The 2014 legislative session ended on Friday, May 5, 2014. Overall, it was a good session for forestry and agriculture. Every year it is a challenge to hold bad bills at bay; this year that challenge was once again met. Not all of Florida Forestry Association’s priority legislation passed, but several issues important to our industry were successfully maneuvered through the process.

Below you will find highlights of some of the bills relevant to forestry that lived and died in the 2014 legislative session:

**Legislation that passed**

**Transportation:** CS/CS/CS/SB 218 by Sen. Denise Grimsley

This legislation includes language allowing log trucks to display an amber light to the rearmost point of the truck or trailer. This law will go into effect July 1, 2014. (Please note that amber lights are voluntary, not mandatory.)

**Water Storage:** CS/CS/SB 536 by Sen. Wilton Simpson

This legislation requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the five water management districts to conduct a comprehensive study on expanding the use of reclaimed water, stormwater and excess surface water in Florida. Among other things, the completed report will include information on the feasibility, benefit and costs of constructing storage facilities on private lands. Two public meetings will be held. The report is due December 1, 2015.

**Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services:** CS/HB 7091 by Rep. Cary Pigman

This legislation addresses a number of issues related to agriculture and the powers and duties of the Department. The bill contains several provisions of particular relevance to the forest industry:

- Allows the property appraiser to grant a 25-day grace period for the deadline to file for a Greenbelt classification on agricultural property;
- Ensures that ag producers participating in a dispersed water storage program maintain their Greenbelt classifications;
- Allows a landowner to establish a baseline for wetland conditions prior to implementing Best Management Practices and provides protections if wetland conditions are subsequently created; and
- Renames the Madison Forestry Station in honor of Mr. Harvey Greene (father of FFA Board member Bubba Greene)

**Budget issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Florida Forest Service – Budget Priorities</th>
<th>Requested</th>
<th>Passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter Pay Increase</td>
<td>$1.42 Million</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime Pay</td>
<td>$1 Million</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace Firefighting Equipment</td>
<td>$5 Million</td>
<td>$3 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural and Family Lands Protection Program</td>
<td>$10 Million</td>
<td>$5 Million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Department of Environmental Protection:**

Florida Forever Funding: $57.5 Million

**Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission:**

Chronic Wasting Disease Study: $50,000

**Legislation that Failed to pass**

**Sales Tax on Equipment Parts & Repairs** – This legislation would have expanded the sales tax exemption on power farm equipment to include parts and repairs.

**Ag Lands and Practices Act** – This legislation would have expanded the Act’s preemption of local government regulating forestry practices beyond adopted Best Management Practices to include wetlands protection ordinances adopted prior to 2003.

**Commercial Motor Vehicle Review Board** – This legislation would have expanded the Commercial Motor Vehicle Review Board from three representatives from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Department of Transportation and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to include three additional members from the private sector, including one from the construction, trucking and agricultural industries.

**Natural Resource Protection** – This legislation would have created the Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act. The Act would have mandated the delineation of management and protection zones for each spring designated as an Outstanding Spring as well as the adoption of minimum flows and levels and other protective measures.

**Retail Shopping Bags** – This legislation would have permitted local governments to ban the use of plastic shopping bags and assess a 10-cent tax on the use of paper shopping bags.
August 26-28, 2014, in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

FFA will return to the luxurious Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach for its 2014 Annual Meeting. From August 26-28, 2014, participants can look forward to a full and exciting slate of educational, recreational and networking opportunities.

