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# Magnolia FORESTER

[www.cfr.msstate.edu/mssaf](http://www.cfr.msstate.edu/mssaf)

## First Forests for Humanity House under construction



The Mississippi forestry community worked with other organizations to begin construction on a new Habitat for Humanity house in Starkville Saturday, Sept. 17. Called "Forests for Humanity," the program is a collaborative effort of the Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers Association, the Mississippi Forestry Association, and the Mississippi Society of American Foresters, along with Habitat for Humanity.

The Forests for Humanity program demonstrates that proper harvesting of timber in Mississippi provides homes for people. Trees are a renewable natural resource that is economically important to the state.

The program is designed to create relationships between Mississippi Habitat for Humanity affiliates and the Mississippi forestry community throughout the state, establishing a channel for donations of standing timber or wood products to state habitat chapters.

The house is being built for a habitat family at 507 Garrard Road. Framing lumber and

oriented strandboard have been donated by Noxubee county-based Shuqualak Lumber Co. and Choctaw county-based Packaging Corporation of America. Both mills are members of the Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers Association.

The oriented strandboard used to sheath the house was provided by Georgia-Pacific Corp. Individual members of the sponsoring organizations also are contributing labor to help build the house.

"Through Forests for Humanity, a forest landowner, public agency or forest industry can donate a portion of standing timber from a sale or building materials for local Habitat houses," said Bob Daniels, council representative for the Mississippi Society of American Foresters. "The Garrard Road house is the example that will be used to spread the idea statewide."

Once forest landowners see an opportunity to contribute, the Forests for Humanity project could grow like a pine tree in the Mississippi sun, Daniels added.



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## from the Chair...

By the time these comments go to press I will have attended the national meeting in Fort Worth. Numerous items will be taken up by the HSD. Some may get controversial.

One thing that concerns me is the loss of membership in the SAF. We, MS SAF, lose fifty plus members each year. Should you have recommendations for the retention of members please do not hesitate to pass them along.

The forest industry in Mississippi has suffered a tremendous loss from Hurricane Katrina. It will be years in the affected areas before things return to normal, if they ever do. Living sixty miles from the coast we

did not expect winds in excess of one hundred miles per hour. In Hattiesburg, three hundred fifty homes were destroyed and countless others damaged. I personally had experience with Hurricane Camille as well as Katrina. I do not know who came up with the following phrase but it is absolutely correct. "Camille was a Lady and Katrina was a B----."

Our annual MS SAF meeting is scheduled for April 19 and 20 in Ellisville. The delay is due to all of the lodging in this area being taken over for several months by construction crews. Please mark your calendar and make every effort to attend what promises to be a most informative meeting.

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# from the Chair-Elect...

On August 29, Hurricane Katrina made a profound and lasting impact on our existence. Hundreds of people lost their lives, hundreds of thousands lost everything material, and millions more were affected to varying extents. Some estimates indicate as many as 850,000 homes in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana were either destroyed or damaged to some extent. Rebuilding and repairing will take an estimated 6 billion board feet of lumber and 4.6 billion square feet of structural panels, and probably will be spread over the next five years.

Mississippi's forests, and Alabama's and Louisiana's, suffered damage that will take more than 5 years to overcome. The U.S.F.S estimates damage to 19 billion board feet of timber spread over 5 million acres in these three states. About 30% of the damage is concentrated in 8 south Mississippi counties.

The monumental task of recovery and salvage is under way. Most mills that sustained damage are back up and running, including a sawmill and a plywood mill that

were cranked back up to help utilize the available wood. Wet storage yards are being re-opened or built from scratch to store salvaged forest products that are in excess of normal fall inventory build. The Mississippi Department of Transportation has temporarily relaxed weight limits on state highways to help move more timber quicker. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality has expedited the permitting process for wet storage sites. Loggers have come from all over the U.S., as far way as Idaho and South Carolina, to help get the storm damaged timber cleaned up. Sadly, history indicates that salvage of only 20-25% of the downed timber will be a success.

