CONCERNS ARISE WITH PROPOSED WATER RULE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) have released a proposed rule to revise the definition of “waters of the United States” for all Clean Water Act (CWA) programs. Despite the agencies’ claims to the contrary, the proposed changes have raised concerns that they would significantly expand federal control of land and water resources.

The U.S Supreme Court has made it clear that there is a limit to federal jurisdiction under the CWA. Regardless of that, the proposed rule actually adds new waters and areas to be regulated by the CWA.

EPA states that the rule is based on the Agency's draft scientific study on the connectivity of waters and is therefore supported by the latest peer-reviewed science. However, EPA’s Science Advisory Board panel is still in the process of peer-reviewing the draft connectivity report and, at its December 2013 meeting, the panel identified significant deficiencies with the report.

The rule does continue existing statutory and regulatory exemptions from Section 404 permitting requirements for normal farming, silviculture and ranching practices where these activities are part of an ongoing farming, ranching or forestry operation. However, the exemptions apply only so long as they are conducted consistent with NRCS conservation practice standards. They do not apply if there is a change of use. EPA and the Corps will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the NRCS to develop and implement a process for identifying, reviewing, and updating NRCS agricultural conservation practices and activities that would qualify for the exemption.

Additional problems with the agency's approach include questions that have arisen about who will inspect and enforce compliance with NRCS guidelines and whether third parties have the ability to challenge exempt status.

Forestry organizations are continuing to analyze the proposal, especially to better understand the potential implications for forest management activities.

CAPITAL DAYS

FFA leadership visited Florida’s capital city in mid-March for a full slate of events.

On Monday, March 17, 2014, FFA hosted the Working Forests Partners Roundtable and reception. A collaboration of the forest industry, governmental entities and the environmental community, this annual event provides an opportunity for open discussion on issues of shared interests. By working together to find common ground, the roundtable event strives to increase understanding and build consensus among its participants.

The next morning, the FFA Board of Directors gathered at the Florida Forest Service’s offices for one of its biannual meetings. Afterwards, directors and members of the Forestry Forward leadership class spent the afternoon in the capitol visiting with legislators and aids on FFA’s priority issues, including a meeting with House Speaker Designate Steve Crisafulli. Also Tuesday afternoon, members of the Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources hosted a reception for current class members and program alumni on the Association’s outdoor deck.

That evening, FFA participated in a legislative event hosted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Florida Farm Bureau. FFA’s exhibit featured information about the benefits of the forest industry, a Goods from the Woods display and a pine tree seedling giveaway.

SOUTHERLAND/YOHO FUNDRAISER

Congressmen Steve Southerland and Ted Yoho will be the guests of honor at a joint campaign fundraiser in Mayo on Thursday, May 15, 2014. Hosted by Ken and Lynetta Griner, Richard and Jennifer Schwab, and Jack, J.W., Earl, Benita and Paul Byrd, a delicious supper will be served at the Byrd’s Cookhouse at 6 PM (EDT).

This is an excellent opportunity for Florida’s forestry community to show its support for two outstanding representatives. Both Congressmen Southerland and Yoho do a superlative job in Washington, DC, and are well known for standing strong for their constituents. Forestry is important to the people in their districts, and it is important to the congressmen!

Because this is a joint fundraiser, checks should be made payable to Southerland/Yoho Victory. For more information, please contact Vickie Allen at 850.222.5646 or Vickie@ForestFla.org.
The Florida Forestry Association invites you to join us for our Annual Meeting, August 26-28, 2014, at the beautiful Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. 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.

Events include...
- General sessions led by noted speakers
- Roundtable discussions on topics of importance
- Landowner Day
- Meetings of various industry groups
- Networking opportunities
- Annual Awards Breakfast
- Master Logger Luncheon
- President's Reception and Dinner
- Silent Auction
- Timber Toppers Golf Tournament
- Door Prizes
- And much, much more!

Don't miss this chance to meet with the forest industry's leading professionals at one of the state's premiere golf resorts!

For more information, visit the FFA website at www.FloridaForest.org. Online registration will be available soon!

**SILVICULTURAL CONTRACTOR AWARD**

FFA is accepting nominations for the “Silvicultural Contractor of the Year Award.” This award recognizes the dedication, hard work and challenges of those individuals whom we depend on for professional silvicultural services.

**Who can be nominated?**
Mechanical site preparation contractors, herbicide applicators, timber stand improvement contractors, tree planters, fertilizer applicators.

**Who can submit a nomination?**
Any member of FFA. All members are encouraged to nominate any contractor they feel exemplifies the best in silvicultural contractors.

**How will it be judged?**
All of the nominations will be reviewed and judged by members of the FFA “Silvicultural Contractor of the Year Award” committee. All of the committee members are FFA members and are actively involved with silvicultural activities. The top finalists will be judged in an on-site evaluation.

**What do they win?**
Complimentary registration and hotel accommodations for one night for the finalist and their spouse at the FFA annual meeting. Recognition at the awards breakfast and appropriate award plaque.

