2003 Mississippi Society of American Foresters Annual Meeting

Make plans now to attend the 2003 MS SAF annual meeting in Tupelo, MS, on March 4-5 at the Ramada Inn. The theme of the meeting is Urban Forestry and the Wildland-Urban Interface. You probably are thinking as you read this: "What does urban forestry have to do with my job?" The Southern Forest Resource Assessment found that the greatest loss of forestland in the South is due to urban sprawl. Also, if any of you have tried to make a timber sale on a tract that was rural 10 years ago and now has houses surrounding it, you have experienced the problems of the wildland-urban interface.

The 2003 meeting will feature a golf tournament on Tuesday, March 4, at Big Oaks Golf Club. Cost will be $40 per person and includes a box lunch, range balls, 18-hole green fee and cart, SAF-logo sleeve of balls, and prizes for best score, longest drive and closest to the pin. For those who don’t golf, on Tuesday afternoon there will be a tour of the Norbord OSB facility near Tupelo.

The spouses program on Wednesday will feature a presentation by a representative from McRae’s followed by a luncheon at Flowerdale Marketplace and Café. The Mall at Barnes Crossing and several antique stores are convenient to the motel. And, of course, there is Elvis’ birthplace to visit.

Instead of the normal schedule of having the MSU Alumni breakfast on the 3rd day, followed by the annual business meeting, we will have all our activities in a 2-day period. The MSU Alumni breakfast will be replaced with an Alumni reception on Tuesday night. The annual business meeting will be held on the afternoon of March 5 after the program. We will have an Ethics program after the business meeting.

The Awards Banquet will be preceded by a reception and followed by entertainment from a Bluegrass Band. Room rates will be $59.00 per night with a full breakfast for up to two people. Exhibitors will have plenty of room to spread out making it convenient for all attendees. The silent auction will be held on Wednesday night before the banquet. Please plan on bringing something for the Silent Auction.

http://www.cfr.msstate.edu/mssaf
Comments from the Chair

A while back I met a forester friend of mine and asked how things were going with him. He replied, "I'm just putting in my time until retirement. The job's no fun anymore. There's just been too dang many changes." I've heard the same sentiments from others in the forestry profession in the past few years. I went home from the meeting and told my wife that something must be wrong with me - that I still love my job and the forestry profession.

In a career that has spanned 37 years I have seen many changes and, believe it or not, most of them were good changes! Acceptance of change, and not change itself, is usually the problem. We tend to "tilt at windmills" like Don Quixote rather than harness the power of the windmill. I don't mean to imply that all change is good - companies and individuals are subject to screwing up ever so often.

Looking back, when my career started, foresters were the good guys because we were helping Smokey the Bear do his job (too successfully, as it turned out). People remembered when most of the country had been lumbered through and left in terrible shape, and they saw that good forest management brought the forests back. Foresters and companies were worried that we would run out of wood with the expansion of pulp mills, sawmills and chip mills across the South. The South's "Third Forest" was the theme of most meetings. Later environmental activists began to paint our profession, loggers and forest industry as the destroyers of nature. They railed against the monoculture of pine plantations and claimed that they were going to replace all our native hardwood stands (no matter, that most of them had been high-graded for generations).

In the past 25 years, the forest community has embraced Best Management Practices as realistic guidelines for harvesting and managing our forests. Logging with horses, skidding with tractors, chainsaw felling have been replaced with feller-bunchers and mechanical skidders. The majority of our logging force has been through Logger Education Courses. Genetically improved seedlings and aerial application of herbicides and fertilizer have increased volume yields on forestlands significantly. Wildlife management is an important part of our forest management plans. Just in my lifetime, deer and turkey populations have skyrocketed making hunting leases on private lands a good source of income. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative has given the forest industry greater credibility among many groups. Computers, GIS and GPS have given foresters wonderfully accurate measurements and freed us from hours of mapping and computing cruises by hand.

Most of the forest industry companies that I knew as a young forester are no longer around. Mergers and acquisitions have changed the forestry industry landscape. Older inefficient mills and machines have been closed down. At present, we have an oversupply of pine pulpwod.

The Society of American Foresters is changing also. The Journal of Forestry is being revamped to answer the needs of field foresters. Regional meetings are being held to offer foresters educational opportunities. Next summer, a "campground" meeting is being planned for our area. The SAF National President, Jason Kutack, and the Region XI Council Member, Don Bell, are from Mississippi, giving us a strong voice at the national level. The forestry profession is and will be what we make it.

In closing, I will list just a few of the changes that I have enthusiastically embraced during my forestry career.

- Air conditioned trucks
- 4-wheel drive vehicles
- Genetically improved seedlings
- Aerial application of herbicides
- Electronic calculators
- Lap-top computers
- GIS, GPS technology
- Fax machines
- Scanners
- Mobile phones

I know that many of you younger foresters can't imagine a world without all the things listed. Change is inevitable and, mostly, it makes our jobs and lives easier. The things that shouldn't change are family values, honesty, integrity, friendships and loyalty.

