

Accountability Report Transmittal Form

Agency Name: South Carolina Forestry Commission

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South Carolina Forestry Commission
Annual Accountability Report
Fiscal Year 2002 – 2003

Section I - Executive Summary

1. Agency Mission and Values:

Our mission is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the forestlands of South Carolina, and educate the public about forestry issues, in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.

We value Customer Service and Satisfaction: to always meet or exceed the customer's expectation. Never show indifference.

We value Professionalism and Pride in Quality Work: to perform up to the highest measure of competence always.

We value Honesty, Integrity and Trustworthiness: to always live the truth, even when it may hurt; to maintain a soundness of character; to trust, and be trustworthy.

We value Treating Employees with Respect and Trust: to respect others (customers, suppliers, and colleagues) and oneself; to believe in our fellow employees abilities to get the job done right.

We value Employee Accountability: to answer for our actions; to accept responsibility.

We value Teamwork: to work cooperatively as a team with no personal agendas.

We value Open Communications: to be open, especially with information, knowledge, and news of forthcoming or actual "problems."

2. Key strategic goals for present and future years:

- a) Continue to provide the basic data used to assess the forest resource and its condition at annual intervals. Partner with US Forest Service in acquisition and analysis of this data.
- b) Raise the awareness among the public of the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource.
- c) Improve the effectiveness of the workforce through better internal communications, making reference to the accountability report and key performance measures in discussions with supervisors and employees throughout the year.
- d) Continue to assess and restructure the workforce at its basic level to meet changing needs and desires of constituents/customers.

3.1 Opportunities for fulfilling our mission and achieving our strategic goals:

- a) Increasing public interest in the need for green space and the health and productivity of that space -- the Forest Inventory Analysis provides critical management information on the resource.
- b) Increasing interest in green space also creates a need for a better educated populace to make informed decisions regarding the forest resource.
- c) Increasing demands on the forest resource to provide clean water, while the resource continues to function as an economic base for the forest products industry.
- d) Increasing value of the forest resource has created the need for protection of the resource, as well as vulnerable landowners, from unscrupulous buyers or outright theft.

3.2 Barriers that may affect our success in fulfilling our mission and achieving our strategic goals:

- a) To move ahead on the above opportunities will require increased funding for both upgrading our workforce and capital improvements. Budget reductions delay implementation.
- b) County forestry boards' role in management of local personnel hampers the agency's ability to change structure of the agency to meet current needs. This role, specified by law, needs to be changed.
- c) The state's changing populace no longer has rural needs and lacks the understanding of basic forest management techniques needed to keep the forest healthy and productive.
- d) Expanding population into rural areas creates increased risk of fire to structures built in those areas.

4. Major achievements from the past year:

- **Reorganized/realigned the workforce** – In response to the declining budget and increasing vacancies, the agency's mission, programs, structure, workforce needs, and key customers were evaluated, resulting in the reorganization/flattening of the agency's structure, realignment of the workforce, and a strengthened focus on the core mission of protection of the forest resource. (See charts Section II 7a & 7b)
- **Timber Theft and Fraud** – An awareness campaign (meetings, news articles, mailings) was conducted during the year to educate forest industry and others on the passage of legislation that strengthens record keeping requirements and penalties related to timber theft and fraud.
- **State Forest Long-Range Plan** – Development of a long-range plan for the state forest system was completed. Management of the forests continues to be for sustainable, multiple use benefits under long-range goals encompassing environmental protection, educational outreach, local and state economic development, and forest based recreation.
- **Statewide Recreation Advisory Committee** – Guidelines for recreational use of the state forest system were completed in January 2003 by a Recreation Advisory Council (RAC) composed of citizen users, Forestry Commission personnel, and technical advisors from Clemson University, PRT, and the SC Board for Barrier Free Design. The Guidelines were approved by the State Forester and Forestry Commissioners and included in the State Forests Long Range Plan. The Long

Range Plan and the Guidelines for Recreational Use of SC State Forests are published in limited edition and are also available on the Forestry Commission's website. As its final task, the RAC formed working groups to help each state forest implement the guidelines and to assist with trail construction and maintenance. The RAC will continue to meet as needed, at least once a year.

- **Wildland Urban Interface/Firewise Communities** – Populations expanding into rural areas of South Carolina are increasing the risk of destruction of structures and loss of life due to wildfire; no longer having rural needs, this population also lacks the understanding of basic forest management techniques used to keep the forest resource healthy and productive. The agency has incorporated Firewise principles into its overall fire management program to improve the education and protection of the homeowner in the wildland urban interface and is emphasizing the importance of sound forest resource management practices to these citizens.
- **Forest Inventory and Analysis** – South Carolina's full forest inventory data was made available online during the year. Development of a comprehensive report on the status of the state's forest resource, based on the full data, was initiated in partnership with the U. S. Forest Service; the report is scheduled for release by calendar year-end. The second round of inventory measurements continue, although behind schedule due to personnel reductions. (See Figure 7.2.2)

5. *How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance:*

The agency strengthened its understanding and use of the accountability report by participating in a report assessment and scoring. The Baldrige criteria served as a guide in the agency's reorganization and realignment. As a result of the reorganization, a broader set of employees have been included in the process of identifying and evaluating additional outcome based performance measures and benchmarks.

Section II - Business Overview

1. *Number of employees:*

The Forestry Commission is authorized to employ personnel utilizing 493 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs). Currently we employ 365 people with a 26% vacancy factor. This is the largest number of vacancies we have ever carried.

2. *Operation locations:*

Personnel are assigned positions throughout the state through a series of zone, unit, regional, and headquarter offices. The largest single group of employees, forest fire wardens, reports directly from their residences in responding to wildland fires. Regional administrative and support offices are located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Central emergency dispatch centers are co-located at the regional office sites. A forest seedling nursery is located in Edgefield County, and a forest seed orchard is located in Jasper County. Major property holdings include Manchester State Forest near Wedgefield, Sand Hills State Forest near Patrick, Harbison State Forest near Columbia, and a newly acquired forest near Pickens.

3. *Expenditures/appropriations chart:*

Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart

Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	01-02 Actual Expenditures		02-03 Actual Expenditures		03-04 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$13,275,018	\$11,191,165	\$11,644,413	\$9,596,923	\$10,479,012	\$8,291,542
Other Operating	\$5,871,141	\$2,749,775	\$5,734,952	\$2,972,172	\$7,595,656	\$3,027,332
Special Items	\$991,115	\$240,000	\$898,284	\$230,000	\$1,280,000	\$230,000
Permanent Improvements	\$2,337,135	\$91,823	\$617,250	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$951,134	\$0	\$783,835	\$0	\$2,264,000	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$4,320,534	\$3,711,028	\$3,992,518	\$3,372,391	\$3,897,459	\$3,259,316
Non-recurring	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
Total	\$ 27,746,076	\$17,983,792	\$23,671,252	\$16,172,485	\$25,516,127	\$14,808,190

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	01-02 Actual Expenditures	02-03 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$0	\$0
Capital Reserve Funds	\$0	\$0
Bonds	\$0	\$0

4. *Key Customers:*

- Owners and users of forestland
- Earth science teachers and students
- Environmental education coordinators and administrators
- City and county fire services
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Urban residents and businesses

Major products and services with links to Key Customers:

The major products and services of the Forestry Commission are authorized and required by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, *General duties of Commission*.