**What is the deadline for nominations?**
All nominations must be submitted no later than May 16th, 2014.

**FORESTRY ON WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT BOARDS**

Carla Yetter of Fernandina Beach has been appointed to the Governing Board of the St. Johns River Water Management District representing Nassau and Baker counties and portions of northern Duval County (Area 1). Ms. Yetter is Vice President of Environmental Affairs for Rayonier in Jacksonville.

Al Alexander has been reappointed to the Governing Board of the Suwannee River Water Management District to represent the Upper Suwannee River Basin. Mr. Alexander has an extensive background in agriculture and forestry. Since 2005, Mr. Alexander has worked as an independent contractor for The Forestry Company of Perry.

For more information, please contact Jonathan Webber at 850-222-2473.

Seeking Nominations for Audubon Florida's

**Sustainable Forester Award**
Presented at the Annual Meeting of The Florida Forestry Association

Criteria: Florida Based Forester, Forestry Family or Forestry Business, Excellent Practices and Results Showing Benefits for Water and Wildlife

Easy Nomination: 1 page letter with photographs and other supportive documentation, contact information for nominated forester and nominator. Supportive letters appreciated but not necessary. *Please limit to ten pages or less*

Send to: Eric Draper, edraper@audubon.org, Executive Director Audubon Florida

Deadline: June 15, 2014

Selection committee: Florida Forestry Association and Audubon Florida

For more information, please contact Jonathan Webber at 850-222-2473.
2014 FLORIDA FORESTS TEACHERS’ TOUR: SPONSORS NEEDED!!

The Florida Forests Teachers’ Tour is an annual event that gives the forest industry the opportunity to tell forestry’s story to educators from around the state. Teachers take back the information and insights they learn in this four-day hands-on experience and incorporate them into their curriculum during the school year. This year’s tour will be held June 17-21 in Fernandina Beach, FL.

Each $500 sponsorship allows one teacher to participate at no cost to him/herself beyond travel to and from Fernandina. At this point, funding for 38 teachers has been secured. More sponsors are needed to ensure funding for all 45 teachers!

Many thanks to the companies, groups and individuals who have already signed up to support this program – they are vital to its success!

Akerman LLP; Phillip Allen; Callahan Timber Company; Coastal Plywood Company; Cochran Forest Products; Dave Norton and Diann Douglas; Florida Division Society of American Foresters; Foley Timber and Land Company; Forest Investment Associates; Greg and Martina Driskell; Packaging Corporation of America; Plum Creek Timber Company; the Rayonier Foundation; Rex Lumber Company; RockTenn; School of Forest Resources and Conservation, UF/IFAS; Southern Forestry Consultants; Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc.; T.W. Byrd’s Sons, Inc.; and Usher Land and Timber, Inc.

Won’t you join them and become a sponsor today? Contact Vickie Allen at 850.222.5646 or Vickie@ForestFla.org.

AUSTIN CARY FOREST LEARNING CENTER OPENS

The University of Florida’s School of Forest Resources & Conservation celebrated the opening of the new and improved Austin Cary Forest Learning Center on Saturday, April 5, 2014.

“The Association is proud to be part of the effort that made the new center a reality,” said Alan Shelby, FFA’s Executive Vice President. “It was a blow to the forestry community when the original building burned down, but its replacement is a true showplace for the beauty of Florida forest products.”

With heart pine floors and cypress columns and paneling, the new center offers a conference center, classroom, gallery, library, full-sized catering kitchen and a beautiful deck overlooking Lake Mize.

ACFLC contributors at the Center’s grand opening.

SFRC Director Tim White, FFA Executive Vice President Alan Shelby and ACFLC Development and Construction Committee Chair Jack Vogel

FORESTRY FORWARD

The 2014 class of Forestry Forward, FFA’s up and coming leadership group, held their first meeting in March at Coastal Plywood Company in Havana, FL. David Norman, Coastal’s Timber Procurement Manager, gave an overview of their day-to-day operations before leading a tour inside the plywood facility. Jim Pattillo, President of Coastal Forest Resources Company, and Travis Bryant, CEO, spoke to the group as well.

The class also participated in FFA’s Board of Directors meeting and legislative events in Tallahassee. (See story page 1). There will be at least three additional functions during the year that have been planned specifically for them.

New this year, Forestry Forward events will be organized and facilitated by its first chairperson: David Hand of RockTenn. Hand says his focus will be to provide career-related educational experiences for the group.

From left: Bright Logan, John Dooner, Ret Tiner, David Hand, Emily Lowe, Franklin Van Aernam, Jr., Ray Sharpe, Donald Murphy. Not pictured: Daniel Hautamaki, Brett Matuszak and John Sabine.

ACFLC contributors at the Center’s grand opening.

SFRC Director Tim White, FFA Executive Vice President Alan Shelby and ACFLC Development and Construction Committee Chair Jack Vogel

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

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