Strong push continues for High Court review of Forest Roads case

The National Alliance of Forest Owners continues its efforts to urge the US Solicitor General (SG) to recommend that the US Supreme Court review the Ninth Circuit’s ruling in May, 2011, that forest roads are “point sources” requiring special Clean Water Act industrial discharge permits. The situation within the Administration remains fluid both among the lawyers involved in preparing the SG’s recommendation, and the agencies involved in preparing a contemporaneous policy statement by the EPA. The outcome of these preparations remains uncertain. NAFO continues to focus its efforts on delivering strong messages to the White House and the Obama campaign. Highlights include a bipartisan letter from the Senate to Attorney General Eric Holder and a bipartisan letter from the House to Jack Lew, White House Chief of Staff.

Woody biomass prices on the decline

Prices for woody biomass in the US, whether sawmill by-products, forest residues, or urban wood waste, have been sliding for most of the past three years, but were still higher in the 4Q/2011 in most regions than they were five years ago, according to the North American Wood Fiber Review (www.woodprices.com). The price drop seen in 2010 and 1H/2011 was mainly the result of lower prices for fossil fuels, particularly that of natural gas, and reduced demand for energy. This declining price trend has reduced the interest by both commercial and residential energy consumers in switching to more expensive green energy.

The two major sources for woody biomass are bark from sawmills/plywood plants, and forest residues left after logging operations. In the major biomass-consuming regions of the US, prices for forest biomass have been $10-20/oven dry metric tonne (ODMT) higher than for mill biomass during most of 2011. The region with the lowest biomass prices in the 4Q/2011 was the West, while Maine and New Hampshire continue to have some of the highest prices in the country. In the US South, prices have fallen 15-20% since early 2010, and forest biomass prices in the South Central states in particular have come down thanks to favorable weather conditions.

Session results were good for forestry and agriculture

A surprising finish to a Session that most of us assumed would accomplish little outside of redistricting and budget cuts: Forestry fared well. For a full report, visit our website to review legislative actions that are important to the forestry and agriculture industry at: http://floridaforest.org/_files/WRAPUP2012.pdf.

Putnam’s renewable energy bill passes

A lighter version of Florida Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam’s renewable energy bill passed the legislature. The major components in the final bill includes:

- $16 million in tax incentives and rebates for renewable technology investments;
- a streamlined review process for non-native plants grown for energy crops; and
- funding for (and requires Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services to conduct) a comprehensive forest inventory analysis, to ensure forest sustainability.

“With overwhelming support in both chambers, the Legislature is sending a clear message that Florida is focused on its future. We’re putting Florida’s energy policy back on the right track, positioning Florida to secure a stable, reliable and diverse supply of energy,” Putnam stated before thanking Rep. Scott Plakon, R-Longwood, and Rep. Seth McKeel, R-Lakeland. Putnam also thanked the Senate for its part in the bill’s success, declaring “With passage of Florida’s energy bill in the Senate, we’re one step closer to increasing diversity in Florida’s energy portfolio, expanding energy production and creating jobs for Floridians.”

Association endorses Don Curtis for House seat

A career forester and landowner has been officially endorsed for State House District 7, by the Florida Forestry Association. Don Curtis, owner of The Forestry Company in Perry, received the endorsement by a unanimous vote of the Association’s Executive Committee on March 26th. While the Association has been active in political campaigns through its TreePAC organization in the past, this is one of only a few times the leadership has publicly endorsed a candidate for the State House of Representatives. For more information on the Don Curtis campaign and to help put a forester in the Legislature, visit the campaign website at: http://www.electdoncurtis.com/.
March 27

At the Association’s Board of Directors meeting in Tallahassee on March 27, the Board gets an update on Wildlife BMPs. The Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC) is now in the second year of the three-year period identified for the development of voluntary wildlife BMPs to address “gaps” in protection should be better understood, and help point the way toward the development of voluntary wildlife BMPs to address any concerns. The intent of wildlife BMPs is to give landowners an alternative to the perceived need for an “incidental take” permit, if certain listed species are known to exist on a silvicultural site. Although Sanders did not address a specific time-frame for this BMP project, the FWC is now in the second year of the three-period identified for project completion.

The report, which is prepared every two years by the Florida Forest Service, is now available online at this link: http://www.floridaforestservice.com/publications/2011_BMP_survey_report.pdf.

Send a teacher to the woods!

You can hardly put a price on an all-expenses paid three days for a Florida educator to learn about what we do and how we do it. But from reviewing the evaluations each year, “priceless” best describes the value of this investment.

The 2012 Florida Teacher’s Tour is expected to be another eye-opener. And again, sponsors are needed to give this selected group of 45 teachers an experience of a lifetime.

Many thanks to the following sponsors for already committing to help Florida educators become more aware of the growth and business of forestry:

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Plum Creek Timber Company @ 6
Rayonier Foundation @ 3
Rex Lumber Company @ 3
Society of American Foresters @ 1
Southern Forestry Consultants @ 1
University of Florida SFRC @ 1

Please “adopt” a teacher for the June 19-22 event!
Email info@forestfla.org and let us know how many teachers you would be willing to sponsor and we will invoice you accordingly.