Protect the Resource

Key Customers:

- Owners and users of forestland
- City and county fire services
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups

The Forestry Commission has a statewide wildfire prevention, detection and control network in place. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall take and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands in the State."

Commission personnel construct firebreaks on privately owned forest lands to suppress fires and reduce the potential for destructive forest fire. To further minimize the effect of wildfire and smoke hazards, Commission foresters prepare prescribed burning plans for property owners and assist with conducting burns to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, and prepare sites for reforestation.

Using National Fire Prevention funds, the South Carolina Forestry Commission has established numerous project areas around the state to assess the dangers from wildland fire to communities. Working in cooperation with local fire services, local governments, and various business and civic groups, the Forestry Commission is in the process of assessing interface communities in order to develop Community Fire Wise Plans. These Fire Wise Plans will be used to educate wildland urban interface communities as to how they can reduce the threat of wildland fire to their lives and property.

The Commission periodically surveys the state for forest insect and disease infestations. Because the Commission's central office has an entomologist working out of a fully equipped diagnostic lab, project foresters have access to up-to-date information about local problems and measures for control. South Carolina is currently experiencing the worst Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) outbreak on record in the state. \$385 million worth of timber has been lost to SPB since the start of the current outbreak in 1998.

The Law Enforcement Program provides fire prevention through the enforcement of state fire laws and strives to reduce arson and forest product theft and fraud. The agency has 45 commissioned officers, including 2 full-time investigators. Two investigator positions are currently vacant due to budget cuts. In addition to enforcing outdoor burning regulations, this program has handled a dramatic increase in timber theft/fraud cases as a result of increasing timber values. The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states that are not actively investigating timber theft cases.

The Forestry Commission is the designated agency in South Carolina to provide public oversight and guidance for technical forest management practices. The agency has established approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and monitors compliance with BMP guidelines routinely. BMP Foresters located in each of the three operating regions of South Carolina offer courtesy BMP exams to landowners, foresters, and timber buyers. The BMP Forester makes site-specific BMP recommendations to follow while conducting forestry activities. During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, the BMP Foresters completed 408 courtesy exams. Of the 408 sites, 398 (97.5%) were completed in compliance with our recommended guidelines.

Manage the Resource

Key Customers:

- Owners and users of forestland
- Earth science teachers and students
- Environmental education coordinators and administrators
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Urban residents and businesses

Commission foresters, working throughout the state, examine woodlands at the request of the landowner. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land ..."

Based on the utilization of the land, the forester writes a woodland management plan tailored to the specific needs of that property. The plan includes descriptions of each forest stand, recommended practices to meet the objectives of the landowner, and a property map. The plan also includes suggestions on how to accomplish recommended work.

Prescribed burning services and timber marking services are offered for a fee.

There are several financial assistance options available for landowners in helping to complete forestry practices. Commission foresters determine whether or not a landowner qualifies for assistance and then assist with the application process and implementation of the practice.

To assist the state's woodland owners with reforestation, the Commission sells forest tree seedlings. Several native pine and hardwood species are available.

The Commission manages Sand Hills State Forest, Manchester State Forest, and Harbison State Forest for multiple forestry and public education purposes.

All employees of the Forestry Commission are committed to forest conservation education. Civic and social groups, scouts, science teachers and environmental organizations request programs on forestry and related environmental subjects.

As our urban areas expand, the importance of growing and maintaining healthy trees in city spaces will increase. Foresters work with urban residents, city planners, developers, contractors and local government to improve the quality of our urban environments.

Raise Awareness about the Resource

Key Customers:

- Owners and users of forestland
- Earth science teachers and students
- Environmental education coordinators and administrators
- City and county fire services
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Urban residents and businesses

The Forestry Commission is responsible for educating the public on the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws “It shall ... promote... a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation.”

The Environmental Education Program has grown rapidly in the past few years. Currently composed of Harbison Environmental Education Forest and the Information & Education Section, the goal of this program is: (1) to provide environmental education opportunities among school age children and adult populations, (2) to produce technical and general informational materials on forestry and forest-related subjects for educational and informational purposes, and (3) to operate two public environmental education centers. (Fig.7.2.10)

5. *Key Stakeholders*

- Employees
- Commissioners
- County Forestry Boards
- Local governments: county and city councils
- State Legislative members
- State of South Carolina
- Federal Natural Resource Agencies such as US Forest Service

6. *Key suppliers:*

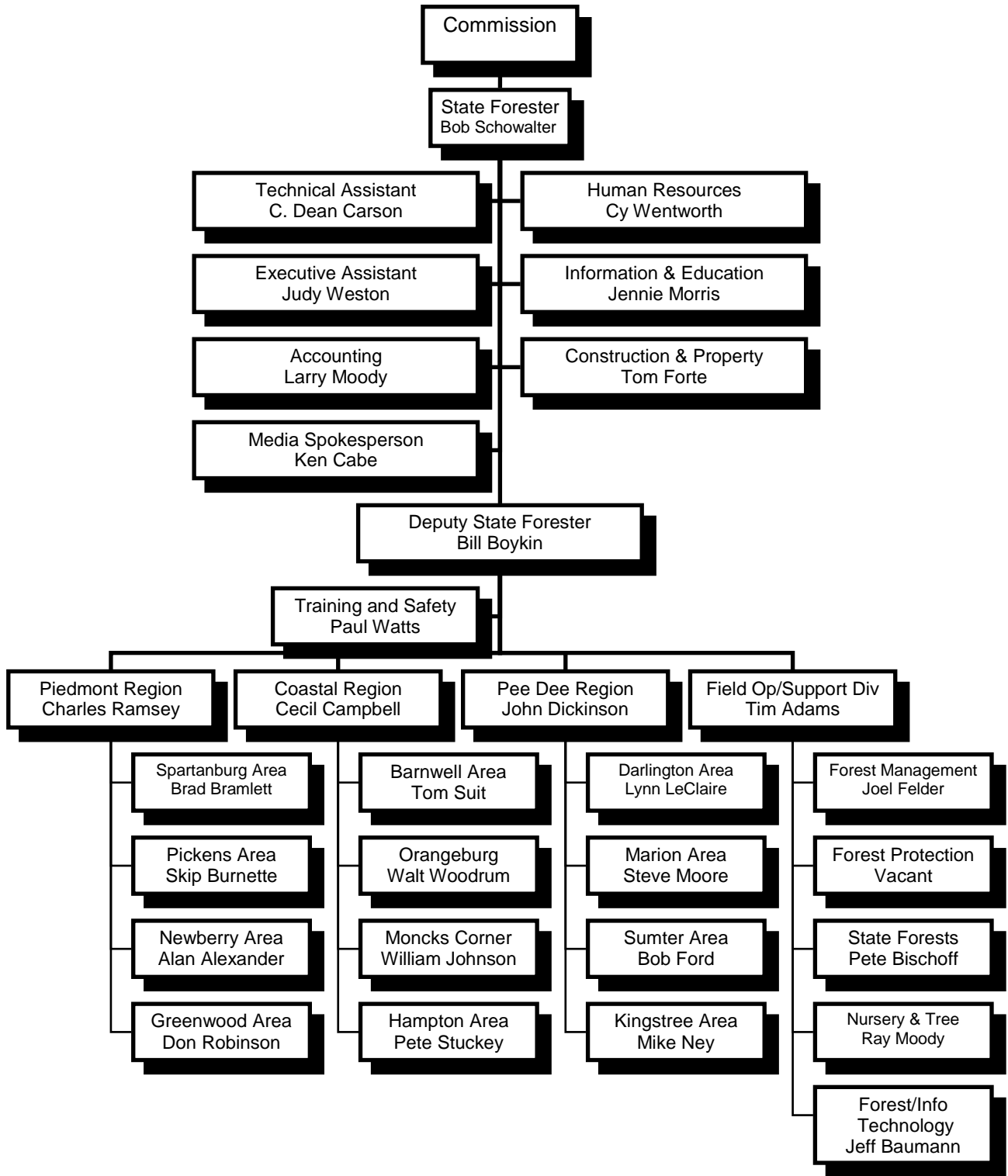
Vehicle equipment manufacturers, heavy equipment manufacturers and dealers, federal excess property inventory system, vehicle repair garages and parts suppliers, communication equipment dealers and repair businesses, forestry equipment suppliers, office supply vendors, printing businesses and media outlets, and aerial detection contractors.