Katrina put some of the forestry students at MSU in a financial bind. MS SAF's executive committee voted to make a monetary contribution to help those students. Several of you donated individually, and others solicited donations. Don Grebner agreed to administer the funds, which have grown to about \$5,000.



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# Executive Committee Meeting

- I. Welcome – Bryant Myatt
- II. Anti-Trust Statement – Joe Spinks
- III. Minutes of Last Meeting – Bryant Myatt
- IV. Financial Report – Steve Grado/Tammy Coleman
  - a. A review of the financial report was given.
  - b. Two certificates of deposit were purchased for \$5,000 and \$10,000.
  - c. Jason Kutack sent a letter to Bryant Myatt requesting a donation for the Foresters Fund raffle.
- V. Committee Reports
  - a. Policy Committee: The policy committee is reviewing five of the standing policies set to expire December 2005. A couple of issues are being addressed by the policy committee including the reorganization of the Mississippi Forestry Commission. Bob Daniels expressed concern that the MS SAF is not represented on the reorganization committee.
  - b. Forest for Humanity: An opportunity for the MS SAF to link with Habitat for Humanity in building homes. The Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers and the Mississippi Forestry Association

- have both agreed to participate. Bob Daniels asked the Executive Committee to commit a maximum of \$400 to purchase banners for a habitat house being built and become a sponsor. Les Shelby made a motion to become a sponsor, Ken Robey seconded the motion.
- c. My Friend the Forester Coloring Book - Bob Daniels suggested that someone take over the contract with Syndistar to produce coloring books.
  - d. MSU Advisory Committee - Les Shelby told the group that George Hopper has been named the new Dean/Director and Jim Shepard is the new department head for forestry. Shepard wants to create a new vision for forestry and plans to have a series of meetings to develop priorities in the Forestry Department. The meetings will involve stakeholders who can give input on how the department can be enhanced and/or improved. A series of surveys will also be sent to stakeholders that can not attend meetings. Les suggested that perhaps it is time for him to step down as SAF representative on the MSU Department of Forestry Advisory Committee, as he has served for four years. Les will take over as chair of the policy committee



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# Executive Committee Meeting

councilman. Bryant suggested that we try to find a replacement for Les on the Advisory Committee.

e. Wildlife Federation - Steve Emerson reminded everyone of the Wildlife Extravaganza scheduled for August 4-6 at the Jackson Trade Mart.

## VI. Old Business

Bryant Myatt reported that 58 members will be purged from the membership for not paying dues. Bryant reported that 1,500 have been purged nationwide.

## VII. New Business

a. Council Report - Bob Daniels reported that the council will have an abbreviated meeting schedule, only three meetings this year instead of four. The council is reviewing the voluntarily organizational structure report for the SAF. The report is available on the SAF web page with a form for electronic input. Daniels reminded the committee that council agenda items should come from the chapters and state societies. If you would like an issue addressed at the national level, please let Daniels know.

b. Annual meeting - Ken Robey and the Magnolia Chapter is planning the annual meeting. Possible locations for the meeting include Laurel or Meridian. Jeff Keeton is planning the program.

c. Foresters Fund - Ken Robey made a motion that the MS SAF contribute \$500 to the Foresters Fund, Daniels seconded the motion.

d. Magnolia Forester - It was suggested that the Magnolia Forester include scientific papers, growth and yield tables, etc.

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# CHAPTER NEWS

## 4-Lakes

The Four Lakes Chapter held a meeting on August 18. It was held at the Corps of Engineers office at Grenada Lake. The special guest was Interim State Forester Everard Baker. He spoke about the restructuring of the Mississippi Forestry Commission and fielded questions from chapter members and commission employees. The steak dinner was provided by Steve Winters. Chapter Chair Bobby Edwards gave a report on the executive committee meeting. He also informed the attendees about Forests for Humanity. A meeting was held on October 2005, where an ethics presentation was given by Mr. Brant Godbold. The meeting was held at the Corps office in Grenada.

