PINES AND NEEDLES

Summer 2016 Volume 71, Issue 2

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE


Our partners at the Forest Resources Association (FRA) report that the congressional appropriations process is reaching a critical stage: The H-2B visa program enables guestworkers, mostly from Central America and Mexico, to enter the U.S. for several months of the year for manual treeplanting work. Experience for several decades has established that U.S. workers are not interested in this work.

Although we expect most of the improvements to the program contained in last year’s Appropriations bill to be renewed in the FY 2017 Appropriations bill, one important provision will need a special push if it is to be renewed: the exemption from the 66,000-worker annual cap for returning H-2B workers. “Returning workers,” as defined in last year’s Appropriations bill, are workers who have entered the U.S. on an H-2B visa in any of the past three years and have already undergone the program’s rigorous screening process.

Without this provision, we may lose the returning-worker exemption. We may also lose the right to use private surveys to determine H-2B worker regional wage levels. These provisions are crucial for reforestation contractors who use H-2B workers.

Timber Innovation Act

Senator Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Stabenow, along with Sens. Crapo, Klobuchar, Daines and Cantwell, has introduced the Timber Innovation Act (S. 2892), a bill designed to further the research with Sens. Crapo, Klobuchar, Daines and Cantwell, has introduced the Timber Innovation Act (S. 2892), a bill designed to further the research and technology for tall wood buildings and provide grants and technical assistance to builders, architects, governments and private sector partners to support building taller with wood.

The bill would:
- Establish performance driven research and development program for advancing tall wood building construction in the United States;
- Authorize the Tall Wood Building Prize Competition through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) annually for the next five years;
- Create federal grants to support state, local, university and private sector education, outreach, research and development, including education and assistance for architects and builders, that will accelerate the use of wood in tall buildings; and
- Authorize technical assistance for USDA, in cooperation with state

WORKING FORESTS CAUCUS

NATIONAL LOGGER OF THE YEAR: M. A. RIGONI, INC.

M. A. Rigoni, Inc., has been named National Outstanding Logger of the Year by the Forest Resources Association (FRA). The award recognizes its winners for outstanding performance in a variety of categories, ranging from years of service, professionalism, involvement in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative’s Master Logger program and engagement in state and national issues, among others.

To make it to the national competition, the company first won on state and regional levels. The state award was presented in August 2015 at the Florida Forestry Association’s Annual Meeting in Panama City Beach, FL; the regional award in March 2016 at an FRA meeting in Gainesville, FL. The Perry-based logging company, represented by owners Gary Brett and Rodney Schwab, was recognized for their national win at the FRA Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs, CO, in May 2016.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!

Do you feel the need for speed? Then join us on the fast track for our Accelerated Membership Drive!

Sign up new members between June 15 and August 1, 2016, and earn your chance for a place in the winner’s circle! For each $100 in new member dues that you successfully recruit, your name will be included in a drawing for your choice of a complimentary registration to our 2016 Annual Meeting, two free room nights at the Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort during the meeting OR a $250 gift card!

Also, when you sign up five new members in any category, you will receive an exclusive Yeti tumbler with the Association’s logo.

Membership applications can be found on the Association website (www.FloridaForest.org). Please put your name on the “Recommendation for Membership” line so we know who gets the thanks! You may also contact Debbie Bryant (850.222.5646 or Debbie@ForestFla.org) to request a new member dues invoice be sent to your membership prospect(s); she will make sure you get credit for the recruitment(s)!

With your help, your Association can cross the finish line in style!
SOUTHERN PINE BEETLE FORECAST

The Florida Forest Service reports that a pheromone trap survey was conducted in March 2016 as part of an ongoing program to monitor the populations of Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) and its associated predators. The purpose is to provide an early-season prediction of the potential level of SPB activity in select Florida counties and identify areas that may be at increased risk for an outbreak.

The 2016 survey results suggest that SPB activity will remain low at all but one trap location in the 26 counties surveyed across Northern and Central Florida. The highest amount of SPB infestations per county for 2015. The Forest Health section will continue to monitor Putnam County and the Northeastern Florida region closely throughout the season for any possible developments.

Low/Static SPB predictions do not guarantee that troublesome infestations will not develop on a local or limited basis in some counties. Activity predictions are likely to be more accurate for the 5-mile radius region around each trap than for the county as a whole. Given the limitations of the forecast, the recent drought and/or flooding experienced by some areas in the state, and the potential for environmental conditions to change after the survey, areas of suspicious pine mortality should be promptly inspected for evidence of SPB in the coming months.

Sign-up for FFS’s SPB Assistance and Prevention Program is open until July 29, 2016. The program offers partial cost reimbursement or incentive payments for:

• first pulpwood thinning
• prescribed burning
• planting longleaf and/or slash pine
• mechanical underbrush treatments

For more information, contact your local county forester. You can find your forester’s contact information under the Resources tab on our website (www.FloridaForest.org).

TIMBER THEFT TASK FORCE

Members of the Association recently worked with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) to review the state’s timber theft system. After review and study, the task force did not see a need to change any of Florida’s timber theft laws. Instead, they created a guide to assist timberland owners in preventing timber theft and also in managing their forests. The guide is now featured on the Florida Forest Service web site.

