overwhelming gratitude from tree recipients.

Erin Harris, one of Operation Green Street's program organizers, said, “People are going to be emotional when you give them a tree because trees are not just landscaping for homeowners. Some of these families have lost trees that have been on their property for generations.”

The program has been very well received by the public, and TFS has received more orders than there are available trees. The agency plans to distribute the remainder of the trees in February, and everyone involved expects the event to end smoothly and successfully.

Karen Woodard, TFS regional urban forester and another of the program's organizers, said, “Operation Green Streets has triggered something within the heart of these cities. People were

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*Bob Reed, TFS resource specialist of Kirbyville, helps a recipient load a tree at the EJ Memorial Middle School in Silsbee, TX.*

*Damage to tree caused by Hurricane Rita in Southeast Texas.*



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Mike Countess, Southern Group of State Foresters' Policy Analyst

### 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Bill Signed by President

After lengthy debates on the content and structure of the 2008 spending package, Congress passed an Omnibus Appropriations bill late in December that was signed by the President on Dec. 26, 2007. A summary of the U.S. Forest Service Cooperative Forestry Assistance program appropriations is detailed below, including a comparison with current year (FY 2007) funding. The largest reductions occurred in Forest Stewardship and Urban and Community Forestry, while funding was slightly increased for State Fire Assistance. Appropriation language also contained specific direction on program structure and priorities including:

- ◆ Within available funding, continue the slow-the-spread program for gypsy moth;
- ◆ Maintain the base budgets of individual research stations at or near prior year levels;
- ◆ Carefully consider actual program needs,

local urgency, and wildland-urban interface for Cooperative State Fire Assistance, and

- ◆ Allocate at least 10 percent of State Fire Assistance (Wildland Fire-National Fire Plan) for cross boundary protection on approximately 12 National Forests to be provided by State and local forces within wildland-urban interface areas.

Approved Forest Legacy Projects within the Southern Region include:

- ◆ Mobile Tensaw Delta (Alabama)
- ◆ Paulding County Land Area (Georgia)
- ◆ Marrowbone Creek (Kentucky)
- ◆ Clarendon Plantation (North Carolina)
- ◆ Piedmont of South Carolina-Belfast (South Carolina)
- ◆ Big Forks (Tennessee)
- ◆ Nottoway River (Virginia)

For more information on Legislative Happenings, contact:

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Program	2008 Omnibus Appropriations (PL 161-121) (\$ million)	2007 Appropriations Per Continuing Resolution (\$ million)
State Fire Assistance (Coop Forestry)	33.1	32.9
State Fire Assistance (Wildland Fire)	48.7	46.2
Forest Health (Coop Forestry)	45.3	47.1
Forest Health (Wildland Fire)	10.0	9.9
Volunteer Fire (Coop Forestry)	6.0	5.9
Volunteer Fire (Wildland Fire)	8.0	7.8
Forest Stewardship	30.0	34.2 (41.9 w/ earmarks)
Legacy	53.2	56.5
Urban and Community	28.1	30.1
FIA (Coop Forestry)	4.6	4.6
FIA (Forest/Rangeland)	61.3	61.3



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES...

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### **Energy Bill Restricts Use of Woody Biomass**

The President signed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 on Dec. 19, 2007, which contains important, if not confusing, definitions for “renewable biomass.” The legislation would require the use of 36 billion gallons of biofuels annually by 2022 with an emphasis on cellulosic feedstocks. However, limitations are placed on the type and condition of renewable biomass that can be applied toward achieving that goal. Apparently, new “tree plantations” on non-federal land (those established by clearing after passage of the act) do not qualify nor do pre-commercial thinnings from stands that are considered old-growth, late succession, or critically imperiled or rare pursuant to a “State Natural Heritage Program.” Limiting determinations to only one database (State Natural Heritage Program) for purposes of designating imperiled or rare communities precludes the use of other important sources of information that could also be beneficial, such as the Southern Forest Lands Assessment process, Forest Inventory and Analysis program and others. The imprecise definitions also raise serious questions about chain-of-custody monitoring and enforcement as well as determinations of what constitutes conditions of “old growth” and “late succession.” Moreover, questions have been raised about the potential for an unfunded federal mandate impact on state forestry agencies. The Southern Group of State Foresters will carefully monitor subsequent rulemaking and administrative procedures to encourage constructive development and interpretation of definitions and protocols.

### **Congress Defers Action on Immigrant Forestry Labor Issue**

Current law places a “cap” on the number of H-2B Guest Worker visas that can be issued annually, which apply in part to forestry related labor.