Thanks to all of you for giving me the opportunity to be the 2002 Chair of the MS SAF.
Comments from the Vice Chair

Recently, I was invited to join the Hattiesburg Metropolitan Club, but the expensive dues leave me hesitant to participate. Their dues are $30 per month. I'd love to join, as they are a great bunch of affluent residents who are active in local economic development. This situation reminds me of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and our membership.

Many professional foresters could join the SAF, and they know that they should, but they don't. Why is this so? If the dues were reduced by half would our membership double? It's unlikely, but the dues are definitely a concern. I believe that many foresters in Mississippi have relied upon their membership in the Mississippi Forestry Association (MFA) to represent their professionalism. MFA is a superb association and they are a positive voice for many concerns about forestry, but membership in SAF should be important as well.

Of course, our members are aware that SAF's lobbying efforts at the national level has positively impacted forestry, especially with the latest package attached to the Farm Bill. But are the non-members aware of what SAF has accomplished and will continue to accomplish? As I recall from the MFA legislative bulletin, many issues of vast concern are precipitated and addressed at both the national and local level, like TMDL's.

People need a reason to expend funds and join an organization. They have to perceive the membership as a necessary and beneficial endeavor. Mississippi's SAF membership is below 600, yet there are twice that many registered foresters in the state. Most foresters that are not presently members will probably not elect to join, so I think we can more effectively focus on the next batch of graduates and impress upon them the importance of supporting their profession from which they will earn a living.

On the lighter side, we are currently receiving nominations for awards, and I propose that we create a new award and nominate Jason Kutack as our "Forester for the Millennium."

Le joie de vivre!

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A. Membership
Steve Dicke remarked that no attendees at the last Capitol Chapter meeting were present who represented forest industry, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, or the USFS. Les Shelby asked that Chair Preston Padgett consider writing a letter to the heads of agencies and forest industry leaders in the area to encourage attendance and membership. Steve Grado noted that the MFA holds a dedicated seats for an individual from the Miss. Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and that idea might also be applicable for the Capitol Chapter. Preston noted that when he was Chapter Chair and when Ron Honea was Chapter Chair, they used to call members in addition to mailing notices. Email was also used to remind members. Debbie Gaddis volunteered to write a My Turn article for the Journal on the lack of support for SAF within industry and the USFS. Don Bell also commented on the lack of support and the efforts of the national leadership. He also commended the MFC in the 4-Lakes Chapter, who are quite active and leaders in the organization. Neil Kirkland commented that many individuals have made it clear that SAF has become a “forestry” society, not a professional organization, and that has made it less attractive to those who once were members. Jason Kutack stated that individuals with grievances should try to change SAF and that opportunity is open. He also promoted reading of the book Smoke Jumper, and stated that SAF is going to take a leadership role in attempting to change the management of Western USFS lands to promote management. Bob Daniels addressed the issue of non-professionals joining SAF and taking over. He noted that technicians and non-foresters have not taken over SAF and that we should address this topic by pointing out that we need a national voice and if not SAF, then who? Neil Kirkland responded that SAF activity in the public arena has indicated that SAF has changed from being a professional organization to a general forestry organization. Don Bell reported that 12,399 of 15,737 members are professionals and that MSU has more than most. Accreditation standards do not require a student chapter of the SAF, though MSU has more than most.

C. Policy
Chair Bob Daniels reported that the committee met on July 30 and two draft policies were prepared. Bob distributed them to the Executive Council. One policy is the "Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory" and the other is "The Need for Hardwood Forest Management Research." Dr. Daniels again asked for chapter chairs to appoint a representative from each chapter to be on the Policy Committee. He passed out "A Professional View of Forestry Issues in Mississippi" which contains all 10 of our current policy statements. These are also posted on the web. Daniels asked for directions on distributing the booklets. Discussion ensued. The decision was made to mail the booklets and make copies to give to the chapter chairs who will give names of representatives they will personally contact.

Bob passed out a memo to Gerald McWhorter, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Lands and to State Forester Jim Sledge that related to the position statement on 16th Section Forest Lands. He used this as an example of how to influence policymakers. Randy Watkins spoke to Lt. Governor Amy Tuck about having an SAF member on the Forestry Task Force. Chair-elect Watkins will write a letter to Lt. Gov. Tuck asking for such a position for SAF on the committee. Dr. Daniels moved that our society approve funding a representative for the National SAF Fly-in in Washington, D.C. The motion was made and passed.

