Good afternoon,

We are certainly seeing dramatic changes here in the state with the economic slowdown, in the country with a new President, and in the world with economic troubles and conflicts abounding. Seems that periods of calm are hard to come by and short lived.

Given this backdrop, the Forestry Commission is doing very well with what it can control or significantly impact and dealing with what it cannot. We are striving to meet our mission of protecting and developing the state’s forest resource with reduced funding. Along the way, we are refining our organization so we will be more efficient with the resources we have. However, we have expressed a grave concern to our legislature and other leaders for the continued reduction in wildfire fighting capacity due to funding reductions. With reduced resources, the Commission and its allies have to really be on point regarding wildfire fire prevention, readiness, communication, and suppression to meet its statutory obligations for protecting the forest resource, public property, and lives. With reduced capacity, communications must be even more effective both internally and externally. Externally, the public must be made aware of the situation and stress that they must do their part by being extra careful when using fire, contacting the Commission when they see a wildfire, and supporting wildfire control efforts. We should also stress the importance of controlled burning as a wildfire prevention and suppression tool because it is often misunderstood but of great importance to managing forests and protecting them from catastrophic wildfires.

We will all hope for a mild wildfire season wherein our firefighting capacity should be adequate, but if the season is at an average or worse level, then we will be stretched to or beyond the limit of our capacity. Let’s do all we can to ensure that we are each ready to fulfill our roles and to encourage the public to do likewise.

Best regards,

Gene
Friday, December 5 is Arbor Day in South Carolina. As the state agency in charge of protecting and developing South Carolina’s forest resource, the Forestry Commission is involved in many Arbor Day activities around the state. Tree planting is something we’re very good at. The agency planted almost a million trees on our state forests during the 2008 planting season. But planting is only the beginning of that story. In addition to the beauty, recreation, wildlife, clean air, and water provided by trees and forests, they pay us back with cold hard cash!. The economic downturn makes this attribute even more significant.

Recently, the South Carolina Forestry Commission delivered $672,000 to twelve South Carolina counties in which the agency has land. The money (a record total) goes to the local school districts. The total represents 25% of the revenue generated by these forests and serves as an example of the economic power of healthy, well-managed forests which can and do drive South Carolina’s economy. This revenue sharing program from timber sales, recreation fees, pine straw sales, and other forest product sales is unique within state government. And, it supports our communities in one of the most important ways possible - education. In addition, management costs of all five State Forests are fully covered by the other 75% of revenue, so that no state funding is required.

Highlights from the Commission’s past year of revenue sharing include Chesterfield County Schools receiving $364,000 from the Forestry Commission’s revenue from Sand Hills State Forest. Sumter County youngsters benefiting from $203,400 since Manchester State Forest grows in their “neck of the woods.” And, Williamsburg County education receiving $60,000 from the Forestry Commission’s revenue generated by Wee Tee State Forest.

So, Arbor Day lends itself to that great old metaphor of “planting the seedlings of knowledge and beauty for tomorrow’s generation.” And, “money does grow on trees.” You’ll find the satisfaction of planting one tree on Arbor Day will make the effort worthwhile. Imagine what it feels like to plant thousands or even a “million” trees and share the benefits.

For more information on trees and forests, please see the Forestry Commission’s web site www.trees.sc.gov and our tree planting campaign web site www.GrowSomeGreen.com

PLANS AND SUPPORT—Charles Ramsey
SCSGIN

Congratulations to Judy Lucas for being recently elected to the Executive Committee of The South Carolina State Government Improvement Network (SCSGIN). Individuals are voted for by all the members of the SCSGIN throughout state government. When looking for members of the Executive Committee the following are desired traits and skills: knowledge of performance improvement principles and techniques; organizational skills; communication skills; and sufficient commitment of time to attend monthly committee meetings and actively participate in the work of the Network. Judy definitely possesses these characteristics and will be a great representative for the Forestry Commission and for State Government.

