



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

301 North Lamar St., Suite 300, Jackson, MS 39201

www.mfc.state.ms.us

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Contact: Kent Grizzard,
Manager, Forest Protection and Information
(601) 359-2841
kgrizzard@mfc.state.ms.us

Forestry Commission Seeking Input on Forestry Issues

Jackson, MS — Mississippi is blessed with fertile soils that produce great hardwood and pine forests. These forests occupy two-thirds of the state's total land area and provide many benefits that are enjoyed by all citizens of the Magnolia State. Providing clean air and water, excellent outdoor recreation, scenic beauty, and jobs made possible by the state's abundant forest resource, Mississippi's forests and associated natural resources support a quality of life enjoyed by all Mississippians.

“Although Mississippi's forests are abundant and diverse, the health, productivity, and future of Mississippi's forests and related natural resources are being impacted by a wide variety of influences,” said Charlie Morgan, State Forester of the Mississippi Forestry Commission. “Changes in land use and ownership, impacts of foreign markets on forest products and raw materials, the influence of climate change and emergence of carbon sequestration, the rapid spread of non-native invasive species, the need for alternative sources of energy, and many other influences are affecting the decisions made by natural resource managers and landowners across the state and throughout the Southern region.”

In order to ensure the future enjoyment of forest-based benefits, the Mississippi Forestry Commission is seeking public input in regard to the issues affecting the forests and natural resources of the state. The commission has prepared an on-line survey that builds on resource issues identified at the 2006 Natural Resources Planning Conference held in Mississippi.

The survey can be found on the Forestry Commission's Web site www.mfc.state.ms.us and will be available through April 3, 2009. The commission encourages all natural resources stakeholders, landowners, and citizens to participate in the survey. In addition to the survey, the Forestry Commission is planning to host public meetings this summer as another source for collecting public input.

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(Input on Forestry Issues, cont'd)

Once the issues have been identified and prioritized, a comprehensive strategy will be developed to effectively address the issues. As part of a national effort to be completed by the summer of 2010, all state forestry agencies are completing a Forest Assessment and Resource Strategy.

“The Mississippi Forest Assessment and Resource Strategy will serve as the foundation on which to direct a unified approach to addressing the many issues affecting Mississippi’s trees, forests, and associated natural resources,” said Morgan.

Mississippi’s Forest Assessment and Resource Strategy will provide a comprehensive analysis of the forest-related conditions, trends, threats, and opportunities within the state. The assessment will also identify priority rural and urban forest landscape areas most affected by the issues. The Forest Resource Strategy will provide a long-term, comprehensive, coordinated strategy for investing state, federal, and other resources to the management of priority landscapes identified in the forest assessment.

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