We want to give a special thanks to Michael Dooner and the task force members, including FFS’s Jim Karels, Sherman Wilhelm, and Brad Ellis for their contributions to the Timber Theft Task Force and the posting of the Landowner’s Guide on the FFS web site.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW MANUALS

The Association’s Environmental Law Manual has been transformed! By going digital, we have created a system that automatically updates itself. It is much more efficient and easier to maintain, and it is now free and accessible to everyone!

Rules and regulations previously referenced in our printed manual are now on our website (www.FloridaForest.org), under the Resources tab at the top of any page.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Branch (850.222.5646 or Mike@ForestFla.org).

YOU’RE INVITED!

Longtime Association member, supporter and friend Harold Mikell will soon be celebrating his 90th birthday, and you are invited to celebrate with him!

The party will be held at the Austin Cary Learning Center in Gainesville, FL, on July 23, 2016, from 1 – 3:30 PM. Heavy hors d’oeuvres will be served. Please text, call or email his daughter Patti (850.545.8887 or paboot@aol.com) to RSVP. No presents, please — your presence is the best gift of all.

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, 2016

Selection committee: Florida Forestry Association and Audubon Florida

For more information, please contact Jonathan Webber at 850-999-1030.
2016 ANNUAL MEETING  
AUGUST 30 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2016  
OMNI AMELIA ISLAND PLANTATION RESORT

Join your friends and business associates at the beautiful Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort for three days of networking, learning and celebrating another year in the amazing forest industry! The majestic Atlantic Ocean pairs with Florida’s beautiful forests to serve as the backdrop for this exciting event.

The state’s largest forestry trade show is held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting, featuring exhibits by the industry’s cutting edge equipment and service providers. Don’t be left behind – schedule time to meet with all the top bid on any item in our slate of auction offerings!

This year also commemorates the 30th anniversary of our Silent Auction! We are expanding our base of donors for this “Diamond and Pearls” event. You will be the envy of your friends and colleagues when you walk away with the top bid on any item in our slate of auction offerings!

The schedule below outlines all the events as well as our session topics and speakers. A registration form is available under the Annual Meeting tab on our website (www.FloridaForest.org) or by calling the Association office (850.222.5646).

Register now for the best rates!

SCHEDULE

Tuesday, August 30, 2016
10:00 AM–5:30 PM  Trade Show Set-Up
1:00 PM–6:00 PM  Registration Desk Opens
1:00 PM–5:00 PM  Forestry Council Meeting
3:00 PM–5:00 PM  Forestry Forward Tour (Tentative)
5:30 PM–7:00 PM  Registrant Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet

Wednesday, August 31, 2016
6:30 AM–6:00 PM  Registration Desk Opens
6:30 AM–8:00 AM  Early Bird Coffee
6:30 AM–9:00 AM  Trade Show Set-Up
6:45 AM–7:45 AM  Tee-Time Coffee & 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:
  Alan Wilson – Tips for a Successful Pine Stand
  Pat Minogue – Insights into Site Preparation
  Tyson Johnson – Affordable Care Act Today
12:00 PM–2:00 PM  Lunch on your own
12:00 PM–2:00 PM  UF SFRC Alumni Lunch
2:00 PM–4:00 PM  General Sessions:
  Pete Stewart – Forestry Forecast for the Southeast
  Jeff Vowell & Scott Sanders – Wildlife BMPs
2:30 PM–4:00 PM  Forestry Forward Tour (Tentative)
3:00 PM–5:00 PM  Forestry Forward Tour (Tentative)
4:00 PM–5:00 PM  Karaoke
4:00 PM–7:00 PM  Welcome Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet
5:00 PM–7:00 PM  Auction Item Pickup & Trade Show Teardown
6:00 PM–8:00 PM  Forestry Council Meeting
8:00 PM–9:00 PM  Auction Item Pickup & Trade Show Teardown

THE MASTER LOGGER LUNCH IS OPEN TO EVERYONE. HOWEVER, ONLY MASTER LOGGERS REGISTERED FOR THE FULL MEETING MAY ATTEND AT NO CHARGE. OTHERS WISHING TO ATTEND MUST PURCHASE A TICKET BY AUGUST 15, 2016.

HOTEL INFORMATION
Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort
39 Beach Lagoon Road
Amelia Island, FL 32034
Reservations: 1.888.261.6161
Group Name: Florida Forestry Association
Reservations may also be made online. Please visit the Annual Meeting tab on our website (www.FloridaForest.org).

Rate: $129 + 57 resort fee
Reserve now! The room block is filling up quickly!

TIMBER TOPPERS GOLF CLASSIC
All the golfers will be happy to hear that the 2016 Timber Toppers Golf Classic will be played on the fabulous Oceans Links course! Join your associates for a day of play and networking that you will not soon forget.

Tee-time is 8 AM on Wednesday, August 31, 2016. Golf is open to all Association members and guests. Meeting registration is not required to play in the Classic; however, for logistical reasons, all golfers must register to play in the tournament. So register today to reserve your space on the course!

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