

FOREST ACTION PLAN

FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 to include the requirement that each state conduct an assessment of and develop long-term strategies for its forest resources. These assessments and strategies focused on three national priorities:

- Conserve and Manage Working Forest Landscapes for Multiple Values and Uses
- Protect Forests from Threats
- Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests

These documents were developed by a comprehensive team of stakeholders to address cross-boundary, landscape-scale actions that would most efficiently address the concerns identified in the assessment phase of the Forest Action Plan.

Highlighted below are some of the actions that have been taken since South Carolina's Forest Action Plan was completed in June 2010. While not an exhaustive list, it provides highlights of work that the South Carolina Forestry Commission and our partners have accomplished.

Conserve and manage working forest landscapes for multiple values/uses

ISSUE: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FORESTRY

Highlight: Wood Magic Forest Fair

This educational program is designed to improve fourth-graders' awareness of forests' many contributions to society and quality of life, including not only the consumer and intermediary goods they produce, but also the ecosystem benefits they provide in the form of clean air and water.

Since 2010, nearly 6,000 students, teachers and chaperones have attended this event. The strongest evidence of this program's effectiveness is the significant increase in students'



Now in its 16th year, the Wood Magic Forest Fair is a fun-filled, forestry festival for fourth-graders. A day program of forestry-related educational experiences and demonstrations, the fair combines hands-on activities with visually engaging presentations in teaching children about the importance of forestlands to wildlife, the economy and our quality of life.

knowledge of the key forestry, environmental and conservation concepts presented at the event, as demonstrated by the difference in pre- and post-test scores. In 2014, for

example, student test scores increased by 29 percentage points from an average of 52 on the pre-test to 81 on the post-test.

– www.trees.sc.gov/wmfair.htm

Highlight: TELE Workshop

SCFC hosted a Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE) workshop in July 2015. Participants included representatives of the USDA Forest Service, USDA-NRCS, Center for Heirs Property Preservation, SC Tree Farm Committee, Longleaf Alliance, National Wild Turkey Federation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, SC Forestry Association and Clemson Extension Service. Combining principles of targeted marketing with data from the National Woodland Owner Survey, workshop facilitators helped the participants tailor their communications and outreach efforts to the knowledge level, values and style of their target landowner audiences, allowing for more persuasive and meaningful communication and better results. During the workshop, facilitators taught participants how to use these tools for more effective and efficient landowner outreach.

– www.engaginglandowners.org

ISSUE: EMERGING MARKETS

Highlight: 20x15 Project

SCFC initiated the “20-by-15 Project” in 2009 to increase forestry’s economic impact from \$17.4 billion to \$20 billion by 2015. Six committees addressed high-priority issues identified in a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis early in the process. After six years of work, forestry stakeholders came together in a Forestry Summit Aug. 18, 2015 to summarize the current status of South Carolina’s forest resource and its impact on the state’s economy, which was calculated at \$18.6 billion. Progress toward meeting 20x15 Project goals will be determined when 2015 IMPLAN data becomes available late in 2016.

– www.trees.sc.gov/releases/Release-20x15Summit.pdf

Challenge: Shortage of Small-Diameter Wood

Although South Carolina has more wood than ever, as recorded through



State Forester Gene Kodama, agency director of the South Carolina Forestry Commission, left, joined South Carolina Forestry Association President & CEO Cam Crawford Tuesday, Aug. 18 in announcing forestry’s sizable contribution to the state’s economy.

the FIA program, the wood is not evenly distributed across size or age classes. This uneven distribution of the forest resource was determined to have been caused primarily by three factors:

- Hurricane Hugo impacts
- the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Final harvest and reforestation of Soil Bank plantings

The result is a “baby-boom-like” generation in the state’s forest, peaking at 26 years of age. With abundant resource comes reduced wood prices, resulting in forest landowners delaying final harvests and reforestation.

Without final harvests creating acres to plant, tree planting has declined to 40-year lows. This is of significant concern to the existing industry, especially those sectors that utilize small-diameter trees. This is a regional problem and should be addressed through a regional solution that results in increased tree planting.

ISSUE: CONSERVE WORKING FORESTS

Highlight: Indian Creek Initiative

Funded through a Joint Chiefs Landscape Scale Restoration grant, this project expands the area of a successful initiative encompassing national forest land and adjacent private land. The Forestry Commission is providing technical assistance to

landowners participating in NRCS’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in this area as well as writing Forest Stewardship plans for property owners when requested. Demonstration areas and field tours are planned to show landowners several options for managing their open land as well as forestland.

– www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/sc/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD405826

ISSUE: FOREST REGULATION

Highlight: Resolutions Supporting Prescribed Fire

In 2015, the SC Prescribed Fire Council initiated an effort to encourage every county to pass a resolution supporting the use of prescribed fire as a land management tool. Since January, six county councils have passed these resolutions, and five additional counties are in the process of adopting resolutions.