Anyone interested in joining the SCSGIN can do so by going to their website at http://www.scsgin.org/home.html and click on the Membership tab for all the details.
I am sure that you are aware that Michael Weeks has been selected as the West Unit Forester to replace Don Robinson. Michael was the Supervisor for Cherokee, Chester, and York counties. I want to wish Michael good luck in his new job and I know that he will do well. He will be missed and I have heard good compliments about the work he did as supervisor. With the budget situation we are in, effective immediately, Mickey Walley will be the acting supervisor for those 3 counties.

Laurel wilt (LW) has struck the Town of Folly Beach, but they are not going to take the disease that wipes out our native red bays without a fight! Mayor Beckmann has invited the Forestry Commission to speak to the community next week about options for slowing down or containing the laurel wilt.

Laurel Reid and I visited Folly Beach late December to determine how the laurel wilt is spreading on the island. One of the factor's in Folly Beach's favor is that there is no continuous understory of red bays. Folly is hoping to contain and slow down the infection of red bays on the island and slow the spread of laurel wilt in the surrounding areas of the lowcountry. One strategy will be to have designated areas on the island where residents can dispose off their red bay debris once cut down. This will be one of the topics to be discussed at the January meeting.

LW is affecting redbay and other trees in the family Lauraceae (the fungus has been recovered from sassafras, pondberry, pondspice, and avocado) in SC, GA, and FL.

- LW is caused by a fungus, *Raffaelea lauricola*, which is transmitted into redbay trees by a non-native ambrosia beetle, *Xyleborus glabratus*. The fungus blocks the water moving cells of trees and causes them to wilt and die.
- LW has been confirmed in 8 South Carolina counties (Jasper, Beaufort, Hampton, Allendale, Bamberg, Colleton, Dorchester, and Charleston), 21 coastal Georgia counties, and 14 Florida counties.
- Currently there are no management strategies for control of the beetle or fungus.
- We are asking those with redbay trees that died due to LW to please leave the cut wood in place and not allow the city to move the wood to a landfill. If the tree can be chipped or cut into smaller pieces, it will allow the wood to dry quicker.

Laurel wilt, a disease of redbay, is causing widespread mortality in the coastal regions of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The disease is caused by an exotic ambrosia beetle that is native to Asia. This beetle has no natural predators here and is wiping out our redbays.

Laurie Reid holds one of the few green branches left on this redbay near Folly Beach. Laurie will take this specimen back to the SCFC lab for further study.
**NIEDERHOF FORESTRY CENTER— Chris King**

**Update**

We’ve been busy at Niederhof during the last few months as we process cones and seed from our cone harvest. By the time this article appears in *Tree Country*, we will have run all cones through the dry kiln and tumbled all seed from each lot.

Our workload consisted of drying/extracting some 546 bushels of longleaf from Niederhof’s 1.5 Generation orchard, 790 bushels of longleaf from Savannah River Site, 734 bushels of select 2nd-Generation Coastal loblolly family lots, and 965 bushels of select 2nd-Generation Piedmont family lots. Additionally, for the first time we collected a small amount from three 3rd-Cycle Piedmont loblolly selections. Seed processing is ongoing and should keep us busy until grafting begins in late February.

I wish to take a moment to express my thanks and gratitude to Phil Dunham of the Walterboro FIA crew. Phil has been an invaluable aid to this effort and was gracious to assist as his schedule permitted.