7. *Organizational Structure*

(See Organizational Chart on page 9 & 10.)

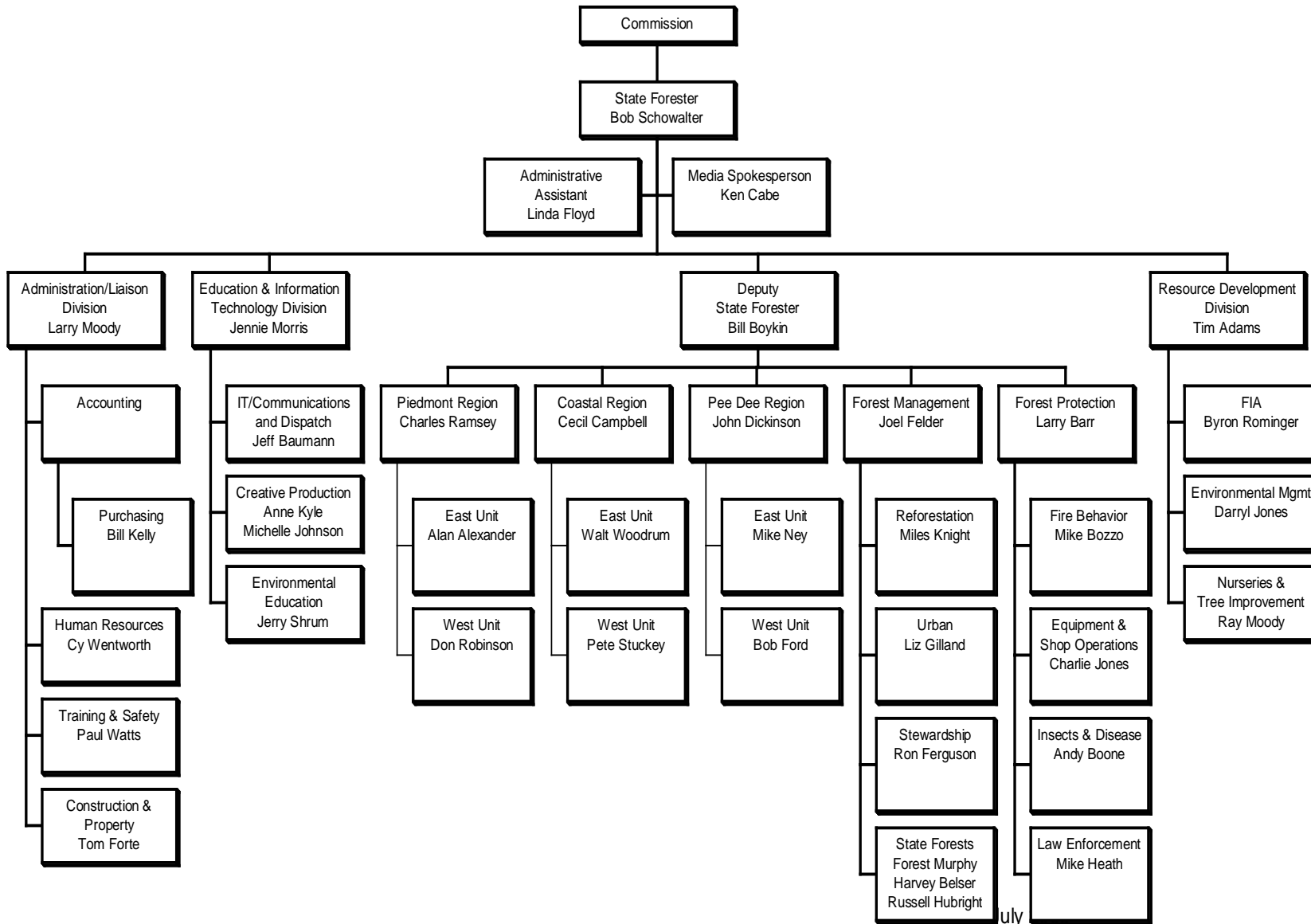
Charts 7a and 7b are provided to clarify the change being made in the agency as a result of budget cuts and restructuring of the agency to focus on our core mission. Chart 7b reflects changes made in July 2003.

7.a
South Carolina Forestry Commission
Organizational Chart



7.b

South Carolina Forestry Commission Organizational Chart



SECTION III – Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

Category I: Leadership

How do senior leaders set, deploy and communicate:

1.1a Short and long term direction?

Senior leaders (agency director, his staff, and division directors) develop short and long term directions with input from stakeholders, customers, field and program leadership, employees, Commissioners, the Executive & Legislative branches of government, and by monitoring and projecting issues and trends that impact forestry and forest resources. Input is obtained through stakeholder and employee meetings, customer surveys, and participation in relevant committees/professional organizations.

Deployment and communication are achieved through the strategic and action plans, the performance evaluation process, weekly news bulletins, and through various meetings scheduled with, or by employees, customers, and stakeholders. The agency director continued to meet with employee and other groups during the year to provide information on agency direction and receive feedback.

1.1b Performance expectations?

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: review of past organizational performance, review of other organizations' performances, input from employees primarily responsible for carrying out/monitoring the program, and feedback from customers.

Performance expectations are deployed and communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance review planning process, meetings, and one-on-one discussions. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress.

1.1c Organizational values?

Agency leadership adopted organizational values as identified by employees at an agency-wide planning conference. Values were printed, framed and displayed in offices. Senior management recognizes the importance of reviewing and discussing organizational values with employees, as well as prospective employees, and strives to deploy and communicate agency values by modeling. Additional effort is needed to ensure that all employees are aware of organizational values.

1.1d Empowerment and innovation?

Agency leadership has worked to strengthen and broaden efforts toward empowerment and innovation. During the year meetings were conducted with various managers and staff challenging them to identify challenges and solutions related to the agency's declining

budget and reduced workforce. Recommendations resulted in the reorganization of the agency, realignment of the workforce, refinement of the agency's key roles and customers.

Also, the state forest recreational advisory council, chartered by the agency director last year, completed work on identifying opportunities, issues and solutions related to recreational uses on the state forests and developed a set of recreational use guidelines. The council's work has been incorporated into the state forests system long-range plan, with local advisory councils having been established for three state forests.

1.1e Organizational and employee learning?

