Urban Forestry and the Wildland/Urban Interface

MS SAF 2003 Annual Meeting
March 4-5, 2003

This year’s annual meeting will provide you with an opportunity to explore the growing importance and impact of urban and community forestry in Mississippi. Urbanization will be changing the way we have traditionally managed forest resources throughout the state.

CONTINUING FORESTRY EDUCATION
Earn 5.5 Continuing Forestry Education Hours - Category 1 (1 hour applies to Forestry Ethics). Earn 1 Continuing Forestry Education Hour - Category 5 for the business meeting.

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
This year’s 18 hole golf tournament will be held at the Big Oaks Golf Club in Tupelo. Golf registration includes cart, sleeve of balls with SAF logo, range balls and a box lunch. Tournament will begin at 11:30 a.m.

NORBORD TOUR
If you do not want to participate in the annual golf tournament, a Norbord plant tour is planned for Tuesday, March 4 at 1:00 p.m.

SPOUSES TOUR
Leave Ramada Inn for the Mall at Barnes Crossing at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 5. There will be a demonstration by McRae’s personnel followed by a luncheon at 11:00 a.m. at the Flowerdale Market.

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Comments from the Chair

A quote appears in my local paper that says we spend more time at our job than we do with our spouse, so be choosy. Balancing activities in our lives within a given time period is so important. We all need mental, physical, spiritual, family, and work activities in balanced proportions. I’ll bet that Past-Chair Preston Padgett already knows this, because he revealed in his last "Comments" that he still loved his job and the forestry profession with a career spanning 37 years. I have to admit that I too enjoy my work, and I try to balance the other important aspects like family, friends, exercise, reading, and praying. Admittedly, there is not near enough time in a day to accomplish all that I would like to. Truly finding one’s passion and pursuing it with excellence is a significant treasure in one’s life.

Musingly, I've considered how mass news media influences and occupies our thoughts. It’s no wonder that the forestry profession is not on the forefront of people's minds. Foreign and local controversies, crime, weather, disasters, devastations, racial tensions, the stock market, religious insurrections, terrorism, war, cloning, and strife, strife, strife… is what occupies the news. The forestry profession isn't alone in competing for recognition. Many professions are taken for granted, but they are still important to each of us. Garnering a rapport with local reporters and business leaders is a good first step toward proactively introducing them to forestry.

Many challenges and opportunities will always be present. Our strong commitment to the Society of American Foresters will ensure that the challenges are met and opportunities capitalized upon. I have much faith that our National Chair Jason Kutack will provide a unique and stunning leadership performance.

I sincerely look forward to seeing everyone at our annual meeting in Tupelo on March 4-5, 2003. The meeting is going to be an enjoyable event. Preston Padgett, Andy Londo, Ron Honea, and the Northeast Chapter members have exerted a diligent effort to ensure a successful occasion. The final determinant for the meeting’s success will be up to us to attend and participate.
Comments from the Vice-Chair

I was asked by Randy to submit an article for the Magnolia Forester and was somewhat void of ideas for such an article. But while mulling over the task, I remembered some events that took place over the years and decided to reminisce a bit.

Having been born and raised in eastern Kansas most of you would think that I probably never saw a tree until I left for greener pastures. On the contrary, there was a good many trees and tree species along the stream bottoms and in the lesser drainages. One of the most prominent of these was the American elm (Ulmus Americana L.). It was a major component of the stream bottoms and was extensively used as an ornamental in the parks and lined the streets of most of the cities and small towns. I especially remember the intertwined canopies of American elm on many of the streets and they were quite comparable to the live oaks currently in southern Mississippi. And then, about the time I was finishing grade school, disaster struck. All of the American elm began to die. Some called it "Dutch elm disease" but I later found that it was caused by "elm phloem necrosis". Regardless of the vector, it was most devastating. As we had a number of these dead and dying elms in the yard and elsewhere on the farm, it became necessary to begin their removal. These were the days before the chain saw so my dad would begin by putting in an undercut with an axe. I remember how straight and level the undercut was as he would chop a while from one side of the tree and then switch to the other side to chop a while. Without the chain saw we would finish felling the tree with a crosscut saw and it became my task to man one end with my dad on the other. It soon became apparent that if I could just pull the saw back to me, the cutting would be done in the opposite direction. Consequently, the sawdust pile was much larger on the other end of the saw. We were proud if we were able to get one of these trees down and cut up in a day as some were four feet or more in diameter.

