KY STATE FORESTER LEAH MACSWORDS RECEIVES 2009 ATFS SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE AWARD

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Listing the attributes of a leader in forestry would include words like: “leader, advocate, promoter, supporter, chair, co-chair, volunteer and participant.” Or, you could just say ‘Leah MacSwords.’

MacSwords received the Sustained Excellence Award at the 86th Annual National Association of State Foresters meeting in Albuquerque, NM. The award was presented by Bob Simpson, senior vice president for forestry, at the American Forest Foundation. This recognition, in the form of an annual award, honors state foresters who have been strong advocates and supporters for the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation.

“I am honored to receive this recognition from the American Tree Farm System, and I’m very proud of the work we do in Kentucky to support our tree farmers,” MacSwords said. MacSwords’ commitment to sustaining the Tree Farm Program provides the foundation for a sustained forest for present and future generations of forest landowners and their families.

MacSwords has served as the director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry for the past eight years. Throughout her tenure, she has been a strong and adamant supporter of the Kentucky Tree Farm Program, maintaining support for tree farm through her Division that handles more than 95 percent of the state’s tree farm reinspections.

As one to not only talk the talk, MacSwords is deeply involved with tree farm committee leadership, as well as serving as an active member of the committee by participating in its meetings on a regular basis.

Simpson said, “Without Leah, her leadership and her commitment to the Tree Farm Program, we wouldn’t be the largest and one of the most valued landowner groups in the country.”

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

What’s New…

At the end of my term as chairman of the Southern Group of State Foresters, I have thought about the activities and actions of the last few months. One of the main points that I supported through my term was the strengthening of the relationships with strategic partners, who can be important players as we work to achieve our goals. The SGSF has enhanced its relationships with important partners that will provide us with a solid influence and voice, both regionally and nationally.

The Southern Governors’ Association is one of the strategic partners that we’ve built stronger relations with in the last few months. At our last summer meeting, we had the opportunity to share some ideas and projects with other organizations, agencies and groups that can be integrated by states or by the SGSF into our goal of providing healthy forests for today and tomorrow. These contacts are important, and we are ready for the next step of considering potential agreements and new funding resources to move our activities to new levels in our region. These relationships – and others that have the potential for partnering – can provide us with new options in the future.

I have to also consider our discussion and participation in critical issues related to biomass and climate change. Those two items are on the table for discussion and will be important for new bills and programs for private forest landowners. Finally, in terms of activities related to fire prevention and events, we have been an example to other regions, and our communication strategy has demonstrated our actions and our products. I’m cheerful and confident that we have moved forward and am ready to keep moving in the direction of our goals.

There are some critical issues that are under consideration, and it will be important to keep our energy and attention focused on them. The main subject that I would like to point out is the state assessment that we are all working on and is due relatively soon. The process has been like going through a dirt road with bumps and hits, but the direction and benefit of moving forward through this road is important and should provide benefits in the long run. We all know that this project will be on our desks for the next few months, so it’s important to maintain the communication and support agenda that has been established.

We are also in the process of evaluating the priority issues for the SGSF. I invite all the State Foresters to think about the critical issues that we should consider in the SGSF working agenda. It’s likely that an evaluation of priority issues identified through the state assessment can serve as a guideline to discuss our priority issues in the future. Themes, such as quality and quantity of water, are issues that might need to be evaluated as part of these discussions. And other themes should be discussed in the next few months.

So, as my term concludes, I wish to recognize the support of the members of the executive committee of both the Southern Group of State Foresters and the National Association of State Foresters. I also extend my special thanks for the support received from the NASF staff, who have always been helpful through my term as Chairman of the SGSF. I would like to express my special gratitude and appreciation to all the employees of the state agencies that participate in our committees and taskforce groups as well as to the support team of the Southern Group of State Foresters. Our staff at the SGSF is that important spark of energy that helps us to move forward through our working agenda. Thanks to all, and I know we will continue moving forward by providing the leadership for forestry activities at both the regional and national levels.
Tree farm is part of the daily functions of the state Division of Forestry, due to MacSwords’ leadership of, and belief in, the Tree Farm Program. The division includes the tree farm display and information at numerous field days conducted throughout the year that involve cooperating with a number of agencies. The division helps to distribute tree farm information during the annual Kentucky Wood Expo and at the Kentucky Forest Industries Association Annual meeting.

MacSwords has instituted a policy to include tree farm brochures in all stewardship plans for landowners that the Division works with throughout the state. In early 2009, MacSwords attended meetings on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) requirements for state buildings and was instrumental in getting parties together to see that state regulations were modified to allow certified tree farm wood to be given credit in the state-approved system.

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) is a national program that promotes the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to private forest landowners. Founded in 1941, ATFS has 24 million certified acres of privately owned forestland and 91,000 family forest landowners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship. Family forest landowners manage their forestlands for wood, water, wildlife and recreation with assistance from 4,680 volunteer foresters.

ATFS is a program of the American Forest Foundation, a nonprofit conservation and education organization that strives to ensure the sustainability of America’s family forests for present and future generations. Its vision is to create a future where North American forests are sustained by the public which understands and values the social, economic and environmental benefits they provide to our communities, our nation and our world.

MacSwords is past chair of the Southern Group of State Foresters and immediate past president of the National Association of State Foresters, where she continues to promote support for the Tree Farm Program to her colleagues throughout the United States.

GONZALEZ COMPLETES TERM
GARRISON ASSUMES CHAIRMANSHIP OF SGSF

The State Forester of Virginia, Carl E. Garrison III, was elected as the new chairman of the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) during the annual meeting of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF). The term runs from September 2009 through September 2010.

He succeeds Edgardo Gonzalez, state forester of Puerto Rico, who completed his one-year term as chairman.

In addition to the chairman, the SGSF leadership team includes Mississippi State Forester Charlie Morgan, vice chair; Alabama State Forester Linda Casey, who is the treasurer, and Edgardo Gonzalez, immediate past chair.