D. Council Report
Councilman Don Bell reported the membership of the SAF is dropping precipitously. Few new graduates of the forestry schools and colleges are becoming members of the SAF, though MSU has more than most. Accreditation standards do not require a student chapter of the SAF. MS, LA, and Texas have lost 115 members since the first of the year. Each member needs to carry around a membership form, and remember to indicate MSU Forestry School as the recipient of credit to be eligible for the Humbolt Challenge prize. There are seven membership categories and Don will recommend that the categories be reduced. Jim Dozier is running for Chair-elect. He is currently executive secretary of the Georgia Forestry Association and a MSU graduate. Councilman Bell asked that our chairs campaign for Mr. Dozier. In 2004, MS will be recipient of the Field Forester Award. The Code of Ethics will be addressed at the House of Section Delegates meeting for revision. A letter was sent to the Chief, USFS about the wildfire issue confronting our profession. The policy statement on the Endangered Species Act has been given to the appropriate congressmen. Lisa Stocker has been distrib-
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

utings statements on clearcutting and fire to the SAF. Policy professional Michael Goergan. Pete Heard of the NRCS can give a program on the Farm Bill, which contains a lot of money for conservation. Steve Emerson challenged each Executive Council member to attempt to get at least 2 new members. The Humbolt Challenge will influence people to sign up.

E. MSU Advisory Committee
Les Shelby reported. He has consulted with Dr. Doug Richards on the CFR. Concerns mentioned were lack of ability to recruit faculty since the resignations and retirements of so many faculty. Enrollment is less than 140 in the undergraduate program and less than 50 in graduate program. There are many job opportunities, though many are out-of-state. About 30% of recent grads have not found jobs, primarily because they do not want to leave home. In 2000, they added a new option in the major, Urban Forestry. A new project has been proposed for GIS and will study the use of imagery for improved forest management, with Dr. David Evans as chair. Les will be presenting more information after the annual Advisory Council Meeting in October.

F. Magnolia Forester Report
Chair Padgett reported for Karen Brasher. He reminded us of our responsibility to contribute to the Magnolia Forester. Information on industry, research, or whatever is requested. Please pass the idea or information to Karen Brasher and she will write it up. Steve Emerson recommended that we put the MS SAF website address prominently displayed in the publication.

G. National SAF Report
Executive VP Bill Banzaff attended the World Council of Sustainable Resources in Johannesburg, South Africa. The SAF National Convention is going to be very stimulating, with excellent facilities. All exhibit spaces have been sold and registrations are good. Chair-elect Jason Kutack asked for input for his impending duties as Chair. The next convention will be in Buffalo, N.Y. Jason recommended that we read a book by Nicholas Evans called The Smoke Jumper. Chair Padgett commended Jason for his work in the past and his current service.

H. Archiving of MS SAF records
Dr. Steve Grado reported on the Foresters' Fund project to archive the MS SAF papers. The grant requested $750, of which $250 was granted. Dr. Grado asked for an additional $250 from MS SAF for assistance to the Library. Arel Simpson moved that we allocate silent auction monies to the Library project and remit the balance to the MS SAF. The motion was rescinded. Ian moved that we contribute $250 to the MSU Mitchell Memorial Library to complete this project. The motion was seconded and passed by the Executive Council.

I. MS SAF Bylaws Revisions
Chair Padgett passed out a copy of the current bylaws for our perusal. There are some changes that might need to be made. A copy will be placed on the web, for consideration by the membership.

J. "A Walk in the Woods"
Harold Anderson, guest from the Mississippi Forestry Commission reported to the Executive Council. The National Project Learning Tree (PLT) Conference in June had a presentation on the SAF's "A Walk in the Woods" combined with Project Learning Tree. At the Mississippi PLT facilitator's training meetings the trainers usually illustrate 3 activities in the morning, walk through the guide, then in the afternoon small groups initiate and complete their own PLT activities. Harold recommended that we use Plymouth Bluff Environmental Education Center to try using "A Walk in the Woods" as part of facilitator training. It would take around 6-8 people to staff this for around 60 participants. Mississippi University for Women has their workshop in September, and they would like to have this as part of their PLT training. The session in November would be for preservice teachers. We have the option to do two sessions. Steve Dicke moved that we co-sponsor the PLT workshop. The $10/student registration fee is paid for by a grant. Steve Grado moved to amend the motion to provide some funding and physical support for the workshop. Steve Dicke accepted the amendment. Ian Munn moved that we co-sponsor the workshop for up to $400. The motion was passed. Harold agreed to write an article on the event for the Magnolia Forester.

K. Nominations for Officers for 2003
Randy Watkins reported that our candidate slate is as follows:
Vice-Chair-Maurice Mitchell and Jeff Keeton
Secretary-Dr. Andy Londo and Dr. Kris Connor
Treasurer-Brad Campbell and Dr. Steve Grado

L. Nominations for 2002 SAF Fellow
Jerry Pelley's nomination should be implemented. Preston asked that everyone look at making nominations and submit them.
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CHAPTER NEWS

Four Lakes
The August meeting highlight was a program on Lyme disease presented by Rob Carter, of the MSU Extension Service. It was an excellent program of great interest to foresters. After the presentation, everyone enjoyed a catfish plate dinner from High on the Hog in Grenada. Plans are being made for the next meeting to be held at Strawberry Plains in Holly Springs. Attendance at meetings is decreasing, reasons unknown.

Magnolia
At the May meeting, members enjoyed a crawfish boil. The speaker was from the U.S. Forest Service. There were 15 in attendance. The next meeting will be at Plum Creek Nursery in September. A November meeting is planned at the Silver Creek Sawmill.

