



# FLORIDA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

## PINES AND NEEDLES

July - August 2011

Volume 66, Issue 4

**imagine**  
*THE POSSIBILITIES!*

**2011 ANNUAL MEETING**  
September 7-8  
Renaissance @ World Golf Village  
St. Augustine

FLORIDA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

### Putnam views forests as bright spot in Florida's future

Commissioner of Agriculture, Adam Putnam, addressed a packed house on July 12th about forestry in Florida. During the SAF Big Bend Chapter meeting held at the Tall Timbers Research Station north of Tallahassee, Commissioner Putnam reflected on the recent wildfire season and the ultimate sacrifice made by two Florida Forest Service forest rangers. He also touched on the recent "rebranding" of the Division of Forestry to its former name, "Florida Forest Service," and how the change is intended to elevate the status of the agency within his Department and among the public. The Commissioner shared his vision on forest management's future role in water supply, biomass energy production, and recreation, as well as forestry's significance in keeping Florida's next generation connected to the land and nature. He placed special emphasis on the importance of new markets for forest products and how they provide much needed market options for forestland owners. He offered the support and assistance of the Office of Energy, now housed within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACs). This will continue to be the primary organization for state energy and climate change programs and policies.



### Annual meeting provides continuing ed hours

Continuing education hours have been approved by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) for the Association's September 7-8 Annual Meeting. A total of nine (9) hours (8 @ Category 1 - CF, and 1 @ Category 2 - CF), are available through attendance in the two-day event. Master Loggers wishing only to obtain the required six (6) hours needed to maintain their designation can obtain those hours by attending the Thursday-only portion of the meeting, or by attending two sessions during the course of the Wednesday-Thursday meeting. Additional details on the Annual Meeting and SAF credits for foresters can be viewed on the SAF Web site at: [www.safnet.org/calendar/eventDetails.cfm?eventID=42521](http://www.safnet.org/calendar/eventDetails.cfm?eventID=42521).

### Seeing what can be

No doubt about it, it's a tough economic landscape. But no matter the challenge or obstacle, our focus must remain on the future!

At this year's Annual Meeting, we will draw on experts in the field to: Explore new applications and technology. Discover new ways to grow. Envision the outer edge. Propel the forestry world forward.

No other forum in Florida provides a place to gather with other landowners, loggers and forest business professionals in such a positive, fun, energetic and casual environment. And, we've even cut the cost to make it possible for more people to attend! All the information for the September 7-8 meeting at Renaissance World Golf Village Resort is provided on our website at [www.floridaforest.org/conference.php](http://www.floridaforest.org/conference.php).

And don't forget to make your hotel reservations at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort to take advantage of the same great rate offered us in 2009. Call 800.266.9432 today, and be sure to mention you're with the Florida Forestry Association group.

### Untangling the Economic Maze

Economist Jeff Thredgold has been helping people understand the tangled maze of the economy and financial markets for over three decades. Thredgold's career includes 23 years with \$100 billion KeyCorp, one of the nation's largest financial services companies, where he served as Senior Vice President and Chief Economist. He has served the past 13 years as economic consultant to \$55 billion ZionsBanCorporation.

Understanding today's economic environment is more important than ever before. With a humorous and slightly irreverent style, Jeff Thredgold will guide us through the complexities of the U.S. and global economies and financial markets—helping to make sense of it all.

### Timber Toppers Golf Classic - nothing will compete or compare!

Play golf with the movers and shakers of the forest business! This year's golf scramble guarantees to be talked about long after the tournament's end. We have revised the schedule to make sure nothing will conflict with the popular Wednesday morning golf tournament. Also new this year, we are opening the tournament to invited guests of annual meeting registrants.

Slammer & Squire 18-hole championship resort course will be the location for our golf outing. Be sure to make plans to join our friends from Suwannee Lumber Company for a morning of golf like no other. There will be prizes and special gifts for all entrants. Trophies, group pictures, FFA golf balls and other complimentary prizes will be given out. Line up your foursome by filling in the names on your annual meeting registration form, or let us do the pairing for you. Either way, you're in for a great golf outing and quality networking time with forestry friends! Tee time is 8:00 am on Wednesday, September 7.

