Good day,
Wildfire activity has slowed quite a bit due to an early vegetative green up this year and recent rainfall. We are very fortunate on that front as compared to Florida and Georgia who are still having a lot of activity and some very large and damaging fires. We provided some assistance to Georgia and Arkansas a while back and put personnel and equipment on standby for Florida but have not been called out yet. We hope for their sake and ours that the call out will not be needed.

There is an article in this bulletin on the Forestry Commission’s 90th anniversary. We celebrated this achievement on the actual agency birthday of April 26th to commemorate and recognize our agency for its 1927 founding. Governor McMasters issued a proclamation saying the state would recognize that day as “Forestry Day,” recognizing the agency for its service and wishing the Commission well for another 90 years. The General Assembly also prepared a joint resolution recognizing the agency for its service, announcing the resolution in both chambers, and providing recognition in their chambers. Of course, the Commission has changed over the years from its meager beginning with just a State Forester as its one employee to an organization with hundreds of personnel and facilities and equipment distributed across the state. Though, the agency’s staffing, equipment, and tactics have changed over the years, it has consistently met its mission of protecting and developing
the state’s forest resource. I know you join me in being proud to be a Forestry Commission employee, to conserve our forest resource, and to serve the citizens of South Carolina.

During the Forestry Day celebration, we also announced the results of the latest forestry economic impact study conducted by Clemson University that found the forest industry to now be a $21 billion business segment. This was the culmination of the 20 by 15 Project that was initiated by the Commission, the Forestry Association of SC, and our partners in 2009 to help the industry recover from the recession and grow from a $17 billion economic impact to $20 billion by year 2015. So, the industry not only reached the $20 billion goal but exceeded it to reach $21 billion. And, as what we call an “Ideal Industry,” it continues to produce a huge economic impact and many good jobs while also protecting the environment and providing numerous social values.

As we kick off the month of May, we enter a period designated by a Governor’s proclamation to express appreciation to South Carolina’s state employees. The Commission is hosting employee appreciation events across the state this month as part of this initiative. Please accept my personal thank you for what all our Commission employees do every day to help the agency accomplish its mission, to serve the state’s citizens, and to protect and develop our forest resources. We all have our particular role to fill, and we consistently do that to enable our agency to be one of the most effective and efficient state organizations.

Before our next bulletin, we will have celebrated Memorial Day to pause and recognize our military heroes and remember those who gave their life protecting our country. Please join me during this special time to be appreciative for our country and for those that have made it the greatest nation on Earth.

Best regards,

[Signature]
Employee News

New Employees

We would like to welcome two new employees to the Coastal Region, Justin Hasert and Middleton Bull.

Justin Hasert is the new forestry technician in the Berkeley/Upper Charleston Sector. Justin lives in Summerville and attended Astronaut High School in Titusville, Fla. He previously worked for the Florida Division of Forestry.

Middleton Bull is the new forestry technician for the Dorchester/Orangeburg Sector. Middleton lives in Santee and attended Holly Hill Academy, Newberry College, and Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College. Middleton is a volunteer for his local fire department, and his father is the owner of Willshire Farms, Inc.

Personnel News

Project Forester Jacqueline Lintzenich transferred from the Beaufort and Colleton project to the Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester project in the Santee Unit effective March 17. She will work out of the Charleston office.

Fairfield/Newberry Sector Forestry Warden Stan Johnson left the agency effective April 30. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Retiree News

Retiree Wilson Horton passed away April 13. Wilson served as the District Forester in Camden and Nurseries Chief among other things. He started with the Forestry Commission in 1957 and worked a little over 31 years for the agency.

Cooper Completes CPFM Burns

Abbeville/Greenwood/Laurens Forest Technician Clay Cooper completed his final controlled burn to receive his CPFM certification.

West Unit Forester Michael Weeks and Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Project Forester Henry Hutto assisted him with the burn, as did Nelson Wilson and Dale Curry who aren’t pictured.

State Forester Gene Kodama was interviewed by the National Wild Turkey Federation after the Military Appreciation Hunt at Niederhof for a future NWTF television show on the Pursuit Channel.

State Forester Gene Kodama sent in this photo from an Easter sunrise service at Lake Moultrie.

Edisto Unit Forester Pete Stuckey sent in this photo of a wildfire at Round-O in Colleton County that burned 75 acres March 26.

