



AWARD WINNING FORESTRY

Recognizing Association members who have been honored for their contributions to Florida forestry



Florida Forestry Association's Legislator of the Year Award: Senator George Gainer

Senator George Gainer, R-Panama City, is only in his first term in the Florida Senate, but that did not stop him from stepping up and taking a leadership role in disaster relief and recovery efforts after Hurricane Michael.

Always a staunch supporter for the forest industry, Senator Gainer's advocacy has kept the industry and its people in the forefront of legislative awareness. He has used every tool available to do so, right down to his socks!

At the beginning of this year's legislative session, the Senator had socks made with his face on them. Whenever someone would comment on them, he would use it as a launchpad into a conversation about the needs of the people in the hurricane impact zone. The Senator and his socks quickly became a social media sensation, keeping attention on hurricane relief and recovery.

Senator Gainer continues to be an active promoter of reforestation efforts. He believes in the economic and environmental benefits of working forests and educates other key policymakers about them as well.



Representative Lorraine Ausley

An Ironman triathlete, a mom, and a legislator, Representative Lorraine Ausley brings the passion and commitment of a world-class triathlete to her public service on behalf of her community.

Whether it is running a marathon or working for people in need, she is tireless in her pursuit to reach her goals. Since Hurricane Michael hit in October 2018, she has focused much of her work on recovery efforts in the Panhandle.

Representative Ausley took the task of advocating for the impacted people and industries head-on. Her leadership during the legislative session elevated awareness of the critical need for hurricane relief and recovery efforts. She continues to be an active spokesperson and to focus on positive, productive solutions to the challenges still being faced.

In addition to her legislative efforts, she also uses her strong social media platform to tell the forestry story and to bring awareness to the devastation caused by the hurricane.



Florida Forestry Association Above & Beyond Award: Bump Faircloth

Frank "Bump" Faircloth joined the Association in 1976. "Bump Faircloth is the kind of member every association wants to have," said Association Vice President Carlton Jones, who presented the award. "He is eager to step in wherever needed, gladly offering support, advice and help however he can."

Faircloth served as the CEO of Suwannee Lumber Company in Cross City for 27 years. Under his leadership Suwannee became one of the largest Southern Yellow Pine sawmills in the South. Suwannee was sold to Blue Wolf Private Equity in 2013 and then last year to Conifex.

Currently Faircloth is Chairman for Blue Wolf Capital Partners. He serves as a consultant and assists with mergers and acquisitions. He is also a Tree Farmer.

Outside of the forestry realm, he founded Faircloth Ford in Perry, FL, created and owned several other businesses, and serves his community and church in several capacities.

Despite having such a full plate, Faircloth became a trusted "go-to" person for the Association. His most visible efforts are with the Timber Toppers Golf Tournament, which he organized and sponsored for many years, but he has been active in many other ways as well, explained Jones.

"Bump is the first person to raise his hand to volunteer and the last to sit down when the work is finished," said Jones. "In short, you can always count on him to go above and beyond."



Florida Forestry Association Distinguished Service Award: Jim Karels

James "Jim" Karels has served as State Forester and Director of the Florida Forest Service since 2008, after more than 20 years with the agency in a variety of capacities.

The Florida Forest Service manages more than one million acres of state forests, provides forest management assistance on more than 17 million acres of private and community forests, and is responsible for protecting homes, forestland and natural resources from the devastating effects of wildfire on more than 26 million acres.

"The impact that Jim has had on Florida forestry is immeasurable," said Association President Edward Cole. "He is always there when needed, doing whatever needs to be done, taking the lead and making things happen."

"After Hurricane Michael, Jim and his team at the Florida Forest Service immediately had boots on the ground, and they have remained highly active in relief and recovery efforts," said Cole. "Jim's leadership is a major force in rebuilding forestry in the Panhandle."

Karels is also a national leader in both prescribed fire and wildfire management. He was the president of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and is currently representing all 50 states as the NASF Fire Committee Chair.

He has more than 38 years of experience in prescribed burning, wildfire suppression and land management throughout the United States. With his expertise, he has been called in to fight wildfires across the United States.

