LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Incoming president Michael Dooner of Havana, FL received the symbolic presidential gavel from outgoing president Mike Bell at the President’s Dinner Thursday night.

Dooner, a Society of American Foresters (SAF)-certified forester, is the founder and president of Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc. He directs much of the company’s northwest Florida operations and coordinates activities of sister companies Southern Forestry Realty and Wiregrass Ecological Associates.

“Florida’s working forests are an integral part of our state’s environment and economy,” Dooner said. “I’m proud to be part of an industry that does so much good on so many levels.”

“The Florida Forestry Association has long acted as a strong advocate for the responsible and sustainable use of our state’s woodlands,” explained Association Executive Vice President Alan Shelby. “With Michael’s experience, passion and forward thinking, the Association will undoubtedly continue to grow even stronger under his leadership.”

Also elected to lead the Association as officers for the next two years are:

Vice President: Edward Cole, Akerman LLP
Secretary/Treasurer: Robert P. “Bob” Cook, Great South Timber and Lumber
Executive Vice President: Alan Shelby, Florida Forestry Association

AWARD WINNERS

Legislators of the Year:

One of the challenges that the forest industry faces in Florida is that 80% of our working forests can be found north of Ocala, but 80% of our state legislators can be found south of Ocala. The 80/20 Rule, as it’s known, makes it imperative that the forestry story reaches legislators outside of the industry’s geographical base.

For that reason, the Association was very pleased to present its Legislator of the Year awards to two people who hail from the center of our state, Imperial Polk County. Despite living far from the beautiful working forests that cover North Florida, they both understand and appreciate the value that our industry contributes to the state.

Senator Kelli Stargel

Senator Kelli Stargel of Lakeland might be the first to admit that when she was first elected to the Senate she did not expect to be a champion for the agricultural industry. However, time and again she has proven to be one of the forestry and agricultural industries’ biggest supporters. She sponsored legislation exempting certain agricultural buildings from the Florida Fire Code. She also pushed passage of critically needed updates to Florida’s agritourism laws. Perhaps most importantly, she led the charge to preempt the authority of local governments to impose special assessments for fire fees on timber and ag lands.

Representative Ben Albritton

Representative Albritton epitomizes agricultural leadership. Making his living in the citrus industry, he has a special appreciation for the struggles we face in the forest and agricultural industries.

During his tenure in the Florida legislature, Representative Albritton has been a go-to member on sales tax issues, funding for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and specifically the Florida Forest Service. He has also stood strong on the environmental benefits forests, farms and ranches provide to our state.

During the 2016 legislative session, Representative Albritton and Senator Stargel championed legislation to prohibit the assessment of special fire fees on agricultural land. He also is responsible for securing the funding for our reforestation cost-share program. He successfully shepherded funding for that program through the process to passage in both the House and Senate; however, it later fell victim to the governor’s veto pen.

In addition, the Association’s Board of Directors added several new members to its roster: Benji Addison—Hancock Forest Management
Danny Duce—American Forest Management, Inc.
Dave Fox—International Paper
Alan Jaye—Enviwa Pellets Cottondale, LLC
Emily Lowe-Farm Credit of Northwest Florida
Hayes Morris—Morris Timber Products, Inc.
Jeremy Sapp—Sapp’s Land & Excavating, Inc.

FLORIDA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

PINES AND NEEDLES

Fall 2016 Volume 71, Issue 4

2016 ANNUAL MEETING

The Association’s 2016 Annual Meeting was held August 29-September 1, 2016, at the Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort in Amelia Island, FL. Even the threat of Hurricane Hermine could not dampen the success of the event.

With almost 300 registrants and 41 exhibitors, this year’s gathering featured tremendous networking opportunities and topnotch speakers addressing current topics of interest to the forest industry.

Highlights of the three-day event included the Timber Toppers Golf Classic, the state’s largest forestry trade show, the 30th anniversary of our silent auction, two receptions and a karaoke night!
Anthony Boggess

Anthony Boggess became Suwannee Lumber Company's head of procurement and forestry in 2002 as a recent graduate of the University of Florida's School of Forest Resources and Conservation. Even early in his career, Anthony demonstrated a love for growing trees and the preservation of wild game and bird life.

