

# Tree Country

April 2016



the employee  
newsletter of the  
South Carolina  
Forestry Commission

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Drone Training  
Page 4



Tree Farm Legislative Day  
Page 5



Youth Turkey Hunt  
Page 7



from the desk of  
STATE FORESTER  
**Gene Kodama**

Good day,  
Spring is here and what a quick change from winter's cold and wet conditions to spring warmth and at least less rain. "Green Up" seems to have come quickly with the warming of moist soils all over the state. Wildfire numbers have increased with the drier, windy conditions we have had lately, but wet soils and damp large fuels have kept intensity and numbers down. It appears that we will be blessed with another year of relatively low total wildfire numbers and the continuing opportunity to restore staffing and equipment before more active fire seasons return. The mild fire seasons have also helped greatly to minimize funds spent on firefighting while our budgets are still far below pre-recessionary levels.

Mild fire seasons have also lessened the safety risks we face during more active times. Every wildfire we don't have reduces our exposure to hazards. You will see in this issue of the bulletin that

our agency won an award from the SC Chamber of Commerce for improving its safety incident record. As we know, safety is "job #1" for the Commission, and we can be proud that we have

reduced the number of accidents and injuries. We now need to continue with our emphasis on working safely and keep striving for zero safety incidents.

During the award ceremony, the keynote speaker, J. Brian Pearson, from the SC National Safety Council focused his message on the engagement of people in safety. That is, for our organization and employees to function safely, we must all be engaged in the process and committed to the goal of zero incidents. He mentioned a Council program called “Alive at 25,” which is a program designed to reduce the number of driving injuries and deaths suffered by youngsters. He said the biggest cause of these tragedies was “distracted” driving which is now the number one killer of teens. Seventy-seven (77) percent of youngsters text and drive and often learn to do so by seeing their parents do the same thing. He also said that overall workforce accident rates are 48 percent higher when employees are not engaged in working safely. We should strive for a “behavior-based safety culture and 100 percent engagement” to minimize accidents and injuries.

Our agency is improving its safety performance as illustrated by the award, so let’s continue to strive for zero accidents and injuries to our Commission family by “staying engaged in the task at hand, focused, and not distracted.”

Regarding legislative affairs, we have had an active and productive month.



State Forester Gene Kodama addresses the Tree Farm members at the annual Tree Farm Legislative Day Feb. 25.

We have communicated with several legislators on a variety of topics ranging from constituent issues in their home districts to our budget and proposed legislation. The renewal of Act 271 to provide continued funding for firefighting and firefighting equipment made considerable progress recently in the forms of House Bill 4525 and Senate Bill 973. The Senate approved S.973 and sent it to the House for their approval, and a House Ways and Means subcommittee approved H.4525 and sent it to the full committee.

We presented the agency’s 2016-2017 budget request to our Senate Finance Subcommittee, and it was well received. The agency’s Senate Oversight Review report was presented to the full Senate Fish, Game, and Forestry Committee, and it was reported out favorably with no further issues to be addressed by the Commission. There is still much more

legislative activity ahead in this session, but progress has been good thus far.

Let’s all continue to look out for each other and ourselves and keep safety first in everything that we do.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gene".



This issue’s cover features a nice loblolly pine stand at the Piedmont Forestry Center near the cabin.



FlySmart instructor Lee Breeding, State Forester Gene Kodama, Chief Pilot Sam Anderson, and Public Information Coordinator Justin Holt watch a demonstration of the Phantom 3 quadcopter.



# Employee News

## New Employees

The Coastal Region welcomed new mechanic **Robert Johnson** March 2. Robert will work in the Walterboro Shop. He lives in Walterboro and has previously worked for Hill Tire Company.

Welcome, Robert!



Robert Johnson

## PERSONNEL NEWS

Effective April 2, 2016, **James Douglas** is the new Manchester State Forest Director. James has been the Manchester State Forest Assistant Director since March 2011 and has worked in other areas of the Commission since July 2006. Congratulations to James!

**Brian Moran** resigned from his position as FIA Forester in the Coastal Region March 29.



James Douglas

Georgetown Supervisor **James Hall** graduated from Basic Law Enforcement Class 644 March 4. He was sworn in as a law enforcement officer with the SC Forestry Commission March 9. Congratulations, James!



L to R: Equipment Coordinator Doug Mills, Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt, Pee Dee LE Investigator Winn McCaskill, Georgetown Supervisor James Hall, LE Chief Tommy Mills, Protection Chief Darryl Jones, and Assistant LE Chief Jonathan Calore congratulate Hall, center, at the graduation ceremony.



Hall is sworn in as an officer by LE Chief Tommy Mills.

## SCFC Receives South Carolina Safety Award

The South Carolina Forestry Commission has been awarded a South Carolina Chamber of Commerce annual Commendation of Excellence award.

The Safety Awards Luncheon to honor South Carolina's companies with top safety records took place Tuesday, March 22 at the Embassy Suites in Columbia.

Please take this opportunity to thank our safety managers and employees who work so hard to keep your workplace safe.



Coastal LE Investigator Kip Terry, Coastal Region Forester Calvin Bailey, Training & Safety Coordinator Leslie Woodham, Human Resources Manager Erica Brazile, and State Forester Gene Kodama accepted the award at the luncheon.

## CAUGHT ON CAMERA



It's a campaign year, and pine straw seems to be an option!



Edisto Unit Forester Pete Stuckey sent in this photo of a deer stand in Hampton County being used to prop up a pine tree.



FEPP/FFP Manager Brad Bramlett dressed as a snazzy spokesperson for a video project for his Certified Public Manager class video project.

# Programs

## SCFC Staff Participates in Drone Training at Headquarters

Several employees went through Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) fundamentals training Feb. 29 at Commission headquarters.

Chief Pilot Sam Anderson and Public Information Coordinators Michelle Johnson and Justin Holt attended the training conducted by Lee Breeding, who is Chief Pilot and Director of Media Development for FlySmart Academy.

Breeding covered a vast array of subjects to prepare SCFC employees for UAS use, including terminology, regulatory requirements, safety, airspace, Phantom 3 parts, maintenance, setup and operation.

Following the classroom instruction, each attendee practiced flying the Phantom 3 inside the Palmetto Room because the SCFC cannot legally fly its UAS outdoors at this time.

The SCFC is currently going through a multistep process to get the Phantom 3 cleared for outdoor use. A letter has already been sent to the Attorney General proving the SCFC is a state agency in need of using a UAS. Johnson is spearheading the work to register the Phantom 3 with the Federal Aviation Administration and is completing paperwork for a Certificate of Authorization (COA) and a 333 exemption.