Garrison, who has been the leader of the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) since November 2004, is both a Registered Forester and a Certified Forester. His resume includes 20 years of experience with the VDOF and seven years as a forestry consultant in private practice in Georgia and Texas. A graduate of Virginia Tech, he is married and has a son in college.
The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) is assisting in the creation of more than 300 temporary jobs statewide as part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The federal program will subsidize five grants totaling $9.7 million in forestry-related work to help stimulate the economy and benefit Georgia’s environment. The funds will not replace or supplant state-mandated GFC budget reductions, but can be used only for the creation of new, temporary positions in the forestry industry.

“These proposals will enhance GFC initiatives beyond what was possible under current austere budget conditions,” said Robert Farris, director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. “The work will have multiple benefits, including reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire; restoring longleaf pine ecosystems; fighting invasive weed species, and reaching out to thousands of landowners who need updated forest management plans.”

Farris said forestry professionals who are interested in the work these grants have created should go to the GFC Web site for information and application materials. The GFC Web site can be found at GaTrees.org. A link to ARRA grant opportunities is located on the homepage.

The five grants received have different purposes and are operated by different business units of the GFC. Each grant has specific qualification guidelines, application windows and managers. The grants include:

- **Enhanced Fuels Management and Community Wildfire Protection Plans** – This $3.59 million grant will help create a wildfire-resistant forest buffer surrounding the fire prone Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge. It will also help with wildfire mitigation planning for several communities that were affected by the catastrophic wildfires of 2007. More than 60 percent of this grant will be used to reimburse landowners who complete forest management options, outlined in the grant, for reducing wildfire fuels and creating defensible space around the Okefenokee. Forestry technicians will be hired to supervise the procedures and a community fire mitigation specialist will be hired to promote Firewise practices and Community Wildfire Protection Planning.

- **Stewardship Revisit for Prescribed Fire** – Some 6,400 Georgia landowners have received Forest Stewardship Plans via a program that began in 1991. As part of a $2.24 million prescribed burning initiative, these forests will be revisited to measure progress on recommended forest management practices and to evaluate the use of prescribed fire. Twenty foresters/forestry technicians will be hired to make site evaluations. Prescribed burning of 50,000 acres will follow, based on evaluations.

- **Dixon State Forest Wildfire Recovery and Habitat Restoration** – $377,000 will be administered for the rehabilitation of 19,000 acres in Dixon Memorial Forest, which burned in the 2007 wildfires. Bids will be accepted for site preparation, tree planting and the purchase of longleaf pine seedlings.

- **Cogongrass and Invasive Plant Eradication** – Cogongrass is considered the seventh worst weed in the world and has taken over vast ecosystems in some southern states. Cogongrass greatly increases the risk of damaging wildfire in the forest. GFC professionals have identified other invasive plant species as threats to forested ecosystems within Georgia, as well. To expand detection, eradication and education efforts toward these invasive plants, $1.8 million will be administered. Incentive payments will be available to landowners who perform treatments within forested areas. To perform these tasks, GFC will hire six temporary personnel and an estimated 20 or more contractors; multiple crews will be hired by landowners. Jobs will be created throughout...
TEMPORARY FORESTRY WORK COMING THROUGH A.R.R.A. GRANTS...

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the state as these invasive plant surveys and treatments take place.

◆ Regional Longleaf Pine Restoration Initiative and Fuel Reduction - Longleaf pine forests once covered a vast range from Texas to Virginia, but have been reduced to three percent of historical acreage due to conversion of land to other uses and forest types. Longleaf pine forests are highly valued for their resistance to damage by insects, diseases, wildfire and storms, and for their yield of high-quality wood products, biological diversity and scenic beauty. As part of a regional project involving Georgia, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina to reestablish this native, highly valued longleaf pine species, $1.7 million will be administered. This work helps restore a great American ecosystem while creating jobs for contractors and laborers involved in tree planting and forest improvement work, including nursery workers, conservation planners and coordinators, media specialists and educators.

Funding for these five projects was provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working to implement provisions of the Recovery Act to put Americans back to work and rejuvenate the nation’s economy. The Recovery Act provided USDA with nearly $28 billion in funding; of that, $1.15 billion has been allocated to the Forest Service for project work in forest restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, construction and maintenance of facilities, trails and roads, green energy projects, and grants to states, tribes and private landowners.

For more information about GFC-administered A.R.R.A. grants, visit GaTrees.org or call 1-800-GA-TREES.

KENTUCKY’S WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION TEAM RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

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Kentucky’s Wildland Fire Prevention and Education Team (KWFPET) recently received the Silver Smokey Bear Award. The award was presented to the team for outstanding work in wildland fire prevention in southeast Kentucky and surrounding states. This merit award has been bestowed on well-deserving groups and individuals annually since 1957 by the National Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Committee.

“The Silver Smokey Award is given to organizations or individuals who have a significant impact on wildland fire prevention within a regional scope over a minimum two-year period,” said Leah MacSwords, director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry. MacSwords presented the award at the Governor’s Conference on the Environment in early October. Jim Funk, Jennifer Turner, Evelyn Morgan and Gwen Hensley accepted the award on behalf of the team.

Through the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention (CFFP) Program, the USDA Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), and the Advertising Council sponsor the national Smokey Bear Awards to recognize outstanding service in the prevention of human-caused wildfires and to increase public recognition and awareness of the need for continuing wildfire prevention efforts. Smokey Bear Awards are chosen through a nomination process and a maximum of five silver awards are handed out annually across the country. For more information about wildfire prevention, visit the KDF Web site at www.forestry.ky.gov.