“Audubon of Florida made an excellent selection in Anthony,” said Alan Shelby. “His knowledge of sustainable forestry is surpassed only by his passion for it. Receiving this award says a lot of good things about Anthony and about Suwannee Lumber Company. We are always proud when our members’ hard work and diligence is recognized.”

Anthony and his wife, Anna, currently reside in Alachua, Florida.

**Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year: The Alonzo and Eliza Register Family Partnership**

The Alonzo and Eliza Register Family Partnership owns more than 1,100 acres of timberland in southeastern Leon County near Woodville. All of the property is in timber production with either natural longleaf or planted stands. The Partnership is made up of 35 family members and is managed by three general partners: Julie Hannon, Frank Douglas and Mary Grace Crosby, grandchildren of Alonzo and Eliza Register.

Alonzo Register was born and raised on the land now owned by the Partnership. He worked the longleaf for turpentine for almost half a century, beginning in 1928. He and wife Eliza formed the Partnership in 1997 so that their family could continue to enjoy the land and timber as they had for so many decades. Alonzo passed away the following year.

“The forest industry has become very high tech over the years,” said Alan Shelby, “but it was built by private landowners and retains strong roots in family ownership to this day. The Alonzo and Eliza Register Family Partnership being named the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year is an excellent example of how new advances in technology and traditional family values continue to coexist in the industry.”

“We are proud of what the Partnership has accomplished,” he said. “And I have no doubt that Mr. and Mrs. Register would be very proud as well.”

**Silviculture Contractor of the Year: Mizell Development, Inc.**

Adam Mizell founded Mizell Development, Inc., in 2005, operating on his own with a track hoe and a bulldozer, primarily working on logging roads. Today, Mizell Development has 30 valuable employees and prepared more than 25,000 acres for reforestation in North Florida and South Georgia in 2015.

“The Lord has blessed my business so much over the years,” Mizell said, “I feel very grateful to work in the forest industry and I appreciate all the fine people I get to work with on a daily basis.”

“Adam Mizell is an excellent example of the high caliber of people who work in the forest industry,” said Alan Shelby. “Reforestation is vital to sustainability, and businesses like Mizell Development make it possible.”

Married for 10 years, Mizell and his wife, Carrie, live on his family farm near Hilliard. They have two children, Allie Claire and Whitt.

**Audubon of Florida Sustainable Forestry Award: Anthony Boggess**

Anthony writes a specific wildlife management plan for each tract that Suwannee Lumber Company buys, leases or contracts for. He also manages more than a thousand acres of his own land.

Anthony now serves as Suwannee Lumber Company’s Vice President. An active member of the Florida Forestry Association, he sits on its Board of Directors and Steering Committee and is an alumnus of the Association’s leadership development program. He also serves on the Young Farmers Advisory Committee for the Farm Credit of Florida.

“Audubon of Florida made an excellent selection in Anthony,” said Alan Shelby. “His knowledge of sustainable forestry is surpassed only by his passion for it. Receiving this award says a lot of good things about Anthony and about Suwannee Lumber Company. We are always proud when our members’ hard work and diligence is recognized.”

Anthony and his wife, Anna, currently reside in Alachua, Florida.

**REPORTING FLORIDA PINE SNAKE AND SHERMAN’S FOX SQUIRREL SIGHTINGS**

With input from Association members, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has released a new reporting form for sightings of Florida pine snakes and Sherman’s fox squirrels.

The new form allows sightings to be reported using the closest crossroads or longitude/latitude references. The form can be found on the Association’s website at www.FloridaForest.org/Environmental-Law under “Threatened and Endangered Species.” We encourage you to share it with your fellow landowners and others in the forest industry. Reporting sightings as they occur is critical; without participation in this process, these species could make the federal listing.

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

**UF SFRC DIRECTOR SEARCH**

Dr. Tim White retired from the position of Director of the School of Forest Resources & Conservation at the University of Florida in May. Dr. Jack Payne, the University’s Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources, is conducting the search for his replacement with an openness and inclusiveness that deserves commendation.