## Magnolia

The Magnolia Chapter held a meeting on November 8 in the cafeteria of the C.L. Neill Building on the campus of Jones County Junior College, Ellisville. The guest speaker, Dr. Glenn Hughes of the MS Extension Service, presented the forestry ethics program. Afterwards, a business meeting was held to discuss the MS SAF Annual Meeting.

## Capitol

The Capitol Chapter had a Forestry Ethics meeting on Nov. 21 at the Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Raymond, MS.

## Northeast

No report

## Broadleaf

The Broadleaf Chapter will present a course on the ethical challenges of diameter limit harvesting in bottomland hardwoods. This course will qualify for the 1 hour ethics requirement for Registered Foresters in Mississippi. Dr. Brian Roy Lockhart of the USFS Hardwoods Research Lab will be the presenter.

## Longleaf

The Longleaf Chapter met at the Western Sizzlin in Wiggins on August 25. At that meeting, Mr. Ron Smith with the De Soto National Forest Office in Wiggins gave an overview of the planning effort for the De Soto and other National Forests in Mississippi. Somewhat prophetically, he said "if we don't get in there and do some thinning, Mother Nature will thin a lot of these stands for us." Four days later, Hurricane Katrina hit, with the most severe damage occurring in southeast Mississippi. The next meeting of the Longleaf Chapter will be on November 17. Because of Katrina, the time and speaker are not finalized.

## Loblolly

The Loblolly Chapter will meet on November 29 at the Weyerhaeuser CPPC. Ben Knight, our

## Mississippi Society of American Foresters Chapter Chairs

	<b>Four Lakes</b> Mr. James R. Edwards 662.226.3321	<b>Broadleaf</b> Dr. Brian Lockhart 662.686.3171
	<b>Magnolia</b> Mr. Ken Robey 601.785.4792	<b>Loblolly</b> Mr. David Moody 601.650.9900
	<b>Capitol</b> Mr. Trey DeLoach 601.857.2284	<b>Homochitto</b> Inactive
	<b>Northeast</b> Mr. Jeff Ware 662.842.5312	<b>Longleaf</b> Mr. Bob Heinz 601.964.7138

# CHAPTER NEWS

host, will lead us on a tour of Weyerhaeuser's new woodyard and Sen. Gloria Williamson, Chair (acting), Senate Forestry Committee will address us on a variety of issues concerning our profession. You will also have an opportunity to ask her questions.

## **Homochitto**

Inactive

## **JCJC Student Chapter**

The JCJC student chapter has gotten off to a slow start this year due to the Hurricane, however, we have elected officers for this year. Katy O'Quinn was elected president and Cody Martin was elected vice-president. The student chapter is presently selling rib-eye steak plates for our annual Treats in the Streets on October 31<sup>st</sup>. All profits will go to the JCJC scholarship program.

## **MSU SAF Student Chapter**

The MSU SAF Student Chapter has assisted with recovery efforts related to Hurricane Katrina. Members helped Starkville residents remove downed trees and other related debris. At each household, they mentioned that they were student members of SAF. Students also traveled with a MSU College of Forest Resources (CFR) team to Poplarville, MS to set up a base camp to help with Hurricane Katrina relief. They removed debris, built temporary shelters, and set up generators and air conditioning units. They worked not only in Poplarville, but also Picayune, Biloxi, White Sand, McNeill, and Pascagoula. The Chapter also sent \$500 to the Red Cross earmarked to help Mississippi victims. The Chapter helped the MSU Forestry Extension program collect food and other supplies such as diapers, baby food, common toiletries, and clothing for Hurricane Katrina victims. Dr. Andrew Londo, MSU Forestry Extension Leader and SAF member, organized the overall effort while Chapter member Bryan Netterville organized student participation in loading a large trailer to transport goods to county extension offices in Forest, Green, and Perry counties which are located in southern Mississippi.

The MSU SAF Student Chapter participated in a local Forest for Humanity project in Starkville. This project aided the First Presbyterian Church of Starkville's Habitat for Humanity efforts to help local citizens with home ownership. Chapter members helped with reinforcing interior walls and install several trusses.