### Information

-Justin Holt

When all the paperwork has been completed and approved, the agency may use the Phantom 3 drone to:

- perform photography and videography for informational, educational and promotional purposes, the products of which will take the form of audio/video presentations and general



Chief Pilot Sam Anderson flies the unmanned aircraft in the Palmetto Room at the Columbia headquarters as FlySmart instructor Lee Breeding coaches and observes.

informational/educational content that will appear in the agency's and partners' printed materials, websites and various electronic media;

- monitor water protection/quality compliance under Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards;
- observe and assist with wildfires;
- use as a monitoring tool for nursery/tree improvement purposes;
- monitor the health of South Carolina's forests with regard to insects and disease;
- monitor the conditions of South Carolina's forests with regard to forest management;



Breeding goes through a pre-flight equipment and safety check before letting the training participants operate the drone.

- assist with Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) operations;
- assess urban tree canopy health;
- assist and support search-and-rescue operations on state forest lands.





# Tree Farm Legislative Day

The South Carolina Tree Farm program held its annual Legislative Day at the Statehouse Thursday, Feb. 25 to raise awareness of the importance of forestry to the environment and the economy. More than 50 members of SC Tree Farm convened at the capitol to be recognized in both chambers of the General Assembly and to visit one-on-one with lawmakers.

In addition to touting the industry’s \$18.6 billion economic impact in South Carolina – forestry is the state’s number one manufacturing sector in terms of both jobs and wages, trees are the state’s largest crop, and forest products are the number one export commodity by volume from the Port of Charleston – the SC Tree Farm delegation advocated its 2016 legislative agenda, which includes:

- **Replacing Load-Restricted Bridges**

Annually, there are about 1 million truckloads of logs and wood chips delivered to mills in our state. No industry is impacted more by the posting of load-restricted bridges than the forest industry is. There are 363 load-restricted bridges in South Carolina. Tree farmers receive lower bids when their timber tracts are located near a load-restricted bridge due to the increased cost of log trucks having to drive a longer, alternate route to the mill. The General Assembly needs to include \$25 million in funding over a 10-year period to eliminate load-restricted bridges in House Bill 3579.

- **Restricting Eminent Domain**

The General Assembly needs to protect timberland owners’ private property rights by prohibiting private, unregulated companies including petroleum pipeline companies from being able to condemn private property. Support Senate Bill 868 as amended in Senate Judiciary Subcommittee.

- **Protecting The Forest Resource**

As introduced Senate Bill 973 and House Bill 4525 extend the funding received from the insurance premium tax for firefighting equipment at the South Carolina Forestry Commission until 2022.

- **Supporting The Budget Requests Of The SC Forestry Commission, DNR And Clemson PSA**

These three state agencies are invaluable partners to SC Tree Farm in promoting the responsible stewardship of forestland and other natural resources.



Tree Farm members sit in the balcony of the House to be recognized.



# Programs

## Education Programs Impact Richland County 7th-Graders

Seventh-grade students from Dent Middle School in Richland County School District Two recently participated in the “Population Dynamics & Energy Flow” program at the Environmental Education Center at Harbison State Forest.

Students learned how forests are dynamic and are ever-changing in response to natural and human-caused events and how the introduction of invasive species affects the balance in an ecosystem.

Students became grasshoppers, shrews, and hawks in a food chain to learn how energy flows through trophic levels.

The lead science teacher, Chloe Jeffords, had the students reflect upon their

learning once they returned to school. Here are some excerpts from some of the students’ reflections that exemplify how the mind of seventh-graders work...funny what is remembered correctly, incorrectly, and what’s important to a 13-year old:

*“He told us about how they don’t have to pay their taxes in money, but in things from the forest like, timber, pine cones, ETC.... It was sort of a bad idea to bring my new shoes because we walk through a lot of muddy stuff, but thankfully my shoes didn’t get that dirty (Oh, and my new shoes were blue and yellow Roshies).”*

*“Today I took a field trip to Harbison State Forest and I had a WONDERFUL time. You see, I’m not really into hiking*

*so I was not very excited about going (I almost thought about “sleeping in” again.) but once I arrived and we started, I was having TONS of fun!!”*

*“Once I realized that outdoor learning CAN be fun and entertaining at the same time I thought of an idea for our outdoor learning classroom.”*

*“Urban Foresters take care of individual trees to make sure that too many don’t die off at once.”*

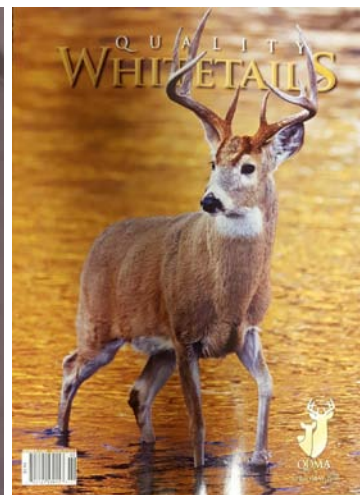
### Education

-Matt Schnabel

## Commission Listed as Partner in Two National Organization Magazines



In the March/April issue of *Turkey Country*, the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) magazine, the SC Forestry Commission was recognized and listed (right) as a Hunting Heritage State Agency Partner.



In the April/May 2016 issue of *Quality Whitetails*, the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) magazine, the Commission is listed as a Conservation Partner (right).





# Military Appreciation Youth Turkey Hunt Brings Smiles

The South Carolina Forestry Commission hosted a military appreciation youth hunt March 11-12 at Niederhof Forestry Center.

Five youths with military ties took part in the hunt. None of the hunters had ever harvested a turkey, and two had never participated in any type of hunting or shooting activities.

The hunters arrived at the Niederhof office March 11 for orientation, an overview of the importance of forestry in South Carolina, an introduction to turkey hunting and a safety briefing. The afternoon concluded with a trip to the range where hunters were taught firearm safety and patterned their guns.

The participants returned to Niederhof before sunrise March 12 to travel to their hunting locations. Stewardship Coordinator Scott Phillips, Coastal Region Investigator Kip Terry and Edisto Unit Forester Pete Stuckey each took one hunter to a scouted location, while State Forester Gene Kodama took two hunters with him.

Several gobblers were seen or heard during the hunt, but unfortunately, none were harvested. However, the hunters and their parents left Niederhof with a newfound excitement for turkey hunting and an appreciation for the SCFC's service to the state and its military appreciation program.

"It was truly an honor to be around all of the wonderful people that made this event a huge success," said SC National Guard Child and Youth Services Program Director James Harris, whose son, Luke, was one of the hunters. "There are no words to describe the impact they had on my own son as well as all the other youth."

A special thanks goes out to the South Carolina chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation for sponsoring the meals, and to Niederhof Seed Orchard Manager Chris King and Allendale/Hampton/Jasper sector Forest Technician Lowell Parnell for their help with the hunt.



Hunt participants with guides and family members enjoyed their time outdoors.



Reforestation/Stewardship Coordinator Scott Phillips explains how decoys are used in turkey hunting.



Coastal LE Investigator Kip Terry shows the children how to safely handle a firearm.