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 26, 2014**

10:00 AM–6:00 PM Trade Show Set-Up – Champions A-E
1:00 PM–6:00 PM Registration Desk Opens – Champions A-E
3:00 PM–4:00 PM Forestry Council Meeting – Players B-C (Committee members only, please)
3:00 PM–5:00 PM Prescribed Burn Working Group – Players B-C (Committee members only, please)
6:00 PM–7:00 PM Icebreaker Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet – Champions A-E

**Wednesday, August 27, 2014**

6:30 AM–6:00 PM Registration Desk Opens – Champions A-E
6:30 AM–8:00 PM Tee-Time Coffee – Champions A-E
6:30 AM–9:00 AM Trade Show Set-Up – Champions A-E
6:45 AM–7:45 AM Tee-Time Coffee & Golf Registration – Ocean Course @ Ponte Vedra Inn and Country Club
8:00 AM–Finish Golf Tournament Shotgun Start – Ocean Course @ Ponte Vedra Inn and Country Club
8:00 AM–Finish Group Fun Run-Walk – Resort Entrance
8:30 AM–9:00 AM Exhibitor Orientation – TBA or Champions A-E
9:00 AM–7:00 PM Trade Show and Silent Auction Open – Champions A-E
10:00 AM–12:00 PM Roundtable Discussions (2 @ 1 hour each) – Champions A-E

Game Food Plots/Game Inventory – Jeff Bewsher, Legacy Wildlife Services (NPR5)

Control of Exotic Weeds – Jeremy Miller, Crop Production Services

12:00 PM–2:00 PM Lunch on your own

2:00 PM–4:00 PM General Sessions (3 @ 40 min each) – Champions F-H

**Thursday, August 28, 2014**

6:45 AM–12:00 PM Registration Desk Open – Champions A-E
6:45 AM–7:45 AM Early Bird Coffee – Champions A-E
8:00 AM–10:00 AM Awards Breakfast – Champions F-H
10:00 AM–4:30 PM Trade Show and Silent Auction Open – Champions A-E
10:00 AM–12:00 PM Roundtable Discussions (4 @ 1 hour each-choose 2) – Champions A-E

Game Food Plots/Game Inventory (Wed repeat) – Jeff Bewsher, Legacy Wildlife Services

Control of Exotic Weeds (Wed repeat) – Jeremy Miller, Crop Production Services

High Tech Tools for Forest Management – Mark Milligan, F4 Tech


12:00 PM–1:30 PM Lunch on your own
12:15 PM–1:30 PM Master Logger Luncheon (Master Loggers only, others may purchase ticket) – Players D:

**Flow**

4:30 PM–5:30 PM General Session/Panel Discussion: Grassroots Advocacy – Joe Savarise, BIPAC

1:30 PM–2:30 PM General Session – Champions F-H

Florida’s Political Landscape – Marian Johnson, Florida Chamber

Grassroots Advocacy – Joe Savarise, BIPAC

2:30 PM–3:30 PM General Session/Panel Discussion: Communications is Key* – Champions F-H

Building a Successful Outreach & Awareness Campaign: Forest Certifications – Jamie Mongiovi, Media Specialist

Effectively Affecting Policy – Mary Ann Gosa-Hooks, UF/IFAS Governmental Affairs

Common Ground Communication with Conservation Groups – Eric Draper, Gator Timber & Land, L.L.C.

Audubon FL

3:30 PM–4:30 PM Trade Show Social and Silent Auction final bidding: Live Auction surprise items; Exhibitors’ Unlimited $20 Cash Door Prize drawings; Gun Raffle – Champions A-E

5:00 PM–6:00 PM President’s Reception – Champions Foyer

President’s Dinner – Commissioner of Agriculture

6:00 PM–8:00 PM President’s Dinner – Commissioner of Agriculture

8:00 PM–9:00 PM Auction Item Pickup & Trade Show Teardown – Champions A-E

**SPONSORS**

**Presidental Partner**

* Sponsor list as of 6/19/2014

Help us reach our goal of 100 sponsors this year! Contact Debbie Bryant at 850.222.5646 or Debbie@ForestFla.org for information about the benefits of sponsorship.

w w w. F l o r i d a F o r e s t . o r g
TIMBER TOPPERS GOLF CLASSIC
Suwannee Lumber Company is proud to sponsor our annual Timber Toppers Golf Classic on the beautiful Ocean Course at the Ponte Vedra Inn and Country Club. Don’t miss this great golfing experience and networking time with other forest professionals and friends! Tee-time is 8 AM, Wednesday, August 27, 2014. Golf is open to all FFA members and guests. Meeting registration is not required to play in the tournament; however, all golfers must register for the tournament to ensure a spot.