Organizational and employee learning is primarily set, deployed, and communicated through an established training council which consists of employee representatives from each region and various program staff. Agency leadership actively supports the efforts of the training council, in identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing internal training. Training council is in the process of reevaluating training needs in view of the recent agency reorganization/realignment. Additionally, the agency's first two candidates completed and received their Certified Public Manager credentials and two new candidates have been enrolled in the program.

1.1f Ethical behavior?

Agency leadership sets, deploys, and communicates ethical expectations through the agency's values, as well as through various policies and procedures and professional organizations.

Employees violating ethical principles are dealt with through appropriate individual means.

1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers?

Senior leaders have established and promoted a customer focus through the agency's mission statement and strategic and action plans. The agency intentionally seeks customer feedback and input on various services and issues: seedlings sales, services work, technical forest management assistance, changes in timber theft and fraud legislation, and recreational uses of state forests through users' advisory councils. This input is obtained through customer surveys, meetings (external and internal), and focus groups.

1.3 What key performance measures do your senior leaders regularly review?

Performance measures that are regularly reviewed by senior leadership include the following :

- Customer satisfaction levels for forest tree seedlings, forestry assistance, & services
- Forest based economic development impact.
- Forest Inventory Analysis Productivity
- Fire response times and Southern states average fire sizes
- Timber theft recovery rates
- Best management practices compliance trends
- Environmental education trends
- Employee turnover rates and experience lost
- Financial
- Fire investigations
- Southern Pine Beetle losses
- Southern Pine Beetle salvage
- 1-800 phone call savings

Agency reorganization/realignment is necessitating the development of additional efficiency and quality measures.

1.4 How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?

Senior leaders discuss and use employee feedback and organizational reviews to determine if leadership/management is:

- adequately communicating direction and priorities to employees
- identifying and removing barriers that may hinder employees performance
- setting realistic performance expectations
- needing to modify or change priorities

In response to the identified need to improve communication, the agency director conducted several employee meetings in the field and headquarters during the year to share information and obtain feedback. Also, the Forestry Commission participated in an accountability report assessment and scoring, which identified other opportunities for improvement.

1.5 How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?

Current and potential impacts are identified by seeking employee, customer, public, partner, legal, financial, and other input/feedback and then are typically addressed in agency procedures.

1.6 How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?

Senior leadership sets key priorities for improvement by reviewing input and feedback from internal and external customers, reviewing available performance data and benchmarks, and noting trends in forestry and government. Priority items may be included in the strategic and action plans.

Priorities are communicated by meeting with internal and external customers, the performance review process, one-on-one discussions, and the agency's weekly news bulletins. Key priorities were discussed by the agency director during employee and other meetings conducted this year.

1.7 How does senior leadership and the agency actively support and strengthen the community?

Leadership and the agency support and strengthen the community by participating on and encouraging participation on boards and local committees, in associations, and community projects. The agency routinely provides advice and assistance, as well as training and grant opportunities to communities, organizations and local governments, especially through its urban forestry program, cooperation with rural and volunteer fire departments, and reforestation efforts. Employees' involvement includes participation in and support of local fire, law enforcement, and forestry associations; participation in the United Way, Camp Kemo, Red Cross blood drives, various walk & bike-a-thons, Good Health Appeal, United Black Fund, the Salvation Army, fishing rodeos, state forests and state park events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities.

Category 2: Strategic Planning

2.1 What is your Strategic Planning process, including participants, and how does it account for:

- *Customer needs and expectations*
- *Financial, societal, and other risks*
- *Human resource capabilities*
- *Operational capabilities and needs*
- *Supplies/contractor/partner capabilities and needs*

The Forestry Commission's strategic planning process involves collecting input and data from agency Commissioners, employees, customers, cooperators, and the public. Information/data is analyzed and its content verified, like issues consolidated, strategies identified, the plan developed and disseminated, with reviews and updates occurring as the plan is carried out.

As the plan has been reviewed and revised, efforts have been undertaken to more closely align the plan with the EPMS process and the Malcolm Baldrige National Award Criteria.

Efforts continue to more closely align the strategic plan with the EPMS process and the Malcolm Baldrige National Award Criteria.

2.1a Customer needs and expectations?

The strategic plan indicates that customers' needs and expectations will be sought through surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, and monitoring of complaints. Input from customers is a primary basis for developing action items in the plan. The agency conducts on-going customer surveys on seedling sales, forest management plan development and forestry services for private landowners, and has established local recreational advisory committees that meet regularly on three state forests.

2.1b Financial, societal and other risks?

Specific financial, societal, or other risks are addressed in individual action items in the strategic plan; this includes reviewing the agency's financial and staffing levels and needs.

2.1c Human resource capabilities and needs?

The strategic plan reflects the agency's intent to plan effectively for the use of human resources, with a strong emphasis on training and safety for firefighters and foresters. In response to the continuing budget reductions and vacancies created through the offering of Retirement Incentives and Voluntary Separation Programs, the Forestry Commission reviewed its structure, programs, and staffing levels, and reorganized and realigned the workforce. Efforts will be focused on developing a stronger cross-functional workforce in the performance of forest protection and management services.

2.1d Operational capabilities and needs?

Action items within the strategic plan specify that various capabilities/processes will be examined through internal audits or reviews. Specific items examined during the year included air operations (fire detection/suppression), shop operations, and IT security. Efforts are continuing to examine additional work processes and to identify key performance measures.

2.1e Supplies/contractor partner capabilities and needs?

Major contractor and partner needs and capabilities are covered in specific action items, with a focus on strengthening working relationships by improving mutual understandings of needs and capabilities.

2.2 How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?

Action items were identified for each goal in the strategic plan and were included in the plan. Agency leaders and program managers further identified steps needed to achieve the action items and the personnel involved. These action items have been included in specific employees' EPMS planning stages, with managers and supervisors responsible for tracking progress.

2.3 How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures?

Strategic objectives are communicated by the agency director at personnel/staff meetings and through the agency's news bulletin. The objectives, along with action plans, and performance measures also are communicated by a cross-functional leadership team that is involved with the day to day operations of the agency, program managers, and supervisors, as well as through the EPMS planning process.

2.4 What are your key strategic objectives?

The agency's five key objectives are as follows:

- Protect the Resource – To ensure their future health, South Carolina's forests must be protected from harm due to natural and human-caused factors.
- Raise Awareness About the Resource – We must raise awareness among decision-makers and the public in general concerning the environmental and economic benefits of sound forest management.
- Manage the Resource – Forest landowners, communities, and the public expect the South Carolina Forestry Commission to deliver financial and technical assistance while addressing social and environmental concerns.
- Enhance the Resource – An ample, productive forest land base and an economic climate conducive to forestry-based business are essential if forest landowners of South Carolina are to practice sustainable forest management.
- Prepare to Meet Future Demands – To meet future demands and provide quality customer service, the South Carolina Forestry Commission must have well-trained, qualified staff that enjoy a safe and rewarding work environment.

2.5 If the agency's strategic plan is available to the public through the agency's internet homepage, please provide an address for that plan on the website.

The web address for the agency's strategic plan is www.state.sc.us/forest/stratplan.htm.

Category 3: Customer Focus

3.1 How do you determine who your customers are and what are their key requirements?

Our key customers were generally identified in the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90 *General duties of Commission*. As our services and products have evolved over the years our customer base has expanded to include other non-traditional forestry customers. For example, urban populations have expanded into the more rural and forested areas of our state

and we are responding to this population's need for assistance on their personal property, as well as providing information on their surrounding natural environment.