Caught on Camera
Press conference and tree-planting ceremony make a media splash

South Carolina Forestry Commission officials announced the economic impact of the state’s forestry sector in grand fashion Wednesday, April 26, unveiling a large backdrop depicting the industry’s $21 billion contribution to the state’s economy.

The new economic impact figure, revealed in the findings of a Clemson University study commissioned by the agency and several other forestry organizations, was disclosed at a press conference on the eastern grounds of the State House as a part of “Forestry Day,” as proclaimed by Gov. McMaster.

The occasion was also a celebration of the Forestry Commission’s 90th anniversary, which was founded nine decades ago to the day.

The announcement was the culmination of a nearly decade-long initiative among the Commission and its partners called the 20-by-15 Project, whose goal was to increase forestry’s economic impact from $17 billion in 2008 to $20 billion by 2015, which is the study year reflected in the Clemson University analysis.

The occasion was also supported by concurrent resolutions in each house of the General Assembly, both commemorating the agency’s 90 years of dedication to the citizens of South Carolina.

State Forester Gene Kodama opened the event with reflections on the agency’s proud history of service before introducing SC Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt, who also spoke about the industry’s size and importance to the state.
Sen. Chip Campsen (R-Charleston), Rep. David Hiott (R-Pickens) and Forestry Association of South Carolina President and CEO Cam Crawford also addressed the crowd of about 100 guests, industry leaders and media about their personal experiences with the Commission.

Campsen, who is both a forest landowner and a certified prescribed fire manager, invoked Teddy Roosevelt at the beginning of his remarks. “We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune.

“When I contemplated what to say about the 90th anniversary of the Forestry Commission, that quote came to mind. The Forestry Commission has certainly been doing its part ... to conserve ... the forest [resource] ... and it has great economic benefits, as the study demonstrates.”

The program ended with the ceremonial planting of a loblolly pine tree by the speakers and Commission Chair Walt McPhail. The loblolly was chosen because of it represents about 95 percent of the trees planted in the South.

The full economic impact study can be found on the Forestry Commission’s website at: www.state.sc.us/forest/economicimpactstudy2017.pdf
The National Wild Turkey Federation/SCFC Military Appreciation Turkey Hunt was held at Niederhof Forestry Center (NFC) March 23-24. Seven hunters participated in a very active hunt that harvested four gobblers, with two soldiers harvesting their first.

The hunt was conducted on NFC and the adjoining Chase Tract owned by Commissioner Micky Scott. Three SC National Guard soldiers participated, as did two (and their guest) who won the hunt at NWTF auctions. The Forestry Commission provided four guides (Reforestation/Stewardship Coordinator Scott Phillips, Edisto Unit Forester Pete Stuckey, Coastal LE Investigator Kip Terry, and State Forester Gene Kodama) while the NWTF provided three: Travis Sumner, Gary Peters, and Tom Hughes.

Thursday afternoon after introductions, Stuckey gave an overview of the hunt, Sumner presented Turkey Hunting 101, and Kodama gave an overview of the SCFC before hunters patterned their guns on the range. A safety briefing was given, and the hunters and their guides left for the afternoon hunt. No birds were harvested Thursday, but after an early start Friday, four gobblers were taken with some big smiles.

After the hunt State Forester Gene Kodama presented the military personnel with SCFC challenge coins and, Travis Sumner with NWTF presented them with the NWTF challenge coin.

Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and time outdoors.
Elementary Education Majors at Anderson Trained in PLT

A Project Learning Tree (PLT) Early Childhood module was taught to 17 early childhood majors preparing for their internships April 5 at Anderson University. Facilitating the workshop was Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel and Teachers’ Tour alumni Melinda Beach, who is a third grade teacher for Anderson School District 4.

The Early Childhood module is designed for children ages 3-6 years of age and “integrates nature-based exploration, art, literature, math, music and movement, and outdoor play into early childhood education programs.” (www.plt.org)

Anderson University professor Nancy Witcher said, “The session went so smoothly and seamlessly. The students were thoroughly engaged and enjoyed the learning process. I enjoyed it myself! What a terrific resource you two are, as well as the PLT materials!”

Anderson University student Rebecca Windham commented, “This was a fun and interactive session that not only helps an educator prepare for teaching, but motivates to include these PLT lessons as much as possible!”

Did You Know?