My next recollection associated with the American elm was in northern Mississippi. It was shortly after I moved to Starkville the elms in that area began to decline. Despite the efforts of Dr. Vernon Ammon and others to stop or even slow the progress, it was not long before the trees were dead and removed. I especially remember the naked look of the street in front of Dorman Hall without its canopy of elm trees. There are probably many of you reading this article that remember that occurrence and the devastating look of the many stumps around the campus.

My next encounter with an elm disease took place while I was working in eastern Oregon. Having been requested to look at a dying tree in a small town in northeast Oregon, I found an isolated elm tree with all the symptoms of the Dutch elm disease. A sample to the lab at OSU confirmed my suspicions and I was told that it was the first reported incident of that particular disease in eastern Oregon.

All of this has been leading up to the most recent event in the continuing love affair with the trees of my youth. About a month before Christmas I encountered an article about a particular variety of the American elm. It told of a group of elm trees in Princeton, New Jersey that survived the diseases that had came their way and even survived attempts to inoculate them with the diseases. Within a few short hours, I had viewed the web site of the nursery that was propagating these trees and had placed an order for one. It is now planted in my front yard where it will provide the front of my house with shade from the rising sun. Talk about a sucker for trees. By the way, does anyone know anything about the "Dunston" chestnut?
AGENDA

Tuesday, March 4
10:00 a.m. MS SAF Executive Committee meeting
11:30 a.m. Golf tournament - Big Oaks Golf Club
1:00 p.m. Tour of NORBORD plant
5:00 p.m. Registration
6:30 p.m. MSU Alumni reception

Wednesday, March 5
7:30 a.m. Registration
(Exhibits and Silent Auction Open)
8:00 a.m. Call to order
Mr. Preston Padgett
2003 Annual Meeting Chair
Welcome - Tupelo Mayor
8:15 a.m. Address by National SAF President
Mr. Jay Kutack
9:00 a.m. Spouses tour departs
9:00 a.m. Technical session begins
Dr. Andy Londo, Moderator
Importance and role of urban forestry
Mr. Bill Hubbard
Urban forests as watersheds
Ms. Donna Yowell
10:15 a.m. Break
10:30 a.m. Urbanization and timber harvesting
Dr. Ian Munn
Wildlife in urban areas
Dr. Ben West
11:45 a.m. Lunch (on your own)
1:00 p.m. Technical session resumes
Mr. Ron Honea, Moderator
Opportunities for consultants in the urban forest
Mr. Billy Rye
Firewise communities
Mr. Jeff Ware
2:15 p.m. Business meeting
3:15 p.m. Break
3:30 p.m. Forestry ethics
Dr. Bob Daniels
4:30 p.m. Technical session ends
6:00 p.m. Social (cash bar)
7:00 p.m. Awards banquet
8:30 p.m. Entertainment

LOCATION AND LODGING
The Mississippi SAF annual meeting will convene at the Ramada Inn and Convention Center in Tupelo, MS which is located at the intersection of McCullough Blvd. and North Gloster St. (854 N. Gloster). A block of rooms has been reserved at the special rate of $59.00 per night. To guarantee this special rate please call 662.844.4111 and mention you will be attending the SAF meeting. Other accommodations are available in the area.