Our agency uses a variety of methods to determine requirements, expectations, preferences and satisfaction of customers and stakeholders:

- Customer Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Public Forums and Workshops
- Collaboration with Partners and User Groups
- Outreach Publications for Targeted Audiences
- Interviews
- County Forestry Board Meetings
- Monitoring of Legislative Activities

The Forestry Commission has conducted surveys of customers to determine their expectations and preferences. Survey forms soliciting feedback are sent to landowners that receive forest management assistance or services. Customers are asked about the length of time it took to complete the service, the results of the service, follow-up on the service, and courtesy and professionalism of the employees.

Each year, agency leadership also participates in meetings of county forestry boards to discuss current forestry issues and agency programs.

Federal grants dictate who we provide assistance to regarding Urban Forestry, Best Management Practices, and the Wildland/Urban Interface.

Periodic mailings to new forest landowners, surveying their interests and needs help acquire new customers.

3.2 How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?

The Forestry Commission seeks input and information through participation in a number of partnerships and councils. These include: Urban and Community Forestry Council, Wildland Fire Protection Partnership, South Carolina Foresters Council, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, Emergency Management Division, South Carolina Forestry Association, many local landowner associations, and the South Carolina Firemen's Association.

3.3 How do you use information from customer/stakeholders to improve services or programs?

Information about customer satisfaction and suggestions for improving services is reviewed by the senior leadership of the Forestry Commission and is disseminated to the appropriate program manager to improve the service or product. Regionally, this information is passed on to the area/unit and then to the County where the work is performed for improvement.

3.4 How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?

Customer satisfaction surveys for forest management plans, forest services, and forest tree seedlings are provided to customers for them to fill out and return in a self-addressed postage paid envelope. This has been done for the past four years for management plans (see figure 7.1.3) and services (see figure 7.1.2). Survey information for the past five years is available for forest seedling customers (see figure 7.1.1).

3.5 How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.

Complaints are recorded and promptly investigated to determine all problems and to attempt to alleviate them quickly.

The Forestry Commission meets with state forest user groups on a timely basis to discuss and plan for future opportunities on Forestry Commission owned land that is used for various recreational purposes.

The Forestry Commission makes timely responses to state legislators when our elected officials seek input.

The Forestry Commission's Wildland Urban Interface Program is beginning to reach out to residents and business owners in the state's ever expanding wildland urban interfaces. This is primarily an educational program to teach these customers proper fire wise concepts to protect their lives and property.

The Forestry Commission has a very strong program aimed at reaching educators, young people, and other interested citizens. This program takes the form of Wood Magic Forest Fairs, and a week long training program for teachers during the summer (Teachers' Tour). See Figure 7.2.10.

Category 4: Information and Analysis

4.1 How do you decide which operations and systems to measure?

Historically, measures have been used to monitor program accomplishments. Output measures were commonly used as a gauge of our activity levels. The agency's performance measurement system is constantly evolving and improving. More recently however, new measures have been developed based on their importance to the overall success of our agency. Recent budget reductions have focused our attention on efficiency, quality, and outcome measures.

We continue to design measures linked directly to our mission and the objectives outlined in our strategic plan. Senior management determines which measures should be developed for internal use, and which measures will be reported on an annual basis. We are still learning what constitutes meaningful performance measures but generally our accountability efforts are advancing from output type measures to outcome type measures.

4.2 *How do you ensure data quality, reliability, completeness, and availability for decision making?*

We are continuing to learn to use performance measures in our decision making processes. Measures and data have been used on a limited basis during program reviews at the area/unit and state levels. Senior management has instructed regional foresters and division directors to begin sharing performance data with personnel at all levels as a means of improving processes and generating feedback.

We undergo annual audits of financial records and processes. An internal auditor reviews data collection processes on an ongoing basis.

4.3 *How do you use data and information analysis to provide effective support for decision making?*

Each delivery process and each support process has its own set of measures. These measures are used to determine process efficiency and effectiveness. The agency has overall measures of effectiveness, such as, customer satisfaction, turnover rate, and financial reports. Decision-makers at all levels will have access to performance measures and are expected to factor that information into their thinking and decisions.

4.4 *How do you select and use comparative data and information?*

Comparative data from similar state forestry organizations is available on a limited basis. However, we strive to get the best comparative data available. Each state records data differently. Contacts made with southeastern states reveal that most state forestry organizations are just beginning to track meaningful performance measures. South Carolina is the only southeastern state which tracks dispatch response times through a statewide real time computer aided dispatch system. The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness.

Category 5: Human Resources Focus

5.1 *How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees to develop and utilize their full potential?*

The Forestry Commission encourages, arranges, and enables employees to obtain the State's Associate Public Manager Award (APM), the Certified Public Manager Award (CPM) and to participate in the South Carolina Executive Institute to help them be more effective supervisors and better prepare them for promotional opportunities.

Although budget cuts have required the suspension and/or curtailment of our performance pay and bonus programs, we will strive to continue to reward outstanding employee performance. We consider this financial recognition incentive to be a high priority.

We also plan to recognize those employees who take on additional duties and responsibilities as a result of budget changes and then perform well. We believe that as we downsize and adjust to doing more with less it is very important to reward those employees who do more than their share of work.

We encourage supervisors to nominate their employees for the above type of rewards and we believe that these programs have a positive effect on employees throughout the organization.

Tuition assistance is available in our agency and is viewed as a win-win situation for employees to expand their educational opportunities as well as help provide increased levels of expertise for the agency.

We involve employees in our strategic planning processes. During plan development and revision, data and information were collected and shared at area/unit level meetings throughout the agency. Representatives from all areas of the organization participated in refining information for the plan.

Although inability to fill vacancies has temporarily precluded recruitment efforts, recruiting for new foresters is generally conducted at various forestry schools in the southeast with onsite interviews and screenings, looking for bright energetic candidates with knowledge and skills to develop into future leaders of the organization. We value promoting from within to fill the majority of our supervisory and upper management positions and have been very successful doing so over the years through these recruiting efforts.

Structured career paths providing for advancement opportunities, additional skills and knowledge gained through training, and salary increases are available for many of our job classifications.

5.2 *How do you identify and address key developmental training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training?*

Identification of training needs is done by asking program managers to stay current on all required training and new techniques and technologies affecting their programs and requesting appropriate training. A training council meets quarterly to review training needs and is currently working on training guides to set minimum training requirements by job position. The training director constantly looks at training opportunities and insures that all personnel meet required training. Affirmative action training is provided each year to all supervisors authorized to hire.

5.3 How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance?

Our Employee Performance Management System uses a universal review date of January 1, which allows supervisors to emphasize strategic plan action items for employees during the calendar year. Position descriptions have been revised to reflect strategic plan objectives for selected positions.

5.4 What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation?

Employees are surveyed periodically for input on issues and areas needing improvement, such as in planning conferences and development/updating of strategic plan action items. The SCFC was the first state agency to conduct a Malcolm Baldrige Self-Assessment in 1997, and is the first state agency to conduct a follow-up Baldrige Self-Assessment which was completed in August 2002. We are considering developing a survey for future use to measure employee satisfaction and well being. Employee input is obtained through established training and safety committees.