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## Green light for renewable energy center



Rentech, Inc. (NYSE AMEX: RTK) has received the final air permit for its Port St. Joe Renewable Energy Center. The 55MW biomass gasification facility proposed for Northwest Florida was issued the permit by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in July, following an event free 30-day appeal window. Now all that's left to break ground on the 55 megawatt biomass power plant in the permitting process is a local development permit.

Approximately 930 dry tons per day of woody biomass is the planned feedstock for the plant. The project has a Power Purchase Agreement with Progress Energy of Florida, which has been approved by the Florida Public Service Commission. The Port St. Joe facility will be the world's first Biomass Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (BIGCC) project, using the Rentech-SilvaGas biomass gasifier to provide synthesis gas to an advanced high efficiency combined cycle power plant.

The \$225 million Northwest Florida Renewable Energy Center (NWFREC), to be constructed in Port St. Joe on a former coal transfer site, is estimated to generate 180-200 jobs during the 18-month construction timeline with 85-100 permanent jobs generated at the plant and through the fuel production pipeline.

## Weight extension for burnt wood salvage

Governor Scott has issued Executive Order 11-172, a 60-day extension of Executive Order 11-128, suspending the truck weights for commercial trucks transporting burnt timber, emergency equipment or supplies. The permit letter, extended through September 7, 2011, authorizes trucks to transport loads of burnt timber up to 95,000 lbs. Each vehicle carrying this additional weight MUST carry a copy of the extended DOT permit letter and a route map in the cab of the truck at all times. The permit letter and map are entitled Permit Letter (11-172) and 2008 TTT Map 1. These documents are available at: [www.fdotmaint.com/PermitNew/home.asp](http://www.fdotmaint.com/PermitNew/home.asp). This information may also be obtained by contacting the Florida Department of Transportation at 850.410.5777.

## DOT and FHP merger underway

As part of a statewide merger, 267 Florida Department of Transportation officers are now Florida Highway Patrol troopers. The FDOT employees will continue to drive their DOT vehicles, which could cause some confusion during traffic stops. Eighteen new troopers took to Southwest Florida's streets Thursday with the merger of the Florida Department of Transportation Motor Carrier Compliance Office with the Florida Highway Patrol. The move will save taxpayers more than one million dollars a year.

"We all have the same job description - Keep the highway safe, arrest those who break the laws, and make sure you get from point A to point B safe and sound," said Sergeant Dwayne Cooper of the Florida Highway Patrol. To save money, the state will not immediately change trooper vehicles or uniforms. So don't be alarmed if you see a blue and white car working alongside FHP's traditional black and tan cruiser. "You're going to see DOT vehicles with FHP stickers, FHP license plates and the officers will be in their regular DOT uniforms, but they'll wear our badge and patches," said Cooper.

The new troopers will focus on commercial vehicle inspections, but will also pull over drivers for traffic stops and criminal violations.

## Density, a way to increase carbon storage

Forests in many regions are becoming larger carbon sinks thanks to higher density, U.S. and European researchers say in a new report. In Europe and North America, increased density significantly raised carbon storage despite little or no expansion of forest area, according to the study led by Aapo Rautiainen of the University of Helsinki, Finland, and published in the online, open-access journal PLoS ONE. Even in the South American nations studied, more density helped maintain regional carbon levels in the face of deforestation. The researchers analyzed information from 68 nations, which together account for 72% of the world's forested land and 68% of reported carbon mass. They conclude that managing forests for timber growth and density offers a way to increase stored carbon, even with little or no expansion of forest area.

## Funds secured for biomass plant

The Gainesville Renewable Energy Center (GREC), a 100 megawatt biomass power plant located in Gainesville, Florida, has successfully raised nearly \$500 million in construction financing. Construction of the plant began in March 2011. Completion of this financing allows the project to remain on schedule, with operations expected to commence in late 2013. The successful development of GREC follows that of Nacogdoches Power, a nearly identical 100MW biomass project located in East Texas, which was developed by the same sponsor team and sold to Southern Power late in 2009.