Frank Beum, Daniel Boone National Forest supervisor; Jim Funk, team leader; Jennifer Turner, team information officer; Gwen Hensley, team graphic specialist; Evelyn Morgan, team information officer; Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear; Leah MacSwords, Kentucky Division of Forestry director
The Florida Division of Forestry had a lot to celebrate during the month of August. Smokey Bear turned 65; the prestigious bronze Smokey Bear award was presented to three Florida winners, and the number of human-caused fires has been steadily decreasing over the past several years.

Local Division of Forestry field units and their cooperators hosted more than 30 birthday celebrations statewide for Smokey Bear in August. Nine county governments signed proclamations designating the week of August 9th, 2009 as Smokey Bear Week. Smokey celebrated his birthday with Florida citizens at baseball games, children’s hospitals, shopping centers, nature centers and summer camps. Smokey also celebrated his birthday with the Governor and Cabinet on August 25th, and received a state resolution honoring him for his 65 years of vigilance in fire prevention.

**Bronze Smokey Bear Award Winners**

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles Bronson, Division of Forestry Director Jim Karels and U.S. Forest Service Region 8 Fire and Aviation Director Dan Olsen presented the bronze Smokey Bear awards to the three Florida winners before the Florida Cabinet meeting August 25th. Bronze Smokey Bear awards are given nationally each year to individuals or organizations that have made significant impacts in fire prevention on a statewide level. This year, only seven were awarded nationally – three of those being in Florida.

Melissa Yunas, mitigation specialist in the Okeechobee District, developed innovative ways to motivate her entire district to become more active and participate in fire prevention activities. Melissa partnered with several local and state agencies to create an event called Fire Fest to promote fire prevention in her area. She developed fire prevention games and activities for kids and adults. She also included live fire demonstrations to show the importance of prescribed burning for land management as well as fire prevention. Fire Fest has become an annual event and is growing bigger each year.

The Suwannee Forestry Center Fire Prevention Committee developed an art and an essay contest for the Suwannee County Elementary school. The contest was so popular the first year that the committee implemented it district-wide the following year. The committee also constructed four fire danger signs for the district and built a Smokey Bear cabin to be used as a traveling fire prevention display. The cabin has been used by several other districts for events, such as the Gator Bowl Parade.

Genie Hall, account director for National Cinemedia, has been instrumental in helping the Division of Forestry promote the fire prevention message through movie ad campaigns for the past several years. Genie has gone above and beyond what has been asked of her in promoting the fire prevention message. During one particularly bad wildfire season, Genie took it upon herself to call seven of her colleagues and asked them to extend the public service prevention ads free of charge for an additional few weeks until the wildfire danger in Florida decreased.
SMOKEY BEAR CELEBRATES 65TH BIRTHDAY

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Gov. Steve Beshear, along with the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) and Daniel Boone National Forest (DBNF), recognized one of America’s beloved icons. The governor officially proclaimed Sunday, Aug. 9, 2009, as Smokey Bear Day in Kentucky in an effort to celebrate Smokey Bear’s 65th birthday and provide critical information about wildfire prevention.

Since his “birth” Aug. 9, 1944, Smokey Bear has been a recognized symbol of conservation and protection of America’s forests. His message about wildfire prevention has helped to reduce the number of acres burned annually by wildfires, from about 22 million (1944) to an average of 7 million today. However, wildfire prevention remains one of the most critical environmental issues affecting our country. Many Americans believe that lightning starts most wildfires. In fact, on average, nine out of 10 wildfires nationwide are caused by people. The principle causes are: campfires left unattended; debris burning; senseless arson; careless discarding of smoking materials or BBQ coals, and operating equipment without spark arrestors.

Smokey Bear has been communicating his well-known message, “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires,” since 1944. In 2001, he introduced the term ‘Wildfire’ to include all unwanted, unplanned fires in natural areas, such as grass fires or brush fires. Today, his campaign continues to be a critical tool specially designed to ask for every citizen’s commitment to be responsible with fire.

“Smokey Bear is one of the longest-running and most successful public service advertising campaigns in our country’s history,” said Leah MacSwords, director of KDF and immediate past president of the National Association of State Foresters. “His message has helped forestry agencies across the U.S. raise awareness about wildfire prevention,” she added.

The Wildfire Prevention campaign was developed in partnership with the Ad Council, a private, nonprofit organization that marshals talent from the advertising and communications industries; the facilities of the media, and the resources of the business and nonprofit communities to produce, distribute and promote public service campaigns on behalf of nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Smokey and his wildfire prevention campaign continue today as a partnership among the Ad Council, the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. The Ad Council has distributed new public service announcements (PSAs) to media outlets nationwide. Per the organization’s model, the new Smokey Bear PSAs are airing and running in advertising time that is donated by the media. KDF and DBNF are encouraging media outlets throughout Kentucky to provide support for the new ads.
THE VALUE OF TREES
Software helps communities determine benefits, maintenance costs associated with their trees
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Ask the residents of Prospect, Ky., how much a tree is worth and you may get a science-based, calculated answer based on a comprehensive study of their community trees. More than 25 dedicated community members and local officials from the small town in northern Kentucky recently completed an inventory and analysis of public trees. The accomplishment made them the first city to partner with the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) and complete a tree inventory to be analyzed in a software program known as i-Tree.

The innovative i-Tree was developed by the United States Forest Service and numerous cooperators for the purpose of quantifying the environmental value of trees. In other words, the program can translate the significance of a tree into real dollars and cents.

Most of us are aware that trees provide environmental and economic benefits for our communities. They beautify our surroundings; act as sound barriers; purify our air; provide us with oxygen; prevent soil erosion; protect water quality; and help us save energy through their cooling shade in summer and their wind reduction in winter. However, because the benefits can be both direct and indirect, determining the monetary value of a community tree can be challenging.

So, how do we convince cities to take more interest in protecting and managing their trees? The answer is in providing policymakers with hard data to justify planting and maintenance costs.