First energy report released by Commissioner Putnam

Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam has released an annual report of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Office of Energy, providing a snapshot of the state’s energy industry, and outlining policy that would guide the expansion of energy production. The annual report is released on the heels of the legislative session, during which the Florida Legislature, in coordination with Commissioner Putnam, developed and passed Florida’s first comprehensive energy bill since 2008.

“The last six months, we have shifted the mission of the Department’s Office of Energy from an office that administers grants and rebates, to one focused on working with the Legislature to develop a balanced energy policy for the state of Florida,” said Commissioner Putnam. “This report not only provides a comprehensive view of the energy industry in our state, but also highlights areas of opportunity going forward.”

The annual report summarizes the review of renewable energy and efficiency projects supported by $176 million in federal stimulus grants, and highlights an audit that was initiated by Commissioner Putnam to ensure grantees are fulfilling their commitments to taxpayers.

Credit Crunch helps lumber market

Reuters reports that US lumber futures prices have soared about 30% in the past five months, with bets rising 18% since January with help from an odd ally - a credit crunch in the industry. Lumber distributors, who channel supplies from mills to end users who’re finding it difficult to raise loans to buy lumber in the cash markets, are resorting to buying futures as a hedge and to possibly take delivery when a contract expires. Lumber supplies available to distributors in the cash market have also been shrinking due to a pick up in the housing market in the wake of a mild winter in the country. “Distributors are having trouble buying lumber in the tight stocks environment, and also they can’t get capital from banks, so they’re buying futures,” says Brian Leonard, a futures broker and analyst for Leonard Commodities, Inc., in Chicago. Open interest in lumber futures is up 18%, and spot lumber prices are up 12% since January, indicating new buyers in the futures market.

Sawmill production up

Full-year production by US sawmills grew 7.7% in 2011, to 26.712 billion board feet (bbf) from 24.802 bbf in 2010, according to the latest statistics from the Western Wood Products Association (WWPA). Sawmills in the Western US produced 11.867 bbf in 2011, up 6.6% year-over-year from 11.137 bbf, while output from sawmills in the South was 13.434 bbf, up 8.7% from 12.354 bbf. US production as a percentage of total capacity averaged 75% in 2011, compared with 69% in 2010.

Landowners could benefit while protecting gopher tortoise

A new cost-share opportunity for private landowners to receive funds specifically for managing gopher tortoise habitat, has been announced by the Florida Wildlife Commission. From $33 million, approximately $6 million is reserved for improving gopher tortoise habitat throughout its range. The goal of this new funding initiative is to help reverse the decline of seven critical species, namely the new england cottontail, bog turtle, golden-winged warbler, gopher tortoise, greater sage-grass, lesser prairie-chicken and southwestern willow flycatcher. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Interior’s US Fish and Wildlife Service will jointly prepare and deliver recovery tools such as informal agreements, safe harbor agreements and habitat conservation plans to provide regulatory certainty to landowners.

Applications are accepted year-round, but eligible applications received by the cutoff date of April 30, 2012 will be assigned priority. If funds are available, a second ranking cutoff date will be May 30, 2012. Applications within priority habitat areas will receive highest consideration. Contact your local NRCS office for additional information.

www.floridaforest.org
**Luraville Depot preserves Florida’s early logging history**

Steam locomotives were a major part of Florida’s history in the 1800’s and well into the 1900’s. Wood fueled and wood freighted, these “iron-horses” delivered economic prosperity, namely big logs for building ships to naval yards and lumber. As a matter of fact, many Florida lumber companies operated their own railroads.

Preserving this time in history was the purpose in March, when over 100 people showed up to officially mark the dedication of the Luraville Train Depot at the Florida Forest Service headquarters in Tallahassee. Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam was joined by former Commissioners Doyle Conner and Charles Bronson at the dedication. State Forester Jim Karels also welcomed back former State Foresters Earl Peterson and Harold Mikell for the occasion.

So what makes this train depot so special? It preserves one of the oldest surviving relics of early wood burning steam locomotives in the nation. Sometime between 1898 and 1906, the Luraville Locomotive fell into the Suwannee River while being loaded on a barge. The logging train engine was revealed to a young James Lancaster when he was a boy, by his uncle while they were fishing together in the 1930s. The young Lancaster could not let the thought of what he saw leave his mind. It became his dream to pull the old engine out of the river and when he was 55 years old he assembled a team, rented a crane, a wrecker and paid divers to hook up the aging iron and pull the train from its watery grave.

What James Lancaster had was a wood-burning locomotive that had been owned by Bache and Hagen Lumber Company of Luraville before the turn of the century. The engine was used as a tram, carrying felled trees from deep in the forests to the Suwannee River, where the logs would be rafted downriver to the mill. It sank when crossing the river on a barge on the Lafayette County side. When one spectator suggested the Smithsonian might be interested, another reportedly remarked, “We don’t care about those Yankee museums. This is the Southern Railroad!”