The MSU SAF Student Chapter started a program to help forestry students at Mississippi State University that were adversely affected by Hurricane Katrina. Currently, MS SAF has donated \$3,000 and the Chapter has collected \$2,270 from forestry alumni and SAF members throughout Mississippi and neighboring states. Other SAF Chapters across the nations such as those from Maine and Wisconsin have expressed interest in helping MSU forestry students.

This fall the Chapter helped organize the CFR Welcome Back BBQ, picked up trash along Highway 25 south of Starkville as part of their commitment to the Adopt-A-Highway program, and attended the Society of American Foresters National Convention in Forth Worth, TX. The students manned an exhibit representing the Student Chapter and forestry at Mississippi State University and participated in the SAF Quiz Bowl. The Chapter's Quiz Bowl team made it to the Final Four. They defeated teams from Louisiana Tech University, Iowa State University, and Northern Arizona University, but they lost to Penn State University whose team won the overall event. In addition, the Chapter received special recognition for achieving second place in 2004/2005 SAF Outstanding Student Chapter Award for the United States. The Chapter received first place for the outstanding student web site during the same time period.

# NATIONAL SAF NEWS

## Switch focus to key issues, Forest Service chief says

The chief of the U.S. Forest Service said he worries “lesser issues,” such as logging and road-building on public lands, are drawing too much attention and too many agency resources away from more serious threats to America’s forests and grasslands.

“I think we need to change the national dialogue to focus on the things that really count the most,” Dale Bosworth said Monday night at a scientific conference at Yellowstone National Park.

He said he sees the four greatest threats as fire, loss of open spaces, invasive weeds and unmanaged recreation.

“Yet our national focus is on other issues, like whether too much timber is coming off national forest land or whether we’re building too many roads,” he said. “My biggest fear is that these other, lesser issues are absorbing all our energy, while more important things are falling by the way.”

Bosworth said the Forest Service faces longer-term challenges, as well. These include addressing a backlog of maintenance and restoration projects; dealing with the demands of a growing population on resources; better understanding climate changes; and encouraging a sound “consumption ethic.”

“Taken together, the threats and the challenges we face today are as great as any we’ve ever seen,” he said. “But we can’t address them by acting alone; we need to work together across the landscape.”

Chris Mehl, a spokesman for The Wilderness Society, agreed that the Forest

Service’s focus should be on the four areas identified by Bosworth. By comparison, he said, logging’s importance has decreased dramatically, and the agency already has so many roads that it cannot keep track of all them. The use of the lands is changing, he said, with recreation becoming a bigger issue.

But Julia Altemus, of the Montana Logging Association, said she disagreed with Bosworth that logging was a lesser issue, noting that it has important economic and ecological benefits.

“Restoration is logging, and they just don’t understand it,” she said of environmentalists. “To them, if you cut a tree and make a profit, it’s a terrible thing.”

By *BECKY BOHRER*  
Associated Press

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# POLICY SCOREBOARD

The Policy Scoreboard is a regular report in the Magnolia Forester on Policy Committee activities. Please express your opinion on any or all of the positions of the MS SAF by sending an E-mail with your comments to the Policy Committee at bobd@ext.msstate.edu or call 662.325.3151.

The Policy Committee has been following the reorganization of the Mississippi Forestry Commission and speaking about the future of Mississippi Forestry. The Loblolly Chapter is hosting Senator Gloria Williamson, current chair of the Senate Forestry Committee on November 29. I hope there are some good questions asked regarding MS SAF's participation in forging the state's forestry future. I encourage all chapter chairs to host legislators who are on the Senate and House Forestry Committees.

The planning process for the Mississippi National Forests continues—after a setback from Hurricane Katrina. Beginning with a public input meeting about the Tombigbee National Forest at MSU's Thompson Hall on December 6 at 5:30 p.m., the Forest Service will initiate a new round of meetings to hear what we consider important as they plan the future of Mississippi's National Forests. A second meeting will be held on December 8 at the Oxford Convention Center from 6 to 8 p.m. for the Holly Springs National Forests. These two meetings are the first to be held since October 2004. More meetings are planned for January and February 2006. Please check the Mississippi National Forests web page at [www.fs.fed.us/r8/mississippi](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/mississippi).