Three candidates have been identified by the search committee to fill the position, with interviews scheduled for late October and early November. Interested parties are invited and encouraged to attend functions being held for each candidate:

- Dr. Terrell “Red” Baker
  - Chairman, Department of Forestry, University of Kentucky
  - Wednesday, October 26
- Dr. Keith L. Belli
  - Head, Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Department, University of Tennessee
  - Tuesday, November 8
- Dr. D. Allen Rutherford
  - Director, School of Renewable Natural Resources, Louisiana State University
  - Wednesday, November 16

All functions will be held at the Austin Cary Learning Center. Stakeholder meetings with the candidates will begin at 5:30 PM, followed by receptions 7-9 PM. If you can attend, please register online at https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe3/form/SV_4PFBQy7UuuTUUfsh

**TREEEPAC**

TREEEPAC is the Association’s official non-partisan political action committee (PAC). Contributions are made to state legislative candidates based on their support for the forest industry and their pro-business philosophies. To date, TREEEPAC has contributed almost $45,000 in the 2016 elections to candidates running for the Florida House or Senate who support the forest industry and exhibit pro-business philosophies.

**FLORIDA TAKES THIRD IN NATIONAL FORESTRY INVITATIONAL**

A team of three 4-H-ers from St. Johns County took home third place in the recent national forestry invitational. Florida was represented by Henry Keating from St. Augustine and Cayla and Jeremy Smith, both from Hastings. The team was coached by Wendy Smith from Hastings.

www.FloridaForest.org
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

In addition to the candidates for federal, state and local races who will be appearing on the general election ballot next month, Florida voters will also decide the fate of four proposed amendments to the state’s constitution.

Each amendment requires sixty percent approval from voters to pass.

Amendment 1: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: This amendment establishes a right under Florida’s constitution for consumers to own or lease solar equipment installed on their property to generate electricity for their own use. State and local governments shall retain their abilities to protect consumer rights and public health, safety, and welfare, and to ensure that consumers who do not choose to install solar are not required to subsidize the costs of backup power and electric grid access to those who do.

Sponsor: Consumers for Smart Solar

Financial Impact Statement: The amendment is not expected to result in an increase or decrease in any revenues or costs to state and local governments.

Amendment 2: Use of Marijuana for Debilitating Medical Conditions

Summary: Allows medical use of marijuana for individuals with debilitating medical conditions as determined by a licensed Florida physician. Allows caregivers to assist patients’ medical use of marijuana. The Department of Health shall register and regulate centers that produce and distribute marijuana for medical purposes and shall issue identification cards to patients and caregivers. Applies only to Florida law. Does not immunize violations of federal law or any non-medical use, possession or production of marijuana.

Sponsor: People United for Medical Marijuana

Financial Impact Statement: Increased costs from this amendment to state and local governments cannot be determined. There will be additional regulatory costs and enforcement activities associated with the production, sale, use and possession of medical marijuana. Fees may offset some of the regulatory costs. Sales tax will likely apply to most purchases, resulting in a substantial increase in state and local government revenues that cannot be determined precisely. The impact on property tax revenues cannot be determined.

Amendment 3: Tax Exemption for Totally and Permanently Disabled First Responders

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize a first responder, who is totally and permanently disabled as a result of injuries sustained in the line of duty, to receive relief from ad valorem taxes assessed on homestead property, if authorized by general law. If approved by voters, the amendment takes effect January 1, 2017.

Sponsor: The Florida Legislature

Amendment 4: Homestead Tax Exemption for Certain Senior, Low-Income, Long Term Residents; Determination of Just Value

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to revise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption. The amendment takes effect January 1, 2017, and applies retroactively to exemptions granted before January 1, 2017.

Sponsor: The Florida Legislature

Amendment 5: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 6: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 7: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 8: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 9: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 10: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 11: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 12: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 13: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 14: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 15: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 16: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 17: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 18: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 19: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.

Amendment 20: Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to re- vise the homestead tax exemption that may be granted by counties or municipalities for property with just value less than $250,000 owned by certain senior, low-income, long-term residents to specify that just value is determined in the first tax year the owner applies and is eligible for the exemption.