Protect forests from threats

ISSUE: WILDFIRE RISK

Highlight: Dispatch Center Improvements

SCFC has implemented voice-over-IP technology, developed an automated burn notification system, replaced alphanumeric pagers with pager/

phones, and incorporated a new communications console system and color aerial photography in the computer-aided dispatch system.

Highlight: Equipment Replacement

SCFC, with the aid of its partners, secured recurring funding for replacement of outdated, unsafe tractor plow units beginning in 2013. This has allowed the agency to obtain 54 enclosed-cab bulldozers, which is approximately one-third of its fleet of 160 suppression units.

Highlight: Prescribed Fire Act

This piece of legislation provides increased protection from litigation for Certified Prescribed Fire Managers. These burners are not to be held liable for “damages caused by the resulting smoke of a prescribed fire unless gross negligence is proven.”

– www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t48c034.php

Data Need: Leaf-off Color Infrared Photography

Due to lack of funding, it has been more than 10 years since the agency acquired statewide coverage of leaf-off color infrared photography. This imagery is critical to both forest management and wildfire suppression.

Highlight: Parcel Data

The State GIS Coordination Council has been very successful in obtaining parcel data from every county in the state. The Forestry Commission needs to maintain its membership and support of the State GIS Coordination Council to continue to have access to county GIS data.

ISSUE: FOREST PRODUCT THEFT

Highlight: Timber Theft Initiative

In the early 1990s, the SCFC began investigating timber transaction crime, primarily in response to public demand. Specially trained agents now investigate hundreds of timber thefts and fraudulent timber deals every year, and the agency has become recognized as a Southeastern leader in this area. In 2013 SCFC assisted the Georgia Forestry Commission in establishing timber theft laws in their state and in securing jurisdictional power to enforce these laws. The Florida Division of Forestry has also sought SCFC’s assistance in establishing timber theft laws in their state.

ISSUE: FOREST HEALTH, INSECTS, DISEASES

Challenge: Changing Threats

The single most important challenge in addressing forest health issues is that threats are continually changing.



Leaf-off color infrared photography is a valuable tool in wildfire suppression.

New threats are constantly being discovered. When the Forest Action Plan was written, specific threats to South Carolina’s Forest were included. Since 2010, new threats have emerged that may be more severe. Because of the fluidity of this situation, our tactics will need to be adapted frequently to address these changing threats to forest health.

Enhance public benefits from trees and forests

ISSUE: WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY

Highlight: BMP Compliance

BMP compliance and implementation monitoring for timber harvesting was completed in 2012 with a compliance rate of 93.4%, a slight dip from the previous survey, but still above the regional average. In 2015, the follow-up to the 2012 survey was completed, having made return visits to those sites 1 year and 2 years post-harvest. For this survey, compliance and implementation of BMPs for non-harvest activities were assessed, resulting in an overall compliance rate of 96.6%.

– www.trees.sc.gov/pubs/BMPMonitoringReport.pdf



South Carolina Forestry Commission officials placed a new enclosed-cab bulldozer next to an older, less reliable unit to illustrate the difference in size, safety and effectiveness of our newly acquired heavy equipment.

Challenge: Reduced Federal Funding

In 2010, federal EPA 319 funding for the BMP program was reduced from \$215k to \$175k. The 319 funds are a 60% federal/40% state match. This reduction resulted in the loss of one full-time position in the BMP Program reducing the program to one statewide coordinator and three regional field foresters.

ISSUE: COMMUNITY FORESTS

Highlight: Green Infrastructure Workshops

SCFC partnered with the Green Infrastructure Center and the Councils of Government of South Carolina to conduct 10 workshops across the state.

Challenge: Reduced Federal Funding

The reduction of federal funds to a baseline level has allowed only 2 of 3 full-time urban forester positions to be filled. Without an increase in funding, the agency's ability to provide effective urban and community forestry assistance will continue to be limited.

Future Plans: Stormwater Management

SCFC developed a grant proposal for FY2016, which, if awarded, will demonstrate Stormwater Management BMPs through implementation of



In 2015, BMP foresters made more than 1,200 site visits to over 560 different sites and provided 307 courtesy exams to loggers throughout the state. In addition, BMP foresters have provided nearly 78 hours of BMP instruction to more than 760 foresters, loggers and landowners. On the sites where a courtesy exam was conducted, BMPs protected more than 88 miles of perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams.

Green Infrastructure plans in 6 states across USFS Region 8 (SC, NC, VA, OK, GA, AL and FL).

Highlight: Green Infrastructure Plans

These plans incorporate existing green assets into county comprehensive plans. Sustainable forestry, agriculture, recreation, cultural assets and urban development are taken into consideration by planners using the Green Infrastructure (GI) model. The SCFC is taking the leadership role in GI planning, training, and grant opportunities.

– <http://www.gicinc.org/methods.htm>



Green infrastructure refers to the interconnected natural systems and ecological processes that provide clean water, air quality and wildlife habitat.