The first step is to conduct a tree inventory to gather information on the location, type, size and age of each tree. A tree inventory also assesses tree health, pruning needs, hazardous trees and the percentage of canopy cover. The second step is to analyze the inventory data using the various tools and programs within i-Tree to determine benefits, costs and maintenance needs.

For example, the City of Prospect's inventory of 1,478 street trees showed the monetary benefits related to energy conservation; air quality improvement; storm water control, and property value to be $126,746 annually. The total annual costs for planting, pruning, removal and other maintenance was calculated at $18,949. Basically, the city saves nearly $7 in benefits for every $1 spent on tree care.

In addition to providing information on money matters, the analysis tools within i-Tree can provide valuable information for any individual, arborist or forester who takes an active role in caring for and managing urban trees. Using information collected in the inventory, a comprehensive forest management plan can be developed to address concerns, such as tree health, tree diversity and storm-damaged trees. The plan can even recommend the placement of trees with respect to utility lines and sidewalks while determining the type of tree that is best suited for intercepting storm water run-off, removing air pollutants and/or providing shade and wind protection.

Forestry officials say one of the best features of i-Tree is that it can provide replacement values for trees. This will be particularly useful for homeowners and communities who want to protect Kentucky's ash trees from emerald ash borer (EAB), a highly destructive insect pest which was recently confirmed in northern and central Kentucky.

“Ash trees are the third most common species in the City of Prospect, and the replacement value for ash would be over $100,000,” said Peter Barber, urban forester for the Kentucky Division
of Forestry. “Prospect city officials will take this into consideration when making decisions about protecting and managing the ash in their community,” he added.

Barber, along with Robert Bean, chief forester for the division’s Central District, has worked extensively with Prospect officials and community members since 2008 to assist the city in becoming a certified Tree City U.S.A.; organize an Arborfest celebration; locate and record the state champion Kentucky coffeetree, and write and develop a forest stewardship plan for one of the city’s natural areas.

Mayor Todd Eberle noted the importance of partnering with KDF and expressed appreciation for support and assistance from the two KDF foresters.

“Small cities have a cost-effective, unique capacity to manage their environment and quality of life simply through their management of trees and forestlands,” said Eberle. “The technical assistance and guidance from KDF has been indispensable to our community and Forestation Board.”

THE VALUE OF TREES...

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Other communities that care about their urban trees can easily model the City of Prospect. i-Tree software is available free of charge to any community or individual and can be downloaded from the i-Tree Web site at www.itreetools.org. For more information about urban forestry assistance in Kentucky, contact KDF at 1-800-866-0555 or visit its Web site at http://www.forestry.ky.gov/programs/urban/.

NEW SC FORESTRY COMMISSION BMP MONITORING REPORT

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Compliance with Best Management Practices for timber harvesting rose to 98.6%, as detailed in the latest monitoring report now available on the SC Forestry Commission Web site.

“These results continue to build on a tremendous record of success by the forestry community in our state,” said SCFC Environmental Program Manager Guy Sabin.

This is the eighth study of SC BMP compliance since 1989, and will help identify the most critical practices to emphasize during BMP courtesy exams and training. Stream crossings, Streamside Management Zones, and stabilization of skid trails emerged as the most important areas to focus on for further improvement.

In addition, a group of outside experts were invited to evaluate BMP compliance and effectiveness on difficult and borderline sites. This review provided a valuable opportunity to consider how potential water quality impacts are evaluated by specialists in related fields, such as aquatic ecology, hydrology, wetland science and other areas. The group also included professional loggers, consulting foresters and representatives from forest industry. Expertise was drawn from organizations, such as US Army Corps of Engineers, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, SC Department of Health

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The South Carolina Forestry Commission played host to a special group of hunters in September, when it opened up the normally quiet fields of its Taylor Nursery to active soldiers and physically-challenged hunters looking to shoot dove. The shoot, the second in a new relationship between SCFC and Hunting with a Hero, proved a success as most shooters participating were able to bag the limit of 15.

The participants come from a variety of backgrounds, but most notably, they represent active members of the armed services (usually from regional US Army installations, such as Ft. Jackson or Ft. Gordon); are avid hunters sponsoring a soldier, or are physically-challenged outdoorsmen looking for a chance to hunt and some camaraderie.

We began this summer with a turkey shoot for soldiers at the SCFC Niederhof Seed Orchard. This small-scale trial hunt proved such a success, SCFC State Forester Gene Kodama and Hunting with a Hero founder Lt. Ron Gooding, US Army, were compelled to expand the effort. September 9th's dove hunt was, therefore, much larger in scope, thanks to the involvement this time of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF).

Headquartered in Edgefield, SC, NWTF boasts a loyal membership of shooters well versed in and equipped for their sport. Their “Wheelin' Sportsmen” group provides safe, well-planned hunts designed to prove that despite their challenges, injured and handicapped hunters are just as competitive and enthusiastic as the able-bodied variety. Indeed it’s only lack of opportunity which keeps many of the men we met this month sidelined during hunting season. The Forestry Commission and these cooperating organizations are eager to change that. The shots of 20 shooters echoed over the fields of the nursery (conveniently located near NWTF’s HQ in nearby Trenton, SC). Thanks to the marksmanship of the participants, there was plenty of fresh dove to accompany the usual cookout fare.

Lt. Ron Gooding formed Hunting with a Hero (HWAH) when he realized there were many hunting programs for soldiers injured in battle. He didn’t see any for combat-experienced soldiers who were not injured. Through extensive networking, his organization teams up these eager (some of them first-time) hunters with sponsors for a hunting trip aimed at proving to the soldier that his or her service to our country is truly appreciated. The organization is brand new, but many have heard the call and have thus far sustained it by donating time, money, land, equipment, feed and seed, and the various other supplies it takes to maintain productive hunting lands. SCFC’s involvement comes at no appreciable cost to the SC taxpayer. Revenue from HWAH sponsorships is used to fund the Family Readiness Group, a support organization for the spouses and dependents of active-duty soldiers serving overseas.

