More options give members more value

The Annual Meeting schedule has been completely revamped this year to offer more opportunities for learning while also allowing ample time to socialize. Thursday’s schedule will include an afternoon of Table Topics, where participants can move around to 12 different discussion areas during a three hour time period in order to receive expert advice on the following subjects:

- Cost share overview/Reforestation
- Forestry websites/apps: how to find, best navigate and use
- ID and control of major invasive species
- Intergenerational transfer of property
- Managing forestland for non-game wildlife
- Managing forestland for game
- Prescribed fire as a forest management tool
- Status of potential new wood and energy projects
- Timber marketing
- Value of Consulting Foresters
- Women in Timber
- Woodland Security

In addition, there will also be uninterrupted time to visit our exhibitors and take advantage of special features in our Trade Show area. The Annual Meeting is being held September 5-7, at the Baytowne Conference Center @ Sandestin Resort. Registration information will be mailed soon. Exhibitor registration is available now at www.floridaforest.org/_resources/files/EXH_REG2012.pdf.

LaDonna Gatlin to join us at Sandestin

Back by popular demand to help us celebrate our 90th Anniversary, LaDonna Gatlin will headline the President’s Dinner, being held September 6th, at Sandestin. The sister of country music’s Gatlin Brothers, LaDonna began her career as a member of the family singing group. Certainly her name insures great music, but LaDonna’s performance will go beyond the music with a powerful message.

LaDonna’s outstanding vocals along with plenty of down-home humor and storytelling will definitely send attendees off on a high note! Don’t miss this special performance, designed especially for our Anniversary celebration!
EPA responds to 9th Circuit Court ruling

On May 21, the Environmental Protection Agency released a notice of intent (NOI) stating the agency’s intent to remove the mandatory permit requirement for forest roads from its stormwater regulations and then evaluate stormwater discharges from forest roads in a separate study to determine whether any additional agency action is necessary. The NOI maintains EPA’s long-standing interpretation that Best Management Practices (BMPs), rather than permits, are the proper way to address water quality and forest road systems. This notice, which will be published in the Federal Register, will give the public 30 days to comment on alternative methods of addressing stormwater discharges from forest roads.

Importantly, the NOI addresses only the “permit requirement” and does not change the Ninth Circuit’s determination that forest roads are point sources, contrary to EPA’s 35-year position that they are not.

Solicitor General does not recommend further review

While pointing to error in the Ninth Circuit ruling, the US Solicitor General (SG) concluded recently that the 9th Circuit Case on Forest Roads does not warrant further review by the US Supreme Court. The brief gave Congress and EPA the nod as the best place to address the issues more definitively and in a more nuanced fashion.

The National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) agreed with the Solicitor General’s conclusion that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals erred in its NEDC v. Brown ruling, but expressed disappointment that the SG chose not to defend EPA’s 35-year policy on forest roads before the US Supreme Court. NAFO will continue to strongly encourage the Supreme Court to put an end to the Ninth Circuit’s disregard for legal precedent and EPA’s long standing and well established interpretation of the Clean Water Act.

Meanwhile, efforts continue for a permanent fix beyond the courts. The Florida Forestry Association will continue to work with NAFO and other groups to enact permanent legislation in Congress to preserve EPA’s existing regulations and provide long-term legal certainty to federal, state, tribal and private forest owners. Temporary legislation preventing the Ninth Circuit’s ruling from taking effect expires September 30, 2012.

Revised gopher tortoise goals proposed

Proposed changes in Florida’s gopher tortoise management plan are aimed at restoring its population so the gopher tortoise will no longer need threatened species protection. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is seeking public comment and plans to consider the proposal in September. The existing goal is to restore and maintain viable populations in the tortoise’s current range. The new version expands that goal statewide and adds the delisting intent. It is currently illegal to harm the reptiles or their burrows. Tortoise burrows also provide habitats for 350 other species including snakes, frogs and owls, some of them also threatened.

FFA and Southerland support preference for forest products

The Florida Forestry Association has joined other national and state organizations in a letter of support to allow inclusion of forest products in the USDA Biobased Market Program. Congress is considering a bill, the “Forest Products Fairness Act,” that will clarify that forest products should be included in the Program if they meet the minimum biobased content requirements including:

- pulp, paper, paperboard, pellets, and wood products
- any recycled products derived from forest materials

The bill is being sponsored by Representatives Glenn Thompson (R-PA-5) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR-5). US Representative Steve Southerland has joined the growing list of sponsors of this important piece of legislation. If included in the program, forest products could receive increased consumer attention with a USDA Certified Biobased label, as well as federal government procurement preference.

Most forest products are currently excluded from both the federal procurement preference and the market label of the USDA Biobased Markets Program through an exclusion of “mature market products,” defined as having been in existence prior to 1972. A new proposed rule from USDA suggests replacing this “mature products” exclusion with language that focuses the program on “new and emerging markets for biobased products.” The new proposal does not provide any certainty that forest products would be included in the program.

This bill will create a level playing field for forest products. Currently, products that compete with forest products, like bamboo-based tissues (most likely the bamboo used for this product is imported) or hemp-based pallets, receive the procurement preference and/or the label.