Returning workers had enjoyed an exemption from that cap and were not counted toward the total number that may be issued, but that exemption was scheduled to expire in 2007. The issue has been of concern to certain parts of the landscaping, nursery, and forestry sector that extensively utilize H-2B labor and were at risk of not being able to assemble tree-planting crews. Senators Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) introduced bills to extend the exemption period. Sessions successfully amended the appropriations bill for Commerce, Justice, and Science to include the provisions of S. 988. However, the subsequent Omnibus Appropriations Bill stripped the amendment from the Commerce appropriations language. It appears, therefore, that Congress cannot or will not be able to modify the exemption over the objection of those critical about immigrant labor competition and related issues. The extent to which immigrant labor shortage subject to H2B restrictions will impact reforestation capabilities will soon become apparent. At least several states have already indicated difficulties in hiring tree-planting crews or lifting labor in seedling nurseries.

### **Farm Bill in Conference Committee- SGSF Makes Recommendations**

The House and Senate both passed respective versions of the 2007 Farm Bill before the end of the year. A Conference Committee is expected to be organized to begin the process of reconciling differences between the two houses. As part of the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition – along with the National Association of State Foresters – the SGSF submitted the following suggestions and guidance to House and Senate Agriculture Committee staff:

#### **Forestry Title**

- ◆ Recommend House language for Statewide Assessment and Plans that contains content originally proposed by SGSF with addition of a Senate provision that the Statewide Plans

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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES...

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can substitute for other program planning requirements of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act;

- ◆ Recommend House language regarding coordination of Statewide Plans with addition of Senate specification to coordinate with all applicable federal land management agencies;
- ◆ Recommend the House provision to establish a competitive process for the annual allocation of program funds;
- ◆ Recommend the House version that establishes a Cooperative Forest Innovation Grant Program, and
- ◆ Recommend the Senate version that established a Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program.

### ***Emergency Forest Restoration Program***

- ◆ Recommend House language contained in the Conservation Title that focuses the program on non-industrial private forest lands and requires completion of a 10-year restoration

plan to qualify for funding;

- ◆ Recommend House language for specifications of qualifying loss and damage to include prevention measures for potential insect and disease damage but also include Senate provisions for placing priority on health and safety issues, and
- ◆ Recommend financial assistance provisions of House version, including a cap on damage recovery not to exceed \$50,000 per applicant.

### ***Healthy Forest Restoration Program***

- ◆ Recommend funding provisions of the House at \$10 million annually but include Senate provision for option to use permanent easements.

### ***Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Security Program (CSP)***

- ◆ Prefer the more detailed and specific House version that expands the availability of EQIP to forest landowners and removes limitations on the utilization of CSP for forest land.

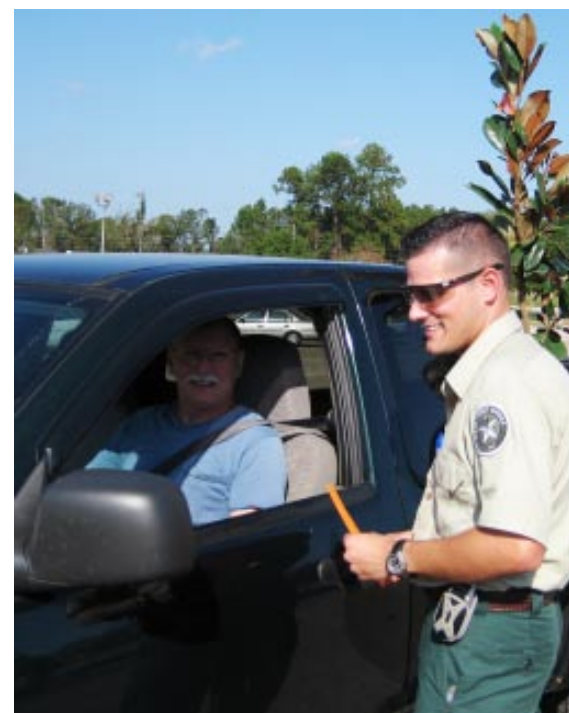
## OPERATION GREEN STREETS...

*continued from page 9*

so overwhelmed with trying to get their lives back up and running that not until we offered them a free tree did they realize how important these trees were to them. It will take years to grow back the trees we lost, but by taking the reigns of this initiative, Texas can show the nation not only how to build back houses, but how to build back communities.”