Capitol
Les Shelby and E. C. Burkhardt will host a Hardwood Management Tour on October 11th at Gaddis Farms near Bolton (2 hrs CFE). A dinner meeting is scheduled for December 5th in Brandon. “A Walkabout Down Under (Australian Forestry)” will be presented by Stephen and Susan Dicke (1 hr CFE).

Northeast
The Chapter recently lost their Chair and Annual Meeting Chair since Dr. Robert Carter resigned to go to Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, AL. A meeting is planned for September according to Preston Padgett who is working with David Duff to make sure the Chapter does not lose momentum.

Broadleaf
On August 8, 2002, Brian Lockhart of LSU presented a program on Hardwood Forestry: The 10 Commandments of Hardwood Forestry. This program is strongly recommended to other chapters. The next meeting is scheduled for October.

Loblolly
No meetings held since April. A meeting or field tour is planned in September.

Homochitto
The Homochitto Chapter will be meeting on October 10 at the Plum Creek Pearl River Nursery. Mr. Ken Woody, Manager of the Pearl River Nursery, will give us a tour of their operations. Our next meeting will be in January of 2003.

Longleaf
The Longleaf Chapter conducted its quarterly meeting in Hattiesburg at Dr. Glenn Hughes’s office complex. The meeting was officiated by Chapter Chair Charles Graham and the guest speaker was Tom Wood with the Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. A delicious meal of smoked brisket and homemade fixings was prepared and served by Charles Graham and his mother, Virginia Graham.

MSU Student Chapter
Eleven members of the Mississippi State University Student Chapter, led by Dr. Don Grebner will attend the National Convention in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Chapter will receive special recognition for achieving second place in 2001/2002 SAF Outstanding Student Chapter Award for the United States.

On September 24, 2002, the SAF Student Chapter hosted a guest speaker to discuss with students attributes looked for by potential employers. Mr. Stephen Butler the CEO of TimberCorp, Inc. spoke with the students in Tully Auditorium at Thompson Hall. Forty students were in attendance.

Mississippi Society of American Foresters Chapter Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<td>Four Lakes</td>
<td>Mr. Neil Kirkland</td>
<td>662.983.4903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia</td>
<td>Mr. Jody Phillips</td>
<td>601.735.3075</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitol</td>
<td>Mr. Stephen Dicke</td>
<td>601.857.2284</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Mr. Robert Carter</td>
<td>662.566.2201</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadleaf</td>
<td>Mr. Arel Simpson</td>
<td>601.638.4683</td>
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<td>Loblolly</td>
<td>Dr. Andy Londo</td>
<td>662.325.8003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homochitto</td>
<td>Mr. Chad Smith</td>
<td>601.587.1125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longleaf</td>
<td>Mr. Charles Graham</td>
<td>228.392.5632</td>
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Forestry Organization to Enhance Certified Forester Program

The Society of American Foresters is enhancing its Certified Forester® (CF) program by instituting an examination component. Beginning January 1, 2003, all forestry professionals wishing to become certified under the CF program will need to pass an exam. Foresters who are active in the CF program as of December 31, 2002, will not be required to take the examination to maintain their certification.

"The public wants its practitioners to be capable and trained and SAF is the only organization in the US in the position to certify foresters," says Dave Walters, CF, of the Tennessee Division of Forestry. Walters shares a commitment to enhancing the CF program because "continuing education in the forestry profession benefits everyone."

The CF program was established in 1994 to recognize and document professional forestry excellence. The program is voluntary and open to qualified SAF members and nonmembers. The CF program documents that certificants are educated and experienced foresters who possess the necessary body of knowledge to perform as professionals. It also shows that the certificants are dedicated to professional forestry standards and are willing to stay ahead of the curve through continuing education.

The CF program provides third-party verification of qualifications. It provides certificants the satisfaction of measuring themselves against the highest professional standards and provides evidence of competence to peers, employers, clients, and the public. It also enhances certificants' credibility in legal testimony, and strengthens their overall value in the market.

Forester certification has taken on an increased priority given increasing public interest in forests and the people who care for them. It fills a void in the marketplace created by inconsistent or nonexistent state licensing and registration criteria for foresters.

"In many states, there's no way for the public to know whether the foresters in their area possess any degree of professionalism," says Harold Olinger, CF, chair of the Certification Review Board, the SAF body that oversees the CF program. "In addition to acknowledging a certificant's education and experience, the CF program is a statement that a forester has chosen to accept a code of ethics and agrees to professional standards of practice."

A CF agrees to abide by the program's requirements and procedures for certification and recertification, to maintain continuing professional development, and to conduct all forestry practices in a responsible, professional manner consistent with state and federal regulations governing environmental quality and forest management practices.

The core requirements of the program are that certificants must have earned a professional degree from an SAF-accredited or SAF-candidate curriculum, or a substantially equivalent degree from a non-SAF accredited curriculum. They must also have five years of professional forestry related experience. All applicants granted CF status must complete 60 contact hours in continuing forestry education prior to recertification every three years. No continuing education credits are required for initial certification.