SPEAKERS
Mr. Bill Hubbard
USFS, Southern Extension Forester, Atlanta, GA

Ms. Donna Yowell
MS Urban Forestry Council, Madison, MS

Mr. Jay Kutack
National SAF President

Dr. Ian Munn
Department of Forestry, MSU

Dr. Ben West
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, MSU

Mr. Billy Rye
Consultant Forester, Florence, AL

Mr. Jeff Ware
MS Forestry Commission, Tupelo, MS

Dr. Bob Daniels
Department of Forestry, MSU

REGISTER TODAY!
See the registration form in this issue of Magnolia Forester or register online at http://www.cfr.msstate.edu/mssaf
## New MS SAF Officers Elected

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CHAPTER NEWS

Four Lakes
The last meeting was held in December at Big Creek Mississippi. Thirty-five individuals participated. The Annual Christmas Auction was held with auctioneer Don Bell. The Chapter raised approximately $400. Part of these funds will be used to finance memorial tree plantings in memory of Victor B. “Vic” MacNaughton and Ray M. Conarro. Vic was the first forest supervisor of the Mississippi National Forest and was project manager of the Yazoo Little Tallahatchie flood prevention project. Ray was the acquisition manager for the U.S. Forest Service and acquired much of Mississippi’s forest land for the Forest Service. He also worked for the Mississippi Forestry Commission and organized their fire control efforts in North Mississippi. The trees will be planted in February at the U.S. Forest Services’ Hydrology Laboratory in Oxford. Anyone in the area is welcome to attend the ceremony and reception following.

Magnolia
The last meeting was the annual Christmas Banquet held at Jones Junior College. The next meeting has not been scheduled.

Capitol
Our new officers for 2003 are Chair Ryan Ramsey, consulting forester, Brandon, Vice Chair Robert Boyd, forester, Woodland Services, Inc., Philadelphia, and Secretary Jennifer Brady, forester and soon-to-be-mother, Brandon. We look forward to another great year under their leadership.

Northeast
The Northeast Chapter has been busy working on the Annual Meeting. A planning meeting scheduled for February.

Broadleaf
The final meeting of 2002 was held November 7, 2002 at Anne Caseys Steak House in Greenville. In the business meeting Glynn Brown and Larry Moore agreed to serve as the nominating committee to come up with a nominee to fill the currently vacant Vice Chair slot. The rotation of meetings was set at Greenville, Vicksburg, Yazoo City. These are general locations, sticking to set rotation allows all chapter members the most opportunity to attend meetings. Outgoing Chair Arel Simpson challenged the chapter to find new and exciting tools to recruit new members into the chapter. Wendell Haag presented an enlightening presentation on the freshwater mussels of Mississippi, their status and relevance to forest managers.

Loblolly
The loblolly chapter held elections in the fall for a new chair-elect and secretary/treasurer. Dr. Debbie Gaddis was elected as chair elect and Dr. Kris Konnor was elected Secretary/Treasurer. The 2003 chair is Mr. Brad Campbell. The chapter held a meeting at Lake Tiak-O-Khata on December 10. Rick Olson from the Mississippi Forestry Commission spoke about the importance of urban forestry and trees in the urban environment.

Homochitto
No updates since the last meeting.

Longleaf
We conducted our last 2002 chapter meeting on December 12, 6:30 p.m., MS State Extension Service
District Office, Hattiesburg. The speaker was our own Jason Kutack, who gave us an update on the happenings of the SAF on a national level. Jason then presented SAF member Ben Stevens, Jr. with a 50 year membership certificate. There were 16 members in attendance.

MSU Student Chapter
The MSU SAF Student chapter has been quite busy during the fall months. In November, five students assisted with the SAF Project Learning Tree Field Day held at the Plymouth Bluff Environmental Education Center. Students spent the day assisting Mississippi forestry leaders in exposing Mississippi teachers to forest related lesson plans for instructing children about nature. The student chapter also maintained a display for MSU's Discovery Day as part of the College of Forest Resources' effort to recruit incoming freshman and transfer students.