HOTEL INFORMATION
Sawgrass Marriott Resort & Spa
Ponte Vedra Beach
Room Rate $119 nightly
Phone: 800.457.4653
Group Name: Florida Forestry Association
Reserve online at https://resweb.passkey/go/floridaforestryassociation
DEADLINE: JULY 30, 2014

FFA is proud to host Florida’s largest forestry trade show in conjunction with its Annual Meeting. Please contact Debbie Bryant at 850.222.5646 or Debbie@ForestFla.org for information about exhibiting.

MEMBER MILESTONES
Tom Reed, Vice President of Resources for Plum Creek’s Atlantic South Region, has been elected as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Forest Resources Association (FRA). Reed formerly served as president of FFA and remains active on its Board of Directors.

Richard Schwab, head of procurement and new business development for M.A. Rigoni, Inc., has been elected President of the Southeastern Wood Producers Association (SWPA). Schwab has been active in the forest industry for more than 20 years.

Henry Kempfer has been elected president of the Florida Cattlemen’s Association. In addition to his cattle operation, Kempfer, a member of FFA since 1985, also runs Kempfer Sawmill, Inc.

Natural Resource Planning Services (NRPS) recently celebrated their 40th Anniversary at the Austin Cary Forest Learning Center in Gainesville.

(Pictured left to right: Jack Vogel, John Holzaepfel, Tony Wallace and Tom Mastin)

Longtime FFA member Johnny Mack Brown has retired from Buckeye Nursery, Inc., after twenty years. Brown recently sold his interest in the operation and looks forward to a long and happy retirement.

Former FFA Board member Tom Cathey also recently announced his retirement from Resource Management Service (RMS). Cathey served as RMS’s Regional Manager for Florida since 2006. Previously, he had worked for Champion, International Paper and the state’s Division of Forestry (now the Florida Forest Service).

REFORESTATION RATES ON THE RISE
The Florida Forest Service has tracked reforestation trends in Florida since 1950. A chart depicting these trends through the 2012-2013 planting season is below.

As you will see, reforestation ticked up slightly in 2012 by about 4,000 acres compared to the prior two years. This represents an increase of roughly 3.5 million trees. The current rate remains less than half the acres planted on average during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. A significant decline started in the early 1990s and appears to have bottomed out in 2008-2009.

This chart also depicts planting by major landowner groups. Historically, the forest industry was the leading tree planting group in Florida. As the chart shows, non-industrial private landowners (NIPF) took the lead beginning around 2007.

NEW, LOWER HUNT LEASE RATES
The Florida Forestry Association (FFA), in partnership with Outdoor Underwriters, Inc., is now offering even lower rates to its members for hunt lease insurance! The new minimum premium rate has been reduced to $150! For more information, please call Phil Gornicki at the FFA office (850.222.5646).

WATER RULE COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has extended the public comment period for its proposed rule redefining what types of waters are subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act. Comments will now be accepted through October 20, 2014.

This extension was granted in response to a large number of requests to EPA and the Florida congressional delegation, including those of the Florida Forestry Association (FFA) and other concerned associations and businesses.

EPA and the US Army Corps of Engineers will continue to meet with state and local governmental officials, businesses, landowners, environmentalists and other stakeholders during the extended comment period. FFA will keep its members apprised of new developments related to the proposed rule change.

We invite comments and suggestions. Let us know what you think by writing us at:
PO Box 1696, Tallahassee, Florida 32302;
by phoning us at: (850) 222-5646;
by faxing us at: (850) 222-6179
emailing: info@forestfla.org;
or by visiting us at: 850.222.6179
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