It is very important for the local MS SAF chapters to be represented and be vocal at these meetings. The National Forests in Mississippi will be run by those who show up! The National Forests want professional foresters from MS SAF to participate vigorously in the process. Let's be strong advocates for the multiple uses of the National Forests. We have position statements that

can be useful in voicing opinions at these meetings. Discuss local issues at your next chapter meeting and appoint representatives to go and voice your chapter views at your local meeting.

At the MS SAF Executive Committee meeting on November 17, the Policy Committee presented and renewed 3 positions that were about to expire. Those positions were: Clearcutting, Use of Herbicides in Forestry and Private Property Rights. In 2005, several new members were added to the MS SAF Policy Committee. If your chapter does not have a representative on the Policy Committee, I encourage you to appoint one so your members can follow and be a part of forestry policy developments.

In 2006, Les Shelby will take over as Policy Committee Chair as I continue in the SAF Councilman role. It has been my pleasure to serve as your Policy Committee Chair for the past 4 years. I know Les will do a great job!

The 2005 edition of "A Professional View of Forestry Issues in Mississippi" is available. If you would like to have one or more copies or have comments please contact Dr. Bob Daniels.

As we move into 2006, the hiring of a new State Forester, the reorganization of the Mississippi Forestry Commission, planning process for Mississippi's National Forests and restoration of the forests following Katrina will be active policy issues. Make sure your chapter has its say. The annual meeting of MS SAF is being planned around forest recovery from Katrina. It looks like it could be the best program we've had yet. Please plan to attend.

# annual meeting

April 19-20, 2006

Recovery from Katrina

Ellisville, Mississippi

The Magnolia Chapter is planning the MS SAF Annual Meeting. Plans include having at least one speaker who experienced the devastation and recovery efforts of Hurricane Hugo. There are plans for presentations on the economic, environmental, and silvicultural impact of Hurricane Katrina.

Plans are being finalized to utilize meeting rooms at the New Technology Park located just south of Ellisville. Meeting rooms are state of the art and free of charge.

## **Planning committee members**

**Jeff Keeton – Chair**  
**Tommy Miller – budget**  
**Jim Walley – activities**

## **Other committee members include:**

**Brian Mitchell,**  
**Caron Thornton,**  
**Tom Chambers,**  
**Ken Robey.**

## Alumnus selected for forest leadership role at MSU

A Mississippi State forestry alumnus is the new dean of the university's College of Forest Resources and director of its Forest and Wildlife Research Center.

George M. Hopper assumes his new duties July 15, pending formal approval by the Board of Trustees, State Institutions of Higher Learning. The Vicksburg native succeeds interim dean Bob L. Karr, who has retired after 29 years of service.

MSU's College of Forest Resources includes the departments of forestry, forest products, and wildlife and fisheries.

Hopper has served for 11 years as head of the department of forestry, wildlife and fisheries at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. He previously was a professor for 11 years in the department.

A specialist in hardwood silviculture and the biology of oaks, Hopper earlier worked for Mississippi State's forestry department and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Anderson-Tully Lumber Co.

In addition to bachelor's and master's degrees from MSU, he holds a doctorate from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Besides holding the title of Society of American Foresters Fellow, he is president-elect for the Southern region of the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges.

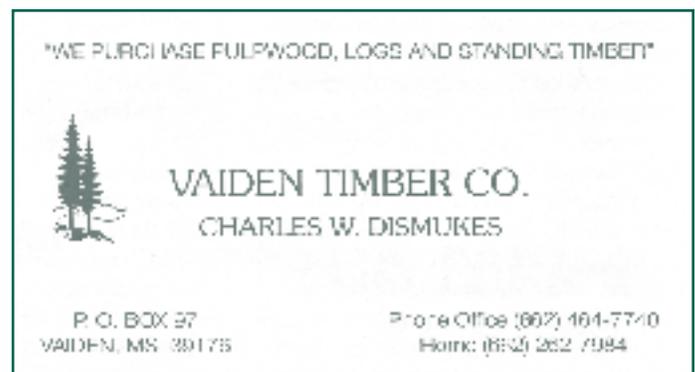
Hopper's appointment was announced jointly by Vance Watson and Peter Rabideau. Watson is vice president for agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine; Rabideau, provost and vice president for academic affairs.