In October, the SAF Student Chapter hosted a guest speaker, John Baswell District Ranger from the Ackerman office of the Tombigbee National Forest, to discuss with Chapter members attributes looked for by potential employers such as the USDA Forest Service. Approximately, 45 students were in attendance. This was the third speaker in a series to help students become more aware of employer needs in the forestry sector. The Chapter also held its annual fall field day at Dorman Lake near Starkville. Approximately, 30 students attended the event. Events included DBH estimation, dendrology, wood identification, photogrammetry, knife and axe throwing, log rolling, speed chopping, men's crosscut, woman's crosscut, Jack-and-Jill crosscut, and pole felling. Students also attended the Mississippi Forestry Association Annual Meeting in Jackson. The students set up a display representing SAF and assisted with the Awards Banquet.

Eleven students from the student chapter attended the SAF National Convention in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Chapter received special recognition for achieving second place in 2001/2002 SAF Outstanding Student Chapter Award for the United States.
John H. Beuter, CF, of Corvallis, Oregon, has been elected vice-president of the Society of American Foresters. After serving SAF as vice-president in 2003, Beuter will assume the SAF presidency—the organization’s top volunteer leadership position—on January 1, 2004.

Beuter is one of the nation’s foremost experts in forest economics, with particular expertise in management decision analysis, forest valuation, forest resource analysis, forest economics policy, and forestry education. He manages his own forests and consults as owner and president of Umpqua-Tualatin, Inc. in Corvallis, Oregon. From 1993 through 2001 he was with natural resource consultants Duck Creek Associates, Inc., of Corvallis, serving as principal and president through 1999, and senior associate and director thereafter. He remains on the firm’s board of directors. He is also a Courtesy Professor of Forest Resources in the College of Forestry at Oregon State University.

During 1991 and 1992 he served in the first Bush administration as deputy and acting assistant secretary in the US Department of Agriculture, overseeing the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service. From 1988-1990, he was consulting forester and principal with Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc., in Portland. Beuter was professor of forest management at Oregon State University (OSU) from 1970 to 1988. From 1961 to 1968, he was research forest economist and resource analyst with the USDA Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station in Portland, the last three years as project leader for marketing economics research.

Born and raised in Chicago, Beuter has a BS degree in forestry and an MS degree in forest economics from Michigan State University, and a PhD in forestry and economics from Iowa State University. During his career Beuter has written more than 50 reports on forest management, resources, economics, policy, and education. He has also received research awards from Oregon State University in 1977 and 1990.

Beuter joined SAF as a student member in 1955 and has been a professional member since 1957. Elected SAF Fellow in 1986, Beuter has served on the SAF Council, the organization’s governing body, representing District II (1996–98), and on a number of national SAF committees and task forces, including the Task Force on Forest Health and Productivity (1994–96), Accreditation Committee (1987–91), Task Force on Below-Cost Timber Sales (1981–84), and the Task Force on Commercial Timberland (1981–84). He has also been active in SAF working group activities and the Oregon SAF.

The 2002 SAF elections also resulted in the election of four new representatives on the SAF Council. They are Ann Forest Burns of Seattle, Washington (District I); Marlin Johnson of Albuquerque, New Mexico (District IV); Michael B. Lester of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania (District VII); and Emmett F. Thompson of Auburn, Alabama (District X).

Forty-one SAF members were elected SAF Fellow, the highest honor that can be bestowed on an SAF member. Fellows are SAF professional members who have been identified by their peers as having rendered outstanding service to forestry and the Society.
Governor Musgrove recently announced an initiative to boost funding for education in Mississippi and bolster what many say is our state's number one economic development need. But what is forestry's connection to education?

If we want to promote economic development in Mississippi forest industry, foresters should have an interest in better education so tomorrow's workforce is as capable as possible. But there is a more direct connection between forests and education in Mississippi and it's one that we encounter regularly: sixteenth section forestlands.

As many of us know the sixteenth section lands were held in the public domain from the earliest days of statehood (1830s), "for the support of public education". They are managed by the local Board of Education with the assistance of the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) for the purpose of providing funds for the support of local schools.