Karels has received numerous other honors this year, including election to the Florida Foresters Hall of Fame, the National Association of State Foresters' Jeff Jahnke Current Achievement Award for Leadership and the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Programs Paul Gleason Lead by Example Lifetime Achievement Award.



Audubon Florida Sustainable Forester Award: Michael Dooner

Michael Dooner, a timber stands owner and consultant, went above and beyond after Hurricane Michael to revitalize timber operations in the Florida Panhandle. Forestry's environmental and economic importance became acutely apparent than in the wake of the hurricane, when Floridians emerged from storm shelters to find vast forest tracts laid low, along with the livelihoods of the families and the ecology that depended on them.

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While he had holdings of his own to assess, salvage and replant, Dooner worked tirelessly with agency personnel to improve recovery efforts on the ground. He helped connect forest owners with essential services, and also advocated for federal disaster relief to give a hand up to the region's hard-hit forest economy.

"Thank you, Michael," Audubon's Director of Policy Beth Alvi, who presented the award, "for helping see the Panhandle through this challenging time, and for protecting the region's forest way of life and its economy."

"Michael Dooner is a great example of what forestry is all about," said Florida Forestry Association Executive Vice President Alan Shelby. "He remains focused on moving forestry forward, especially in the tough times. Michael is a forward thinker and understands the connection between forestry and the environment and economy."

Dooner is a past president of the Association and continues to play an active role on its leadership team. He is a recognized and respected advocate for Florida forestry.

Florida Foresters Hall of Fame

The Florida Division of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) has announced the induction of three Association members into its prestigious Hall of Fame: F4 Tech President **Mark Milligan**, University of Florida emeritus professor **Dr. Eric Jokela**, and State Forester **Jim Karels**.

With only 25 foresters previously inducted, election to the Hall of Fame is intended to be the highest honor and recognition of professional service a forester may receive in Florida. The recent inductees will be honored at the Southeastern Society of American Foresters (SESAP) awards banquet during its 2020 annual meeting in Panama City, FL.



Mark M. Milligan founded ForesTech Consulting, Inc. in 1998 and serves as President of the Tallahassee company, now doing business as F4 Tech. Under Milligan's leadership, F4 Tech focused on providing foresters and technicians with field tested, user friendly technology that did not involve extensive knowledge of how the hardware or software worked. The company's handheld data recorder with GPS capabilities added efficiencies to field data collections and transfer.

F4 Tech products and services have expanded to include turnkey natural resource solutions including data collection, mapping, data driven decision-making, long term resource planning, and analytical services. Milligan has secured several U.S. patents and the company's work has affected over a million acres of private and public lands.

Milligan has served the forestry profession as Chair of the Florida Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters and Executive Committee of the Florida Forestry Association. He has held numerous offices in

the Society of American Foresters including Florida Division Chair in 2007.

Milligan also serves as chair of the Florida Forestry Association's Environmental Committee and sits on its Executive Committee and Board of Directors.



Dr. Eric J. Jokela joined the UF School of Forest Resources and Conservation in 1984 and was named as Emeritus Professor upon his retirement in 2018. As a professor of silviculture, he taught both graduate and undergraduate courses, receiving the School's teacher of the year award seven times.

He directed the Cooperative Research in Forest Fertilization program when he first arrived in Florida and later served as a founding Co-Director of the Forest Biology Research Cooperative. These two cooperatives established scores of long-term research installations from Texas to Virginia, producing scientific insight that has had a profound impact on the productivity, health, and sustainability of managed pine forests in the southeastern United States.

Dr. Jokela published over 85 peer-reviewed papers and many technical reports and is among the most cited silviculturists in North America. He served on the editorial boards of a number of leading international forestry journals and was the founding Editor-In-Chief of the open access journal, *Forests*.

Dr. Jokela chaired the SAF Florida Division in 2005 and the Southeastern SAF in 2013. He received the Florida Division's Stephen Spurr Award for research in 2006 and Southeastern Society's Award of Excellence in Research and Development in 2008. He was named an SAF Fellow in 2011 and received the Barrington Moore Award for Biological Research in 2015.