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With two successful hunts under their belts, Kodama and the other organizers are anticipating a successful deer season. Women will not be left out as hunting opportunities are added, though so far, the hunts have been male-dominated. In these times of drastic cuts to state funding and diminishing resources, an opportunity for the SC Forestry Commission to share its message of forest sustainability and to spread good will with no burden on our budget is just too good to pass up.

Joe Mims, Edgefield, shows off the results of a good shot.

PFC Roderick Tolliver (Ft. Gordon) and bird dog retrieve dove after a successful shot.

Joe Mims, Edgefield, takes a shot.

The expert review team was in 91.3 percent agreement on overall compliance, confirming that SC Forestry Commission field decisions are consistent with current experts in academic, industry, government and regulatory organizations. Results indicate strong consensus among a diverse range of experts that SC Best Management Practices for Forestry effectively protect water quality when properly implemented.

The primary issues identified by outside experts were distinguishing between perennial and intermittent streams, and ensuring adequate protection of larger intermittent streams.

Dr. Tom Williams, forest hydrologist with Clemson University Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science, was a co-author of the first SC BMP compliance study in 1991.

After participating on this expert review, he wrote, “I was impressed with the strides that have been made since my first review in the early 1990s. South Carolina is still a leader in voluntary forestry BMPs. The combination of trained loggers; Sustainable Forest Initiative Program (SFI) compliance in mills, and the Commission’s BMP Foresters has certainly proved to be highly effective to protect water quality in harvesting operations.”

The report is available on the SCFC Web site, www.trees.sc.gov, or contact Guy Sabin at (803) 896-8593 for a printed copy.
Project Learning Tree (PLT), the environmental education program of the American Forest Foundation (AFF), announced that it will fund 34 projects in 21 states that engage students in environmental service-learning projects to improve their schools and surrounding communities. Eight of these grants went to projects in Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

“Students are learning about local environmental issues and developing creative ways to address them,” said Al Stenstrup, director of curriculum programs for AFF, PLT’s parent group. “From removing invasives to monitoring water quality, these kids are researching, planning and taking the lead in solving real-world problems related to forests and the environment.”

PLT’s GreenWorks! program provides merit-based grants to schools and groups that work with youth to plant trees; restore streams and wildlife habitat; improve energy efficiency; create gardens, and other projects. Since 1992, the American Forest Foundation has provided more than $700,000 to fund more than 900 GreenWorks! projects across the country. In many of these projects, such as restoring natural habitat along the Little Tennessee Greenway in Franklin, NC, students share what they learn in community events.

Franklin High School students will work with Southwestern Community College; Macon County government, and the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee to restore natural habitat along the Little Tennessee Greenway. While they improve the environment, they will connect with the college’s GEAR UP program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, to raise student preparedness for post-secondary education and strengthen career awareness.

Mary Bennett, project coordinator and college readiness coach at Southwestern, said, “Students will apply their experience in agricultural and science classes while they bring back the area to its natural biodiversity and beauty.”

The Greenway Restoration and Removal of Invasive Plants Project (GRIP) initiative has been developed to educate the public and to address the problem of exotic invasive plants displacing native plant species.

According to Dennis Desmond, land stewardship director for the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee, “The students will gain instruction in plant identification, survey and monitoring techniques and best practices for removal of the invasive species.”

It is anticipated that teachers and students interested in environmental issues will assist with site inventory, GPS mapping and participate in citizen-based scientific data collection and research.

The next deadline for GreenWorks! grants is April 30, 2010. Grants up to $5,000 are available. Members of the Southern Group of State Foresters, and the individuals, associations, organizations and state agencies you work with, are encouraged to connect with local schools and youth groups to develop an application. For more information on the GreenWorks! grants program; a complete list of grants awarded in the South, and examples of projects taking place around the country that are improving forest health, combating the risk of destructive wildfires, pests, and invasives, and improving water quality, visit the American Forest Foundation Web site, http://www. forestfoundation.org/cel_greenworks.html.

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LEARNING AND SERVING THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION...
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Nick Scheman, environmental science teacher, applied for a GreenWorks! grant to initiate construction of an outdoor classroom in the woods near his Chestatee High School in Gainesville, GA, because he says “it’s in the outdoors that my students learn best...It makes a world of difference in how the kids feel and how they think.”

76TH FORESTRY TRAINING CAMP
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Each July since 1934, foresters and forest rangers from the Florida Division of Forestry (DOF) gather at O’Leno State Park to teach students who are members of various Future Farmers of America Chapters (FFA) about forestry, the largest agricultural industry in Florida. This program, known as the Future Farmers of America Forestry Training Camp, is a collaborative effort by the DOF, the Florida Park Service and the Florida Future Farmers of America.

For 2009, the Forestry Training Camp consisted of two one-week sessions: July 12-17 and July 19-24. Each week, a different group of 60 middle and high school students showed up to learn about the benefits of a managed forest and the forest industry in Florida. The students are lead by a cadre of 15 instructors.

Students are divided into groups, called forests, which are led by foresters and forest rangers from the Division of Forestry. Their first full day is spent learning about different forest cover types found in Florida and how to identify common trees in each. That evening, they get a lesson on the history of Florida’s forests and O’Leno State Park.

The next two days are spent learning about subjects, such as map reading; compass and pacing; area calculation; timber cruising; reforestation; forestry equipment identification; prescribed burning, and fire suppression. Guest speakers from outside agencies stop by to teach the students about forest products, wildlife, Silvicultural Best Management Practices, forest disorders and college opportunities.