5.5 How do you maintain a safe and healthy work environment?

Maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is accomplished by stressing safety in all aspects of the agency. Safety training such as defensive driving training and first aid training is required of certain positions. The safety coordinator looks at all accident reports to recommend ways to avoid similar accidents in the future. Safety inspections of facilities and operations are ongoing and other agency personnel with special expertise are involved where needed. Employees are encouraged to participate in health screenings and health fairs.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission implemented a physical fitness program for our employees on September 1, 2001. Participation in the program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. South Carolina is a leader in the development and implementation of a physical fitness program among the southeastern states. Only 3 other southeastern states have a physical fitness requirement for fireline employees. The goals of the program are: to ensure the readiness of fireline employees to perform their jobs, to increase fireline employees' productivity, and to increase physical fitness levels of fireline employees through a program of fitness and health education, evaluation, monitoring, and follow-up. Additional benefits for the employees that should arise from the standard are: decreased medical costs due to accidents and disease, increased awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle to long-term health and happiness, reduced risk factors for lifestyle related conditions, and improved morale and self-confidence. The program is being phased in over 3 years and will culminate in 2004 with the ultimate goal of walking 2 miles in 30 minutes or less while carrying a 25-lb. pack. (See Figure 7.3.3) This past year the Forestry Commission also had 17 employees volunteer for and passed the arduous level of physical fitness. This level consists of walking 3 miles in 45 minutes or less, while carrying a 45-lb. pack.

5.6 *What is the extent of your involvement in the community?*

We conduct annual fund drives for United Way, Good Health Appeal, United Black Fund, and the Salvation Army. Our agency actively participates in numerous community programs such as volunteer fire departments, career days at schools, Camp Kemo, fishing rodeos, state & county fairs, state forests and state parks events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities. We brought Smokey Bear to children groups in all counties of the state.

Category 6: Process Management

6.1 *What are your key design and delivery processes for products/services, and how do you incorporate new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, into these design and delivery processes and systems?*

The agency offers products and services to forest landowners and the general public in five key areas: forest protection, forest management, state forests, seedling production, and environmental education.

Forest Protection

The SCFC provides landowners with wildland firefighting assistance through a network of firefighters and equipment stationed throughout the state. Dispatching the closest firefighting unit is a key process in protecting the forest resource. The agency has three dispatch centers located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Information gathered from the review of each dispatch center in 2001 has been further analyzed and led to revisions and reorganization to further ensure consistency as well as efficiency. These centers are heavily reliant on advanced technology. In Columbia, there is a Dispatch and Technology Coordinator with operational and technical oversight of the dispatch centers. At this level, detailed and independent analyses of key success criteria are performed annually to facilitate consistency. Field personnel are provided with the tools to monitor their own activities. Reports with information such as response time are distributed to supervisors monthly.

The SCFC also administers the process of accepting notification of outdoor burning. Forestry, agriculture, and wildlife burning notifications are received by the regional dispatch centers. All other notifications for outdoor burning, including trade waste and yard debris, are received by an automated voice mail system. This system is an efficient way to process large numbers of calls (300,000+ per year) in a timely fashion and to deliver a consistent fire safety message to the burner. See Figures 7.6.4 & 7.6.5.

New technology for detection of forest pests is constantly being evaluated. An example of technological advance is use of the Global Positioning System in conducting aerial surveys. By using a preprogrammed GPS, we were able to eliminate the need for one of three personnel required for the survey. The use of GPS technology also cut the time required for each survey by providing the aircraft pilot a constant and continuous flight track throughout the survey.

Forest Management

The SCFC provides forest landowners with assistance in managing their forestland. This involves a wide range of services including the development of management plans, the monitoring of environmental guidelines, and the re-inventory of South Carolina's forests. Previously, one fourth of the agency's 12 operational areas were reviewed annually. This review process has since been revised to include additional mission areas; however, the revised process has not been implemented due to internal reorganization. Also, customer surveys are mailed to recipients of forest services or management plans. (See Figure 7.1.2 & 7.1.3) Different processes are utilized to distribute the surveys. The response rate is minimal for management plan surveys for FY 2002-2003; therefore, we are reviewing the distribution process, as weaknesses are perceived. Compliance with agency-approved environmental guidelines are monitored bi-annually on federal, state, industrial, and private forest ownerships. Results are published and widely distributed in hard copy and over the Internet. A key activity of the SCFC is the re-inventory of the state's forestland. Three two-person crews are measuring plots to exacting national standards. The US Forest Service is required to check a minimum of 5% of our plot work to ensure quality control. (See Fig 7.2.2)

State Forests

The SCFC's State Forests demonstrate sustainable multiple-use management to forest landowners and the general public. In FY 2000-2001, the State Forests began developing a long-range plan to address the primary uses of the State Forests. Such plan was completed in June 2002 and approved by the Commissioners. An implementation plan has since been developed and implementation is in process. Local recreation advisory groups provide assistance in implementing our specific recreation plans.

Seedling Production

The Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the SCFC supplies forest landowners in South Carolina with high-quality forest tree seedlings. Approximately 15.5 million seedlings were produced during FY 2002-2003. A 10% customer survey is implemented annually as a feedback mechanism to direct future product design. Ninety-four percent of those responding are satisfied with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the Commission (see Figure 7.1.1). However, an additional survey was developed to identify the products and delivery mechanisms that forest landowners desire. In response to our survey, we learned that:

- As expected, the majority of our customers plant seedlings for timber production.
- Customers are satisfied with our current product mix.
- Customers are satisfied with our current packaging of containerized seedlings, but they prefer to order bareroot seedlings in smaller quantities.
- 75% of our customers are willing to drive 50 miles to pick up their seedlings.
- 80% of our customers are willing to pay \$10-12 in shipping and handling costs to have their seedlings shipped directly to them by a commercial carrier.

- Our customers are willing to pay more for a higher value product, such as seedlings with disease resistance, faster growth, and preferred wood properties.
- 63% of our customers prefer to order seedlings on traditional paper forms versus Internet ordering.

Also, an annual financial analysis is completed to adjust seedling production and price. In Spring 2003, the Nursery and Tree Improvement program applied for a US Forest Service grant in order to do a thorough review of three aspects of our program: the possible consolidation of Creech and Taylor nurseries, our seedling distribution system, and alternative management strategies for Niederhof seed orchard. The grant was received and the review will be performed in FY 2003-2004.

Environmental Education

One of SCFC's primary missions is to promote an awareness and appreciation by the public of the ecological, social and economic functions and benefits of the state's forests. Educational programs are tailored to audiences of all ages.

Educators in grades K-12 are focal points for professional development training so they can take information back to their classrooms and impart this knowledge to their students. SCFC has led the field in correlating all their educational training and programs to the SC Department of Education's Curriculum Standards in order to stay current with changing educational reforms. All programs and training are content oriented and standards-based to ensure that they meet the requirements of the State Department of Education (SDE). Programs administered by SCFC such as Project Learning Tree and the S.C. Teachers Tour offer educators the opportunity to participate in professional development that meet their needs and fulfill our mission. New technologies such as computer based and web based programs are incorporated into these training programs. Partnerships have been formed with federal and state agencies as well as industries to provide these educational programs at an economical cost.

