2013 ECONOMIC IMPACT FIGURES
The Florida Forest Service has released its 2013 Florida Forestry Economics Highlights fact sheet. The figures show an economic impact of $14.5 billion with 74,500 people employed.
The state legislative session provided an unexpected twist in the tale in its final weeks. Budget negotiations between the two chambers had stood at an impasse for several weeks, but most people—including the Senate—were caught by surprise when House Speaker Steve Crisafulli announced on Tuesday, April 28, 2015, that the House had concluded its business and was adjourning for the duration. Senate President Andy Gardiner countered this move the following day with a letter to Speaker Crisafulli saying that the premature adjournment was unconstitutional and forcefully requesting their return on Friday, May 1, 2015, the day session was supposed to end. The Speaker declined. On Thursday, April 30, 2015, President Gardiner requested a special session be held in June for the purpose of passing a budget (the one thing the legislature is constitutionally required to do). That same day, the Senate’s Democratic caucus filed suit against the House in the Supreme Court, but the suit was struck down.

For those who love political drama, this scenario created a true boon. For those with bills in the process, it has created a true bonodoggle. Relatively few bills had passed both chambers before the House’s sudden adjournment: While the Senate continued hearing bills on Wednesday, only those bills that had already passed the House and on which the House and Senate were in complete agreement actually stood a chance of making their way to the Governor. Given the political climate, that was a small pool to draw from.

Summaries of the bills of particular interest to FFA members which passed both the House and Senate are below:

This legislation expands the Board to include four additional members from the private sector: one each from the construction, trucking, and business or legal fields to be appointed by the Governor and one from the agricultural industry to be appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services. It also gives drivers who are issued a citation for exceeding weight limits by means of portable scales the option of requesting that their loads be weighed at the nearest fixed scales. Lastly, it requires the Department of Transportation to provide the ability to appear before the Board remotely by means of video conferencing.

This legislation would further strengthen the Bert Harris Act, creating a cause of action for property owners imposed by unconstitutional exactions of property by a governmental entity. The legislature returned to Tallahassee on June 1, 2015, to begin a special session to take care of the budget. That session is expected to last through June 20, 2015.

### Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS):
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule on Wednesday, May 27, 2015. A regulatory effort to clarify which water bodies fall under federal permitting jurisdiction, this controversial rule has drawn fire from stakeholders and lawmakers alike. After preliminary analysis, it appears that the final version of the rule is less problematic than the original.

### H-2B Guestworkers
The H-2B Guestworker program is a vital source of labor for tree planting. Recently, the Department of Homeland Security followed up the crisis it had created in temporarily shutting down H-2B Guestworker visa processing by issuing yet another Interim Final Rule governing the H-2B program, accompanied by a “final” Wage Rule, covering wage rate determinations. According to our colleagues at the Forest Resources Association (FRA), neither rule proved favorable. While litigation continues, FRA and other affected sectors are pursuing short-term means to improve some aspects of the two rules. They are working to restore the “returning worker exemption” from the 66,000-worker annual cap and to enable the use of more detailed data in determining allowable guestworker wage rates.

### Estate Tax
FRA also reports that legislation to eliminate the federal estate tax (HR 1105) passed the House. In the Senate, Sen. John Thune (R-South Dakota) has sponsored a similar estate tax repeal bill (S 860).

### Working Forests Partners Roundtable
More than thirty Working Forests Partners (WFP) gathered at the Florida Forest Service on May 28, 2015. High on the agenda were developing the group’s guiding principles and establishing goals. The meeting was chaired by FFA Vice President Michael Dooner and Audubon Florida Executive Director Eric Draper. Representatives from the forest industry, governmental agencies and conservation groups and other interested stakeholders participated.

“Working Forests Partners is a collaborative effort that has great potential,” said FFA Executive Vice President Alan Shelby. “It has a unique set of skills, experience and knowledge that will make him an invaluable addition to our team.”

### SAVE ON HUNTING LEASE INSURANCE
Participating with Outdoor Underwriters, Inc., FFA offers reduced insurance rates for hunting leases. The new minimum premium rate is now only $150! For details, visit FFA’s website, email Mike@ForestFla.org, or call 850.222.5646.

Liability and fire insurance are also available.

### Seeking Nominations for Audubon Florida’s Sustainable Forester Award
Audubon Florida is seeking nominations for its Sustainable Forester Award, which will be presented at FFA’s annual meeting:

**Criteria:** Florida-based forester, forestry family or forestry business, with demonstrated improvements in bird and wildlife habitat and water resources through forest management practices.

**Easy Nomination:** Letter with photographs and supportive documentation of sites managed and improved results. Please include contact information for nominated forester and nominator. Supportive letters appreciated but not necessary. *Please limit to five pages or less.