"Completion of construction financing allows GREC to move forward without delay, ensuring that the Gainesville community will receive the many environmental and economic benefits of this renewable energy facility," said Jim Gordon, President of GREC LLC.

GREC LLC has a 30 year contract with Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU), to sell all of the electricity from the facility to the utility. Pursuant to the power purchase agreement, GREC LLC will provide notice to GRU that construction on the facility has officially begun. The 100 megawatt biomass plant will be fueled by clean wood waste that includes the tops and limbs from harvested trees, urban wood waste from landscaping contractors and power line/roadway clearance contractors and residue from lumber mill operations. Power generated from the biomass plant will provide electricity for 70,000 homes.

## Memorials for the fallen firefighters

A special memorial fund has been established for the two veteran forest rangers that lost their lives battling a wildfire in Hamilton County. Josh Burch, 31, of Lake City, and Brett Fulton, 52, of White Springs, were killed when flames overran the tractors they were operating to cut fire lines. Both were career forest rangers with the Florida Forest Service, and each leaves behind a spouse and two children. In their honor, special memorials are provided for those who want to recognize the tremendous sacrifices they made. Donations can be made through SunState Federal Credit Union, Post Office Box 1162, Gainesville, Florida 32602 or call 877.SUNSTATE (877.786.7828) and through Flag Credit Union, 3115 Conner Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32311 or call 850.488.6781 or 800.458.3524.

## Solutions for water include private land

The potential for private landowners receiving compensation for contributing to the public water supply was one of several innovations discussed during the third Water Choices Forum conducted in Jacksonville recently. The day long "think-tank," sponsored by the Florida Earth Foundation, was the third in a series aimed at finding solutions to Florida's emerging water supply and quality challenges. The concept of public-private partnerships received considerable attention, and was viewed as an important potential piece of the puzzle in addressing one of Florida's major challenges of this century. The group agreed that there was a need to meet again, and that a focus of the next gathering should be the drafting of an outline for new state legislation addressing water solutions.

## Forests and products resonate with Florida educators

Forty-three teachers from across the state were in Fernandina Beach in June, to see firsthand the working forests in Florida. Participants saw all aspects of forestry practices, from the planting and growing processes, to the mills, and finally to the end products. Learning that over 5,000 products are made from trees, the teachers experienced how chemical by-products from the paper making process are used in products like soap, fabrics and even food. A wrap-up session gauged the teacher perceptions of the tour. The PIE Center at UF has compiled a preliminary baseline report of the participating teachers in this year's tour. A post-step was administered on Friday during the wrap-up, to measure what change in perception had occurred. A special thank you goes to the Florida Forest Service (FFS) for their efforts in the planning and execution of the tour, as well as to the helping hands from other public agencies, private industry, and academia, and the following teacher sponsors: Phillip Allen, Ruthie and Edward Cole, Gregory and Martina Driskell, Buckeye Florida, Coastal Plywood Company, FFS Forest Health, Stewardship, and Urban Forestry Sections, FL Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters, Florida Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee, Foley Timber and Land Company, Georgia-Pacific LLC, Ocala Lumber Sales Company, Plum Creek Timber Company, Rayonier Foundation, Rex Lumber Company, RockTenn CP, LLC, Society of American Foresters, Southern Forestry Consultants, University of Florida School of Forest Resources & Conservation, and USDA Forest Service.