According to the Mississippi Forestry Commission's latest figures there are 438,118 acres of forest on sixteenth section lands in Mississippi. From 1993 to 2001 there were an average of 189 timber sales per year on an average of 15,472 acres and the revenues averaged $15.4 million annually. But what do those figures really mean? Is that the most revenue that the sixteenth section could produce for education in Mississippi? We have a great need to fund better education for our state's future. Could the sixteenth section forests generate more for our school systems?

These are questions worth answering. As Mississippi's professional forestry organization, the Mississippi SAF should be the group asking these questions and we are. It is the position statement of the Mississippi SAF that "Mississippi sixteenth section lands in forest be managed to provide the maximum income possible for local school districts within the multiple use concept of management." But without current specific information about these lands the maximization of revenues is not possible. The MS SAF understands that the MFC is preparing the first detailed statewide inventory of sixteenth section forestlands. The Mississippi SAF recommends that the MFC develop a comprehensive inventory of all Mississippi sixteenth section forestlands to facilitate better management planning and increase income for local schools.

All MS SAF members and chapters are encouraged to do your part for education in Mississippi. Take an interest in the management of the sixteenth section forests in your area. Invite the Chairman of the local school board and the MFC public lands forester to speak at your chapter meeting and give a report on sixteenth section forestland status in your area. And show them the MS SAF policy statement on Sixteenth section forestland management. Take a field trip to the sixteenth section forestlands in your area and see the results of current management.

Your local SAF chapter can make a difference for education in your area. Get started this year.
The December meeting is over and I feel much more comfortable representing you after my first year. The current membership report - received December 16, 2002 - shows we lack 41 members from meeting our goal of 1,423 for 2002. Keep up the good work! The SAF is worth your effort.

Last week I received a call from a prominent Mississippi member to compliment the December Journal. Three days later he wanted two new applications. That's the kind of work it will take to turn membership around. We must do it.

The national meeting in Winston-Salem was a winner in many ways (1,489 persons registered). The students from our District represented our forestry schools well. Thanks to all that played a part in making it possible for students to attend the national meeting, and let's have more at Buffalo. If our Society is going to move forward, then we must do a better job at convincing the forestry school students to be a part of SAF and continue to do so after they leave college.

Foresters, the “Muddy Boots” are still on the table, thanks to our fine councilman from Virginia, Lee Spralding. The Field Forester award takes its place with our other National awards. How well we appreciate the man on the ground and in the field. The Journal editor needs more articles from field foresters.

The 2003 budget is set by the Finance Committee and approved by the Council. Continued support by the membership across the board; cues, Foresters Fund, endowments, etc. will be needed to keep our home office (Wild Acres) and staff operating for another year. The attendance at Winston-Salem made it possible to receive a very favorable settlement with our insurance company for the losses on the 2001 Convention.

We are really sorry to lose Bill Banzhof. We wish him well in his next venture. He has served SAF with distinction and will be missed by the Council. The good part is he will still be an active member of SAF. The search is on for a new Executive Vice-President. Mike Goergen will take over, as interim, and the clock will keep ticking.

The leadership academy needs your help. The cost is too much for the number of attendees. Unless there is a step up in members wanting to attend, and an outside source of funds, it will not be held in 2003. The members that have attended need to let the Council know your wishes and back it with dollars. The Certified Forester program has over 2,000 members and growing. The details on this program will be in the Forestry Source.

I want to congratulate Joe Spinks and Jim Walley. It's a real honor to be selected by your fellow Foresters to be a “Fellow”. Our Mississippi State Forester is the new Chair of the National State Foresters Group. Thanks to Jim Sledge for all the work you do for Mississippi and its landowners. “Core Values” and the 2004 SAF Strategic Plan, approved by the Council, are coming your way soon. They should be helpful in identifying what we are and where we are going.

Serving you on Council is the highlight of my 46-year forestry career. It is an honor and a challenge. Thanks to District XI and be assured that your forestry interests are part of all SAF Council meetings.
There's a new trail in town.

The recently completed Avent Park Natural Trail was dedicated October 18th in Oxford.

The 1,700-foot trail features a butterfly garden, woodland garden and outdoor classroom. The dedication ceremony took place in the outdoor classroom.