Before the shooting begins, Kip Terry shows David Ryan where to aim



Scott Phillips helps Jackson Kaminski get ready to pattern his gun.



Kip Terry assists Aaron Meree with setup as State Forester Gene Kodama looks on.



Luke Harris takes aim at the target as Kip Terry looks on.



## Battling the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

The hemlock woolly adelgid, *Adelges tsugae*, is an aphid-like creature native to eastern Asia where it is not a pest. However, it was reported in Virginia in 1951 and has shown itself to be a threat to our native eastern hemlocks and Carolina hemlocks. It has piercing, sucking mouthparts that it uses to tap into the phloem tissue of hemlock leaves. As it feeds, it injects a toxic salivary mixture that desiccates the foliage. The reduced ability to photosynthesize weakens the tree, usually killing it within a matter of three to seven years.

In their native range, the hemlock woolly adelgid alternates between wingless asexual adults that reproduce parthenogenetically (without mating) and winged sexual adults. The asexual forms feed on hemlock, while the sexual forms feed on a species of spruce not found in eastern North America. As a result, sexual forms are rarely, if ever, found in the eastern U.S.

### Forest Health

-David Jenkins



These are hemlock trees that have been killed by hemlock woolly adelgid. (Photo provided by Jason Van Driesch, Bugwood.org.)

The older nymphs and adults are sessile, settling down on hemlock foliage to extract nutrients from the foliage. Before she dies, the adult hemlock woolly adelgid lays between 100 and 300 eggs that remain in her highly visible white, woolly ovisac. They hatch out into crawlers, the mobile stage of this flightless beast. Although they have legs and can crawl, they are most commonly transported long distances by the wind and on the legs of birds and other animals.

Hemlocks, although not a common tree in much of South Carolina, are extremely important in their Appalachian habitat. Hemlocks are slow-growing and long lived, surviving to be more than 800 years old. They are the most shade-tolerant tree in North America. The dense shade and deep litter layer of hemlock forests have a big impact on microclimate and carbon cycling, dramatically lowering temperatures under their canopies. Hemlocks were usually found in the cool humid habitats along mountain streams and played an important role in reducing soil lost to erosion and regulating stream temperatures.

The disappearance of hemlocks could have an enormous impact on mountain stream habitats, so protecting hemlocks is critical. Applications of systemic insecticides, particularly the neonicotinoid imidacloprid, have been very effective in protecting hemlocks in the southern Appalachians. Treated trees are often adelgid-free for four years or more. However, neonicotinoids have been strongly implicated as one of the factors contributing to colony collapse disorder in honeybees and their use is becoming more restricted. Since honeybees do not forage on hemlock flowers, careful treatment of hemlocks poses minimal threat to honeybees while protecting valuable forest trees.



These cottony ovisacs on foliage are the telltale signs of hemlock woolly adelgid. (Photo provided by SCFC Forest Health Specialist David Jenkins.)

At least three natural predators of the hemlock woolly adelgid have been released in eastern North America and are being evaluated for their effectiveness. *Laricobius nigrinus* and *L. osakensis* are predatory lady beetles from the western U.S. and Japan, respectively. Another lady beetle, *Pseudoscymnus tsugae*, has also been imported from Japan to control hemlock woolly adelgid. It is unlikely these beetles will ever eradicate hemlock woolly adelgid from North America. The hope is that they will knock populations back to lower levels that the hemlocks can tolerate.



## Mosquito-borne Viruses a Greater Possibility This Year

After one of the wettest falls on record, we can expect a lot of mosquito activity this spring. Mosquitoes transmit a number of serious viruses, so it would be wise to protect yourself and your family as you work and play outdoors.

An important mosquito genus in the southeast is *Culex*. *Culex* mosquitoes lay clumps of eggs in rafts in standing water, including permanent or semi-permanent pools, ponds and containers. Unlike *Aedes*, *Culex* mosquitoes are nocturnal.

Many viruses are vectored by mosquitoes in the *Aedes* genus. Members of this genus lay individual eggs on substrates that are not in water. The species *A. albopictus* and *A. aegypti* are associated with human habitat and will lay their eggs in containers with standing water, but glue their eggs to the container above the waterline. The eggs remain quiescent and are tolerant of periods of extreme cold and desiccation. Eggs can remain viable for years, hatching only when they are submerged and the oxygen content of the water has dropped due to microbial activity; mosquito larvae feed on microbes so they don't want to hatch before there is food!

Although Zika virus, Chikungunya virus and dengue hemorrhagic fever have captured our attention, your chances of contracting these viruses in South Carolina are very low. All reported cases of these viruses in South Carolina so far have involved individuals who have traveled to regions where



Many viruses are vectored by mosquitoes in the *Aedes* genus. The species *A. aegypti* is active all day.

these diseases are more prominent, including the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Two diseases you can catch in South Carolina are West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalomyelitis.

### West Nile virus

This virus is transmitted by various species of *Culex*, including *C. pipiens* and *C. quinquefasciatus*. These mosquitoes bite humans and birds, which are important reservoirs and hosts of West Nile virus. Most people (approximately 80 percent) infected with this virus report very mild symptoms. Others report headaches, fever, nausea, rash, and a number of other non-specific symptoms. Less than one percent of infected humans experience life-threatening symptoms,

### Forest Health

-David Jenkins

including encephalitis (swelling of the brain) and meningitis (infection of the tissue covering the brain and/or spine).

### Eastern equine encephalomyelitis

This is the most pathogenic of the mosquito-borne viruses we are likely to contract in South Carolina. It is transmitted among birds by the swamp mosquito, *Culiseta melanura* but other mosquito species may spread it from birds to humans and other mammals.

You can protect yourself from these and other mosquito-borne viruses by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors and using mosquito repellent.

## 25 Common American Customs Considered Offensive in Other Countries (Part 1)

—from the *MSN Business Insider*

There are a number of customs and gestures that Americans use without thinking twice. But when traveling abroad, they will not only out you as a tourist, but could get you in hot water in other countries. The most common American customs that are seen as offensive elsewhere:

### Tipping

A contentious issue even here, both over- and under-tipping can quickly make you the least popular person at the table. But in Japan and South Korea tipping is seen as an insult. In those countries, workers feel they are getting paid to do their job, and take pride in doing it well; they don't need an added incentive.



# Programs

## River Falls Fire Department Receives Nearly \$5,000 in Grants

The South Carolina Forestry Commission presented the River Falls Fire Department a check for \$4,836.29 in federal grants Friday, March 11 intended to help the volunteer fire department better prepare for firefighting in rural areas.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission administers the U.S. Forest Service's Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program in the Palmetto State, awarding varying amounts of financial assistance to rural/volunteer fire departments every year. The grants – based on a 50 percent match – are used by the volunteer fire departments to organize, train and equip themselves to prevent and suppress wildfires.