Mr. Lancaster was so proud of that train he displayed it for some time at his home/store in Luraville. Later he sold the engine to Mr. Jack Goyke of Jack-Goyke Lumber Company, who displayed it for some time at his “Train Headquarters” at the corner of Main and Delaware.

In 1982 the train was donated to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for safekeeping.

At the dedication, members of the Lancaster family came together with government officials and the forest community to recognize the historic treasure and a depot constructed with rough cut long leaf pine from Florida State Forests as an official historic site. The depot was built by firefighters from the Florida Forest Service.

**New Design Values approved for Southern Pine Dense and Non-Dense Lumber**

As a follow up to its approval of new design values for visually graded No. 2 and lower grades of 2x4 Southern Pine lumber in January, the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALS) Board of Review has approved new design values for No. 2, 2x4 Dense and Non-Dense grades, with an effective date of June 1, 2012. This size category includes material that is 2-4” thick and 2-4” wide. In announcing its decision on March 9, ALSC stated, “After consideration of all the information available to it, the Board approved the No. 2 Dense 2-4” thick and 2-4” wide, and No. 2 Non-Dense 2-4” thick and 2-4” wide southern pine design values as submitted by the Southern Pine Inspection Bureau (SPIB) on February 10, 2012, with a recommended effective date of June 1, 2012. The new design values for No. 2 Dense and No. 2 Non-Dense apply only to Southern Pine lumber,” says Cathy Kaake, senior director of engineered and framing markets for the Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA). “Mixed Southern Pine does not have published Dense and Non-Dense grades,” she added. Minutes of the ALS Board of Review’s March 9 executive session, along with previous ALSC rulings, are available on the New Design Values page at www.southernpine.com. Also available from this page is Supplement No. 9 to SPIB’s 2002 Standard Grading Rules for Southern Pine Lumber, plus a revised table providing the new design values.

BMP Workshops Announced

The Florida Forest Service has announced the following available dates and locations for “Florida Best Management Practices for Silviculture” workshops:

- **05.23.12** - East Palatka @ IFAS Extension Office (Reg Deadline: 05.14.12)
- **10.02.12** - Lake City @ IFAS Extension Office (Reg Deadline: 09.21.12)
- **11.13.12** - Bartow @ IFAS Extension Office (Reg Deadline: 11.02.12)

**Contact:** Robin Holland @ 352.732.1273 or Robin.Holland@freshfromflorida.com. Please note that there is limited seating, and registrations are confirmed on a first-come first served basis.

**Congress encouraged to strengthen rural economies with local forest resources**

Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Forestry, recently held a public hearing to review several aspects affecting forest health, including timber harvests, wildlife management, invasive species, and the US Forest Service’s planning rule. On behalf of the Federal Forest Resource Coalition, Chuck Watkins, Chief Operating Officer of Rex Lumber Company, joined a panel in testifying that more aggressive management practices are necessary, and that more needs to be done to reduce the regulatory burden on those working in the forest products industry.

“A more concentrated effort is needed to help ensure that further losses in wood-using capacity do not take place near the National Forests,” Watkins told the Subcommittee. “Whether the Forest Service is attempting to create early successional habitat for grouse and woodcock in the Great Lakes, maintain or improve quail or woodpecker habitat in the Southeast, or restore habitat diversity in older forests in the Pacific Northwest, the existence of viable wood consuming mills helps reduce their management costs and improve the quality of life in adjacent communities. We appreciate your efforts to keep these issues front and center at the Department, and look forward to working with you to achieve healthier National Forests and more prosperous rural communities,” Watkins stated.

Rex Lumber Company is a family owned company and is a founding member of the Federal Forest Resource Coalition (FFRC), which represents purchasers of Forest Service timber across the country. The Coalition has members in more than 24 states, with approximately 650 member companies representing 350,000 workers and about $19 billion in payroll.

Efforts continue to statutorily recognize BMP’s

Long established forest management practices are working in Florida and throughout the country to control stormwater runoff associated with timber harvesting operations. The most recent report on Silvicultural Best Management Practices for Florida confirms that. And this is the message the Association sent to Congress, asking our delegation to support the Silviculture Regulatory Consistency Act. H.R. 2541 and S. 1369. The bill would provide a legislative remedy, by codifying the intent of Congress when promulgating the Clean Water Act, to permanently allow exemptions for Silvicultural activities, including the use of forest roads, from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting process.

We invite comments and suggestions. Let us know what you think by writing us at: P.O. Box 1606, Tallahassee, Florida 32302; by phoning us at: (850) 222-8466; emailing: info@forestfla.org; or by faxing us at: (850) 222-6179

**FDACS Dignitaries L-R: Karels, Peterson, Putnam, Conner, Mikell, Bronson**

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- • Other Related Needs
- • Fall 2012 date TBA
- • Historical Data
- • Quarterly Reports
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- • Land Acquisition
- • Land Purchase
- • Equipment Purchase/Lease