This training camp serves to introduce students who are interested in agriculture to the field of forestry. Some of these students are interested enough to come back a second time to learn more – a few even go on to work in forestry. The week culminates with an exam and awards banquet to recognize their achievements. At the banquets, the Director of the Division of Forestry, or a designated representative, delivers the keynote address, impressing upon the students the importance of forestry. Students receive awards for achievement in areas of cleanest cabin, sports and top scores on the exam.
The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and Oglethorpe Power Corporation recently announced their first-of-its-kind partnership in the state to reforest as much as 500 acres of hardwood forestland burned in wildfires near the Okefenokee Swamp in 2007. The replanting project is taking place in the 33,000-acre Dixon Memorial State Forest located in Ware and Brantley counties. The two parties made the announcement at the 4th annual Georgia Environmental Conference in Savannah.

Under an agreement reached by Oglethorpe Power and the GFC, designated wetlands areas are being replanted with red maple, cypress, swamp chestnut oak and water tupelo trees. Trees have already been planted on more than 200 acres, with the remainder scheduled to be planted this year.

“As these areas that the GFC would set aside as low priority for reforestation because of budget constraints,” said Dru Preston Jr., carbon project forester with the Georgia Forestry Commission. “They would otherwise be left to natural regeneration, and wildlife habitat and damaged ecosystems would take much longer to recover.”

As part of its agreement with the GFC, Oglethorpe Power will be able to receive credit for the carbon dioxide captured by the replanted trees as future climate change regulations unfold. Oglethorpe Power will have title to the carbon dioxide removed from the air by the trees for the first 25 years, then will share those rights with the state for an additional 50 years.

Michael Price, Oglethorpe Power chief operating officer, said, “We believe that planting more trees to capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is an important part of addressing the climate change issue while also restoring our valuable forestlands and providing important wildlife habitat. We’re excited to join with the Georgia Forestry Commission in this win-win effort for Georgia’s citizens.”

Georgia Forestry Commission Director Robert Farris said, “This landmark partnership provides benefits on numerous levels. The project will restore the bottomland hardwood-cypress ecosystem and critical wildlife habitat in Dixon Forest. It is also a breakthrough example of a Georgia company investing in Georgia’s forestry resource to offset carbon emissions, which ultimately benefits every citizen.”

The reforestation partnership was also praised by Gov. Sonny Perdue, who said Georgia is well-served when the state and private industry are able to work together. “In joining together to restore these forests, the Forestry Commission and Oglethorpe Power are helping to establish a roadmap for future public-private partnerships that can benefit all of Georgia,” Perdue said.
REGION 8 FORESTERS COMPLETE URBAN FORESTRY STRIKE TEAM TRAINING

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A total of 33 foresters from throughout the southern region completed the SGSF’s Urban Forestry Strike Team (UFST) training supported by Urban Forestry South and USDA Forest Service (Region 8 S&PF). The training took place during the week of July 20, at the Florida Center for Wildfire and Forest Resources Management Training, located 70 miles north of Tampa. The Florida Division of Forestry served as hosts, and the nearby cities of Inverness and Brooksville provided logistical support for the field exercises. Nine foresters who had participated in previous UFST deployments were trained as team leaders and the remainder were trained as crew members.

The UFST concept developed from experience and knowledge gained after Hurricane Katrina devastated tree populations along the Gulf Coast in 2005. Following that disaster, there were numerous reports of community trees being mismanaged after the storms. Several communities inadvertently removed healthy trees and improperly pruned standing trees in an attempt to eliminate hazards. In addition, many communities did not have the capacity to assess tree damage and estimate costs associated with managing trees and woody debris after the storms. Smaller communities especially did not have the resources to carry out these functions. The USDA Forest Service (Region 8, Atlanta), the International Society of Arboriculture (Champaign, IL), the Davey Resource Group (Kent, OH) and others organized professional arborists to provide several of these communities with needed assistance.

The Urban Forestry South staff assembles resources and coordinates the UFST program. Leslie Moorman and Paul Revell, the urban forestry coordinators of North Carolina and Virginia respectively, have been especially involved in working with Urban Forestry South to develop and promote the UFST concept. Together with Barbara White (VA), Pete Smith (TX) and Rick Olsen (MS), they comprise the UFST Advisory Committee. Additional information on UFST program activities can be found in the March 2009 edition of The Southern Perspective newsletter.

During this year's training in Brooksville (FL), Dudley Hartel and Eric Kuehler (center manager and technology transfer specialist, respectively, at Urban Forestry South) reviewed the goals that the teams would accomplish during a deployment. These include minimizing public risk from hazard trees; retaining trees that are healthy enough to be of value to the community, and assessing the amount of woody debris generated by the storm event. They began by providing an overview in the classroom of the principles and procedures for tree evaluation, data collection and processing. Then, they instructed the trainees in the use of the electronic data collection and GPS equipment. Two half-days were spent doing actual tree evaluations in the nearby cities. Team leader trainees received additional guidance on how to manage field crews; download and process collected field data; interact with local officials and the general public, and plan future work.

The session held in Brooksville was the third UFST training session. Initial training for UFST task specialists took place in Kinston, NC, in July 2007. Task specialist and team leader training was then held the following year in Providence Forge, VA. Urban Forestry South will develop Web-based continuing education for UFST task specialists and team leaders and periodically update the UFST procedures to improve their effectiveness.

Plans for UFST include providing training for municipal and private arborists. To date, officials from Fairfax County, VA, and Escambia County, FL, have also completed the training.
Kentucky Division of Forestry and University of Kentucky officials confirmed the first cases of emerald ash borer (EAB) infestations in Kentucky earlier this year. Since May, the insect has been found in eight counties. The discoveries were the result of investigations of dying ash trees reported by homeowners and woodland owners.

**Identifying the Pest**

EAB, an invasive insect native to Asia, was discovered in southeast Michigan in 2002 and has since destroyed more than 25 million ash trees in urban, rural and forested settings. The adult stage of EAB is a small, metallic-green beetle that lays eggs on the bark of all species of ash trees. Although the beetle may be seen feeding on ash leaves, the larval stage is far more destructive. EAB larvae create galleries, or tunnels, while feeding on the inner bark. This activity damages the vascular system of the tree and reduces the flow of nutrients. Symptoms of EAB activity include canopy dieback, sprouts from the trunk and stems and D-shaped exit holes in the trunk. Despite visible signs, infestations generally go undetected until the tree dies.