**Send to:** Eric Draper, edraper@audubon.org, Executive Director, Audubon Florida

**Deadline:** July 31, 2015

**Selection committee:** Florida Forestry Association and Audubon Florida

For more information, please contact Jonathan Webber at 850-999-1030.
**FFA 2015 ANNUAL MEETING: “WORKING FORESTS WORK”**

August 25-27, 2015, in Panama City Beach, FL

FFA is exploring new territory for its 2015 Annual Meeting! Please join us at Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort in Panama City Beach, FL, from August 25-27, 2015, for an action-packed agenda set on the shores of the beautiful Gulf Coast. Participants can look forward to a full and exciting slate of educational, recreational, and networking opportunities, as well as gorgeous beach sunrises and sunsets!

The state's largest forestry trade show is held in conjunction with this event and features exhibits by the industry's cutting edge manufacturers, sellers and service providers.

Review the schedule to learn about our session topics and speakers. A registration form is available on our website (www.FloridaForest.org) under the Annual Meeting tab or by calling the FFA office (850.222.5646).

**SCHEDULE**

**Tuesday, August 25, 2015**

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM Trade Show Set-Up
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM Registration Desk Opens
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Forestry Forward Tour (Members only, please)
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet

**Wednesday, August 26, 2015**

6:30 AM - 6:00 PM Registration Desk Opens
6:30 AM - 8:00 AM Tee-Time Coffee
6:30 AM - 9:00 AM Trade Show Set-Up
6:45 AM - 7:45 AM Golf Registration
8:00 AM - Finish Golf Tournament Shotgun Start
9:00 AM - 7:00 PM Trade Show and Silent Auction Open
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Roundtable Discussions
   1) Tance Roberts – Estate Planning
   2) Charlie Houder – Conservation Easements
   3) Sec. Jon Steverson – Amendment 1 Implementation
   4) Jim Karels – Forest Inventory
   5) Dr. Pat Minogue – Vegetation Management
   6) Lynetta Usher Griner – Working Forests Week
   7) Clint Ecord – Disaster Recovery
   8) Jeffrey Spencer & Zak Seymour – Financial Issues
   9) Dr. Pat Minogue – Vegetation Management
   10) Charlie Houder – Conservation Easements
   11) Clint Ecord – Disaster Recovery
   12) Phillip Moore
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM Lunch on your own
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM General Sessions:
   1) Master Logger Luncheon: Ethan Pardue – Logging Around Transmission Lines
   2) Steve Chamberlain – Forest Professionals of the Year
   3) John E. Anderson
   4) Master Logger Luncheon: Ethan Pardue – Logging Around Transmission Lines
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Trade Show and Silent Auction Open
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Roundtable Discussions
   1) Tance Roberts – Estate Planning
   2) Charlie Houder – Conservation Easements
   3) Sec. Jon Steverson – Amendment 1 Implementation
   4) Jeff Vowell – Wildlife BMPs
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM Board Meeting
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM Florida Gateway College/UF SFRC Meeting
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet
9:00 PM - 12:00 AM Karaoke

**Thursday, August 27, 2015**

6:45 AM - 12:00 PM Registration Desk Open
6:45 AM - 7:45 AM Early Bird Coffee
8:00 AM - 10:00 AM Awards Breakfast
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Trade Show and Silent Auction Open
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Roundtable Discussions (choose two):
   1) Tance Roberts – Estate Planning
   2) Charlie Houder – Conservation Easements
   3) Dr. Pat Minogue – Vegetation Management
   4) Charlie Houder – Conservation Easements
   5) Lunch on your own
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Master Logger Luncheon: Ethan Pardue – Logging Around Transmission Lines
12:15 PM - 1:30 PM Lunch on your own
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM General Sessions:
   1) Michael Dooner, Ann Duff & Lynette Usher Griner – Working Forests Week
   2) Jim Karels – Forest Inventory
   3) Trade Show Social and Silent Auction final bidding
   4) Closing Dinner
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM Dinner
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Auction Item Pickup & Trade Show Teardown
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Closing Dinner

**Friday, August 27, 2015**

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM Forestry Council Meeting (Members only, please)

**HOTEL INFORMATION**

**Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort**
11212 Front Beach Road
Panama City Beach, FL 32407

Reservations: 800.874.8686
Group Name: Florida Forestry Association
Booking Number: #10M1TR
Deadline: July 29, 2015

**TIMBER TOPPERS GOLF CLASSIC**

The 2015 Timber Toppers Golf Classic will be played at the championship Hombre Golf Course. Don’t miss this great golfing experience and networking time with other forest professionals and friends!

Tee-time is 8 AM, Wednesday, August 26, 2015. Golf is open to all FFA members and guests; meeting registration is not required to play in the tournament.

**SPONSORS**

Presidental Partner
Exclusive sponsorship of the Thursday evening dinner event is still available.

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**Sponsor list as of 6/03/2015**

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Land & Timber Management, Inc.
M & A Riggs, Inc.
Miami Corporation
Oldcastle Lawn & Garden
Pinecrest
PotashCorp-White Springs
Frosholt Trucking
Resource Management Services
Robbins Forestry, Inc.
RockTenn
Southeastern Wood Producers Association
Superior Tree, Inc.
The Hutson Companies & Elkton
BioResource Management, Inc.
Hollinwood Ranch
Dow AgroSciences
Dwight Starnes Farm & Nursery
Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort
Florida Tree Farm Program
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