***Mickey Merritt, TFS staff forester of Houston, works alongside the Beaumont Fire Fighters Association in Beaumont, TX.***

***Rich Dottellis, TFS district forester of Kountze-Olive, chats with recipient about his new southern magnolia tree.***



## ONGOING HURRICANE KATRINA MITIGATION IN MISSISSIPPI'S URBAN FORESTS

*Britt Hubbard, Katrina urban forest coordinator, Mississippi Forestry Commission*  
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The Mississippi Forestry Commission awarded \$1.32 million from the Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program for Hurricane Katrina Recovery grant to 34 cities, counties, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations within the hurricane-affected area between October 2006 and March 2007. The funds for this grant were made available to the Mississippi Forestry Commission through a grant from the USDA Forest Service. The awarded grant funds are being used for urban tree inventory and assessment, replacement, remediation, and information and education. A majority of the funding is being used for tree replacement.

Three grant recipients have implemented regional programs affecting a large number of people and multiple communities. The Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain is using funds to kick start its Replant South MS program. Replant South MS is a network of interested citizens working together to plant 300,000 trees in Mississippi's six coastal counties over the next three years. Grant funds were used to organize an initial meeting and training session for participants and to secure trees for planting. The Mississippi State University Extension Service used grant funds to employ an urban forester/arborist for the coast. The arborist conducts educational programs and offers free technical assistance on urban forestry to the public. The Extension Service is also using funding to provide trees at tree giveaways on Arbor Day. The Mississippi Urban Forest Council (MUFC) is using funds to educate citizens across South Mississippi through its Master Urban Forestry Training Workshops. The two-day workshop educates attendees on urban forestry issues and encourages participation in an urban

forestry volunteer network. Volunteers are then available for future urban forestry projects in their communities.

Cities, including Bay St. Louis and Waveland, and schools, such as Jones County Junior College (JCJC) and Forest County Agricultural High School (FCAHS) are keeping projects local. Bay St. Louis and Waveland are considered ground zero for Hurricane Katrina. These cities are using grant funds to replace a portion of the many trees lost during the storm. The new plantings provide much-needed aesthetic and environmental benefits to the cities. JCJC is using funds on two projects. The first is to plant trees on campus and around its walking track. The second is for students to grow out 1,500 seedlings and plant them in areas adjacent to campus and in nearby cities. FCAHS is also making use of its student volunteers. Grant funding has provided a means to buy trees, and students are planting them on its damaged campus and in the local community.

Planting season is peaking in Mississippi and, with Arbor Day just around the corner, the opportunity to educate citizens is also peaking. Grant recipients are taking advantage of both of these facts by planning multiple planting and educational events. As these events take place, more trees go into the ground and more citizens learn about the benefits of urban forestry. Through all of these activities, Mississippi's urban forests are drawing closer to recovery from the destruction wreaked by Hurricane Katrina.



*(Top) Gail Kimbell, chief of the USDA Forest Service, and Mississippi's State Forester Charlie Morgan present a grant check to Billy Skellie, mayor of Long Beach, Mississippi.*

*(Bottom) The Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain and some young volunteers plant trees in Hancock County.*

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS + COMMUNITY TREE INVENTORY + STRATUM = SUCCESS

*Jennifer A. Seitz, urban forestry extension associate, University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation  
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The Urban and Urbanizing Forests program in the School of Forest Resources and Conservation at University of Florida, pilot-tested a two-week urban forestry module in October at A.D. Harris High School (AD High) in Panama City. This module focused on defining urban forestry, the benefits of community trees, and tree inventories. The objective of this project was to determine if high school students or community volunteers could undertake a tree inventory using the new i-Tree software; understand the results, and apply what they learned.

Through an existing partnership with AD High, we worked with teachers to select activities from Urban Forests: A Supplement to Florida's Project Learning Tree that aligned with their project and classroom science, math and language arts lessons. A class of 17 students met for two weeks, 50 minutes a day for this specialized urban forestry class. During the first week of class, students participated in hands-on activities focused on tree biology and benefits. Local foresters from the Society of American Foresters and Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation taught students tree identification techniques.

Tree inventories were introduced the second week of class. Their campus was treated as a community. Prior to class, we made a map of the school grounds with the location of 75 trees and divided the campus into three zones. These zones are already used by the teachers for other projects. To make this learning process meaningful to students, we had to connect what they were doing to something they care about. The data collection session started off with an explanation of how the

students will be gathering tree data and, then, how that data will provide information on the benefits of AD High's urban forest.

We went over the types of measurements that would be collected and defined what each meant. Data collected included: species, DBH (diameter at breast height), and condition of the wood (trunk). Students, with assistance from our staff, practiced using a DBH tape and recording measurements. On field days, students were divided into teams of two or three and given a DBH tape, tree ID book, tree tags, and a data sheet. After collecting data on a tree, students placed a tree tag with a unique number and their initials. The tree tag indicated to other teams that this tree's data was already taken. Tree data was entered by our staff into STRATUM (Street Tree Analysis Tool for Urban Forest Managers), a tree benefits model that is part of the i-Tree suite of programs. Once the data was analyzed, the students were given the results; explained the benefits as to how they related to their work, and then allowed to come to their own conclusions.

