

## 2012 South Carolina Teachers' Tour

On June 19, twenty-five educators from across the state met at Harbison State Forest in Columbia to participate in this year's SC Teachers' Tour. For three days the teachers participated in Project Learning Tree (PLT) activities and listened to guest speakers as they learned about the social, economic, and environmental importance of forestry in our state.

Guest speakers from the SC Forestry Commission led the discussion with welcoming and an overview of forestry in SC from State Forester Gene Kodama, followed over the next three days by discussions from other forestry professionals. Guy Sabin discussed Best Management Practices and Darryl Jones talked about the protection of endangered species. Jimmy Walters discussed forest protection while Laurie Reid taught about insects and disease that affect our forests. Denise Bonnett, with the SC Tree Farm Committee, shared information about the Tree Farm program, and the SFI certification process. Bill Wylie spoke about wildfire protection while Sam St. Louis talked about law enforcement in the forest industry.

Program coordinator Jerry Shrum, new assistant coordinator Matt Schnabel, and SCFC employees Stephanie Kolok and Russell Hubright facilitated many hands-on activities during this 3-day advanced PLT workshop, using PLT curriculum materials to teach the participants about trees as a renewable resource, forest management practices, global connections of SC forests to the forest of the world, and forest sustainability practices. The teachers were quite impressed with the PLT materials and activities. *"I enjoyed the active participation. I learn best by seeing and doing. Books are great, but showing us how to use them and then using them is so much better...and seeing the operations helps make them real,"* said Jan Ward, 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Covenant Classical Christian School in Columbia.

Some of the PLT activities that teachers participated in included: Tree Cookies, Monitoring Forest Health, Every Tree for Itself, Renewable or Not, Tree Factory, Adopt-A-Tree, Forest to Faucet, and Seeking Sustainability.



**(Picture shows teacher Reggie Williams with instructor Jimmy Walters participating in PLT activity "How Big is Your Tree?")**

Thanks go out to the many sponsors of the Teachers' Tour who furnished meals and scholarships. The Association of Consulting Foresters sponsored a BBQ meal the first night and members of the Enoree Chapter of the Society of American Foresters provided an outdoor cookout on Wednesday. Needless to say the teachers packed on a few pounds during the entire event.

On Monday of the following week the teachers met in Columbia to begin four days of touring different forests and forest industries in the Midlands region of the state. Stops from tree farms to forest products mills around the Midlands area showed teachers the "forest to the product" chain. Following is a daily journal of the activities and reactions of the educators during the tour.

## Monday, June 26

Morning: Joe Young of Low Country Forest Products and Crad Jaynes of the SC Timber Producers Association welcomed the teachers and discussed the role of harvesting in the state. Mr. Young described how the forest industry has been an integral part of his life and his entire family. He also passionately explained the “Log-A-Load” program where loggers can give back to local hospitals to buy much needed equipment to help save young children’s lives.



Afternoon: We quickly grabbed our box lunches and rode the bus to Congaree National Park. The mosquito meter read “severe” but we armed ourselves with plenty of Deep Woods Off to protect ourselves from the little bloodsuckers. We learned about the role of our National Parks and other public lands in protecting unique and important forestlands. **(Picture shows teachers ringing the second largest loblolly pine in Congaree National Park)** Our hike was led by Teachers’ Tour participant and ranger Vikki Pasco, who works part-time at Congaree National Park as part of the “Teacher-Ranger-Teacher” program.

Evening: We headed up the Congaree and were the guests of Marion Burnside at the Millaree Hunt Club for our evening meal. The Central Carolina Chapter of the SAF provided a delicious and filling meal (most of us had never seen grilled chicken breasts so large!). We enjoyed the beauty of the bottomland forest while talking to many professionals in the forest industry.

## Tuesday, June 27

Morning: Bright and early at 7:45, the bus departed the hotel for the Weston Lake Recreational Area at Fort Jackson. Here, forester John Maitland showed us how the Army manages their forests while also utilizing it for training of its soldiers. Then biologist Stanley Rikard talked about the dating service he provides for the red-cockaded woodpeckers ( an endangered species who prefers longleaf pine savanna ecosystems) on base and how the Army is helping in the recovery of this species.

We then headed up to Camden for a tour of the Canfor Southern Pine Sawmill. Dave Dodge, chairman of the SC Forestry Association, welcomed us and then we all headed out in groups to tour the mill. Thankfully, we all returned safely with all fingers and toes accounted for, had a quick lunch (provided by Canfor), and then boarded the bus for our next destination.