Agriculture Coalition concludes candidate interviews

As a member of the Florida Agriculture Coalition, the Forestry Association recently participated in six rounds of legislative candidate interviews. Seeking to identify and help elect legislative candidates that understand and support forestry and agricultural issues, the Agriculture Coalition spent 13 days interviewing over 100 candidates from the legislative districts statewide. Among the cities where the interviews were held: Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, Boca Raton, Coral Gables and Tallahassee.
Vote on LEED rating system delayed

The US Green Building Council (USGBC) has announced it will delay balloting “LEED 2012,” the next-generation rating system of the popular green building guidelines, until June 2013. As a result, USGBC has changed the name of the guidelines to “LEED v4.” USGBC said it was delaying voting on LEED v4 “in response to concerns raised by members, core LEED users and stakeholders, and in an effort to provide the marketplace a view of the full LEED program experience prior to ballot.” The group also indicated that it could potentially ballot LEED v4 earlier if members and the green building market can agree on the new guidelines sooner. According to GreenSource.com, the move resulted from “a growing outcry from architects and other building industry professionals” who had three main concerns: 1) The proposed changes were too much, too fast, especially in a weak market; 2) Some changes required more refinement, especially in the Materials & Resources category; and 3) Means to achieve the new credits would not be widely available by November 2012, when the new system was slated to launch. LEED’s current rating system recognizes wood only if it is certified to the Forest Stewardship Council’s forest standard. However, three quarters of the domestically certified forests operate on different standards, primarily the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) or the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), which are not recognized by LEED. As a result, LEED’s rating requirement has the adverse effect of dissuading builders from using US-made wood products that are ineligible for LEED certification, despite their substantial environmental and economic benefits.

Florida Energy Summit announced

Commissioner Adam Putnam has announced the 2012 Florida Energy Summit, a three-day conference hosted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, August 15-17, at Shingle Creek in Orlando. The 2012 Florida Energy Summit will bring together energy leaders from across the state and around the nation to share ideas on diversifying the state’s energy sources, spurring economic growth and promoting energy conservation.

“This year, we’re partnering with the Florida Energy Systems Consortium to feature expertise, research findings and emerging technologies from Florida’s world-class university system. Working together, we can develop and implement strategies to secure a stable, reliable and diverse supply of energy for Florida,” states Putnam. The summit will include research underway at Florida’s universities along with speakers offering short-term and long-term outlooks for the state’s energy industry along with how the state’s supply and demand of electrical fuels and technologies has changed over the past decade.

To register for the event, visit www.floridaenergysummit.com.

Association submits comments to EPA

The Florida Forestry Association provided comments to EPA on June 21 on its Notice of Intent (NOI) to specify that a federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is not required for logging roads. The Association applauded EPA’s continued support in the NOI for its 1976 determination that water quality impacts from forest roads, and forestry generally, are best addressed through state-adopted best management practices (BMPs), and also offered remedies for bringing as much certainty as possible to a final outcome of this issue. As we have previously reported, this issue originates from a recent Ninth Circuit Court decision to require NPDES permits for logging activity on forest roads which essentially overturned EPA’s 35-year approach to managing forest road runoff.

Spotlight On…

“‘If it appreciates, buy it. If it depreciates, lease it.’”

- J. Paul Getty

Planning to pay cash for your next equipment or vehicle purchase? Lisa Fulghum, Senior Relationship Manager with Farm Credit of Florida, wants you to consider leasing instead because leasing is a great way to keep your cash and acquire the equipment you need.

Appreciation vs. depreciation

Ask your accountant - she’ll tell you that it’s a smart move to lease items that depreciate in value like equipment, vehicles, and on-farm buildings.

Hedge against the unknown

Being an agribusiness owner, we don’t have to tell you that there are many variables in your industry. Weather, commodity prices, input costs and inflation are constantly changing. You can hedge against these unknowns with a short term lease (24–36 months). By leasing, you pay only for the usage of the equipment during the term. At the end of the term, you can purchase, surrender, renew, or upgrade to the newest model.

Cash has a price

With the current low rates available on leases, you may be better off investing your cash in your operation and creating a higher rate of return.

Leasing has a built in replacement cost

With a lease, you can continually upgrade to the latest and greatest every few years, effectively eliminating expensive maintenance and upkeep, and not have to worry about selling the older equipment.

Financially Sound

Using large amounts of cash to purchase equipment has an immediate negative impact on your balance sheet. Keep your cash. Leasing spreads your payments across time and helps you manage your cash flow.

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Coming Events

Jul 25  Palatka • Georgia-Pacific LLC Annex
FFA Annual Meeting
Sep 5-7  Sandestin @ Baytowne Wharf
FFA Executive Committee Meeting
Aug 1  High Springs @ Loncala
Master Logger continuing ed workshop
Sep 7  Sandestin @ Baytowne Wharf
FFA Board of Directors Meeting
Sep 8  Palatka @ Georgia-Pacific LLC Annex
Master Logger continuing ed workshop
Nov 14  Ocala • Ring Power
Master Logger continuing ed workshop
Dec 12  Lake City • Ring Power
Master Logger continuing ed workshop

Contact Debbie Bryant@ 850-222-5646 or debbie@forestfla.org

www.under.org