The information provided by STRATUM helped students to better understand the AD High urban forest (tree characteristics and health), and to suggest tree management concerns to the principal (safety and maintenance issues). Their tree inventory provided information about the structure, function and management needs of the trees on their campus.

The two-week unit ended with a field trip led by the Florida Division of Forestry's Bay County Forester. The goals of the field trip included: linking what the students learned to real-life application, hurricanes and trees, and career options. Students spent a half-day visiting neighborhoods and parks in Panama City looking at tree benefits (relict oak hammock and compared with a new development with no trees); tree biology (how trees grow in harsh urban areas), and hurricane resistance by certain species.



*Students conferring with Dr. Francisco Escobedo in tree's identification.*

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS...

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Follow-up meetings with the teachers and community partners concluded that students took ownership of the project and learned new concepts that they were able to apply to their math and science lessons. The hands-on element kept students interested and engaged. Teachers suggested we provide a unit assessment for the entire two-week program and add at least a week of time to the unit to allow for student comprehension.

Improvement of this module includes: the creation of additional educational tools (e.g., worksheets, pre- and post-tests); the implementation of a teacher training workshop; the development of an expanded urban forest unit, and the expansion of the program to other high schools.

Additional information can be found at the following Web sites:

i-Tree Tools: <http://www.itreetools.org>

Florida's Urban and Urbanizing Forests Program: <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/urbanforestry>

Urban Forests: A Supplement to Florida's Project Learning Tree: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR164>



*A student team working together to obtain tree data.*

## URBAN FORESTRY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN UNDERWAY FOR SOUTHERN STATES

*Susan Reisch, urban and community forestry coordinator, Georgia Forestry Commission*

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Rapid population growth, urban development and forest fragmentation trends make it imperative for the southern Urban & Community Forestry coordinators to help build a greater awareness and commitment to forest landscapes. With these key issues in mind, the Urban Forestry Committee, in coordination with the Communications Chiefs, developed an Urban Forestry Communications/Social Marketing Plan to begin to change the attitudes, beliefs and values of various target audiences, including policy makers, developers, consumers and elected leaders.

This plan will help each state and the southern region identify who should be targeted, when,

and what consistent message points to deliver in order to impact the social/political environment so that people can better receive urban forestry messages and take action. Development of the plan was inspired by each state's best practices. An international public relations firm, Manning, Selvage & Lee in Atlanta, consulted on the plan.

By working together over several years, each state's triggering media moments regarding trees will convert passive awareness into engaged action and help change mindsets. The plan helps urban forestry create a movement similar to the anti-smoking campaign. For example, until the 1970s, smoking was considered glamorous, fashionable and in vogue. But today, smoking has become taboo. This just didn't happen. It came about through a series of strategic steps. First, health warning ads were placed on packs of cigarettes; then smoking ads were banned; non-smoking areas were created in restaurants, and today grassroots organizations are continuing to help remaining smokers kick the habit.

The Urban Forestry Communications/Social

Marketing Plan is designed to create a similar mindset change. It will help move people in the South to understand healthy and sustainable urban forests can be part of the solution and lead to greater quality of life. The plan is in draft form and will be presented at the summer SGSF meeting.

If you wish to learn more, ask the urban forestry coordinator in your state to view the latest version.

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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**Cho, Seong-Hoon; Newman, David H.; Wear, David N. 2005. Community choices and housing demands: a spatial analysis of the Southern Appalachian Highlands.** *Housing Studies*. 20(4): 549-569.

This paper examines housing demand using an integrated approach that combines residential decisions about choices of community in the Southern Appalachian region with the application of a Geographic Information System (GIS). The empirical model infers a distinctive heterogeneity in the characteristics of community choices. The results also indicate that socio-economic motives strongly affect urban housing demands, while environmental amenities affect rural housing demands. <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/25435>

**Cho, Seong-Hoon; Bowker, J.M.; Park, William M. 2006. Measuring the contribution of water and green space amenities to housing values: an application and comparison of spatially weighted hedonic models.** *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*. 31(3): 485-507.

This study estimates the influence of proximity to water bodies and park amenities on residential housing values in Knox County, TN, using the hedonic price approach. Values for proximity to water bodies and parks are first estimated globally with a standard ordinary least squares model. A locally weighted regression model is then employed to investigate spatial nonstationarity and generate local estimates for individual sources of each amenity. [http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/ja\\_cho011.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/ja_cho011.pdf)

**Harder, Scott V.; Amatya, Devendra M.; Callahan, Timothy J. [and others]. Hydrology and water budget for a forested Atlantic Coastal Plain watershed, South Carolina.** *Journal of American Water Resources Association*. 43(3): 563-575.