**(Picture shows teachers at Canfor learning how logs are cut into various products using computer technology)**

Afternoon: As we arrived to Billy Cate's property, we were treated to a bucolic landscape of forest and farmland. We walked through various tracts of forest with different management prescriptions and learned about the American Tree Farm Program and conservation easements. The theme of the connections between forest stewardship, economics, and family legacy and enjoyment were very apparent in Mr. Cate's management of his land.

Back on the bus again, we headed down to Eastover to the International Paper (IP) paper mill. Everybody thought we would smell the mill before we saw it, but surprisingly, there was little smell at all. The immense size of the mill impressed us all. We were welcomed by Samantha Hood and here we saw the local to global connections that the forest industry has in the world. They discussed skills and knowledge they needed to teach in order to make productive employees in today's technological forest products manufacturing plants. *"I had no idea the wide range of products that trees provide for us. I did not realize the importance of forestry to our state economy. I was amazed by the use of computer technology in the equipment,"* said Louise Hope, teacher at Pickens Middle School in Pickens.

Evening: To end our day, we were guests of IP at the Kensington Mansion, restored and managed for public tours by IP, for a white tablecloth dinner on the beautiful grounds of the property. We were transported back in time to the mid-1800's during our tour of the mansion when we heard about the history of the old plantation.

### **Wednesday, June 28**

Morning: We started the day with a drive up to the Enoree District of Sumter National Forest where we met with Gwen Beavans of the U.S. Forest Service. She explained how the USFS manages their lands in South Carolina and specifically the Indian Creek Wildlife Restoration Project. Here, they were using a combination of fire management and seed-tree cutting techniques to restore habitat for many wildlife species including bobwhite quail.



Pressed forward by Teachers' Tour assistant coordinator Dean Carson with his cattle prod, we boarded the bus to head down to a logging site, owned by a private land owner, being logged by Michael Doolittle and Charles K. Doolittle Inc. For many teachers, this was the most anticipated and impressive stop of the tour. It was amazing to see the machines in action and to meet some real loggers on the job. This is always one of the highlights

of the tour. A delicious lunch was provided by the SC Timber Producers Association.

**(Picture: Michael Doolittle explains the operation of a feller-buncher as the teachers look on.)**

Afternoon: We next got a different perspective on forest management by visiting an industrial forest site (Old Town Tract) being managed by Plum Creek Inc. Here, Plum Creek forester Jon Welch showed us

how they sustainably manage forests for profit while also protecting soil, air, and water quality. Ruth Engasser, informal educator who leads a 4-H club said, *"I love the idea that it really is a sustainable industry and it is good for the environment, wildlife, clean air, etc."*

We quickly boarded the bus and headed down the road to the Georgia Pacific Plywood Mill in Prosperity. Here, Bobby Derhart led us on a tour where they made "Plytanium" plywood. Again, the sheer size and intricacy of the factory made a lasting

impression on the teachers. At every mill on the tour, we were all impressed that nothing on the tree was ever wasted, from bark, shavings, to trimmings in the processing of a tree.

Evening: Dusty and dirty, we headed back to the hotel for a quick (Dean made sure of that) clean-up before heading back to Harbison State Forest for the sponsors reception and dinner. It was a wonderful evening where teachers had a chance to talk to the sponsors who help make the Teachers' Tour possible. It was an especially important evening because Jerry Shrum was recognized for his many years of service with



the tour and because the "Project Learning Tree Outstanding Teacher of the Year" award was renamed in Jerry's honor. After many handshakes, hugs, toasts, and kind words at the dinner, we all headed back to the hotel and continued the fun and deepening of new friendships. James Roberts, teacher at Aynor High School in Horry County said, *"I enjoyed the friendships that kindled during our time together. Relationships, whether among people or with people and the environment are important to me."*

#### **Thursday, June 29**

Morning: We headed back to Harbison State Forest for a few more sessions of forestry education and final procedures before heading home. Dean Carson spoke about engineered wood products and gave away a door prize (various hand-crafted wooden items for the home) to each teacher. Crad Jaynes showed off various pieces of heavy forestry equipment used in logging operations. Finally, we shared testimonials about our experiences on the Teachers' Tour and how attitudes were changed over the past two weeks. We shared final hugs and goodbyes and promised to stay in touch (Matt Schnabel is creating a Facebook page specifically for past and present Teachers' Tour participants).