Programs oriented toward children such as the Wood Magic Forest Fair and educational programs offered to schools at Harbison State Forest are also designed to meet the requirements of the SDE for quality programs, and are content oriented and standards-based. These programs have been rapidly expanding in response to their popularity among elementary school children and teachers. (See Figure 7.2.10)

All educational programs offered by SCFC are evaluated and adjusted to meet perceived needs. The demand for these quality programs exceeds SCFC's ability to accommodate them.

6.2 *How does your day-to-day operation of key production/delivery processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?*

Forest Protection

A request for proposal for a new computer aided dispatch system (CADS) was initiated to improve efficiency and consistency and negotiations are in process. The new CADS will provide for automatic compliance to Smoke Management Guidelines and automatic vehicle location technology to aid in response time and safety.

The automated yard debris burning notification system was modified so that all non smoke management type vegetative debris burning notifications could be directed to that system as of July 1, 2001. It was estimated that this change would redirect approximately 30,000 calls per year from our dispatch centers to the automated system. This reduction in call volume would allow dispatchers to more efficiently handle smoke management notifications, radio communications, and wildfire calls. The automated system was also modified to handle 24 calls simultaneously which increased its call handling capabilities by 50%. Another benefit of this change was an overall reduction in phone charges. (See Figure 7.6.4 & 7.6.5)

Forest Management

Customer surveys are sent out following services work or delivery of management plans. (See Figure 7.1.3) Responses are returned directly to the regional forester and analyzed with particular attention given to any negative responses. Contacts are made with landowners where possible to review responses and correct any problems with service delivery. In general, statewide programs, such as the Environmental Management and Forest Inventory and Analysis programs, are directly supervised by a Columbia staff forester with specific training in that program area.

The Commission was a major cooperater in the 1999 National Aerial Photography Program, which acquired 1:40,000 color infrared aerial photography of South Carolina during January and February of 1999 and 2000. In FY 2002-2003, the Commission worked with the Department of Natural Resources, US Corps of Engineers and other agencies to convert this photography into Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads (DOQQs). Field foresters are utilizing desktop mapping and geographical information systems to develop recommendations and maps in the delivery of forest management services to forest landowners.

State Forests

Annual work plans are reviewed by agency management. Forest product sales are reviewed and approved by the agency's nine-member Commission. Federal and state regulatory agencies work closely with the state forests to ensure protection of rare plants and animals.

Seedling Production

Key success criteria are included in Nursery and Tree Improvement facility manager's EPMS rating criteria. Success criteria include measures of seed & seedling quality as well as protection of the productive capability of the nursery soil. There is technical oversight by staff at the Auburn & NC State University Cooperatives, of which the SCFC is a member. Internally, agency staff reviews seedling production periodically.

During FY 2002-2003, longleaf cones were collected from Sand Hills State Forest and seed extracted to ensure we received the best quality longleaf seed.

Environmental Education

Individual evaluation by participants is a key component of all SCFC educational programs, including professional development programs such as Project Learning Tree and the S.C. Teachers Tour as well as children programs such as the Wood Magic Forest Fair. Program changes are constantly being considered and made based on these participant evaluations.

Pre- and post-test are given to participants in the Wood Magic Forest Fair to evaluate program effectiveness. There is a significant increase between these test scores with this program. Educators are also sent pre-visit materials as well as post-visit materials and lessons to enhance the content of the Wood Magic program.

In general, there is an overwhelming demand for SCFC environmental education programs. (See Figure 7.2.10) Many educators return for additional training after going through one of the agency's environmental education programs.

- 6.3 *What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?*

Information Technology

Most aspects of our business involve technology and information management. We have established a presence on the Internet as a means to disseminate information. Internet sales of State Forest recreational permits and Nursery & Tree Improvement seedlings are being explored.

The Information Systems group is responsible directly and indirectly for the maintenance and support of the agency's wide area network, 10 Windows NT Servers, and over 200 computer users and their software applications. During FY 2002-2003, the Chief Information Officer and other agencies were consulted regarding network security. Ultimately, a consultant review was performed and implementation of the recommendations is in process. A new firewall has been installed, virus software has been updated, and we are migrating off less secure operating systems.

Training Programs

Fire training is a key internal activity specific to the South Carolina Forestry Commission due to our emergency response mission. We also require employees to attend training in human resource management areas such as Equal Employment Opportunity training, recruiting and hiring practices, and supervisory skills. The Training Council serves as an advisory board meeting on a quarterly basis to review training policy and procedures and develop training schedules based on needs submitted from employees, supervisors, and program managers.

Mandatory training guidelines have been developed and implemented for major job categories within the Commission. Specialized training is also provided to meet regulations imposed by other agencies such as OSHA, SFM, DHEC etc. Continuing education is provided to keep employees current with emerging technology.

During FY 2002-2003, 125 training sessions were held to better equip our personnel in performing their job. Training is also provided for external customers as 29 training sessions were held for Fire Management with 520 non-SCFC personnel in attendance while 2 Certified Prescribed Fire Manager courses were held with 34 in attendance with the majority being non-SCFC personnel.

Accounting Department

Our accounting department has received four successive audits by the State Auditors Office with no findings. We continue to monitor and improve our processes and procedures with internal audits and existing staff. The number of voucher transactions has been reduced over the past 7 years as a result of using the Visa card program. This has helped reduce the need for 1 FTE (see Figure 7.6.3).

6.4 *How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?*

Air Operations

We depend on two sources for early detection of wildfire: fires called in to dispatch centers by the public and aircraft detection. Aircraft detection services are provided by both contract aircraft with pilot and aircraft on loan from the federal government with South Carolina Forestry Commission pilots. Contract pilots are trained by us to detect and report location, size, and woodlands involved to dispatch centers who in turn dispatch fire suppression resources to the fire. In addition to detection, South Carolina Forestry Commission pilots and aircraft are used in the fire suppression effort to assist ground crews and equipment with information needed to suppress the fire in a safe and efficient manner. Close coordination among agency pilots and contractors is required to operate efficiently.

Equipment Manufacturers

Our Equipment Program Manager works closely with fire suppression equipment dealers and factory representatives to stay abreast of new designs and technology. The equipment program produces specifications to receive bids on equipment and provides design and fabrication capability to the field organization. Equipment specifications are updated as state-of-the-art technology changes, such as the development of hydrostatic transmissions. Equipment maintenance, warranty issues, inventory, cost effectiveness and replacement scheduling are also responsibilities of the program which in turn provides information as needed to equipment manufacturers and other related partners. Software has been purchased and utilized to track equipment costs. The Commission utilizes training sessions provided by vendors to stay abreast of changes, participates in vendor demonstrations, and shares information with sister states.

University Cooperative Membership

The SCFC stays current with state-of-the-art forestry research through membership in university-based research cooperatives. This is especially important in the Nursery and Tree Improvement section where we are members in the NC State Tree Improvement Cooperative and the Auburn Nursery Cooperative. The collaborative effort and related cost of conducting research is spread over all cooperative members, eliminating redundant efforts and expenses.