Although the CF program has served the profession well—some 1400 foresters currently belong to the program—requiring applicants to pass an exam will strengthen the credibility to the program, says Michelle Mauthe Harvey, CF, SAF's Director of Science and Education.

"SAF would like the CF program to set the gold standard for forestry professionalism—a credential that will be recognized and accepted by all," says Harvey. SAF will develop the CF exam in compliance with the certification criteria established by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

For information about the CF program, visit the website at www.certifiedforester.org.
I’ve often said that to be a forester a person has to be an optimist. It takes an optimist to put a seedling in the ground and expect to get something useful in the future. But how many of us are actually optimistic about our profession’s future?

What are your thoughts about the future of Mississippi’s forests? What will be the condition of our state’s forests 30 years from now? The answers to those questions can reveal optimism and also prompt questions and some needs for today.

I personally think that Mississippi’s forests will be better in 30 years than they are today. Why? They will be better because trees in Mississippi are valuable for wood products, wildlife habitat and recreation, among other things and the need for these benefits will continue. When things have value to people they are promoted and multiplied and I expect this will be the case for Mississippi’s forests. It happened in the 1930s and 40s and it will likely happen again.

The situation, however, prompts some issues for foresters of today. What should we be doing to insure that the forests of tomorrow are healthy and productive? What is the current state of our forests and what actions are needed in our state to secure and improve these forests?

The essential tool needed to answer these questions and many others is a current, continuous forest inventory. Traditionally, the forestry community has relied on the U.S Forest Service to produce a state inventory periodically. The last published forest inventory for Mississippi was released in 1994. If the forests are as economically important to Mississippi as we say they are, we need to develop our own, state-funded forest survey information. This will allow us to plan for the forest development and use. We will know where the timberlands are being reforested and harvested and where inventory levels may support a new mill operation.

Toward this end the Legislature authorized in 2002 the creation of the Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory (MIFI). MIFI is now in its formative stages and is seeking funding. This will allow Mississippi to develop and maintain our own forest inventory and update it regularly. MIFI will be a giant step forward for the future of Mississippi forestry.

The Mississippi SAF has developed a position statement in support of the creation of the Mississippi Institute of Forest Inventory. We have positions on many other issues as well. Our positions are posted on our website at www.cfr.msstate.edu/mssaf/. I encourage discussion of these and other issues at local MS SAF chapter meetings. I also encourage the development of new issues that the members think should be addressed by the MS SAF Policy Committee.

Read our current position statements and let us hear from you. Knowing what we think about the future of Mississippi forestry and expressing those thoughts in clear policy statements is the best way for MS SAF to contribute to an optimistic forestry future in Mississippi.

Bob Daniels, SAF Policy Chair
Mississippi State is teaming with an Australian company to locate an engineered-lumber pilot plant on the Starkville campus.

The University’s Forest and Wildlife Research Center is working with TimTek, a firm with offices in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, and Clarkesville, Ga., to develop a commercial market for a process the company has developed.

Patented by Australia’s Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, the process makes high-strength engineered lumber from small diameter trees thinned from pine plantations. To form the resin/wood fiber composite, long strands of crushed trees are coated with an exterior-type adhesive and dried before being formed to desired shapes in a specialized steam-injection hot press.

“TimTek’s product is a unique, long-fiber structural engineered lumber with uniform, stable and high-strength properties of select-grade sawn timber,” said Walter Jarck, the company’s Australia director. “It can be produced in lengths and cross sections greater than can be achieved from the largest logs available.”

In the past, trees of three-to-eight-inch diameters were used primarily for pulpwood. With a decreased demand in the South for pulpwood, few markets are left for small trees thinned from Mississippi’s almost three million acres of plantation pine.

Jarck said the end product of the new process is both economically and environmentally sound.

“The beams and timbers will compete favorably with the engineered products now used in residential and commercial construction as joists, rafters and headers and for other uses where strength and quality are required,” he said.

Professors Dan Seale and Terry Sellers Jr. of MSU’s Department of Forest Products, received a $1 million grant from the Mississippi Land, Water and Timber Resources Board to bring the technology to the state and provide funds for related infrastructure.

“These funds are provided for innovative projects such as the TimTek/MSU partnership,” said Lester Spell, State Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce and a board member. Spell said the partnership will be beneficial to the state, which currently has 18.6 million acres of forest land, 70 percent of which is owned by private landowners.

Seale said TimTek surveyed universities and industrial partners throughout the United States and Canada to determine the best location for a pilot plant for their new product. The company chose MSU because of its strong composite wood product research program.

“The purpose of the pilot plant is to demonstrate that the new technology will work with small diameter raw materials,” Seale said. “Our Forest and Wildlife Research Center will determine the strength values of the product and test it to help gain building code acceptance. We also will demonstrate the new technology to the forest products industry.”

Since the process can be incorporated into existing plants, owners of wood processing operations should be able to realize immediate economic benefits. So, too, will landowners.