To read about **Jim Karels**, please see his profile for the Florida Forestry Association Distinguished Service Award.

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2019 Florida Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year: John Russell

John Russell is the family manager for Russell Brothers Farm, a longleaf pine plantation bordered by Pine Barren Creek in the Oak Grove community in north Escambia County. His parents, Jay and Clara Russell, bought the property when they moved from Holmes County in 1946. Their sons, Keith and John, purchased the property from

their parents and have focused on longleaf restoration since becoming involved in the Longleaf Initiative Program in 2008.

Russell demonstrates a true passion for land management. He has always worked very closely with county and state forestry and wildlife agencies to ensure Best Management Practices are followed in managing the property. He has spent time educating himself on how to better manage his forest.

Russell understands the importance of fire in forest management and has become a certified burn manager so he can do his own prescribed burning. He is proud of the family history of the property and does the right things to preserve and also share its importance with others.

Russell looks forward to hosting "field days" for local schools to bring students out to visit and learn the history and importance of the longleaf pine forests.

"John Russell exemplifies the high standards of Florida's Tree Farmers," said Association Vice President Carlton Jones. "His passion for the land and the time, energy and work that he pours into it are worthy of this special recognition."



Florida Land Steward's Landowner of the Year: Bob Jenkins

Robert "Bob" Jenkins was recognized by the Florida Land Steward Partnership for outstanding forest management on his property known as Jenkins Millview Trace. The property in Millview has been in the Jenkins family since the 1930s, but increased urbanization has made Jenkins Millview Trace part of the wildland-urban interface area. Recognizing this change, Jenkins has taken active steps to reduce the risk of wildfire to his property and neighboring homes.

In the early 2000s, Jenkins and his consulting forester began implementing a Stewardship plan to replace slash pine stands with longleaf pine and to introduce regular prescribed burns to control the underbrush and establish varied wildlife habitat. Since then, the property has been burned regularly on a three-year rotation and mechanical mulching treatments have been utilized to remove brush in areas unable to be burned. Bob has also opened Jenkins Millview Trace to fellow landowners to participate in prescribed burning and provides recreational opportunities for local families.



Florida Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector of the Year: Cathy Hardin

Cathy Hardin, the Florida Forest Service county forester serving Escambia County, was recognized for her excellent service to private forest landowners and the Florida Tree Farm Program.

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Landowners and assistance programs have benefited from Hardin's dedication and hard work. She has tremendously influenced the expansion and implementation of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Program and the Tree Farm Program in Escambia County. Due to her efforts to revitalize the program in her area, Escambia County is now among the top performing counties in the state for landowner cooperation and enrollment.

Hardin has helped numerous landowners plan and manage their forests, including the winner of 2019's Outstanding Florida Tree Farmer, John Russell, and Landowner of the Year, Bob Jenkins.

BLOCK GRANTS TO HELP FOREST LANDOWNERS IN AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE MICHAEL

In a historic move, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Sonny Perdue has announced funding for state block grant programs to help forest landowners in the Panhandle recover from the devastation created by Hurricane Michael. This is the first time that the subject-specific grants have been made available for timber.

"Category 5 Hurricane Michael left over one million acres of timber on the ground and impacted the area's forestry community to an unprecedented degree," said Florida Forestry Association President Edward Cole. "Forestry is a key part of the economy and the culture in the Panhandle, so the destruction was not only a blow to the landowners but also to all those who work in the forest industry."

"The announcement today is a positive step forward in helping forestry rebuild and recover," Cole said.

The block grants, which were authorized by the 2019 supplemental disaster aid package passed by Congress earlier this year, provide nearly \$370 million in timber crop loss payments. These dollars will supplement previously announced funding for debris clean-up and reforestation efforts through the USDA's Emergency Restoration Forestry Program (EFRP).