Also, a big ‘Thank you!’ to our Forestry Technician I, Lowell Parnell, for learning our extraction system and keeping our kiln schedule on-track. Lowell was hired last April and has proven to be a most valuable asset to this facility. The 3,038 bushel harvest/workload is our largest since the 2002 cone crop. This work could not have been accomplished in a timely manner without the tireless efforts of Phil and Lowell.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT— David West**

**McCaskill to Serve Chesterfield and Lancaster**

The South Carolina Forestry Commission has sworn in its newest law enforcement officer, Winn McCaskill. Winn is a graduate of Horry-Georgetown TEC and has been with the Forestry Commission since 2006 at Sand Hills. Winn will supervise Chesterfield and Lancaster counties. Timber fraud, arson investigation and public safety will account for most of his law enforcement activity.
PLANS AND SUPPORT— Judy Lucas

**Strategic Plan Progress Report**
As many of you know, I’ve been working on the update for our Strategic Plan Progress Report for our upcoming Commission Meeting. I wanted to express my gratitude to each of you who have forwarded me information and self-reported on your programs accomplishments. Your self-reporting of this information aids me in compiling this data. Again, thanks for sharing your good news and keep up the good work!

**Performance Measures**
As of December 2008, customer satisfaction surveys reflect the following overall satisfaction rates for July through December:

- Forestry Services     97%
- Forest Management Plans    96%
- Stewardship Management Plans  100%

In each area, the satisfaction rates are higher than for FY 2008. In regards to the Forest Management Plans, 98% of those responding plan to implement our recommendations. With the Stewardship Management Plans, 100% of those responding plan to implement our recommendations.

Fuel expenditures and usage continue to be monitored and measured to identify any opportunities for cost-savings. Thus far in FY 09 (July – December), we have received credits/refunds totaling $1,929. Such credits/refunds are a result of expediently processing payments and or disputing erroneous charges.

FY 2009 YTD (July – December) fuel expenditures total $349,399. By this time in FY 2008 we had spent $407,754 thus our expenditures are down by $58,355.

FY 2009 YTD (July – December) fuel gallons purchased total 103,694 gallons. By this time in FY 2008 we had purchased 138,700 gallons thus our usage is down by 35,006 gallons.

While fuel expenditures and gallons purchased have decreased it is important to remember two things: we’ve been under travel restrictions, and we also haven’t seen a lot of fire activity which can change at any moment.

**Records Management**
With the New Year upon us it is once again time for us to think about our records retention schedules. The majority of our retention schedules are on a fiscal year basis; however, a number of personnel records fall on a calendar year basis. At this time the following records and copies should be destroyed:

- Activity Reports – January 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005

Please work with your assigned Liaison Officer regarding this matter. Your Liaison Officer can complete the necessary Report on Records Destroyed and submit it to me. Records such as these must be shredded due to the confidential information on them.

Also, I wanted to remind everyone of the new **Identity Fraud and Identity Theft Protection Act (FIFITPA)** which went into effect December 31, 2008. Beginning December 31, 2008, you can place a security freeze on your credit report, which prevents access to your credit report without your permission. This freeze may be temporarily removed at your request. The freeze can be removed within approximately 15 minutes of a request. There is no cost to place a freeze on your report. However, to do so you must contact each of the 3 credit reporting agencies. Additional information regarding this can be found at [www.scconsumer.gov](http://www.scconsumer.gov)
INSECTS AND DISEASE—Laurie Reid

Firewood Survey

This is a reminder that datasheets for the Firewood Survey can be turned into Laurie via email (lreid@forestry.state.sc.us), snail mail, or fax (803 896 8827) at anytime during the survey. If you need additional datasheets, please let Laurie know. Thank you again for your help in collecting data for this survey.

PIEDMONT WEST UNIT

Weeks Contact Information

Piedmont West Unit Forester Michael Weeks will be working out of the Pickens Office. His current contact information is below:

Piedmont Western Unit, PO Box 391, Pickens, SC 29671
Email: mweeks.scfc@innova.net

CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY—David Owen

Protect Water Sources in Cold

As you all know there is a possibility of some extremely cold temperatures over the next few days. Please take time to check all of your outdoor water sources. Make sure that all exposed water lines are insulated or at least covered. Try to drain any lines or hoses that can be drained. Disconnect all water hoses from outdoor faucets.