“We are excited about the opportunities that the TimTek technology will provide for landowners throughout the state and the region,” said landowner Larry Jarrett of Pontotoc, current president of the Mississippi Forestry Association.
Today’s foresters can trade in their hand compasses and other measuring instruments for a Global Positioning System.

The GPS doesn’t help lost woodsmen out of the woods; it does, however, aid in measuring acreage which improves the foresters’ productivity. In a series of eight forestry workshops at Jones Community Junior College entitled Emerging Technologies in Forestry, foresters are taught how to use the GPS.

More than 100 foresters from across the nation met on the campus of JCJC for the last of the summer workshops to learn just how the GPS will enhance their jobs.

Each seminar lasts three days and includes hands-on experience.

Foresters use the GPS to calculate acreage, whether they need to plant trees, harvest timber or spray herbicides. Knowing a near exact amount of acreage greatly affects the costs of such jobs.

“The way we used to do it was with a compass and a ‘hip chain,’” said Herman Smith, forestry technician with the Mississippi Forestry Commission in Jones County. “That would always take at least two, sometimes three, people. Now with the GPS, it only takes one.”

A “hip chain” is a measurement device that marks off and counts feet as the forester moves along his way.

Smith said using the GPS cuts job time in half. The unit is also very precise and collects data a lot faster and can print out a map of the area just surveyed immediately.

For Hattiesburg’s Rob Eddy, a private consultant for landowners, the GPS improves his productivity, something every business owner wants to hear.

“I can determine the amount of land accurately and fast,” Eddy said. “Plus, I can do odd shapes of plots. When I finish, I can just print it out.”

The GPS, which costs about $5,000, does not take the place of a land survey.

But for the amount invested in the GPS, foresters can gather more information with less cost, something needed for the foresters of the 21st century.

JCJC instructor and workshop coordinator Jim Walley said these training seminars not only benefit the foresters who attend, but also the college and students.

“The foresters get an introduction to what we do at Jones Community Junior College, and the students get to meet those in the workforce, and possibly make future job contacts,” Walley said.
Student forestry group at MSU maintaining high standards

Mississippi State’s Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters is again among the top organizations of its kind in the nation.

The 50-member university chapter finished second in the 2001-02 SAF Outstanding Student Chapter Awards competition. The honor recognizes a chapter’s leadership and participation in professional and service activities at local, state and national levels.

Founded in 1900, the SAF is the world’s largest professional organization for foresters. The awards presentation will take place Oct. 6 as part of a national convention in Winston-Salem, N.C. First place will go to the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point.

The latest honor is not the first for the MSU Student Chapter, which captured first place in the 2000-01 and 1996-97, and also was second in 1998-99.

All forestry majors, the 2001-02 chapter officers included chair Brian N. Berryman of Leighton, Ala., vice chair Kevin Burnette of Starkville, secretary Caree A. Crosby of Long Beach, and treasurer Butch Copeland of Philadelphia.

Assistant professor of forestry Donald Grebner is the chapter adviser. He also will be recognized during the awards ceremony for his contribution to the student organization.

Nationally, the SAF has 15,000 active members who engage in a variety of programs to improve the health, productivity and use of the nation’s forest and forestlands.

Early pine beetle detection goal of MSU study

Just an eighth of an inch long, the Southern pine beetle is a big pest in Mississippi’s forests, destroying thousands of trees each year.

The wood-boring insect soon may take less of a bite out of Mississippi forests, thanks to a new project in Mississippi State University’s Forest and Wildlife Research Center. Scientists are using remote sensing technology to detect and analyze pine beetle infestations.

Remote sensing refers to the use of satellites and aircraft to gather information on land use, vegetation, moisture, and other characteristics of an area.

Funded by the Mississippi Space Commerce Initiative (MSCI), the one-year project is expected to result in a commercially viable early detection system and other tools to battle the pine beetle.

Based at the John C. Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, MSCI is a consortium of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the State of Mississippi, 38 businesses and Mississippi’s research universities working to develop, commercialize, and expand the state’s remote sensing industry.

“Southern pine beetles annually kill an estimated 12 million cubic feet of Mississippi’s pine forest,” said Donald L. Grebner, project investigator and assistant professor in the Department of Forestry. “With forest products accounting for $1.25 billion in annual revenue and ranking second among Mississippi’s agricultural products, we need to find new ways to protect this important asset.”

Beetle infestations are identified primarily by visual inspection from small aircraft. Once infestation areas are mapped, experts on the ground determine the best course of action to control the pest.

One problem with the current system, Grebner noted, is that the damage is not spotted before trees actually begin to die from beetle infestations. The MSU project will seek ways to detect telltale signs the pest is just starting to move into trees.

Another project goal is to assess the economic impact of pine beetle damage to Mississippi’s forests.

“The monetary loss resulting from pine beetle damage has not been previously determined,” Grebner said. “This project will provide loss estimates, in addition to performing image analysis to detect pine beetle damage and determining the marketability of trees already damaged by the insect.”

An economically viable early detection could be commercialized for use by private, corporate, state and federal forest managers and landowners seeking to protect their timberland investments, Grebner added.