**Preventing the Spread of EAB**

EAB infestations spread rapidly as a result of human activities, and it is present in 13 states and two Canadian provinces. Firewood movement has been a major factor in the spread of EAB; therefore, restrictions and quarantines have been initiated. The entire states of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio are under federal quarantines that restrict the movement of ash trees, branches, logs and firewood out of those states. Kentucky is cooperating with the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service - Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ) personnel to enforce this federal quarantine.

In June, state officials worked with APHIS-PPQ to quarantine 20 Kentucky counties. The quarantine prohibits “regulated articles” from being moved outside of a restricted area without a certificate or limited permit except under certain conditions. Regulated articles are defined as the emerald ash borer, hardwood firewood, ash nursery stock, green ash lumber, other ash material and any other materials that could potentially spread infestation.

**Tracking Infestations**

Traps have been placed in various locations throughout Kentucky in an effort to locate other infested areas. The bright purple triangular traps are baited with a manuka and phoebe oil beetle attractant and glue to lure and capture adult EAB that might be active in the area. Most of the traps are concentrated in areas north of I-64 as well as at campgrounds and other locations with high tourist traffic, including Land Between the Lakes, Bernheim Arboretum, Mammoth Cave National Park and Lake Cumberland.

**Protecting Ash Trees**

Efforts to contain EAB are ongoing; however, there is only one option to protect infested trees—treating them with an insecticide. Systemic insecticides containing imidacloprid and emamectin benzoate are the most effective. The common methods of treatment are trunk injection, soil injection and soil drenching. Although many treatment options require a certified applicator, there are insecticides available to the public containing imidaclopid. It is important, however, to realize that many factors, including the level of infestation and timing, contribute to the success of the treatment.

Unfortunately, controlling EAB is not foolproof and treatments can be expensive; however, it is possible slow the spread of infestation through quarantines and the help of the public. People are encouraged to become familiar with the signs and symptoms of this pest and to report suspected infestations to your state forestry officials.

More information about EAB is available online at http://www.emeraldashborer.info/.
POLICY NOTES

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Energy and Climate Bill Language – Discussions Intensify in the Senate

The Southern Group of State Foresters and the National Association of State Foresters made recommendations to Senate committees on bill language to address forest climate issues as well as renewable biomass. The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (HR 2454) as passed by the House is the basis for much of the language being considered by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (SE&PW) in S 1733 (Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act). Five other Senate Committees that also have jurisdiction over such matters are considering proposed language as well. SGSF/NASF made specific recommendations to bills and amendments proposed by Senators Bingaman (D-NM) and Stabenow (D-MI) on offsets and adaptation. Recommendations and proposals submitted to Senate members and staff include the following recommendations:

◆ Appropriate a share of the 5-percent auction allocation to the Natural Resources Adaptation Fund (climate adaptation) for Cooperative Forestry Programs based upon the current proportion of federal and non-federal forest ownership. The allocation would specifically expand technical and financial assistance capabilities of Forest Stewardship, State Fire Assistance, Forest Health and Urban and Community Forestry programs. In addition, the proposed language would establish a landowner cost-share component within the Forest Stewardship Program and other comparable plans determined by the State Forester, including third-party certification, to implement climate adaptation activities.

◆ Instead of promulgating new rules to specify “environmental considerations” and requirements for eligible forestry offset projects, it is recommended that the Secretary of Agriculture rely on existing forest sustainability programs, such as Forest Stewardship plans and third-party certification principles, to accomplish such purposes.

◆ Establish a Supplemental Carbon Incentives Program that provides payments to forest landowners for practices that increase carbon sequestration capacity, particularly on those ownerships – that for reasons of economy of scale or other limitations – are not likely to participate in cap-and-trade market programs.

◆ Maintain a broad definition for the term “renewable biomass,” such as the language contained in HR 2454, that effectively defers to the states to institute appropriate programs and policies for the sustainable management of woody biomass as applied to national renewable electricity and renewable fuel standards.

◆ HR 2454 authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to promulgate rules based on findings of the National Academy of Science relative to the adequacy of the definition of “renewable biomass.” It is proposed instead that those agencies prepare and submit a report to Congress regarding such matters.

◆ HR 2454 authorizes establishment of a grant program for tree planting in residential areas to be administered through retail power providers and non-profit tree planting organizations. It is recommended that authorization language be expanded to include participation of State Foresters through the Urban and Community Forestry Program.

◆ Include the Secretary of Agriculture in any interagency efforts to develop and distribute information and research findings regarding effects of climate change on natural resources.

◆ Include State Assessments and Strategies per Farm Bill authorization as a source of information, reference and program direction in the development of State Natural Resource Adaptation Plans.

Much uncertainty remains as to whether there is sufficient support in the Senate to pass national climate legislation that includes cap-and-trade provisions. But both House and Senate leadership have expressed intentions to produce such legislation by the end of next year.

If you wish to offer comments about the newsletter or Web site, contact Mike Zupko, Southern Group of State Foresters Executive Director at sgsfexec@mindspring.com or (770)267-9630.
The Tree Campus USA program, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation and Toyota, is enjoying its second year of impacting campus community forestry and engaging college campuses throughout America in environmental stewardship. In its first year of existence, the Tree Campus USA program honored 29 colleges and universities across the country with this recognition — 13 of which were from the Southern region. These included:

- Albany Technical College
- Duke University
- Furman University
- Georgia Technical College
- Gwinnett Technical College
- Jackson State University
- Macon State College
- Northern Kentucky University
- Southeastern Community College
- University of North Texas
- University of Texas, Austin
- University of South Carolina Upstate
- Virginia Tech

College and university students, administrators and staff around the country are realizing that protecting and maintaining their campus trees is an important priority. Tree Campus USA offers a sustainable framework to help these schools enjoy the benefits of their trees for years to come. The impact of the program is evident as seen through the statistics generated from only the first year of the program. In the Southern region alone:

- 2,721 trees were planted and 2,354 were pruned;
- $2.2 million was spent on tree care and management;
- $28.01 per student was spent, on average, to maintain and care for the campus trees, and
- 186,690 students are benefiting from a well-maintained campus forest.