If you discover that a line has frozen please slightly open a valve or faucet that is attached to that line to help reduce the chances of the pipe bursting. Please help get this notice to anyone who is responsible for a particular facility.

Photos from Chainsaw Training

On January 8-9 a SCFC Chainsaw Safety and Operation class was taught to eight of our FIA timber damage assessment team members. This two day course was taught by Training Coordinator Bill Wiley in Columbia.

Dustbin Gibbons cuts a dead tree on Harbison State Forest.

Dena Jacobs "bucks" a fallen tree.

Bill Wiley discusses the "hinge" with some of the class participants.

Ryan McIntyre makes his initial wedge cut on a tree.
Meet your…
Commission Co-workers

Name: Michael Smoak
Job Title: Forestry Warden
Tech III –Coastal Region
Employed Since: October 1998
Favorite part of my job: Working with landowners
Family: Wife- Sharon, 2 sons- Drake and Jesse, 1 daughter- Cameron
Pets: 2 horses, 3 dogs
Hobbies/ Interests: Hunting, fishing, any outdoor activity
Favorite Tree: Sawtooth oak

Name: Darrell Lamar Batchelor, Jr.
Title: Forest Tech – Piedmont East
Employed Since: November 2007
Favorite part of my job: Fire fighting
Family: Wife – Connie, son – Darrell
Pets: Dogs – Little Bit and Bonnie
Hobbies/ Interest: Hunting and fishing
Favorite Tree: Dogwood

Name: Kenny Robertson
Title: Lynches River Unit Forester
Employed Since: 1991
Favorite part of my job: Assisting private landowners with their forest management.
Family: Wife – Susan, daughter - Elizabeth
Pets: None
Hobbies/ Interest: Hunting, working in the yard/garden
Favorite Tree: Longleaf pine

Name: Liz Gilland
Job Title: Community Forestry Program Coordinator
Employed Since: January 1992
Favorite part of my job: Getting out of the office and working with people on their projects!
Family: Husband—Aaron, and my two, four-legged kids
Pets: Yellow lab (Abby) and cat (Clyde)
Hobbies/ Interests: Flat-water kayaking, walking, jewelry making, church, traveling around the country
Favorite Tree: Sassafras

Liz was a tree hugger early on.
Forest Fire Control Equipment Series (part 8 of 14)

In the coming weeks we will feature one of the fourteen pieces of fire fighting equipment that was used to fight fires in the south in the 1950's. Compare this equipment with what we use today and you will realize how far fire fighting has come.

NOTE: The terms used and prices given are from September 1951.

Part 8: Dodge Power Wagon Suppression Unit
(Used by Florida Forest Service)

Truck: Dodge Power Wagon with front winch cab and chassis. Five 9:00 X 16 tires. Gas mileage – 6-9 mpg

Tank: Florida Forest Service constructed 315 gallon tank. Weight empty – 600 lbs., weight filled – 3100 lbs.

Auxiliary Water Pump: American marsh Model XF, 30 gallons per minute capacity, 125 lbs. per sq. inch pressure. Elkhart nozzle on 50 foot hose with ¾” outlet, 20 foot 1 ½” pickup

Plow: Rome Model 2-20” for Power Wagon. Weight 500-600 pounds, constructs 5-7 foot line widths.

Hydraulic System with Plow: Roper Pac Model 1443, 800 pounds per square inch capacity under normal operating pressure. John Deere standard Agricultural cylinder with 8” double acting stroke and 1,000 pounds pressure.

Costs:

Dodge Power Wagon with winch, cab and chassis $2,248.50
Tank, hose, nozzle and fittings $150.00
Auxiliary water pump $290.00
Plow $290.00
Hydraulic System $140.00
Total $3,118.50

Quote of the Week
People are so worried about what they eat between Christmas and New Years, but they really should be worried about what they eat between New Years and Christmas. - Unknown