“Early detection and treatment of pine beetle infested areas will reduce per-acre losses and promote healthy investment returns from active forest management,” he said.

EMC Surveying and Mapping of Greenwood is assisting in the MSU project by acquiring and processing the digital images.
Congress should repeal the 1993 law that forces the U.S. Forest Service to accept citizen appeals of all land-management decisions, Chief Dale Bosworth said Wednesday.

"There are better ways to allow people to ques-
tion our projects and be involved in our projects," Bosworth said in a telephone interview from his Washington, D.C., office. "We are the only land-man-
agement agency that has an appeals process in law. It doesn't make sense."

Because of the Appeals Reform Act, the Forest Service literally needs 100 percent citizen approval of its decisions, the chief said. "If you have 19 out of 20 with you, that's not good enough. Neither is 99 out of 100, or 999 out of 1,000. Because of that one person, you still have to go through the appeals process, after which you can still end up in litigation.

"People have the right to be involved and the right to question our decisions," he said. "But along with that right goes a responsibility, and the responsi-
bility is that you need to participate in the process upfront."

Bosworth said he welcomes "the high level of attention" being given his agency and its manage-
ment of fire-prone national forests by Congress and the Bush administration.

He is not, however, likely to take sides.

"I'm a dirt forester, not a politician," Bosworth said. "I am trying to make sure people understand the problem from a healthy ecosystem standpoint and the problems communities are facing and what needs to be done to fix that on the land."

The wake-up call, he said, came in 1988, when fires cut huge swaths through Yellowstone National Park and the Scapegoat Wilderness. "That was the first fire season that really burned a whole lot differ-
ently than things we had seen in the past," he said. Then came the fires of 1994, and of 1996, 2000 and 2002.

Foresters, firefighters and scientists understand the problem, Bosworth said. A century of aggressive firefighting in the West's fire-dependent dry-pine forests has created an unnatural buildup of fuels.

Forests that once supported 30 or 40 trees per acre are now thickets of 500 or 1,000 trees per acre. Wildfires that once burned on the ground and at a low-intensity now outrun all possibility of suppression.

"We can't do anything about climate or drought or geography, but we can do something about fuels," Bosworth said. "These fires are not burning under natural conditions."

The Forest Service has identified 70 million acres of national forest land at moderate to high risk of cata-
strophic wildfire. "But we don't need to treat every acre," the chief said. "We need to strategically treat those acres where we can make the biggest differ-
ence. We need to start near the communities and work out."

He emphasized, however, that "it's not about what you take. It's about the condition you put the land into. We need to get fire back into these fire-
dependent ecosystems."

What's missing, then, is a process that lets foresters devote their time and energy to working in the woods and in the communities, Bosworth said.

"We need to give our district rangers and forest supervisors the flexibility they need to work with local communities to design these forest-health treat-
ments."

"We've spent way too much time and way too much money doing analysis and paperwork," he said. "It's time now to spend much more time up-front col-
laborating with people, deciding how and where to do treatments."

"I don't need my people sitting in windowless rooms doing paperwork. I need them out on the ground, getting the job done."

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Mississippi State Forester Jim Sledge was elected president of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) at the association’s 80th annual meeting in Burlington, Vermont.

A graduate of Mississippi State University, Sledge has been involved in forestry for 40 years, 11 as head of the Mississippi Forestry Commission. He has worked for the Georgia Kraft and Mead Corporations and served on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Forestry Association for three terms, and the Mississippi Forestry Association’s Board of Directors for 11 years. As State Forester, Sledge was the southern representative on the NASF Executive Committee in 1996 and also chaired the NASF Forest Resource Management Committee for two years. He was vice president of NASF prior to being elected president.

“I look forward to serving as president of the National Association of State Foresters and hope to be able to build on the solid record of achievements attained under the leadership of my predecessors,” Sledge said. “NASF has an opportunity to continue to be a positive force in promoting sustainable forestry in the United States among all landowners, and I count it a privilege to be a part of that effort,” he said.

Sledge, a native of DeKalb, currently resides in Crystal Springs.

State Foresters also elected Burnell C. Fischer, Ph.D., State Forester of Indiana, as their new vice president and Pat McElroy, State Forester of Washington, as treasurer.

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of the state and eight territorial forestry agencies and the District of Columbia. Through public-private partnerships, NASF seeks to discuss, develop, sponsor and promote programs and activities which will advance the practice of sustainable forestry, the conservation and protection of forest lands and associated resources and the establishment and protection of forests in the urban environment.
President Bush's proposal to speed up selective logging in national forests to prevent future wildfires has bogged down in a partisan Senate dispute that threatens to block action this year.

The president unveiled his "Healthy Forests Initiative" last month during a tour of wildfire devastation in southern Oregon, amid one of the worst western fire seasons in modern times. Twenty firefighters died battling blazes, and 6.5 million acres of western national forests were destroyed. But Senate Democrats have blocked efforts by Sens. Larry E. Craig (R-Idaho) and Pete V. Domenici (R-N.M.) to attach a version of the president's proposal to the fiscal 2003 Interior Department spending bill, while Republicans have opposed Democratic alternatives.