“This was about 4 acres of unusable public land but now it will offer a special outdoor learning experience,” said Billy Lamb, city building and grounds superintendent.

Lamb was working with city crews to clean up the area during the summer of 2000 when the idea struck him that the layout of the land would be perfect for a walking trail. He brought the idea to Tree Board Chairman John Arrechea, who wrote a grant application for the project and coordinated help from volunteer groups. The bulk of construction work was done by city grounds crews.

“It was built with children in mind, but everyone can enjoy walking through and learning what a sassafras tree looks like,” Lamb said. “The goal is really just teaching people about the outdoors.”

A joint initiative of the Oxford Tree Board, Parks and Recreation Department and Building and Grounds Department, the project was made possible with the assistance of an Urban and Community Forestry Grant in cooperation with the Mississippi Forestry Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Lamb estimates the project has cost about $3,500 in grant money.

The trail is designed for foot traffic only.

The ongoing project will eventually reclaim an unsafe and unusable hillside and turn it into a four-acre area where both children and adults can study trees, plant life, animals and insects, or just sit and enjoy nature.

Each area of the nature trail has been designed to offer visitors something different to enjoy.

The butterfly garden has been planted with perennial flowers to attract butterflies which need shelter, food and water.

The woodland garden features trees and shrubs that are shade-loving plants native to Mississippi.

The outdoor classroom provides seating for up to 30 students to learn about nature and the plant life of Oxford.

This article was submitted by John Arrechea, Four Lakes Chapter member and Chair of the Oxford Tree Board.

Shea Stewart
Oxford Eagle
The Project Learning Tree workshop and the Mississippi Society of American Foresters “Walk in the Woods” workshop combined to instruct classroom teachers on how to use materials provided by Project Learning Tree. The classroom materials include a 400-page book with environmental-based lesson plans based on science that can be incorporated in all classes. Thirty-four Mississippi University for Women education students and 13 teachers attended the workshop at Plymouth Bluff in November. Attendees participated in the “Walk in the Woods” and three Project Learning Tree activities to reinforce what they learned.

**Foresters, Come Home to SAF**

It is generally estimated that about half of the foresters in the U.S. are members of SAF. That is a loss to SAF and, indeed, to all foresters. You’re right, this is going to be a hard sell, and here’s why:

*There is only one home for foresters, and that’s SAF!*

Oh sure, there are some other fine forestry organizations, but those are either too specialized, too general, or too regional to represent professional foresters nationwide.

Some foresters do not belong because they do not agree with some policies or stances of SAF. You have probably detected that I don’t agree completely either, but...

**That is the worse excuse for not belonging!**

You can influence the direction of SAF as a member, but your opportunity to do so is practically nil if you don’t belong. And while we’re at it, if you are a member and don’t vote, as is usually true for a majority of eligible voters, you have no one to blame but yourself and others like you if the organization does not meet your expectations.

Most Americans have never met a forester, and citizens ill-informed on forest issues are voting in some terrible laws. We are too few in number to divide our forces. We must develop better means of communicating to a propagandized public, to inform law makers, to provide continuing education for our members, and to support research on which science-based forestry depends. It is a gigantic task, even if all foresters join together, but we must succeed.

Harry V. Wiant, Jr. - Past President of SAF
November 1996
By February 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must decide whether the California Spotted Owl is to be classified as "endangered," or "threatened." Will it base its decision on sound science? Or will environmental politics determine the outcome?

Much as we would like to believe that environmental decisions are simply based on science, far too often this is not the case. In fact, there have been an increasing number of cases over the past decade in which faulty science has been used to justify poor environmental decisions. So prevalent have such cases become that it increasingly appears to be too much to ask of government environmental scientists to put their personal values aside in the interest of producing the best, most reliable information. This leaves the courts to determine whether the science underlying environmental policy is sound; something they can do only if that science is subject to meaningful outside peer review and thoroughly scrutinized in the courtroom.