Cream of tartar can be used to remove stains and the bitter taste from old coffee percolators. It is also used to remove tarnish from silver jewelry and cutlery. Don’t use cream of tartar on pieces that have black detailing because it will remove the detailing. Also, be careful when cleaning jewelry with gemstones, adhesives, or other materials that may be dissolved.
Early Childhood Majors at Anderson University Trained in PLT

Eighteen USC students were trained in the Project Learning Tree PreK-8 module. This workshop was offered as a part of the College of Education Science Methods course. It was a split workshop with the first session taking place April 10 at USC and the second session April 17 at Dutch Fork Elementary School. Beth Foley, the new Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator, facilitated the workshop along with Chanda Cooper, the Richland County Soil and Water agent. Chanda was recognized at the 2017 PLT Coordinators’ Conference as a National Project Learning Tree Outstanding Educator Honoree.

The student teachers worked in groups to facilitate their own PLT activities. Chanda Cooper said, “The activities went smoothly and flowed well. There was a good blend of indoor/outdoor activities, group and individual work, games, crafts, and worksheets.”

Heritage Christian Academy Students Spring into HSF

Students from Heritage Christian Academy got to experience the wonders of spring April 20 at Harbison State Forest. Environmental Education Coordinator, Matt Schnabel and Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator, Beth Foley led the program “Plants and their Environments” where the students explored various forest ecosystems. Students learned how plants survive and how they respond to changes in their environment. They learned about different seed dispersal methods for different species and environments, acted out the life cycle of a tree, and created a tree using themselves as the parts. They also learned the positives and negatives of fire in a forest and how plants and animals are adapted to deal with fire. Students observed, measured, recorded data, and drew conclusions about what they learned.
The South Carolina Litter Control Association (SCLCA) and Palmetto Pride held a press conference April 5 at the State House to kick off the annual Zero Tolerance for Litter campaign. Zero Tolerance for Litter is an annual event to unite law enforcement officers in a dual mission campaign to enforce state and local litter laws and to educate the public on the effects of litter in our communities.

Manchester State Forest Law Enforcement Officer Steve Ward is the President of the SC Litter Control Association and spoke at the event. Also speaking were Director of Spartanburg County Environmental Enforcement James Nelson, and Palmetto Pride’s Sarah Lyles and Scott Morgan.

SC Forestry Commission employees attended the event: Law Enforcement Chief Tommy Mills, Assistant Law Enforcement Chief Jonathan Calore, Manchester Forest Director James Douglas, and Manchester Assistant Forest Director Ben Kendall.

Ward Kicks Off State’s Zero Tolerance Program

Steve Ward, President of the SC Litter Control Association, speaks at the State House on the effects of litter in our state.

Law enforcement officers from around the state stand against litter on the State House steps.

Jonathan Calore, Tommy Mills, James Douglas, Ben Kendall, and Steve Ward support zero tolerance for litter in our state.
When you bring up the subject of singing around Darlington/Marlboro Sector Forest Technician Johnnie Iseman, his face lights up with a smile. Not because it’s one of his favorite hobbies. Iseman will tell you it’s how he got into singing gospel music that brings a smile to his face. After giving his life to Christ at church in February 2012, Iseman prayed for guidance, and the answer he received was surprising.

“I said, ‘Lord, I’ve been trying to do it all these years by myself. I’ve come a long way, and you’ve been watching over me all these years. Now I belong to you. I’ll do whatever it is you want me to do,’” Iseman recalled. “I never thought it would lead to singing. He spoke to my heart and said, ‘Boy, I want you to go sing. That’s how it all came about.’” That experience led Iseman to found a music ministry called From the Heart by Grace. Iseman, his wife, Susan, and Mike and Gayle Beckham pool their talents to sing classic southern gospel music free of charge for a wide variety of church functions, including homecomings, revivals, music services and family nights to name a few.

“I go all over the United States now,” Iseman said. “I even go to Romania every year in November. I take my pastor with me. He preaches every night in a different church, and I sing every night. The Lord has just blessed us and opened up so many doors and a lot of opportunities for us to sing.”

Iseman didn’t have such a clear path laid before him when he was growing up, as he faced plenty of adversity. When he was 7, a tragedy left him and his four older siblings without parents, forcing them to be separated to foster homes. He eventually ran away from his foster home.

When he was 14, Ray Clanton of Clanton’s Auto Auction gave Iseman a job and served as a father figure to him. Iseman worked at Clanton’s Auto Auction for 32 years before he lost his job when the business was sold. But through it all, Iseman persevered time and time again. After losing his job, he attended Darlington County Adult Education and graduated at the top of his class in two years. He then interviewed for a forest technician position with the Forestry Commission and was offered the job.