*George Hopper, Dean of the College of Forest Resources and Director of the Forest and Wildlife Research Center, Mississippi State University.*

Watson said, "Dr. Hopper will lead the departments of forestry, forest products, and wildlife and fisheries toward national prominence in teaching, research and service."

Added Rabideau: "He also will help strengthen the contributions of natural resources to the economic and environmental welfare of the people of Mississippi."



## Capitol Chapter member selected Young Forest Landowner of the Year

The Forest Landowner Association announced Guy T. Vise, III of Ridgeland as the recipient of the 2005 Forest Landowners Association's Young Forest Landowner of the Year Award. Vise is a member of the Capitol Chapter. The award was presented in May at the 64th Annual Forest Landowners Conference in Savannah, Georgia. The Young Forest Landowner of the Year Award is FLA's newest honor, and will be awarded annually to a young landowner who has made significant contributions to his or her generation's understanding and appreciation of forestry and land ownership.

Guy has an extensive education in forestry and has gone on to put his education to use within his own family forestry company. He is an active member of the SAF and the MFA. He is a registered forester in both Mississippi and in Alabama and has a Bachelor of Science from the University of the South, a Masters of Forestry from Duke University, a Masters of Business Administration from Southern Methodist University and a Doctor of Philosophy with a concentration in Forest Business Management from the Warnell School of Forest Resources at the University of Georgia. He has worked with his brother, tax attorneys and accountants to establish seven family forestry investing and management entities. Here they have facilitated appraisals of 6,500 acres of land and timber as well as overseeing the forestry activities of three separate forest consulting companies that manage land in three states.



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## MSU student forestry group again tops among peers

Mississippi State's student chapter of the Society of American Foresters continues among the top organizations of its kind in the nation.

The 39-member university organization recently placed first in the 2005 SAF Student Chapter Web site competition and now is ranked second overall in the outstanding student chapter rankings.

The group has finished atop the overall chapter rankings for the past seven years, capturing first place in 1996-97, 2000-01 and 2003-04, second place in 1998-99 and 2001-02, and third place in 2002-03.

This is the third year that the student chapter has won first place in the Web site competition. Designed and maintained by student members, [www.cfr.msstate.edu/studentorgs/saf/index.htm](http://www.cfr.msstate.edu/studentorgs/saf/index.htm) was judged on design and content, among other criteria.

The 2005-06 officers included president Angela Delaughter and vice president J. Tedrick Ratcliff, both of Brookhaven; secretary Katie L. Nelson of Fayette, Ala. And treasurer Stacy R. Stroud of Hollandale. Associate professor of forestry Donald L. Grebner is chapter adviser.

The 2005 awards presentation is scheduled Oct. 21 as part of the organization's national convention in Fort Worth, Texas. Grebner also will be recognized during the ceremony for his contribution to the student organization.

## Group says MS's national forests 'endangered'

Mississippi's national forests are among the most endangered in the country, according to a report released today by a national forest advocacy group.

The National Forest Protection Alliance report blames commercial logging and bad U.S. Forest Service management for the threats to Mississippi's forests.

"The effects of repeated logging are evident across the landscape as high road density, stunted tree growth and pine plantations compromise the ecology of these diverse forest ecosystems," the report concluded.

Forest Service representatives in Mississippi say they're using the best management practices on federally owned forests.

"It's a misnomer to call these forests endangered," said Lynn Corbitt, a U.S. Forest Service staff officer for Mississippi. "We still manage our forests by thinning and burning to keep pine, which is necessary for the endangered red cockaded woodpecker and gopher tortoise habitat."