A notorious example occurred in 1992, when the Wetsel-Oviatt Lumber Co. was the highest bidder on a sale of Bald Mountain timber from the Eldorado National Forest in California. Like all U.S. Forest Service timber sales, this one had passed an extensive environmental impact analysis and approval process. Yet, Wetsel-Oviatt was denied the award of the sale. The reason: Studies performed by Forest Service wildlife biologists claimed that harvesting would cause unacceptable damage to wildlife habitat.

Wetsel-Oviatt disputed the findings, filed a bid protest lawsuit, and after a four-year court battle, ultimately prevailed. The U.S. Court of Federal Claims found the evidence marshaled by the Forest Service lacked any rational basis in scientific fact and appeared biased by the "personal predilections" of government officials.

Had the court not granted attorneys for Wetsel-Oviatt thorough discovery of the administrative record, including access to the underlying data used by government scientists, the subterfuge never would have been uncovered. Even more important, had Forest Service scientists made their underlying data and methodology available for public scrutiny and outside peer review, the flaws in their science might very well have been revealed without litigation.

In a recent Endangered Species Act case, the National Marine Fisheries Service, for purposes of declaring the coho salmon an endangered species, tried to separate legal consideration of hatchery-spawned cohos from that of cohos spawned naturally.

Knowing it would be difficult to convince anyone that a species that can be replicated in hatcheries was "endangered," the service wanted the courts to make a distinction between virtually identical fish. The move was rejected as arbitrary and capricious, having no scientific basis. Again, the court, while respecting agency discretion, saw no reason not to allow litigants, where necessary, to closely scrutinize the work done by agency scientists.

In another case last year, two government scientists submitted samples of hair from the endangered Canada Lynx as part of a survey being conducted by state and federal agencies. The samples were falsely labeled as coming from Washington state forests, when in fact they were laboratory samples. The hoax was discovered, and the ensuing scandal served to illustrate the dangers - with the management of millions of acres potentially at stake - of failing to ensure that environmental decisions are above suspicion of bias.

Courts and agencies have the tools they need to ensure that sound science underlies environmental decisions. The U.S. Supreme Court, in Daubert vs. Merrill Dow Pharmaceuticals Inc., has endorsed the "gatekeeping" function of federal judges to screen out expert testimony based on unsound science, and call for outside peer review. And the U.S. Office of Management and Budget has issued new guidelines that allow court challenges of information that doesn't comply with rigorous scientific standards.

It remains to be seen whether judges will take up these tools, or whether politics will continue to trump science on environmental issues.
Despite value decrease, timber industry begins to stabilize

The predicted 1.2 percent decrease in value of Mississippi's timber harvest this year may represent a turn toward better conditions in the next few years.

Farm economists and forestry scientists with Mississippi State University's Extension Service are predicting the value of Mississippi's 2002 timber harvest at $1.06 billion, compared to 2001's value of almost $1.08 billion.

Bob Daniels, an extension forestry researcher, said the value of the 2001 harvest represented a 17 percent decrease from the previous year, rather than the expected 10 percent decrease. With harvest volume down 17 percent, 2001 turned out to be a very difficult year for the forest products business. "It was good to see some stabilization in 2002, even if the estimated value is still lower than in 2001," Daniels said. "Signs for the timber industry in the second half of the year are better in some sectors than they were this time last year."

Daniels noted that total harvested volume in Mississippi was about 3 percent higher in 2002, but prices for pine sawlogs - Mississippi's most important product - were about 5 percent lower than in 2001.

"Since pine log values comprise 60 percent of the timber harvest value, the price decrease helped cause harvest values to fall," he said.

Daniels said pine log prices have fallen in response to the falling Southern pine lumber prices in 2002. Southern pine lumber prices are down 8 to 10 percent despite a good housing market and low interest rates. Southern pine lumber producers still blame too much imported Canadian lumber as a big problem, even as negotiations with Canada continue.

Industry officials said the housing market did help hardwood enterprises, including solid wood flooring and cabinet sales, both up about 11 percent in June, compared to the previous year.