## Gopher Tortoise in listing pipeline

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) conducted a conference call on July 26 to announce their finding on the petition to designate the gopher tortoise throughout its range as either threatened or endangered. As was anticipated, the FWS finding was that the listing was warranted but precluded by other priorities, court ordered listing decisions and budgetary restraints. This basically means the listing has been placed on the "back burner". The FWS finding will appear in the Federal Register on July 27, 2011. The FWS emphasized that the finding will not result in any land use or regulatory changes at this time, as there are no provisions under the Endangered Species Act extending its prohibitions over candidate species. The FWS advised that the gopher tortoise would be placed on the candidate species list, which will provide opportunities for FWS technical assistance, matching grants and will make available to landowners "Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances." The FWS indicates threats to the gopher tortoise include habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, predation, inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms, and incompatible use of herbicides in forest management. The Agency emphasized the need for cooperating private landowners as, according to the FWS, 88% of the gopher tortoise range is located on private lands. During the conference call, the preservation organization known as Wildlaw requested clarification on the FWS finding that the listing action was "precluded" by other priorities, etc., suggesting that there were no other species in the region with a higher priority than the gopher tortoise. Some believe that the Wildlaw question suggests a possible legal challenge of the FWS determination that listing was precluded at this time.

## "Nutrient Rule" focus of field visit

Water quality, forest fertilization, and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new Florida "nutrient rule" were the focus of discussion when representatives of the FFA and NCASI (National Council for Air and Stream Improvement) met with members of the Forest Productivity Cooperative recently in Fargo, Georgia. During a scheduled field trip stop on the banks of the Suwannee River, Cooperative members were briefed on nutrient-related water issues in Florida, centering on the EPA Numeric Nutrient Criteria Rule scheduled for implementation next year and its potential impacts on forest fertilization and productivity. Members were also briefed on a new BMP effectiveness study being developed in Florida to further document how the state's forestry Best Management Practices protect surface waters from nutrient pollution. Funding needs for the four-year study were outlined for the group.

## Black bear off the list

The Florida black bear and 15 other species, including the brown pelican, white ibis, snowy egret and alligator snapping turtle, recently lost their status as state threatened species because studies show they are no longer at high risk of extinction. The black bear, considered threatened since 1974, was among 16 removed from the state imperiled species list by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). A study found that the bear's numbers had increased from 500 in the 1950s to more than 2,000 in the early part of this decade. FWC Commissioners voted 6-0 to remove the 16 species from the list, but the change will not take place officially until management plans assuring the future conservation of the species are produced. Florida Forestry Association supported the removal of the black bear from the list of threatened species, while some organizations, such as Florida Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society, had serious concerns regarding its future protection.

## Contact Congress during recess

The Association continues to work to help secure the treatment of forestry operations, including forest roads, as nonpoint sources under the Clean Water Act. Legislation has been introduced in Congress to codify EPA's regulations treating forestry operations, including forest roads, as nonpoint sources under the Clean Water Act. The bill numbers are H.R. 2541 and S. 1369.

This legislation is critical to being able to rely on Best Management Practices as the regulatory tool for forest roads and run off from harvesting operations. The 9th Circuit Court of appeals has recently ruled that forest roads are point sources of water pollution under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and that the use of forest roads for timber harvest requires a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. This decision overturns EPA's 35 year treatment of forest roads as nonpoint sources of pollution subject to regulation under state Best Management Practices (BMPs). A permit requirement would introduce significant additional compliance complexities and costs, subject individual permit holders to citizen law suits for the first time, and result in significant economic costs and job loss in the forestry sector with no corresponding environmental benefit.

What you can do:

Contact Senator Bill Nelson to encourage him to sign on as a co-sponsor of S. 1369. By phone in Jacksonville @ 904.346.4500; Orlando @ 407.872.7161; Tampa @ 813.225.7040; Tallahassee @ 850.942.8415 or email @ <http://billnelson.senate.gov/contact/email.cfm>.

Contact Representative Corrine Brown to encourage her to sign on as co-sponsor of H. R. 2541. By phone in Orlando @ 407.290.9031; Jacksonville @ 904.354.1652 ; Gainesville @ 352.376.6476 or email @ <https://forms.house.gov/corrinebrown/webforms/contact-me.shtml>.

## New job postings in Career Center

Be sure to visit our web site at [www.floridaforest.org/career\\_center.php](http://www.floridaforest.org/career_center.php) for details on new job openings.

## Pines & Needles

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