

Regional Extension Forester's Report
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Items of Regional Interest – Natural Resources & Forestry

1. **Forestry in the Farm Bill** – Forestry and Conservation Titles have programs of interest to Extension's forestry clientele.
 - a. **Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)**: The Forestry Incentives and Stewardship Incentives Programs (FIP and SIP) have been repealed and replaced by FLEP, which combines the elements of FIP and SIP to encourage the long-term sustainability of private non-industrial forestlands. To be eligible for FLEP, forestland owners must develop a forest management plan that provides for the treatment of no more than 1,000 acres. This upper limit may be increased to no more than 5,000 acres if significant public benefits will result. Up to 75% cost-share assistance will be available for activities approved by the Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the State Forester and the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee. FLEP will be funded at a total amount of \$100 million from May 13 through September 2007 (exact date to be determined by the agencies). Remaining FIP and SIP funds appropriated for fiscal year 2002 will be used until depleted.
 - b. **Community and Private Land Fire Assistance Program**: This program is aimed at promoting firefighting efficiency at all levels on Federal and non-Federal lands and at protecting communities from wildfires. The Forest Service will administer and implement the program through State Foresters or other State officials. Funding for Fire Assistance is authorized at \$35 million annually through 2007.
 - c. **The Sustainable Forestry Outreach Initiative**: Authorized at \$30 million annually through 2007, this initiative will educate landowners about the value and benefits of practicing sustainable forestry, the importance of professional forestry assistance, and the array of public and private resources available to assist them.
 - d. **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**: This program will provide funding for activities that enhance agricultural production while optimizing environmental benefits. This version of EQIP will expand the categories of lands eligible for cost-shares to include private, non-industrial forestland and it will be funded at \$1.3 billion annually through 2007.

- e. **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**: Payments will be provided, on a contractual basis, to owners of eligible lands for conserving and improving soil, water and wildlife resources. Eligible land will include marginal pastureland to be devoted to appropriate vegetation, including trees, for enhancing water quality and wildlife habitat. As in the previous version of this program, trees planted on land under CRP contract cannot be harvested or commercially sold unless expressly permitted in the contract. Likewise, no contract shall prohibit activities consistent with "customary forestry practices" such as pruning, thinning, or stand improvement. Entering into a CRP contract will now be contingent on participation in the Forest Stewardship Program.
- f. **Conservation Security Program**: This program will assist agricultural producers in promoting conservation and enhancing the quality of soil, air, water, energy, and plant and animal life. Payments will be made to landowners who have devised conservation security plans and entered into conservation security contracts with the government, and can be used to cover the costs of land management. Forest land that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation will be eligible for enrollment.
- g. **Private Grazing Land Conservation Assistance**: Technical and educational assistance will be provided to enhance private grazing land resources. "Private grazing land" means private, State-owned, tribally owned, and other non-Federally owned rangeland, pastureland, grazed forestland, and hay land.
- h. **Farmland Protection Program**: Funding will be used to purchase conservation easements for the purposes of protecting topsoil by limiting nonagricultural uses of the land. Eligible land includes forestland that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

2. RREA update

- a. Bump of a few thousand dollars to each state in FY '02 funds.
- b. \$10,000 for each 1890 institution.
- c. \$180,000 FY '02 and \$180,000 FY '03 funds for National Web-based Learning Center for Nonfederal Forest and Rangelands.
- d. RREA authorized at \$30 million vs. \$15 million however appropriations are at \$4 million.
- e. Work by the ECOP Forestry liaison team to increase appropriations.

3. Research, Development and Application: Fire Science and Management Partnership (A proposal from Forest Service personnel).

- a. Unprecedented funding is being allocated to resolve fire related science issues on wildlands of the US. However, no plans or processes exist for establishing an effective partnership between research and management to ensure that the investments will achieve the anticipated dividends. Specifically, the need exists to ensure that important research findings and tools are effectively transferred to users. It is also essential to establish a clear pathway for stakeholders to partner with the research community on

urgently needed fire related research. The need exists to develop a proactive approach that will improve “technology transfer” and establish effective partnerships among stakeholders involved in fire related resource issues to support the National Fire Plan, 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, and Implementation Plan. Seven recommendations have been developed to improve partnerships between research and land managers. They include a national, locally based interagency technology transfer cadre; funding targeted at agreements and contracts to deliver research products to stakeholders; and an internet gateway mechanism for fire related science and technology. This proposal envisions increased collaboration with state foresters, universities and the Cooperative Extension Service (CSREES). The cost of implementing a science and management partnership oriented program is estimated to be \$6 million for a basic level effort. It is further estimated that about \$12 million would provide the opportunity of supporting CSREES and state forester delivery of research conducted at the state level by universities.

4. **Master Tree Farmer II** – Successfully held at 90 sites in 11 states in spring of '02. See impact fact sheet in pdf format.
5. **Master Wildlifer** – 11 states and approximately 70 sites already lined up to participate in 7 week satellite short course beginning February 4th and ending March 18th (Tuesday evenings). See promotional pdf flier.
6. **Public Law 106-393** – The Secure Rural Schools Act – South Carolina and Mississippi have hired Extension persons to do forestry education in county/multi county positions.
7. **Other Satellite Programming completed in 2001/2002**
 - a. New Dimensions for the New Millenium Urban and Community Forestry Program – October, 2001. See impact fact sheet in pdf format.
 - b. Forest Certification Update for Forest Landowners – December, 2001
8. **Southern Regional Extension Forestry Internet activities:**
 - a. www.soforext.net
 - i. 21 hours of MTF I presentations streamed (MTF II streamed this fall).
 - ii. 9 hours of urban and community forestry training streamed
 - iii. 3 hours of forest certification videoconference streamed
 - iv. Powerpoint presentations provided as well.
 - v. Woodlands correspondence course scanned and placed online.
 - b. www.forestryindex.net
 - i. New online resources added regularly.
 - c. Collaborative Projects:
 - i. USDA Forest Service – Southern Research Station
 1. www.forestryencyclopedia.net
 - a. Knowledgebase of Southern Appalachian Hardwood Management.
 - b. Possible growth to other areas within Forest Service research.

2. www.rngr.net
 - a. Reforestation, nurseries and genetics website
3. www.wildfireprograms.net
 - a. National database on wild fire programs throughout the country.
- ii. USDA CSREES
 1. www.nrem.net
 - a. Base Program website with flagship programs and links to state NREM websites.

9. Other activities

- a. **Forestry Curriculum Project** – committee formed and meets via conference call.
- b. **Triennial planning** – committee formed and will meet via conference call – scheduled for May 12-14, 2003 in Asheville, NC.
- c. **Forestry Education Council** – committee formed, waiting on potential funding from USDA Forest Service to formalize actions.
- d. **ANREP** – Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals
 - i. National meeting held in Naples, Florida – 200 in attendance.
 - ii. State chapters and state “champions (Florida has 1st state chapter).
 - iii. Membership at 350.
- e. **Urban & Community Forestry Programming**
 - i. Clemson Technology training – Extension, state forestry and NGO’s participated – August 2002
 - ii. Internet activities
 - iii. Future continuing education projects (Wildland Urban Interface, etc).
- f. **Continuing Education via satellite broadcast plans for 2002 and beyond**
 - i. Forestry and the Farm Bill
 - ii. Conservation Easements and Working Forests
 - iii. Long Leaf Pine Management
 - iv. Water Quality and Best Management Practices
 - v. MTF I, II and Master Wildlife in sequencing years.