“The first question they asked was, ‘do you have a high school diploma?’ I said, ‘I have one. The ink isn’t dry, but I have one,’” Iseman quipped. Iseman has been with the Forestry Commission for 10 years and enjoys the work he performs, including suppressing wildfires and assisting landowners.

“I’m just glad to be a part of the South Carolina Forestry Commission,” Iseman said. “It’s a pleasure to be able to serve the people. It’s a wonderful job. You can feel good knowing that you are saving somebody’s property and that you may be saving their life. It’s rewarding.
Iseman (continued)

knowing that you’ve done somebody some good.”

Iseman and Susan have been married 41 years. The couple resides in Darlington and has two sons, Lance and Chase. Lance is a security guard at Duke Energy in Hartsville, while Chase works for the Lee County Sheriff’s Department.

When he isn’t singing with From the Heart by Grace, Iseman enjoys hunting, fishing and camping. His favorite place to go hunting is on a piece of land he leases every year in Mechanicsville.

“It’s right next to my house, so when I get a call from the Forestry Commission, I’m able to go,” Iseman said. “I’ve set it up where it’s really a haven for deer. It has automatic feeders. It has beautiful stands. It has wide lanes. I have cameras everywhere. You name it, I’ve got it. It’s one of my favorite spots.”

New Unit’s First Exercise

Abbeville/Greenwood/Laurens Sector Forest Technician Nelson Wilson took his new enclosed-cab unit out for the first time with Supervisor Dale Curry and West Unit Forester Michael Weeks. In the photo to the right, Weeks gives Nelson some instruction.

Tree Jokes

What type of tree fits in your hand?
   A palm tree.

What did the beaver say to the tree?
   It’s been nice gnawing you!

How do you properly identify a dogwood tree?
   By the bark!
Touch a Truck Event Held in Union

Touch A Truck events offer the opportunity for young and old alike to see big rigs and heavy machinery up close! Union held an event April 29.

Attendees have the opportunity to explore exhibits like fire trucks, law enforcement vehicles, bulldozers, agricultural machinery, and antique military vehicles, as well as meet the men and women who build, protect, and serve the area with the equipment.

The Forestry Commission participated in the Union event with a spare firefighting unit from the Spartanburg Shop, Piedmont Mechanic Kevin Garner’s mechanics truck, and Piedmont Communications Coordinator David Morrow pickup.

Can You Find the Hidden Danger?

Can you find the hidden copperhead snake in the leaves to the left? Tracey Scalzott was turkey hunting on Niederhof Forestry Center last week with her guide, Reforestation and Stewardship Coordinator Scott Phillips when the snake crawled up beside her as she sat by a tree waiting on turkeys as Scott called them. Luckily the snake didn’t bother them.

Watch out for snakes as you go into the woods!

No Pun Intended

A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it’ll still be stationery.

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
SCFC Commissioner Jesse Neville shared these photos that he took with his drone over some prescribed burns he assisted with in the upstate. He uses his drone as a tool for observing the mountain ridges during burns.

Commissioner Neville took this photo of an inversion the morning after a 505-acre burn at Turkey Ridge April 17.

This prescribed fire was conducted for small game habitat management.

This 150-acre site prep burn demonstrates how a fire draws air inward.

The 505-acre prescribed burn at Turkey Ridge was for fuels reduction. The baseline was put in by hand and ignited aerially.
Sand Hills State Forest Assistant Director Justin Smith made a new friend with an Eastern fence lizard while at Sugarloaf Mountain April 10.

State Forester Gene Kodama spotted this giant leopard moth at his home in Berkeley county.

Pee Dee Administrative Assistant Susan Gensel captured this bee in flight circling azaleas at her home in Dillon county.

Sand Hills State Forest Assistant Director Justin Smith made a new friend with an Eastern fence lizard while at Sugarloaf Mountain April 10.
Rick Oates Appointed New State Forester for Alabama

At a meeting in Montgomery, Ala. on April 3, members of the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) selected Rick Oates as the new State Forester for Alabama. His appointment was later confirmed by Gov. Robert Bentley. Beginning his duties April 10, Oates replaces Gary M. Cole, who has served as interim State Forester since October.