The amount of the awards varies based on need, which is determined through a rigorous application and selection process. The VFA grant application is sent out each year in July and is due



SCFC Protection Chief Darryl Jones, left, and SCFC Grant Coordinator Brad Bramlett, right, present River Falls Fire Chief Jason Gordon with an oversized check representing the department's Volunteer Fire Assistance grant award.

the end of September. Each application is scored based on values that help the firefighting capability of both the fire department as well as the Forestry Commission. Some of these categories include population, years funded, annual budget and number of wildfires.

“This money will be put to use in a way that directly serves and impacts the lives and property we protect,” said River Falls Fire Department Chief Jason Gordon. “We are proud to receive this grant and look forward to continuing to work with the Forestry Commission.”

### Information

-Doug Wood

## Agency Publishes New Forest Management Practices Calendar for Landowners

Adapting a forest management schedule he had seen in another state, Reforestation/Stewardship Coordinator Scott Phillips worked with the Information & Education Division to produce a forest management practices calendar for landowners.

Called “My Forest Management Calendar,” the schedule features rule-of-thumb advice spanning the spectrum of forestry management practices for every month of the year.

The calendar has been produced in two sizes, a 17-inch-by-11-inch folded booklet that has to be specially printed in the headquarters office, and a letter-sized version that can be viewed, downloaded or printed online at <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/docs/managementcalendar-landscape.pdf>. If you would like the full-size printed booklet version to share with landowners or for special events, conferences or exhibit booths, please contact Director of Communication and Public Information Doug Wood at (803) 896-8820 or [dwood@scfc.gov](mailto:dwood@scfc.gov) at least one day before scheduling to pick them up.





# Programs

## SCFC to Receive Notable State Document Award

The Forestry Commission has been selected to receive one of 10 Notable State Document Awards for 2015 by the South Carolina State Library. The award-winning publication is the Economic Impact Analysis of SC's Forestry Sector, 2015, which the agency released last August as part of its event materials for the 20x15 Forestry Summit in Columbia.

The agency commissioned the economic impact study, performed by David Hughes, professor and Greever Chair in Agribusiness Development at the University of Tennessee, to support the 20x15 initiative, which aspired to raise forestry's economic impact on South Carolina's economy to \$20 billion by the year 2015 (it currently stands at \$18.6 billion). A follow-up to Hughes' study using 2015 data will be conducted later this year to make the final assessment of the initiative's success.

The Notable Documents Awards recognize state governmental publications of outstanding merit and usefulness to the citizens of South Carolina. In the award letter, SCSL Acting Director Leesa Aiken wrote that the awards "focus on the value of information compiled and produced by state government agencies and to emphasize the importance of open and equal access to this information."

SCFC Resource Development Director Tim Adams and Director of Communication and Public Information Doug Wood attended the State Library's annual Notable State Documents recognition ceremony Thursday, March 31 to accept the award.



### Information

-Doug Wood

## Make a Purchase from the NASF Store

State forestry agencies and their departments have a variety of choices when purchasing educational materials for fire prevention, conservation education and more. By purchasing educational materials through the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), member agencies directly support the non-profit association that supports all state forestry agencies.

NASF's products include educational brochures posters, notecards, awareness tree tags, and gift items like coasters and tote bags.

NASF offers a diverse set of high-quality products under two categories: Smokey Bear (fire prevention and education) and Healthy Forests/My Tree—Our

Forest (conservation education).

The Healthy Forests category includes two new products (tree tags and tote bags) featuring the exciting new My Tree—Our Forest® campaign targeting urban and community forestry audiences. These educational products are suitable as giveaway items at community and school events, forestry tours, exhibit booths at conferences and more.

NASF maintains its educational materials store at [www.stateforesters.org/store](http://www.stateforesters.org/store).

Orders can also be placed by phone at (240) 646-7053.

## Helping to Spread the Word

about CONSERVATION and FIRE PREVENTION!

From our best-selling Smokey Bear pocket planner to desk accessories, posters, and fun gifts for kids, you'll find what you need to engage people of all ages about the role we all play in healthy forests!



[stateforesters.org/store](http://stateforesters.org/store)



# Programs

## Manchester Cleanup Day Collects 17 Tons of Litter

Manchester State Forest held their annual litter cleanup day Saturday, March 19. The event, sponsored by Manchester State Forest, Sumter County Public Works, Palmetto Pride, and Clemson Extension, collected over 17 tons of litter on the forest to fill two small and two large dumpsters. More than 100 volunteers pitched in to help with this year's cleanup. Volunteers represented Shaw Air Force Base, Sumter High School, Manchester Elementary School, and residents of Sumter County. A hamburger and hot dog lunch was provided for all participants.

April is Zero Tolerance For Litter Month!



A group of Sumter High School students was glad to help clean up the forest.

### Manchester

- James Douglas



MSF Forest Technician Wayne Eaddy leads a group of volunteers on the highway.



Volunteers pick up trash along Highway 261.



Two large dumpsters like this were filled along with two smaller ones.

# Programs

## SCFC to Participate in AFF's Take Root Initiative

The South Carolina Forestry Commission will be participating in the American Forest Foundation's Take Root initiative through the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF).

The Take Root initiative, which has a two-year timeline, is a messaging platform designed to use the power of social media to tell the positive story of the forest sector. The SGSF is taking the lead for the SCFC and the rest of the agencies in the South on this initiative

and will represent them on the Take Root communications committee.

Being a part of Take Root has many benefits, including exposure to research on the forest sector and messaging, access to social media help and template materials that can be branded. Public Information Coordinator Justin Holt will make posts on the agency's social media platforms when Take Root material is released.

### Information

- Justin Holt

## 45 Employees Pass Arduous Physical Fitness Test

Congratulations to the 45 Forestry Commission employees who volunteered to take the arduous level work capacity test the agency administered over the last two weeks. This test requires participants to walk three miles while carrying a 45-lb. pack in 45 minutes or less. Passing the test makes them eligible for wildland fire duty requiring a red card. The agency employees who passed are:

### Piedmont Region

Mike Bozzo  
Dale Curry  
Blair Long  
Jeff Riggin  
Michael Weeks  
James Robins  
David Bagwell  
Trey Cox  
Samuel St Louis  
Jeremy Gantt  
Jon Barker  
Jarrod Brucke  
Ben Kendall  
Michael McGill  
Clay Cooper

### Coastal Region

Russell Hale  
Kip Terry  
Tyler Greiner  
Jacqueline Lintzenich  
Gray Vallentine

### Pee Dee Region

Eric West  
Terry Cook  
Wes Brunson  
Ron Holt  
Timothy Hunt  
Matt Crow  
James Hall  
Jacob Schimpf  
Kris Jordan  
Eric Brown

### State Forests

Cody Watts  
Henry Hutto  
AJ Rabon  
Brian Davis  
Roosevelt Seegars  
Justin Smith  
Trip Miller  
Wayne Eaddy  
Charlie Scruggs  
James Douglas

### Columbia

Jonathan Calore  
Drake Carroll  
Matt Schnabel  
Russell Hubright  
David Owen

### Training/Safety

- Leslie Woodham



# NEWS FROM Around the state



## Ward Elected President of SC Litter Control

Manchester State Forest Law Enforcement Technician Steve Ward was elected president of the South Carolina Litter Control Association Feb. 26. Steve will serve a two-year term and can be re-elected.