National forests, unlike national parks, are administered for multiple uses, including timber and natural resource extraction, livestock grazing, wildlife and recreation.

Desoto National Forest suffered mightily from the winds of Hurricane Katrina. The storm blew down roughly 400 million board feet of timber, what the Forest Service normally allows to be harvested in Desoto over a 25-year period.

The Forest Service has temporarily changed its policy to allow loggers to remove timber by weight rather than volume, speeding up the salvage process.

"If we can get half of the timber on the ground harvested, it would be good," said Corbitt.

## Katrina may have dealt Mississippi's timber industry a billion-dollar blow

Trees have been snapped and uprooted across George County by the 100-plus mph winds of Hurricane Katrina, but the disaster really hits home when considering that 77 percent of the county's 400 square miles is devoted to the timber industry.

In George County, timber is the leading agricultural product with an annual harvest valued at more than \$15 million, George County Extension Director Michael Steede said.

Eighty percent of the county's timberland was affected by the storm. That could cost the state's timber industry "millions of dollars," Steede said.

And the loss in George County is small compared to preliminary estimates statewide.

Wayne Tucker, the executive director of the Mississippi Institute of Forest Inventory, said Katrina may have dealt Mississippi's timber industry a \$1.2 billion blow.

"Jackson County suffered a 40-50 percent loss," Tucker said. "The three counties hardest hit were Jackson, Harrison and Hancock. The next hardest hit were Pearl River and Stone. George and Greene counties each suffered a 15 to 20 percent loss."

Officials from the Mississippi Forestry Commission, Mississippi State University, and the Mississippi Institute of Forest Inventory have conducted an aerial survey of damage.

They say more than 24 million cords of pulp, chip and saw lumber, both pine and hardwood have been damaged by Katrina.

Tree growers are now faced with a double-edged sword, said Eugene Cooper, the George County Forester for the Extension Service.

"First, there is the damage to the trees and second is the effect on the markets. Tree

damage extends far beyond the easily visible splintered and uprooted trees," Cooper said.

The dead and dying trees greatly increase the risk of forest fires. A fire would be even more dangerous because personnel cutbacks over the past several years have slashed the number of personnel trained to fight a forest fire.

Dead and dying trees are a haven for destructive insects, especially the Southern pine beetle, and diseases such as blue stain.

The fire hazard is so great that a ban on open burning in George and Stone counties has been issued by the Mississippi Forestry Commission.

"The damaged trees must be removed from these forests," Cooper said. Damaged trees will not bring anything close to market value, he said. "These trees will have less value as pulpwood and that value is decreasing every day," Cooper said. "Pulpwood is sold by the ton. Each day a broken tree dries a little and loses weight."

The effects of the storm are not all short term, Cooper said.

"There is a ripple effect that will be felt for years. The trees that are broken are gone from the rotation," he said. "And it is not just George County. This storm was so huge that it damaged the timber industry across the state. We have never been hit by a storm covering this large an area," he said.

Bill Wilkerson is already looking for a salvage contractor to clear cut his trees. Wilkerson is a tree farmer who says his pine plantation suffered a nearly 90 percent loss. His pecan orchard, which is nearby, suffered a 50 to 60 percent loss, he said.

"The only thing I know to do is to get some good seedlings and start over. At my age, this will be for my grand babies," Wilkerson said.

## Enjoy the old cedars in a stroll around Oxford

Many of Oxford's historical homes were landscaped with cedars. These old, tall, straight evergreens with fibrous, ashy gray bark, planted some five generations ago to enhance the landscape, continue to grow for our pleasure.

Today almost 350 eastern redcedars grace our community: some planted in large numbers, spaced 12 feet apart, bordering pathways or driveways leading to home; some planted to set off boundaries of property. Many locations have only one or two, maybe three or four remnants left of the trees that were planted to landscape the homes built soon after the mid-nineteenth century.