Most recently, Oates served as forestry division director at the Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA), where he was also executive director of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association and director of the organization’s catfish and wildlife divisions. Prior to that, he served as chief of staff for the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries Commissioner. He previously held several positions with the Alabama Forestry Association, including forest resource coordinator, regulatory affairs director, and executive director of both the Alabama Loggers Council and the Alabama Pulp & Paper Council.

As State Forester, Oates will oversee 232 employees of the state agency whose mission is to protect and sustain Alabama’s forest resources. The Commission has an annual budget of approximately $22 million. The AFC gained media attention last fall as Alabama’s frontline defense against numerous wildfires due to drought conditions.

Oates, 49, commented that he looks forward to the opportunities and challenges the new job brings. “Our state is blessed with more than 23 million acres of timberland, and about 87 percent belongs to private landowners,” Oates said. “Alabama forests are an economic engine providing hundreds of thousands of jobs in our state. They provide endless recreational opportunities for hunters and outdoormen and are a renewable natural resource.”

“Rick has a broad perspective of the many issues facing the forestry community in Alabama,” said AFC Chairman Jerry Dwyer. “His background in working with both private forest landowners and forest industry is crucial when you consider the important role they play in enhancing the State and its economy. His task will be daunting considering the many challenges the Forestry Commission is currently facing,” Dwyer continued, “State general funds have shrunk by fifty-five percent over the last ten years, impacting our ability to provide services related to protecting and sustaining our forests, as well as educating citizens about the importance of forests to the well-being of our great State. I am confident in Rick’s abilities as a leader and his genuine desire to have the Alabama Forestry Commission seen as the premier forestry agency in the country.”

Paper Test Can Detect Patient’s Blood Type in 30 Seconds

The paper test has become a cheap and no-frills tool in terms of diagnosing diseases, and Chinese researchers are now expanding its medical application to determine blood type in 30 seconds. This test is not only convenient, but can also save lives during an emergency when a blood infusion is needed. Typically, determining blood type requires use of a centrifuge, which could take hours or days in a lab. With the paper test, the color changes to teal and/or brown to indicate whether someone has blood type A, B, AB or O. Researchers at the Third Military Medical University are also looking to identify rarer blood types, Popular Science reported March 15. Currently, the test is at the proof-of-concept stage, with results showing a 99.9% accuracy rate for 3,550 blood sample tests.
April Declared Certified Public Managers Month

Governor McMaster proclaimed April “Certified Public Managers Month.” The proclamation recognized the professionalism of those trained as certified public managers (CPM) and the impact their leadership has on the state of South Carolina.

The Commission appreciates those who have participated in the CPM program and thanks them for their service to the citizens of South Carolina, the agency and co-workers.

Below is a list of current SCFC CPM graduates:

- Calvin Bailey
- Jeff Baumann
- Mike Bozzo
- Brad Bramlett
- Jonathan Calore
- Russell Hubright
- Darryl Jones
- Libby Martin
- Mike Ney
- Tom Patton
- Lynn Rivers
- Byron Rominger
- Leslie Woodham

Southwest Airlines Gets Rid of Paper Tickets with Latest Upgrade

As part of its $800 million upgrade, Southwest Airlines will eliminate the last of its paper tickets after issuing about 300,000 printed employee guest passes last year, Bloomberg reported March 15. Other upgrades will also shift print to digital, as printouts used by bag transporters and pneumatic tubes used to carry paper notes will be gone and replaced by tablets and other electronic modes of communication. The rollout of these upgrades will begin this year and continue through 2020, which is when Southwest expects to recoup its investment.

http://fortune.com/2017/03/19/southwest-airlines-paper-tickets/

Kodama Clears Remaining Downed Trees

State Forester Gene Kodama plans the cut on the last big Red Oak felled by Hurricane Matthew on his Tree Farm. He cut two 16.5-feet logs from this tree. Gene had to hook his tractor and four-wheel-drive truck in tandem to drag the logs to the deck. The tree was 26” diameter where the butt log was cut.
CURRENT JOB OPENINGS

Job Title: RE-ADVERTISEMENT - Forestry Technician II (Timber)
Closing Date/Time: Continuous
Agency Hiring Range: Min: $26,989.00       Max:$26,989.00
Job Type: FTE - Full-Time
Location: Sumter County, South Carolina
Normal Work Schedule: Monday - Friday (8:30 - 5:00)
Residency Requirement:

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:
THIS IS A RE-ADVERTISEMENT. PREVIOUS APPLICANTS NEED NOT RE-APPLY. YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS POSTING. Under direct supervision, assists in managing the timber, wildlife, and public on Manchester State Forest. Assists with forest management activities including but not limited to prescribed burning, wildfire suppression, timber cruising, timber marking, wildlife and recreation management, and general maintenance. Assists with forest product sale preparation to include establishment of sale boundaries, timber and pine straw sales and evaluations. Assists in performing forest inventory and inspects completed forest activities. Assists in directing forest management operations such as logging operations, forestry best management

MINIMUM AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
A high school diploma and two (2) years experience in forestry management. An Associate Degree in forestry or natural resources may be substituted for the required work experience. Must pass initial physical fitness test that requires a two (2) mile walk carrying a 25 lb pack in 30 minutes. Firefighter registration with the State Fire Marshal’s Office and criminal background check is required.

Logging and the English Language

Some of the ways in which we describe timber harvesting go back over a hundred years. Since then, meanings for some of the words have been lost. (Part 6 of 10)
Forestry is filled with terms that are sometimes misused but fun to learn about. It’s part of the jargon that all professions must deal with. Even a seemingly common measurement can be ambiguous. Take diameter, for instance. Is it the diameter at 4.5 feet (standard) or diameter at stump height? There can be a significant difference in a logging contract.

Asking people to define their terms is a good idea. Words sometimes do matter. Clarity in conversation, and especially in contracts, can go a long way to avoid misunderstanding. In some cases, this clarity can mean the difference between thousands of dollars or the quality of forest health and vigor. Yet another good reason to hire a professional forester to help manage woodlands. http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/logging_and_the_english_language

Management and harvesting are not synonyms. Management is a term for a collection of practices designed to produce specific outcomes. Harvesting is one of those practices. Furthermore, while harvesting always has products as an objective, the practice often is also used to encourage regeneration and improve the quality of the residual stand.
Solar Farms Replacing Tree Farms?

Over the last few years, new “solar farms” have been cropping up in parts of the Southeast. Forestland is being clearcut and replaced with the solar panel installations. Agricultural land is also being taken out of production to install the solar panels.

Due to renewable energy mandates on power companies and incentives of state and federal subsidies, landowners are receiving something like $300 to $900 annually per acre for long-term use of the land for solar energy. And some companies (and colleges) who want to be “greener” are embracing these solar energy farms. For example, in late 2016, one news article reported that Google’s data centers around the world would receive 100 percent of their energy from wind and solar farms by some point in 2017.

Are solar farms preferable to tree farms? While forests provide numerous, varied benefits, it is usually the value of timber as wood and paper products (with renewable wood energy added to the mix for good measure) that provides the ultimate incentive for landowners to keep their land forested, rather than converting the land to other uses.

https://forestresources.org/woods-to-mill/item/865-solar-farms-or-tree-farms

Where Are the Southern Pine Beetles?

Between 2005 and 2015, only 18 counties in the southern U.S. experienced southern pine beetle outbreaks—fewer than two outbreak counties per year on average. Across the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, outbreak severity has declined steadily since the mid-1970s and then dramatically since the mid-1990s. Over that same period of time, southern pine plantations grew from 1.8 million acres in the 1950s to 39.5 million acres by 2012, an approximately 20-fold increase.

Why, with over twenty times more plantation area available for the beetles, has the region seen a disproportionately small number of beetle outbreaks over the last decade or two?

For the story, visit https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/compass/2017/04/13/where-are-the-southern-pine-beetles/

In a letter to State Forester Gene Kodama dated March 15 regarding Edisto Unit Forester Pete Stuckey, Allendale/ Hampton Sector Supervisor Terrell Smith, and Allendale/ Hampton/Jasper project Forester Tyler Greiner’s assistance with a burn:

I am a Stewardship Forest Landowner in Hampton County, South Carolina.

I asked the South Carolina Forestry Commission to assist me in burning my Longleaf and Loblolly forestland on the Salkehatchie River near Varnville, South Carolina. I have periodically used this service in the past with good results.

This year your foresters did an outstanding job. Your employees; Terrell Smith, Pete Stuckey and Tyler Greiner should be commended for the professional burn that was accomplished on my acreage. The improvement in my forest is remarkable. Several commercial foresters have been on the property and were also impressed enough to ask me who did my burning.

I take my forest stewardship responsibilities seriously, and providing this valuable service helps maintain an attractive, healthy forest suitable for wildlife, timber production, and recreation.