Steve was encouraged to join the association in 2004 because of the litter issues on Manchester State Forest. In 2010 he was voted into the Central Regional Director office, which covers Aiken, Barnwell, Calhoun, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Richland and Sumter counties. Steve was re-elected to Central Regional Director in 2012, and in 2014 he was voted in as the vice president for the Association.

The South Carolina Litter Control Association is an organization dedicated to the cause of litter reduction in the state of South Carolina through education and enforcement efforts. Their mission is to support and actively promote membership to all professionals engaged in litter control work and to anyone interested in the cause of litter control and to be the voice for strict enforcement of litter laws.

Congratulations, Steve!



Steve Ward

## Upcoming Bulls Bay Nature Festival

Get outside! Bulls Bay community federal, state and local agencies, organizations, schools and businesses come together once again to bring you the 4th annual Bulls Bay Nature Festival - From the Forest to the Sea on Saturday, May 21, from 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. Festival activities will happen in the Francis Marion National Forest, at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, Hampton Plantation State Historic Site, the Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center and Bishop Jerden Conference Center.

The festival is a day full of fun for everyone! There are activities for kids and adults that include: Photography workshop at the Sewee Center, edible and native plant walks, bird and wildflower walks, historic tours at Hampton Plantation and Battery Warren, Bulls Island Auto Tour, kayak paddles into the salt marshes and blackwater creeks, paddleboarding in freshwater ponds, live red wolf, reptile, raptor and beekeeping programs, sweetgrass basketry workshop, fishing in Sewee Pond, and family bike trip in the Francis Marion National Forest. Tony Mills, Naturalist and Education Director for the LowCountry Institute and host of SCETV's award-winning Coastal Kingdom, will close the festival with his presentation at 4 p.m. Community vendors, live music and food will also be there to enjoy.

The mission of the Bulls Bay Nature Festival - From the Forest to the Sea is to increase awareness, promote engagement and foster lasting connections with our unique natural places and wildlife in the Bulls Bay community. Festival Partners: Awendaw Green, Hampton Plantation State Historic Site, The Center for Birds of Prey, Bishop Jerden Conference Center, Nature Adventures Outfitters, Town of Awendaw, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, Sewee Outpost, Town of McClellanville, Coastal Expeditions, Francis Marion National Forest, SC Department of Natural Resources, Friends of Coastal SC, and the SC Forestry Commission. Coastal Stewardship Forester Vaughan Spearman will be leading an educational walk on edible plants.

Festival Registration Begins May 2nd! Call (843) 928-3264 (Mon-Tues) or (843) 928-3368 (Wed-Sat). Be sure to check the Bulls Bay Nature Festival website at [www.bullsbaynaturefestival.org](http://www.bullsbaynaturefestival.org) to see what's coming May 21. Also visit the Festival Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/bullsbaynaturefestival](http://www.facebook.com/bullsbaynaturefestival).



Coastal Stewardship Forester Vaughan Spearman leads a walk on edible plants.

# New Website Emphasizes the Importance of the Forest Industry in the South

There is a new website, <http://forestryimpacts.net/>, that promotes the importance of forests and the forest products industry in the Southern Region of the United States. The Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) and Southern Regional Extension Forestry (SREF) office have worked collaboratively to bring this economic information and data to one website. All available state-level forest economic reports for each of the 13 southern states as well as regional reports for Southern Region are hosted on this website.

Providing these reports in a single online location makes it easily accessible for use by educators, community leaders, policy makers, and others for explaining and advocating for the importance of the forest industry. Report content varies, as each state has their own data collection, measurement, and analysis methods, although all of them include similar basic information

Links to both state-level and regional-level economic impact and contribution reports for the southern region are provided. These reports include values such as employment numbers, employee compensation, total industry output, indirect and induced impacts, etc.

Please visit our recently-launched collaborative website, [forestryimpacts.net](http://forestryimpacts.net), for the latest state and regional-level data on forest economic impacts in the Southeast.



## FUN FACTS

Cats and horses are highly susceptible to black widow venom, but dogs are relatively resistant. Sheep and rabbits are apparently immune.

Sharks kill fewer than 10 people per year. Humans kill about 100 million sharks per year.

Wild dolphins call each other by name.

Young goats pick up accents from each other.

Source: Mother Nature Network (<http://www.mnn.com>)



## HISTORICAL WILDFIRE DATA FOR MARCH

YEAR	FIRES	ACRES
1980	325	1,144.5
1981	3,517	39,323.2
1982	1,350	6,778.1
1983	519	1,991.3
1984	1,042	5,864.7
1985	3,724 <sup>1</sup>	41,837.3
1986	1,654	11,251.8
1987	637	2,570.4
1988	2,288	13,455.3
1989	615	2,859.2
1990	778	3,728.0
1991	1,118	15,267.9
1992	1,350	10,805.9
1993	746	10,215.9
1994	1,261	12,117.6
1995	1,083	7,627.1
1996	815	6,723.3
1997	887	11,952.7
1998	425	3,145.4
1999	1,426	11,239.0
2000	784	4,810.7
2001	567	2,862.8
2002	837	8,317.3
2003	104 <sup>2</sup>	395.8 <sup>2</sup>
2004	1,169	9,683.7
2005	679	5,215.0
2006	781	5,575.2
2007	709	4,536.4
2008	536	4,000.9
2009	387	2,595.0
2010	404	2,987.2
2011	551	9,175.2
2012	287	3,125.2
2013	502	3,450.1
2014	358	1,821.0
2015	205	1,620.1
2016	275	1,806.4

10 Year Average 473 3,931.4

<sup>1</sup>Highest on record for month of March

<sup>2</sup>Lowest on record for month of March

Most acreage burned in the month of March was in 1955 with 89,816.8 acres from 1,842 wildfires.





# Trees for Wildlife

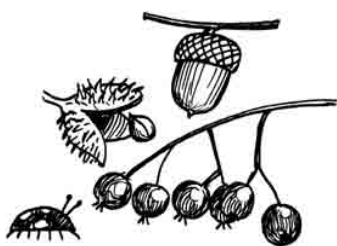
A common thread that runs through the fabric of America is our love for wildlife. Whether it is a squirrel in our backyard or a hovering marsh hawk hunting the edges of a city park, wildlife is a valued resource to protect and enjoy. But to share our communities with wildlife takes understanding and planning. Not surprisingly, trees play an important role. By understanding a few basic principles, you can attract songbirds and other desirable wildlife to your home or neighborhood.