"In 2002, Mississippi hardwood delivered log prices were steady to about 1 percent higher. A steady year is good news for an industry that has seen 18 months of below par business," Daniels said. "While most hardwood users started 2002 slow with talk of a recession, the second half of the year provided some improvement and room for optimism."

Daniels said the U.S. paper industry continued consolidating and balancing production with demand in 2002.

"In Mississippi, pulpwood remains a buyers' market. Prices remained steady for pine and hardwood pulpwood in 2002, but pine pulpwood prices moved up a bit at the end of 2002," he said.

"In some areas of the state, demand is so low that it is still hard to find people willing to thin pine plantations for the first time."
Weyerhaeuser offers proposal to resolve dispute with Canada

Weyerhaeuser Co. is asking the United States to end duties on Canadian softwood lumber imports, asking Canada to levy a new export tax - and asking the two sides to work with timber companies in negotiating an end to their decades-old lumber dispute.

At a news conference in New York City, Steven Rogel, chief executive of the wood-products company based south of here in Federal Way, offered a proposal to resolve the fight over Canadian softwood lumber, which some U.S. producers complain has an unfair advantage because Canada charges far lower fees for timber-cutting rights.

But Canadian International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew largely dismissed Rogel's proposal. "We shouldn't impose on ourselves border measures (the proposed export tax) that would actually legitimize what the Americans have been doing, which we've been saying for a long time is unfair," he told the Canadian Press news service.

The U.S. Commerce Department declined immediate comment. An industry group, the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports, did not return calls for comment.

Weyerhaeuser, which has operations on both sides of the border, called for an end to U.S. import duties on Canadian softwood lumber - which average 27 percent and cost Weyerhaeuser $31 million in its third quarter alone.

Instead, the company wants Canada to adopt its own export tax, with a sliding scale of fees. The Weyerhaeuser plan also calls for the two sides to drop their complaints and appeals to the World Trade Organization and instead negotiate a solution that includes restructuring the way Canada values its uncut timber to bring production costs there into parity with those in the United States.

"We are not wedded to our proposal but we are committed to a permanent solution," said Rogel.

He contends that "a wall is being built between the U.S. and Canada. ... The time has come to tear it down once and for all."

Weyerhaeuser, one of the world's largest wood-products companies, operates 18 softwood lumber sawmills in Canada and 27 in the United States. It employs about 10,600 people in Canada. The company operates a wood products factory in Braxton County, W.Va.

Rogel said the U.S. duties have done nothing to stem Canadian production, ease the oversupply of lumber nor lift slumping prices. As a result, companies, employees and communities on both sides of the border are hurting through mill closures and layoffs.

In addition, relations between Canada and the United States - each other's largest trading partner - are worsening.

The company plans to take its proposal to various parties, including the U.S. Department of Commerce, Canadian national and provincial governments, timber companies and others.

Pettigrew, the trade minister, said Canada will remain open to negotiations but plans to pursue its options through trade tribunals as well.

"Both sides need to work together for an enduring solution," Rogel said.

Helen Jung
Associated Press State and Local Wire

Home Depot using less imperiled wood

Home Depot, under pressure from environmentalists to change its timber policy, said Thursday it is making progress in eliminating from its stores some products that come from endangered areas.

The nation's largest wood retailer said it has reduced by 70 percent purchases of Indonesian lauan, a tropical hardwood grown in rainforests that is used in door components. It said it also has focused on buying redwood from two companies committed to promoting sustainable forests. Environmentalists have protested at Home Depot stores, pressing for the country's largest home-improvement store chain to implement a socially conscious timber policy. The company sells more than $5 billion of lumber, plywood, doors and windows a year.

Of particular concern was the amount of wood it bought from cutters in Malaysia, Indonesia and Ecuador.

The Commercial Appeal
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CANCELLATION POLICY
Should you need to cancel your attendance, contact Jeff Ware no later than Friday, February 21, 2003. Qualified substitutions may be made for cancellations received after 5:00 p.m. February 21, 2003.