Thank you,

Lois Tuten Stratos
In a letter to State Forester Gene Kodama dated April 4 regarding Dillon/Florence Sector Supervisor Anthony Eaddy:

This letter is intended to specifically compliment you and your agency on the outstanding service Anthony Eaddy provides to our great state on a daily basis. Anthony is an incredible person who certainly has extraordinary people skills. His ability to understand the desired goals of each landowner and build relationships while performing his duties, all are very valuable to your agency.

I have been fortunate over the years to work directly with Anthony on a number of projects and every experience has been a real privilege for me. Anthony has always done a superb job on every request I have ever made to enhance properties. He certainly represents you and the Forestry Commission on the highest level of professionalism.

It is apparent your great agency has invested great training, interest and very accurate guidance in Anthony’s placement and career. I would gladly put his excellence and spectacular work ethic up against any across the nation, only for all of us to find he is the best.

Thank you for the service he and his team provide our great state.

1st Sergeant Sidney Rainwater
SC Department of Natural Resources

Sidney Rainwater also told Gene in person that he greatly appreciated the work done by Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt and Dillon/Florence Project Forester Chet Foyle.

In an email to Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt dated April 17 regarding Georgetown Supervisor James Hall and his forestry technicians:

Ron,

My compliments to the fellows that did the fire lines on Rocky Point. James and the crew did a commendable job and we appreciate the effort.

Also, TNC was able to conduct the burns the week ending March 24, 2017. The effect was what we were hoping for. Tom and Katie (and crew) burned almost all of the Winyah Rivers portion of the tract and I am pleased with the result.

So, our thanks to all concerned.

Dan Scheffing, RF, CPF, ACF
Senior Project Manager, Sabine & Waters, Inc.

In a letter to the Forestry Commission dated March 8 regarding wildfire response in Clarendon County:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your fast response to our need for help on Tuesday, march 7, 2017 in the Alcolu area of Clarendon County. What started out as a small control burn quickly became a beast that required your expertise. I shudder to think what may have happened without your help.

Many thanks to your guys that put your lives on the line daily to help other people. May God Bless You All!

Jimmy Witherspoon

In a letter to State Forester Gene Kodama dated March 13 regarding wildfire response at the cattle Creek Campground:

I am sure by now you have heard about the Cattle Creek Campground fire. Quite a tragedy for our community. Twenty four Orangeburg County fire units, 80 county employees and volunteers with thousands of gallons of water could not stop the spread of fire from one tent to another. These buildings were three to four feet apart. Due to the quick decision of your wardens and incident commander on the scene, two buildings were destroyed by two SC Forestry Commission suppression units. This opened up an area so firefighters could contain the blaze. two small wood fires were also put out, one over 100 yards in the woods.

A total of fifteen buildings burned out of thirty-six. A tabernacle, the Cattle Creek United Methodist Church and fellowship hall were not damaged. Without a doubt the damage would have been much worse had it not been for the SC Forestry Commission.

Your employees are to be commended for their service up and beyond their call of duty. On behalf of the trustees, we thank the SC Forestry Commission for their efforts in helping save some of our campground.

Harry Wimberly
Chairman, Cattle Creek Campground Board of Trustees
Governor McMaster Signs Pension Reform Act

South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster signed into law the Retirement System Funding and Administration Act of 2017. This act was designed to meet the priorities outlined by the Joint Committee on Pension Systems Review and accelerate the plans’ progress toward fully funding the unfunded liabilities. This legislation is an enormous step forward in all respects.

“On behalf of the PEBA Board of Directors and the many members of the state’s public pension plans, I extend my gratitude to Governor McMaster, the leadership of the South Carolina General Assembly and the members of the Joint Committee for delving into the complex world of pensions and working through the different scenarios to provide for the sustainability of our state’s public pension plans,” said John Sowards, chairman of the PEBA Board of Directors.

“The Governor and General Assembly have exhibited great leadership in acknowledging the significance of the state’s obligations to its public workers and ensuring that benefits promised to our public servants will be payable when due.”

PEBA’s responsibility, and the responsibility of many other governmental organizations to the more than 558,000 members of the state’s retirement plans, is a tremendous one. PEBA is focused on the issues which impact the plans’ future. PEBA’s staff will continue to work closely with the Joint Committee as it resumes meeting to discuss potential benefit structure changes.