Florida Forestry Association Executive Vice President Alan Shelby said, "We are extremely grateful to Senators Scott, Rubio, Congressmen Neal Dunn, Al Lawson and as well as all of Florida's congressional delegation for their work on the disaster assistance package. In addition, we applaud Gov. Ron DeSantis, Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried, Florida Forest Service Director Jim Karels and all of the elected officials and their staffs who made recovery from Hurricane Michael a priority."

Landowners in the impacted area should note that the USDA has extended the enrollment period for the EFRP program through April 30, 2020. Please contact your local Farm Service Agency office to sign up.

WORKING FORESTS WEEK 2019

Many thanks to all those who participated in Working Forests Week 2019! This annual statewide awareness week provides a great opportunity for everyone to share the forestry story with schools, business and civic groups, local and social media and more.

The launch of Florida Agriculture in the Classroom's Ag Literacy Day book, *Forever There's A Forest*, was held in conjunction with Working Forests Week. One hundred third-graders from Sealey Elementary School in Tallahassee, FL, attended a special kick-off event at Tall Timbers Research Station, where they were treated to time with Smokey Bear and Florida Forest Festival Princess Caroline Gray, who read the book to them. They also participated in activities led by Florida Forest Service staff and plantation manager Jason Hough to help them learn about forestry.

Members of the Florida Farm Bureau, 4-H, FFA and other volunteers also read to students across the state last week and will continue to do so throughout the school year.

At the capitol, forestry took center stage at the Cabinet meeting. Resolutions in recognition of Working Forests Week, Smokey Bear's birthday and Ag Literacy Day were passed. Later that day, Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried also read *Forever There's a Forests* to another group of students in the historic capitol building.

Although we don't have pictures of everything, many more events were held around the state. Working Forests Week grows every year thanks to our hardworking members!



Cabinet resolutions honored Working Forests Week, Smokey Bear's birthday and Ag Literacy Day; Lynetta Usher Griner and Eric Handley spent the day at Chiefland Elementary School reading to Pre-K through 5th graders, complete with a fellerbuncher, safety equipment and Blue Bell ice cream (one of our favorite Goods from the Woods!); Brooks Churn of the Florida Forest Service with students from Sealey; Commissioner Nikki Fried and Florida Forest Festival Princess Caroline Gray read Forever There's a Forest; and Sealey students had a great time at Tall Timbers.

CONGRATULATIONS TO FORESTRY FORWARD CLASS 12!

Our Forestry Forward leadership development program provides up and coming participants access to Board and committee meetings, legislative events, educational sessions and tours, and unique networking opportunities.

Congratulations to those who have been selected to join the new class: Monica Corbin, Colin Davies, Robby Frantzis, Kaylyn Glenn, Jackson Middleton, Jonathan Roberts, Aaron Smith, Austin Thrasher, and William White!

NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATION TEAM



Whitney Hough has been promoted to Director of Member Services. Whitney joined the staff in 2015 as the Association's administrative manager and was subsequently promoted to Member Services Coordinator before taking on her current role.



Laura Bosworth has joined the Association team as Director of Forestry and Regulatory Affairs. Laura spent her earlier career working and playing in the forests of the Southeast as a county forester, a longleaf specialist, and the Southeastern Tree Farm manager. She attended Iowa State University where she obtained her bachelors in forestry with a focus on ecosystem management and services.



Krista Harvard has joined the Association staff as Office Coordinator. Krista was originally born in West Palm Beach and moved to Tallahassee in 2000. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Florida State University in 2015. After graduation, she worked in the field of case management before leaving the medical field for the Florida Forestry Association.

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Consider making a gift of a lifetime to support the future of Florida's working forests by naming the Florida Forestry Association or Florida Forestry Foundation as a beneficiary in your will, charitable trust, life insurance policy, estate plan or retirement plan. Please contact Alan Shelby at 850.222.5646 for more information.



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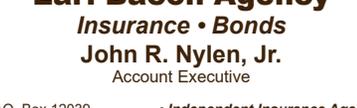
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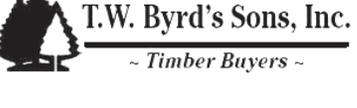
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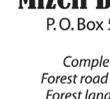


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