## What Wildlife Needs

Whatever the wildlife, whether a song sparrow or a butterfly or a squirrel, the key to its presence is habitat – the place where it lives. Habitat consists of three important elements, all of which are necessary in order for wildlife to find a home.

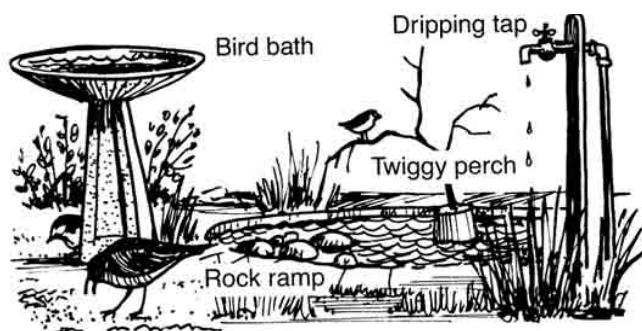
### Food

Each different tree and shrub species has a different food value and attracts different animals. Some, like cherries, may be relished by as many as 40 species. Having a wide variety of trees with high food value is the single best way to increase your pleasure in viewing wildlife.



### Water

Water is as essential for wildlife as it is for humans. Provide it and you will be rewarded with more birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Shown below are a few ways water can be provided in a home landscape.



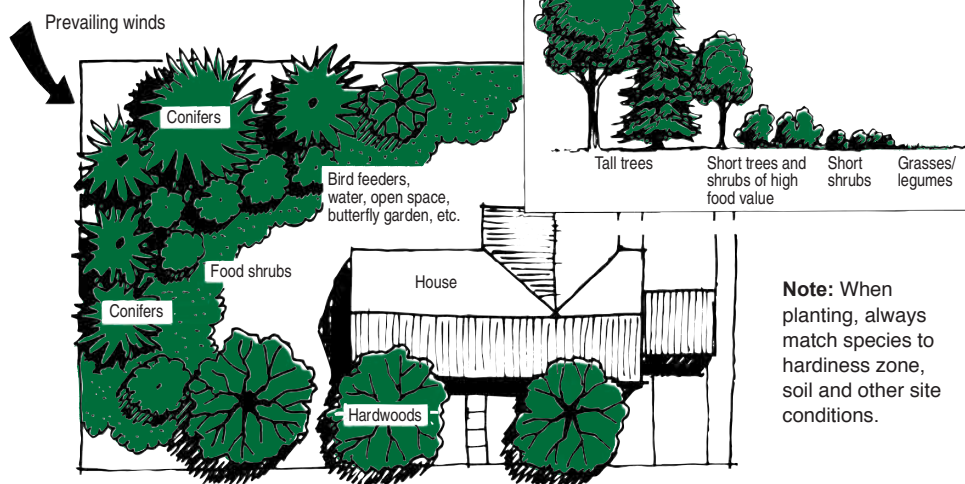
### Cover

Cover provides protection for breeding, nesting, sleeping, traveling, and hiding from enemies. Ideal cover for a wide range of animals is provided by dense plantings of conifers. In urban settings, even a single spruce tree will help, but all the better if you have space for a group of evergreens or a hemlock hedge. Wild tangles, vines and thorny shrubs in odd corners or narrow spaces also provide excellent cover.

## Useful Vegetation Patterns to Help Wildlife

The arrangement of food sources, protective cover, and water will make a big difference in the kinds and quality of wildlife you attract. A few principles:

- The same arrangement of trees and shrubs that provides humans with wind protection and shade also works well for wildlife.
- To see more birds and provide for their safety, plant cover trees or shrubs within 10 to 15 feet of water sources.
- When possible, provide unbroken travel lanes (rows of trees, hedges, a brushy fence row, etc.) between wooded areas.
- Provide “edge” areas where woods or shrubbery meet a lawn or old field. Edge areas provide a combination of food, sunlight, shade, and security.



**Note:** When planting, always match species to hardiness zone, soil and other site conditions.

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# AltaBoy

In an email dated March 2 from Clemson Forestry Professor Tom Straka to Piedmont Stewardship Forester **Jaime Jones** regarding his presentation to Clemson forestry students.

*Jaime,*

*Thank you for the Forest Stewardship presentation today for FOR 4250, Forest Resource Management Planning. It gave really good background on Forest Stewardship, plus a nice perspective on forest management planning in general.*

*Plus, I think the seniors enjoyed the chance to ask a Forestry Commission forester some questions about forestry in the state and what it was like to work for the Commission. You obviously spent a lot of time putting those PowerPoint slides together and I appreciate that.*

*Great talk!*

*Thomas J. Straka, Professor  
Faculty of Forestry*

In an email dated March 14 to Reforestation/Stewardship Coordinator **Scott Phillips** from James Harris regarding the Youth Turkey Hunt at Niederhof Forestry Center:

*I just wanted to touch base with you to thank you for an amazing weekend. I have been able to go to a lot of places in my life but for my son and I to be around such wonderful people for a weekend is something my son and I will remember forever. He has not stopped talking about this weekend since we got home. You guys are truly God's people and have it figured out. I am humbled and appreciative for what you guys did for these children this past weekend. Everyone of you guys are top notch and are first class all the way. Please let me know if I can ever do anything for you or your organization. I still feel like a kid at Christmas because of how special this event turned out!*

James Harris  
CTR NG SCARNG

In an email from State Forester Gene Kodama to **Scott Phillips, Pete Stuckey, Kip Terry, Lowell Parnell, Chris King, and Justin Holt** dated March 16:

*James is right. You fellas do a wonderful job and represent yourselves and the Commission in an outstanding manner. Thank you again for your support of our military appreciation program. It would not be possible without you!*

In a note to State Forester **Gene Kodama** from James Harris regarding the Youth Turkey Hunt at Niederhof Forestry Center March 12:

*Sir, I just wanted to take this time out to tell you how appreciative I am and the difference you made in our children's life this past weekend. It was truly an honor to be around all of the wonderful people that made this event a huge success. My son has not stopped talking about it since we got in the car to head back to the upstate. There are NO words to describe the impact you had on my own son as well as all the other youth as well. You guys have it figured out and are truly God's people. I feel like I made multiple life long friends and the fellowship that my son and I both were a part of was a blessing and a memory that we will never forget. You have a special young man in Aaron and he is first class all day long. Please let me know if I can ever do anything for you EVER! I have always looked up to you since the day I met you but for my son and I to actually spend time with you and to see how you treat everybody you meet is such an honor for me. Again, I can't Thank you enough and I am so humbled to be a part of such a top notch bunch of men this past weekend. I am going to type what my son wrote down last night to send to you and I am going to type it just like did. Lol. Mr. Kodama, Thank you for letting me hunt with you. I really had a great time. Tell Aaron I said Hello. Thank you for teaching me about the forest and hunting the right way. I hope to grow up and be as nice as you one day. Luke.*

James Harris  
CTR NG SCARNG



# Employee Service Awards



## SERVICE AWARDS FOR MARCH

Employee's Name	Position	Location	State Service
Jerry McNeil	Forest Technician	Black River Unit	30 years
Chet Foyle	Project Forester	Black River Unit	20 years
Michelle Johnson	Public Information Coordinator	Columbia	20 years
Erica Brazile	Human Resources	Columbia	10 years

## Physical Fitness Walks

The moderate level physical fitness walks have been scheduled. Any fireline employee (or those wanting to become fireline qualified) will need to participate in one of the following walks. Those that just passed the arduous level walk, turned in a medical exemption, or that walked within the past three months to be hired do not need to walk. All employees must be medically cleared before walking. All walks start at 9 a.m.