For the second time in a week, the Senate yesterday failed to cut off debate on the Craig-Domenici amendment and a related measure by Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) to appropriate $850 million to cover emergency spending this summer on firefighting in western forests. The 49 to 46 vote to break the stalemate was roughly along party lines and fell well short of the two-thirds majority needed.

The administration proposal is aimed at reducing legal and administrative barriers to thinning underbrush and small trees, as well as commercially attractive old-growth trees. The plan would restructure rules that govern appeals of federal decision-making on logging in highly fire-prone areas -- particularly making "less cumbersome" the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which environmentalists see as a bedrock law.

The Craig-Domenici amendment would prevent environmentalists and community activists from seeking court orders to temporarily block proposed logging and other fire-prevention programs in 10 million acres of national forests prone to wildfires. Craig yesterday called the proposal "a slight adjustment in public policy to return a state of health to our national forests" after years of government mismanagement and failed fire-suppression tactics.

But opponents say the president's plan would do relatively little to address the problems of tinder-like underbrush and fire-prone trees near heavily populated areas while giving loggers greater leeway to cut larger, more commercially valuable trees in remote regions that pose less of a fire hazard.

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) and Majority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.) have offered an alternative plan that would expand existing thinning programs from 2.5 million acres to 5 million acres -- mostly near communities and major watersheds -- and exempt those activities from NEPA.

However, the Democratic plan would allow environmentalists to go to court to assure compliance with environmental protection laws other than NEPA. "We target the funds that can be used under this authority to areas we think pose the highest risk of fire," Bingaman said in an interview. "It certainly meets the need."

With Daschle insisting that the controversy over the president's proposal be resolved by a 60-vote super majority, it is unlikely that either side can prevail without a major compromise.

Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) have tried to broker a deal with Republicans and Interior Department officials, but have little to show for their efforts.

House Republicans are considering moving a bill similar to the Bush plan through the Agriculture Committee or taking it directly to the floor. However, they would encounter the same problem Craig is facing once it reaches the Senate.

"People are sort of at an impasse on the issue, but we're still trying," said Eric Ruff, an Interior Department spokesman.
Taking the Long-Term View to Address Forest Health

By William H. Banzhaf, Executive Vice-President of the Society of American Foresters

President Bush was in the Pacific Northwest recently to unveil a new forest management initiative that aims to prevent the kind of catastrophic wildfires that have charred more than 6.3 million acres of national forests so far this year.

Because of the forest health crisis on our national forests, the 2002 wildfire season is proving to be one of the worst on record. As a result of 80 years of the accumulation of fuels—dead vegetation and overly dense stands of trees—and several years of drought, the potential for wildfires is at an all time high in many regions of the United States. Recent Forest Service estimates indicate that 73 million acres of the national forests are at risk from catastrophic wildfire.

Forest scientists know that the way to address the fuel build up is to thin these areas. Once some of the excess fuels are removed, foresters and other land managers can then apply prescribed burning and other management tools to further restore forest health. Indeed, forest managers know that thinning and prescribed burns are only two of the wildfire prevention tools at their disposal. They know what is really required is a full-fledged, sustainable forest management effort. Once we restore natural conditions in these forests we simply cannot walk away from them. Continued impacts of a growing population will require the management of these forests for the long-term, tending to them so that they do not again reach these crisis conditions.

The president’s proposal acknowledges the importance of forest management and will allow the federal government to become more proactive in reducing the risk for wildfires. The administration has said it will work with Congress to streamline and improve the regulatory process to ensure more timely decisions, greater efficiency, and better results in reducing the risk of catastrophic fires. A main tenet of the President’s plan calls for private contractors to enter into stewardship contracts to clear away the underbrush and thin overly dense stands of trees that contribute to both the intensity and the rapid spread of forest fires. These contractors can then sell the commercially viable timber harvested for thinning purposes as payment for their services, potentially reducing costs of hazardous fuels reduction activities.

Many have suggested suspension of environmental laws, particularly the right to public appeals, as a temporary solution to improving efficiencies in hazardous fuels reduction activities. We, as professional forest managers, cannot support that approach. If laws like the National Environmental Protection Act are shunted aside in search of short-term solutions, it will only polarize an already contentious debate about the best way to address the forest health crisis on our national forests. Congress and the Administration ought to address the problems by reforming existing laws. Repealing environmental laws is a band-aid approach to the forest health crisis. We need a more a holistic treatment that calls for comprehensive reform—not repeal or suspension—of the major statutes that govern the management of our national forests.

Although we believe fundamental reform is needed, we are not naïve enough to think it can be done overnight. In recognition of the urgency of the forest health crisis on the national forests, Congress should support interim efforts to direct how current environmental laws are applied and how and when the public is involved in forest management projects that rightfully are emergency in nature.

We recognize that comprehensive reform of statutes will take time. What we are suggesting requires a long-term commitment and a cultural change in national forest management.