Increases in timber demand and urban development in the Atlantic Coastal Plain over the past decade have motivated studies on eco-hydrology and sustainable management of coastal plain watersheds. The purpose of this study was to quantify the water budget of a first-order forested watershed located within the Forest Service Santee Experimental Forest near Charleston, SC. Annual rainfall of 1671 mm in 2003 and 962 mm in 2004 was 300 mm above and 400 mm below normal with runoff coefficients of 0.47 and 0.08, respectively, indicating a wide variability of outflows as affected by antecedent soil conditions.

**Williams, T.M.; Amatya, D.M.; Hitchcock, D.R. [and others]. 2007. Chapel Branch Creek TMDL development: integrating TMDL development with implementation.** ASABE Paper No. 072042. St. Joseph, MI: American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers: 1-13.

Chapel Branch Creek, which drains a 1,600-hectare area into Lake Marion, is listed as an impaired water for excess nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), chlorophyll-a, and pH. The watershed has land uses with varying potential nonpoint sources of N and P. A project supported by SC Department of Health and Environmental Control is underway to develop and implement a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the above pollutants. Successful implementation requires both scientifically valid determination of source loadings and clear demonstration of results to stakeholders. GIS-based watershed characteristics and water quality sampled from various land uses are being used to identify potential source areas. [http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/ja\\_williams010.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/ja_williams010.pdf)

*If you wish to offer  
comments about the  
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## COLLABORATION FOR A COMMON GOAL... THE POWER OF MANY

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During the Second World War, the term “collaborator” acquired a very negative meaning as it referred to persons and groups (in France and other European countries) who helped the Nazi German occupiers of their countries. Well, we are not dealing with foreign occupiers and the term collaboration is in fact a very positive word that is defined today as “a structured, recursive process where two or more people work together toward a common goal – typically an intellectual endeavor that is creative in nature – by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus.”

As many of us were looking at a fall 2007 fire season that would “be one for the record books,” according to Tennessee Fire Chief John Kirksey, what began with a discussion among several of us – and was a topic of a tri-state (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia) meeting – an idea blossomed into an all-out effort to work together to prevent wildfires.

The “plan” called for prevention and education teams to be established in some of the more critical areas. The three states established teams that began in early October and worked through the beginning of November. The teams would work from a common communications plan as a base of operations while allowing for flexibility to customize. A major part of the plan called for a team to be placed in Atlanta to develop “regional/national” messages and to support the other prevention teams.

The leaders from the three state teams shared ideas, plans and materials. The first Atlanta-based team was lead by Dave Merrifield (CA), and the follow-up team was lead by John Warner (TX).

Steve Weaver, assistant director of Fire and Aviation Management for the Southern Region, said, “The work by these teams was outstanding. I have no doubt that the very low number of fires we had during this period of extreme drought is directly related to the intensive fire prevention education campaign and work conducted by these regional and state teams in conjunction with judicious use of statewide and federal forest burning bans.”

Gwen Beavans, acting Regional Fire Prevention and WUI Program manager, said, “The concept of utilizing a regional team is not new; however, putting a team in to cover such a large geographic area and to manage several state-based teams is.

“Theteamsproducedpublicserviceannouncements with the help of Bill Dance and Jeff Foxworthy. They worked with WeatherChannel.com and developed generic, “evergreen” products, such as Web banners, table tents, fliers, and numerous billboard designs – all of which are available through the Web site. Another event that was precedent-setting was the development of a multi-agency, multi-department and function area Core Advisory Team (CAT).

Within the area the Virginia Prevention Education Team was assigned, during the 18 days prior to the team’s deployment, there were 25 fires that burned 469 acres. During the team’s two-week assignment, there were just four fires for 122 acres. Of most significance was that this time span included Halloween, a time when firefighters traditionally have been very busy. There were no human-caused wildfires on Halloween night in



*From left to right Jeff Foxworthy, Smokey, Donna Wilson and Gwen Beavans.*

the team’s six-county area of Southwest Virginia.

I encourage everyone to visit the new Web page [www.southernprevention.com](http://www.southernprevention.com) to see what was accomplished and to see what is now available for everyone to use.

Donna Wilson, who served on the Virginia Team and on the Atlanta Team 2 as a PIO, said that she is a fan for life of Jeff Foxworthy. “He is just a real neat regular kind of guy, and was great to work with.”