The eastern redcedar's name is misleading. It is in the juniper family and is not a true cedar. *Juniperus Virginia* is its Latin name. We know this tree as eastern redcedar. Joe and Merrill Willis tell us, "Cedar wood was sacred to the native local Indians. Prepared cedar berries/leaves cured 12 to 15 common ailments."

Today, we know the heartwood oil repels moths and is also used for medicine and perfume. Farmers use cedar for fence posts, and once cedar was our principle pencil wood. Many birds survive each winter on cedar berries produced only on female trees.

My tree study textbook states, "The eastern redcedar's growth is slow and reaches a maximum age of about 300 years." Oxford's largest collect of old cedars is at Rowan Oak. Today, over 150 stand on the landscaped grounds and on the edge of Bailey Woods. Of these, 54 border the winding pathway leading to the front porch. The cedars were probably planted soon after the home was built c. 1848.

William Griffith, Rowan Oak curator, states, "The cedar seedlings probably came from northeast Tennessee, as the builder of the

homes built in Oxford during this same period purchased cedar seedlings from the same area. Griffith also stated, "The builder had a theory that the cedars would control the yellow fever virus of that day. This proved not to be true." The yellow fever scare was probably the reason why so many of the other finer homes built during that period were landscaped with eastern redcedars.

Countless visitors stroll between the cedars on their way to tour Rowan Oak. Just recently Prince Edward of England chose to stroll along the cedar pathway.

Willie Morris refers to St. Peter's Cemetery in his Terrains of the Heart: "Pete and I often visit St. Peter's Cemetery. It is ineffably a southern place with shimmering magnolias and a circle of cedars, a perfect spot to observe the show changing season." In 1971 Jacob Thompson, former U.S. congressman and member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, deeded six acres to the church for a cemetery for the burial of Oxford's residents.

Known as the Thompson Circle, 17 cedars were planted in a 145 foot circumference. A large, rusty chain connects 19 two-inch pipes, anchored in concrete. A three-foot opening faces north. Twenty-one more cedars stand scattered throughout the six-acre cemetery. All of these were probably planted soon after the cemetery was established.

The eastern redcedar is also called the grave yard tree. An old superstition says, "When a red cedar you planted grows tall enough to shade your grave, it will be time for you to die."

These are the old eastern redcedars, planted to landscape the community during the early settlement of Oxford.

*Submitted by John Arrechea, Four Lakes Chapter*

## Groups offering help to save Gulf Coast's urban forests

The battered trees of south Mississippi's urban forests will receive a helping hand from state, federal and private grants totaling around \$500,000, officials and nonprofit conservation groups said on Friday.

Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, a local conservation group, received a Home Depot Foundation grant totaling \$100,000 to help save coastal Mississippi's hard-hit urban forests.

"We feel that trees are very important and it is vital that we save them," said Judy Steckler, the director of Land Trust.

Ed Macie, a representative of the U.S. Forest Service, which brokered the grant, said the money will be used in five areas of tree "triage" during the project called the "Mississippi Live Oak Rescue Mission."

The money will be used to pack exposed roots in good soil, place mulch around the trees, hire water trucks to flush salt from roots, and for protective fencing to be placed around healing trees.

Steckler said her group was in the best position to use the grant money for all three coastal counties. She said Land Trust's non-governmental status allows them to go on private property to save trees; government

employees must get right-of-entry forms signed and filed.

Two other grants, one from the Mississippi Forestry Commission and one from the U.S. Forest Service, will also go specifically to roadside trees and to help "urban and community forestry."

Walter Passmore of the Mississippi Forestry Commission said an analysis of urban forests showed the state lost around 3.5 million trees totaling \$1.1 billion in damage. He said values were estimated by costs to replace the trees, but also by intangible values trees add to communities, such as higher real estate prices and energy savings from buildings shaded by them.

Before Hurricane Katrina, development had already reduced Harrison County's tree cover by 40 percent in the last several years, so the initial grants will be the seed in the long process.

The Home Depot Foundation's \$100,000 grant "is probably not going to go a long way but maybe we could use it as a basis to get more support," said Donna Yowell, the executive director of the Mississippi Urban Forest Council.



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