The SC Teachers' Tour has had over 525 educators participate in the event since it began in 1997. Over the past 15 years, countless students and other educators have been influenced by the knowledge and experience the teachers gain during this event. Many have gone on to become more involved in Project Learning Tree as facilitators to train other teachers, and some have even won state and national awards because of the inspiration they received during this event and actions they were motivated to do as a result of the Teachers' Tour. But don't take just our word for this, listen to the comments of Marilyn Showers, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher from Divine Redeemer School in Hanahan who was on this year's tour: *"My perception of the forest has changed how I think about forestry, the forest industry, foresters, and public and private lands. I knew nothing about each part and I learned how each part works together for a common goal. The forest industry is a very organized, professional, passionate, and knowledgeable*

organization. I enjoyed listening to each guest speaker and how they connected and helped us put everything in perspective.”



**2012 Teachers’ Tour participants along with instructors  
(bottom: Dean Carson, Matt Schnabel, Stephanie Kolok, and Jerry Shrum)**

### **2012 SC Teachers Tour Participants**

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Grades Levels</b>
Crow	Elizabeth	Cheraw	Petersburg Primary School	PreK-3
Culbreath	Johnnie	Orangeburg	Edisto High School	6-12
Duren	Christy	Aiken	South Aiken Baptist Christian Sch.	2 - 3
Eberly	Andrew	Clover	Clover High School	9-12
Enggasser	Ruth	Greenville	G'ville Co. -Sterline School	Informal Ed.
Enggasser	Edward	Greenville	Greenville County school	Informal Ed.
Hope	Louise	Pickens	Pickens Middle School	6,7,& 8th
Hughes	Elizabeth	Goose Creek	Divine Redeemer Catholic School	6th - 8th
Kelley	Jennifer	Aiken	South Aiken Baptist Christian Sch.	1-5
McCannon	Nancy	Pendleton	Calhoun Falls Public Charter Sch.	8-12
Middleton	McIver	Gaffney	Cherokee Tech. Center	9-12
Pasco	Victoria	Blythewood	Catawba Trail Elementary	K-5th
Pease	Louise	North Charleston	Divine Redeemer Catholic School	5 thru 8th
Roberts	James	Bladenboro	Aynor High	9-12

Roehl	Edwin (Trey)	Greer	Greenbrier Elementary	4th
Satterfield	Nancy	Pauline	Sims Middle School	7th
Shannon	Doug	Chester	Birchwood High	9-12
Showers	Marilyn	Goose Creek	Divine Redeemer School	3rd
Sparks	Robert	Gaffney	Daniel Morgan Tech Center	10 - 12
Ware	Marion	Due West	Cherokee Trail Elementary	K-3
Ward	Janis	Ridgeway	Covenant Classical CS	6th
Weatherford	Beverly	Sumter	Thomas Sumter Academy	9-12

### SC Teachers' Tour Testimonials

"I love the idea that it really is a sustainable industry and it's good for the environment, wildlife in particular, clean air, etc. It creates jobs in so many areas from technical engineering down to machine operators and truck drivers. I'm a convert!" – Ruth Engasser, 4-H Informal Educator

"Everything was amazing. The site visits were incredible. To see the beginning to the end gave me a better understanding of the forest industry." – Stephanie Williams, 5<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, Alexander Elementary, Greenville

"It is all right for trees to be cut down! Many trees are planted for every one tree harvested. Every inch of a tree harvested is used in some way. Numerous products are derived from trees." - Elizabeth Crow, Kindergarten teacher, Petersburg Primary, Pageland

"The future is good for landowners, employees, investors, and the public for the forest products industry. As with other industries, the need for a better educated population is essential for employment and effective consumption." – Doug Shannon, high school teacher, Birchwood School, Columbia

"Cutting down trees is a vital part of sustainable forestry and is not destroying our environment like I thought before this course. I never realized how much technology, engineering, chemistry, etc. there is in the forest industry." – Christy Duren, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher, South Aiken Christian School, Aiken

"I have come from a point of almost total ignorance to one of basic understanding about the forest industry in SC. If you had asked me about logging prior to the class, I would have admonished it. Now I understand its place, and am impressed and supportive of the industry." – Trey Roehl, 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Greenville Elementary, Greenville