A summary of the legislation is available on PEBA’s website at www.peba.sc.gov. If you do not have access to the PEBA website, please ask your supervisor or office administrator for a copy of the Understanding the S.C. Pension Funding Legislation document posted on this website.

Ending TERI webpage launched on PEBA Website

The Teacher and Employee Retention Incentive (TERI) program will close to all members June 30, 2018. Program participants who have questions about ending their TERI participation on or before this date can now learn more on the Ending your TERI participation webpage located at www.peba.sc.gov. Participants can find TERI publications and presentations, as well as forms needed for the TERI-end process.

Warning! Quitting Tobacco Can Have Serious Consequences!

You know what happens when you use tobacco. But what about when you quit? Here are just a few of the serious consequences you’ll face:

- You’ll save lots of money you can spend on vacations, cars and other luxuries. Think about it. The average price of a pack of cigarettes in South Carolina is $5.50. If you are a pack-a-day smoker, that adds up to more than $2,000 a year!
- You’ll also save time you formerly spent on cigarette breaks.
- You’ll regain your sense of smell.
- You’ll have really fresh breath, maybe for the first time in years.

Ready to quit?

The Quit for Life® program will help you every step of the way. You can call on your very own expert Quit Coach® to help you decide on a plan of action and boost your resolve when you’re feeling weak. You’ll have access to support you over the phone, by text and online. You might qualify for nicotine gum or patches. And as a State Health Plan primary member, you can get tobacco cessation medicine at no cost to you when you use a network pharmacy. Stop dreaming about quitting and take the first step toward better health and more money by calling your confidential quit coach today, at no cost to you. To enroll in Quit for Life, call (800) 652-7230.
Florida and portions of Georgia, South Carolina, Texas and New Mexico continue to experience significant fire activity as warmer and drier-than-normal conditions persist. These conditions will persist as the fire activity peaks across the Southern Plains by May and across Florida through coastal Carolina by early June. Periodic, event-driven pre-green-up grassfire activity continues across the central and northern plains and in the lower elevations of the West. This is normal activity and will continue to occur until full green up takes hold. Developing drought conditions across Central Texas and Oklahoma could elevate fire potential in May.

**Southern Area:** Above-normal significant fire potential is expected through July from the coastal areas of South Carolina through Florida and across portions of Texas. Below normal large fire potential is expected from Texas northeast through Kentucky in April and May, returning to normal in June. Above

Temperatures across the region were generally above normal during March. Precipitation, however, was generally below normal except across the Lower Mississippi and Tennessee River Valleys where above normal precipitation reduced large fire potential as forecasted. The greatest departures from normal were across Oklahoma and Texas and across Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas. Fire activity in both areas increased significantly.

Overall, current trends are expected to continue through April before slowly beginning to show improvement in May and June. Relief in Florida will be aided by the onset of the tropical weather season in June. For April, drier-than-normal conditions are expected in all areas except for the Lower Mississippi and Tennessee River Valleys. Above normal temperatures will aid full greenup, but live fuel moistures may be somewhat lower than average. While drier-than-normal conditions are expected in May, precipitation amounts received should show a trend toward normal. Cooler-than-normal temperatures are expected in the southern Appalachians in May. Looking ahead to June and July, overall warmer and drier-than-normal conditions are expected. There are indicators that suggest that central Texas could be much drier-than-normal. South Florida might be an exception if an active tropical season develops.

### Current Fire Numbers for South Carolina

**MONTH AND YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS 5 AND 10-YEAR AVERAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>JULY-APR</th>
<th>FISCAL YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FIRES</td>
<td>ACRES</td>
<td>FIRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Year Average</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>1,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Year Average</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>3,579</td>
<td>1,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current FY¹</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>1,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹To date for current fiscal year
In the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia
On the trail of the lonesome pine
In the pale moonshine our hearts entwine
Where she carves her name and I carved mine

Song: “The Trail of the Lonesome Pine”
Artist: Laurel and Hardy
Released: 1937
Listen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B13QoA59tA4

Can you think of a song with tree- or forestry-related lyrics? Let us know, and we’ll share it with everyone.

Photo of the Month

Pee Dee Region Administrative Assistant Susan Gensel sent in this beautiful sunrise photo taken at Jacksonville Beach, Fla. in December.

Quote of the Month

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing, and becomes nothing. He may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he simply cannot learn and feel and change and grow and love and live.

Leo Buscaglia

Please send in your photos or news to Michelle Johnson at mjohnson@scfc.gov.