Remaining walks:

- April 4- Orangeburg
- April 5- Walterboro
- April 6- Kingstree
- April 7- Barnwell
- April 8- Columbia

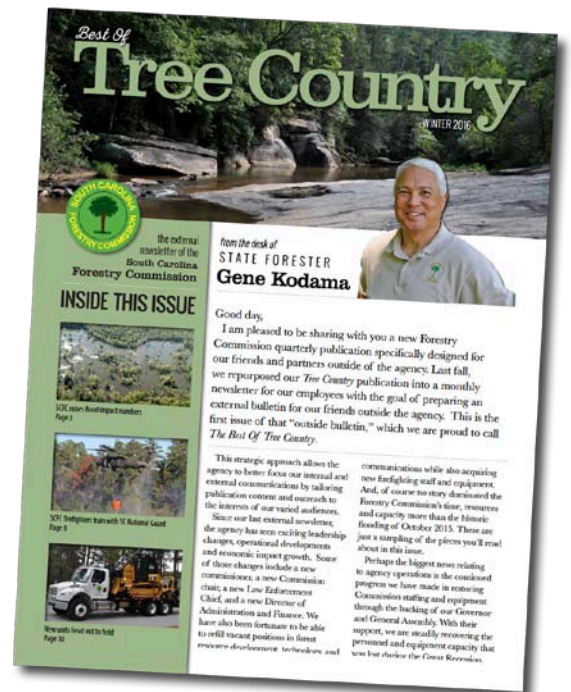
## SCFC Revives External Newsletter for Friends and Partners

The agency has begun producing a quarterly "Best Of Tree Country" publication specifically designed for our friends and partners outside of the agency. Last fall, the Information and Education Division repurposed the long-running Tree Country publication into a monthly newsletter for employees only with the goal of reintroducing an external bulletin in 2016.

Published Friday, March 18, the Winter best-of edition featured highlights from the January, February and March issues of Tree Country and was distributed to 379 recipients.

The publication can be viewed, downloaded or printed at [www.state.sc.us/forest/pubs/BestOfTreeCountry-Spring2016.pdf](http://www.state.sc.us/forest/pubs/BestOfTreeCountry-Spring2016.pdf).

Please share this special quarterly edition with anyone you believe may be interested in receiving it; requests for addition to the e-mail distribution list should be directed to Public Information Coordinator Michelle Johnson at [mjohnson@scfc.gov](mailto:mjohnson@scfc.gov) or (803) 896-8848.



# Human Resources

## Changes to the State Optional Retirement Program

The South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) oversees the State Optional Retirement Program (State ORP). In collaboration with its investment consultant, PEBA continuously monitors the State ORP's third party administrators and the performance of the investment options they offer. This collaboration also includes the continual review of the State ORP to ensure that the program is following industry best practices.

As a result of these reviews, PEBA is implementing changes to the program effective April 1, 2016, that will revise the investment options available from all four State ORP third party administrators and change the way you pay administrative fees for the funds in which you are invested.

PEBA understands that change isn't always easy and we assure you that we did not undertake the revisions to your program lightly. As fiduciary stewards of the programs we administer, we are committed to making sure that your program is aligned with industry best practices that benefit you.

Employees who are enrolled in ORP will receive detailed information about the upcoming revised investment menu directly from your selected State ORP third party administrator. This letter is to inform you of the pending revisions to the program's investment options and explain why PEBA is implementing the changes.

Additional information about the program changes is available at <http://peba.sc.gov/latestnews.html>

**Human Resources**

- Lynn Rivers

## Look for New Information on MyFBMC.com

MyFBMC.com, the website offering information about the MoneyPlus Dependent Care Spending Account (DCSA) and Medical Spending Account (MSA), has been updated.

Here are the changes:

- The mileage for travel for medical treatment has been changed from 23 cents per mile in 2015 to 19 cents per mile in 2016.
- Daycare expenses for dependents under age 13 are now eligible for reimbursement through a DCSA.
- The Resources/FAQs tab includes a link to a list of Employee Benefits Institute of America (EBIA)-eligible items. These items are eligible for reimbursement through an MSA.
- The address for mailing Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and direct deposit documents has changed from the Tallahassee address to P.O. Box 14766, Lexington, KY 40512-4766.

## Upcoming Health Screenings

PEBA is providing a valuable health screening tool and a very worthwhile benefit for employees.

Below is a list of screenings around the state.

<b>April 13-14</b>	<b>Columbia</b> - on the 15th floor of the Capitol Center Building 1201 Main St.		
<b>May 18</b>	<b>Spartanburg</b>	<b>August 17</b>	<b>Greenwood</b>
<b>June 9</b>	<b>Greenville</b>	<b>September 14-15</b>	<b>Columbia</b>
<b>June 23</b>	<b>Hampton County</b>	<b>October 13</b>	<b>Rock Hill</b>
<b>July 7</b>	<b>Florence</b>	<b>November 17</b>	<b>Darlington</b>
<b>July 21</b>	<b>Charleston</b>	<b>December 1</b>	<b>Anderson</b>
<b>July 15</b>	<b>Conway</b>		

More information on the health screenings can be found at: <http://peba.sc.gov/pebaperks.html>.