Help this trend continue by encouraging a campus near you to apply for recognition. Learn more about the Tree Campus USA program and how it complements other urban forest management programs by going to www.arborday.org/TreeCampusUSA or contact TreeCampus@arborday.org. With your help, the Foundation can recognize the colleges and universities in your area for their efforts to foster the next generation of environmental stewards.
ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION AND SOUTHERN GROUP OF STATE FORESTERS TEAM UP TO REFOREST LANDS LOST TO THE BUGABOO FIRE

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Throughout 2007, the states of Florida and Georgia experienced extreme drought, which provided ideal conditions for increased wildfire activity across the region. On May 8th, the Bugaboo Fire was started by lightning at Bugaboo Island in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, and soon crept over the state line into Florida. It expanded quickly, merging with other fires already blazing in the area. By the end of May, 600,000 acres had burned. The Bugaboo Fire of 2007 created additional reforestation needs in two specific areas: John M. Bethea State Forest in northern Florida and Dixon Memorial State Forest in southern Georgia. Each lost thousands of acres of forest and needed help to replant.

The Arbor Day Foundation; the Florida Department of Agriculture’s Division of Forestry, and Friends of Florida State Forests worked together on reforestation efforts to help re-introduce more than 900,000 longleaf pine into John M. Bethea State Forest. The trees were planted to re-establish native forest ecosystems, restore wildlife habitat, and clean the air and water for all Floridians. This 37,736-acre State Forest establishes a continuous wildlife corridor between the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Osceola National Forest.

The Arbor Day Foundation and the Georgia Forestry Commission partnered to reforest, with more than 500,000 longleaf and slash pines, approximately 4,500 acres of upland pine habitat that was destroyed in the 2007 Bugaboo Fire. This planting helped to ensure the protection of the longleaf pine ecosystem and provide an educational opportunity to landowners, professional natural resource managers and the general public about the importance of longleaf pine to the region’s ecosystem.

To learn more about what is being done to replant our nation’s forest, please visit the Foundation’s Web site at www.arborday.org/replanting.
NEW REPORTS AVAILABLE FROM SGSF

Two new reports about matters of importance to people across the south have been posted on the Southern Group of State Foresters’ Web site (www.southernforests.org). The first report, “Guiding Principles For A Practical and Sustainable Approach To Forest Carbon Sequestration Projects In The Southern United States,” examines the key issues surrounding the development and application of forest-based offset projects and provides the Southern Group of State Foresters’ (SGSF) recommendations for how these issues should be addressed in federal climate policy, should legislation be enacted.

SGSF is committed to participating in any process for formulating national rules for developing, measuring and reporting forest-based offset projects. The policy issues involved will be complex and will certainly be debated among stakeholders as policy is developed. These key policy issues are identified in this paper, which was authored by forestry professionals from several member states.

The second report, “Implementation of Forestry Best Management Practices – A Southern Region Report,” details efforts to standardize practices and definitions across the South as well as providing the survey results associated with these standardized practices.

From 1997 through 2007, 25 statewide BMP implementation monitoring surveys were conducted throughout the southern region. For this period of record, states submitted data for at least one statewide survey - the number of surveys reported on from individual states ranged from one to six.

For the seven BMP categories considered in this report, the lowest average implementation for the region was for firebreaks (73 percent), and the highest average implementation was for chemical application (97 percent). The BMP category for site preparation scored 90 percent, with harvesting, forest roads, stream crossings and Streamside Management Zones all scoring 85 percent or higher.

Combining all BMP categories in all states, and using only the most recent survey data, the average, overall BMP implementation for the southern region was 87 percent. The range of overall implementation reported by individual states for all surveys during the period of record was from 68 percent to 99 percent.

Progress in BMP implementation has been noted across the region since the framework was initially published in 1997. For this report, states that reported multiple surveys showed improvement over previous surveys, and overall BMP implementation for the southern region increased by 4 percent. Regionwide improvement in implementation was also noted for the following BMP categories: stream crossings (+8 percent), harvesting (+6 percent), and forest roads (+2 percent).

DISEASE KILLING REDBAY TREES MAKES FIRST APPEARANCE IN MISSISSIPPI

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The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) and Mississippi Forestry Commission have confirmed the positive identification of laurel wilt disease in Jackson County, where the disease was discovered killing redbay trees in late July.

Dr. Lester Spell Jr., MDAC commissioner, and Charlie Morgan, Forestry Commission state forester, will lead a joint effort to determine the extent of the disease and minimize its spread in Mississippi by utilizing visual surveys, trap placement, and public education. Both Dr. Spell and Morgan encourage citizens not to move redbay firewood or chips from infested coastal counties.

Laurel wilt is a devastating disease of redbay trees, which are found in the south half of Mississippi. The disease also affects sassafras trees, which are found statewide. Laurel wilt is caused by a fungus transmitted by the non-native redbay ambrosia beetle and can be spread far distances by transporting firewood. This is the first known occurrence of laurel wilt in Mississippi, and the most western known infection to date. Research is underway to determine adequate control measures.

Symptoms of a laurel wilt infestation include drooping foliage with a reddish or purplish discoloration. Removal of tree bark reveals a black discoloration in the outer sapwood, and evidence of ambrosia beetle boring can be seen in the tree stem.