"I personally enjoyed 'seeing' the industry 'up close and personal.' Our visits to plants, forests, and logging sites make a distinct, unforgettable impression of the industry as a whole. I always feel it's important to improve our environment whenever possible – sustainable forestry is a 'win-win' situation." – Louise Pease, 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Divine Redeemer Catholic School, Hanahan

"I enjoyed all of it. In a nutshell, I've developed an understanding that most growers/loggers and product industry people have a vetted interest in managing the industry in the best possible way." – Vikki Pasco, K-5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Catawba Trail Elementary, Elgin

"I was amazed at the number of jobs and industries that are connected to the forest industry...also, how they utilized every part that was cut down. I was impressed by their professionalism and the passion they have for the work they do." – Beverly Weatherford, high school teacher, Thomas Sumter Academy, Dalzell

"I learned that our forests are growing, that our foresters are very much involved in sustainability and the good health of our forests...very knowledgeable!" – Jan Ward, 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Covenant Classical Christian School, Columbia

"This is field of opportunity for our children. There is a wealth of history and know-how about this field that is misunderstood. It is very educational." – Johnnie Culbreath, 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Edisto High, Orangeburg

"Biggest and most professional industry in SC because of the professional associations and willingness to work together as a family!" – Robert Sparks, high school teacher, Daniel Morgan Technology Center, Spartanburg

"I enjoyed the PLT activities immensely. I'm thrilled to have the PLT book with the wealth of activities (DVD's, books, CD's, etc.). I can use everything in my classroom. I really enjoyed doing some of the activities last week." – Marilyn Showers, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, Divine Redeemer Catholic School, Hanahan

"I enjoyed the industry side of the tour the most. I found the mills and logging site to be fascinating. It was very educational to see the tree go from the land to finished product." – Jennifer Kelley, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, South Aiken Christian School, Aiken

"Many new perceptions: We have more trees than 50 years ago. SFI is a beneficial process. Loggers, harvesters, buyers work closely together to make sure practices are beneficial to our state." – Marion Ware, Kindergarten teacher, Cherokee Trail Elementary, Abbeville County

"I always thought of trees as living in the woods. But now, I can see the importance of forests to all of us. I also know the importance of maintaining healthy forests for all of us in South Carolina." – Elizabeth Hughes, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, Divine Redeemer Catholic School, Hanahan

"I am and always have been pro-logging. Now I am pro-sustainable logging. I can't wait to get to school and develop lesson plans. We have a 5-acre plot that I hope we can develop into a demonstration plot." – James Roberts, agriculture and forestry teacher, Aynor High, Horry County

"I had heard the term 'sustainability' but never knew its true meaning in terms of forestry. I had never thought about timbering helping forests! I had no idea of the wide range of products that trees provide

for us. I did not realize the importance of forestry to our state economy. I was amazed by the use of computer technology in the equipment...especially at the sawmill.” – Louise Hope, middle school teacher, Pickens Middle, Pickens

“I appreciate the fact that the forest will regenerate itself over time and that trees are a crop just like corn.” – McIver Middleton, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, SC School for the Deaf & Blind

“I saw the interactive working relationship between land owners, loggers, foresters, and mills...all giving us their time. I also saw that private land owners can get help and support for decisions and plans for their land for the best use.” – Judy Williams, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, Mt. Gallant Elementary, Rock Hill

“Seeds are being actively planted and our state’s forests are growing. If the land is not being actively utilized for its timber producing potential, then there is a good chance it will be cleared for other uses.” – Edward Engasser, 4-H Informal Educator, Greenville

“I learned the scope of forestry in SC and the role played by professional loggers in protecting the environment. Forestry is important as farming.” – Nancy McCannon, 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Calhoun Falls Carter School, Calhoun Falls

“Wow! My entire thought process about trees and forests has changed. I found the amount of technology involved in all aspects amazing. I had no idea!” – Nancy Satterfield, 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Sims Middle, Union

“The new perceptions I made were: forests are sustainable, burning is necessary for a variety of reasons, there are unlimited opportunities in the forest products industry for STEM careers” – Andrew Eberly, Clover High, Clover

“New perceptions included: clear cutting and thinning can help a forest, prescribed burning helps to regenerate the forest, educational level of loggers is exceptional, the vast amount of products derived from the forest is astounding, the process of maintaining a forest is very detailed.” – Reginald Williams, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Alexander Elementary, Greenville