# Fire Weather Outlook

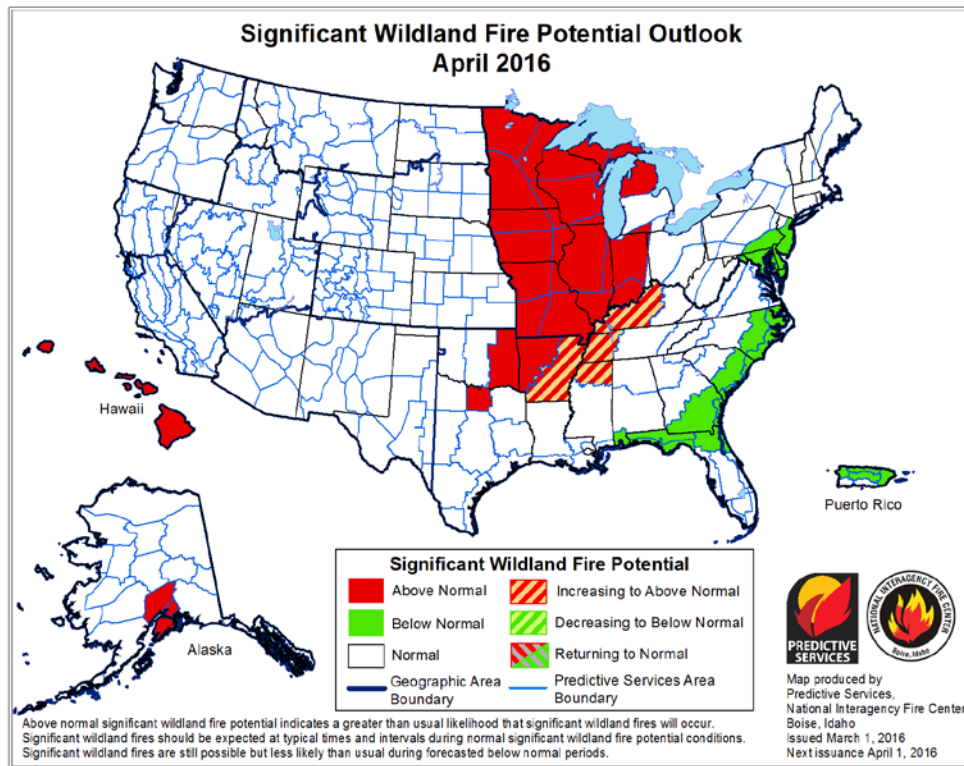
## April

- Above normal significant fire potential will expand across the northern Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes states with increasing dryness in these areas.
- Above normal fire potential will continue across the Hawaiian Islands and develop over south central Alaska.
- Below normal significant fire potential will decrease to just coastal areas of the central Gulf and Atlantic coasts and Puerto Rico.
- Significant fire potential will remain normal across the remainder of the U.S., though potential for pre-greenup fire activity increases through early spring.

## May through June

- Above normal significant fire potential will develop in the Southwest and continue across Tennessee, Kentucky, Hawaii and Alaska.

- Fire potential remains below normal along the Mid-Atlantic coast and Puerto Rico, and drops to below normal in Louisiana and southeastern Texas.



**Southern Area:** Significant wildland fire potential is expected to be above normal over some eastern portions of the Southern Area in March and transition to northern portions of the Southern Area through the Outlook Period. Below normal significant wildland fire potential will be widespread across the Gulf and Atlantic coasts in March and gradually reduce to small areas in Texas, Louisiana and the Carolinas by June.

A drier pattern from January through the first half of February set the stage for rapid fine fuel drying, low fuel moisture conditions and the resulting increase in fire activity in eastern Oklahoma, western Arkansas, and North Texas. Much of the rest of the Southern Area continued to see higher fuel moistures due to the continuation of weekly wet storm systems. Precipitation events will continue to produce a broader and higher frequency pattern of fire-limiting precipitation events.

While Southern Area fire activity remained light, high wind events occasionally combined with low humidity to produce a flurry of large fire activity mainly in eastern Oklahoma. In March, significant fire activity is still expected to be a concern primarily in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Beyond March, dryness in the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys into eastern Oklahoma and Arkansas may be a concern as well. The spring pre-green up period is when very low humidity and windy periods can produce a rapid drying fine fuel situation with activity increasing in the western and northern portions of the Area.

## Current Fire Numbers for South Carolina

### MONTH AND YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS 5 AND 10-YEAR AVERAGE

Time Period	MAR		JULY-MAR		FISCAL YEAR	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
5 Year Average	382	3,923.9	1,608	10,131.6	2,067	13,127.2
10 Year Average	473	3,931.4	1,749	10,140.5	2,365	15,971.2
Current FY <sup>1</sup>	275	1,806.4	693	4,222.5	693	4,222.5

<sup>1</sup>To date for current fiscal year



*There are three wooden crosses on the right side of the highway,*

*Why there's not four of them, Heaven only knows.*

*I guess it's not what you take when you leave this world behind you,*

*It's what you leave behind you when you go.*

Song: "Three Wooden Crosses"

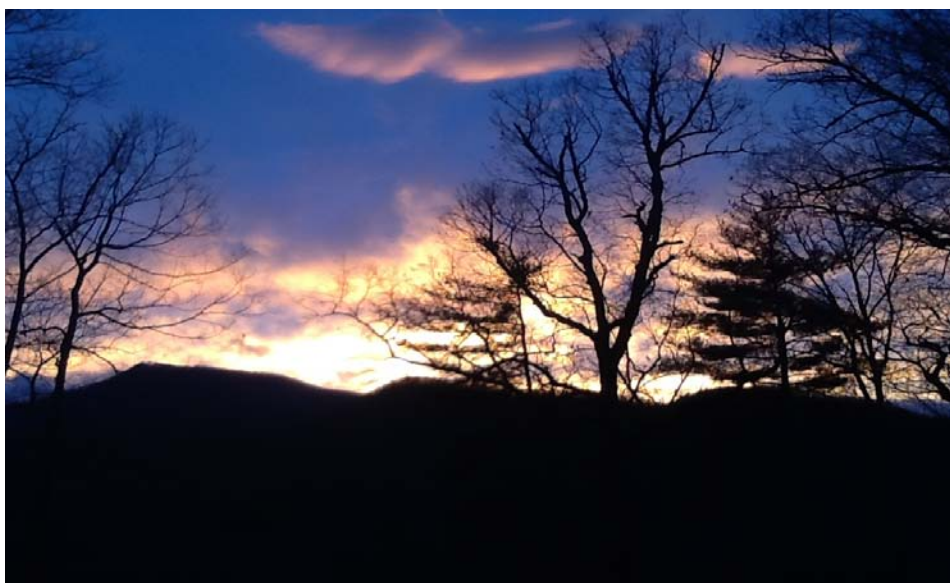
Artist: Randy Travis

Album: Rise and Shine (2002)

Listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP8lCapcqWM>

Can you think of a song with tree- or forestry-related lyrics? Let us know, and we'll share it with everyone.

## Photo of the Month



Retiree Rhett Bickley sent in this photo of Glassy Mountain, SC at sunset.

## GOOD NEWS

Julianna McAlhany, daughter of Dorchester Forest Warden **Anthony McAlhany**, signed a national letter-of-intent to attend and play basketball for Columbia College. Julianna averaged 18.1 points and 16 rebounds during her senior season at Dorchester Academy. She was named SCISA Region 3-A Player of the Year. Congratulations Julianna and Anthony!

## SAD NEWS

Former Florence Area Secretary **Janice Estridge** passed away March 23.

### Quote of the Month

*And when it rains on your parade, look up rather than down. Without the rain, there would be no rainbow.*

Gilbert Chesterton

Please send in your photos or news to Michelle Johnson at [mjohnson@scfc.gov](mailto:mjohnson@scfc.gov).