US Forest Service Cooperative Funding

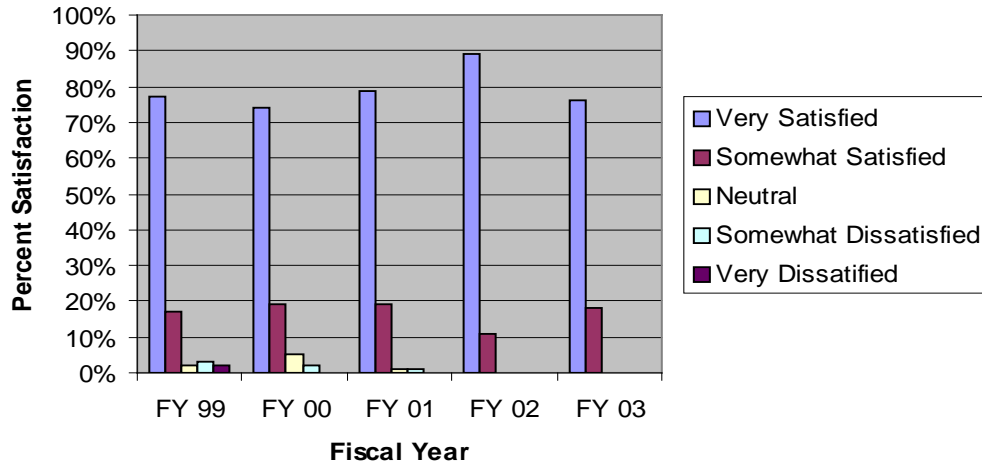
We are the primary partner for the US Forest Service in South Carolina in implementing forestry-related programs. Federal funds are allocated to key SCFC state partners based primarily on funding levels and project prioritization by SCFC-led coordinating committees.

Category 7: Business Results

7.1 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?

In 1998 we began measuring customer satisfaction with our forest tree seedling products. The combined satisfaction levels have consistently remained in the 90%+ range as illustrated in Figure 7.1.1. In FY '03, 94% of surveyed customers responded that they were either "very satisfied" (76%) or "somewhat satisfied" (18%) with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the Commission. Back in FY '02, the neutral category was dropped from the survey in order to clarify customer satisfaction responses. We routinely review comments on returned surveys looking for ways to improve our product and delivery systems.

Figure 7.1.1
Customer Satisfaction Level for Seedling Production



In 1999 we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our forestry services and our technical forest management assistance. Figures 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 illustrate our overall satisfaction levels. Our immediate goal is to improve our forestry services to the 95% satisfaction level. We feel this is a very reasonable and attainable goal.

Figure 7.1.2
Customer Satisfaction with Forestry Services
 (Goal: 95% Satisfaction Level)

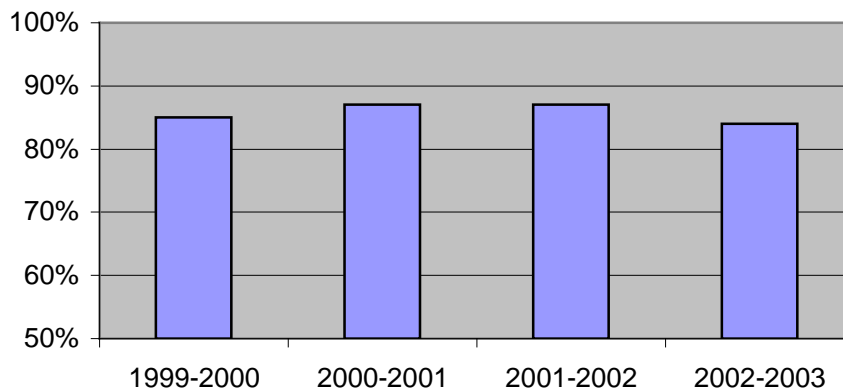
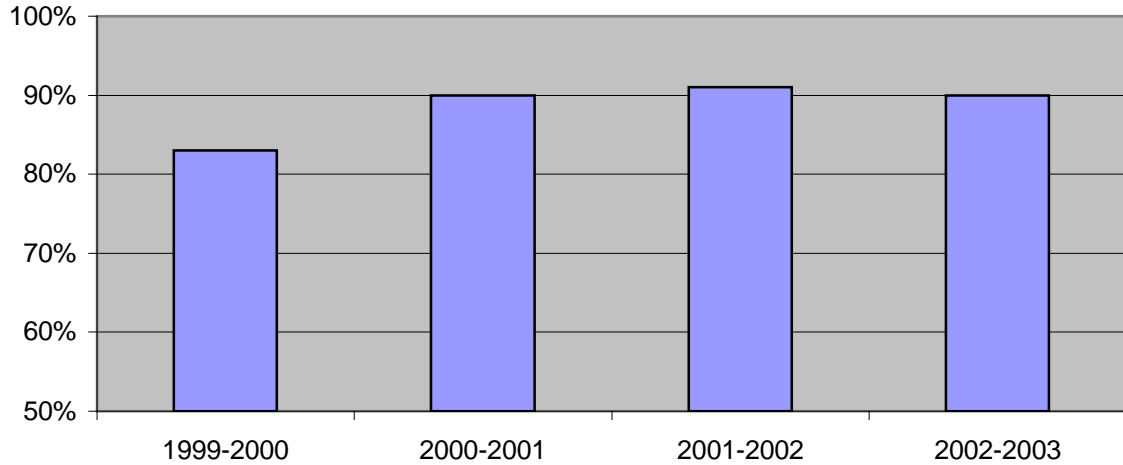


Figure 7.1.3
Customer Satisfaction with Forest Management Plans
 (Goal: 95% Satisfaction Level)



7.2 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment?*

Enhance the Resource

Forest industry development and investment has increased slightly, mostly as the result of small projects which were started to take advantage of niche markets and increased hardwood lumber demand. There has been very little interest in major manufacturing expansion.

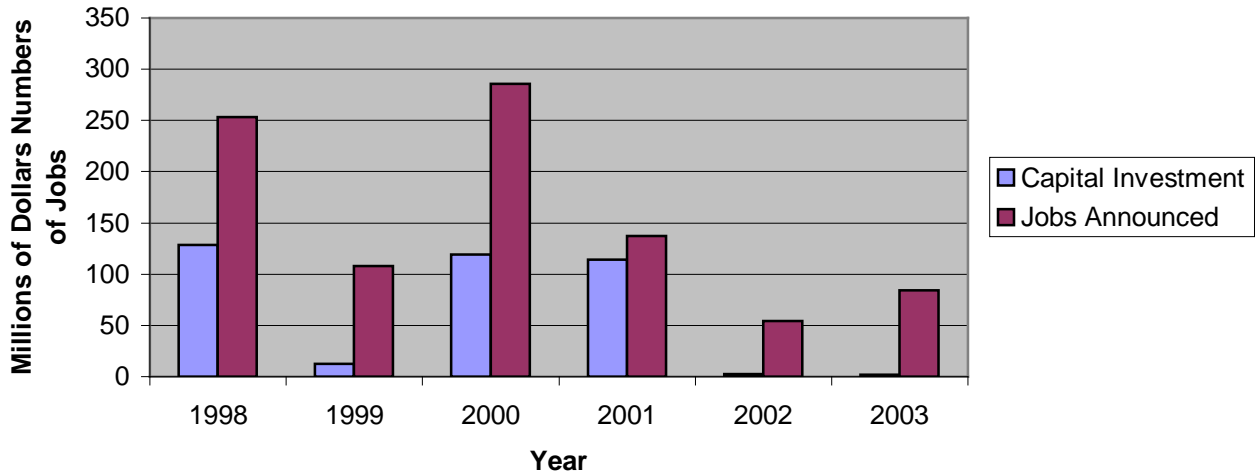
Several projects were begun under a USDA Forest Service program to find or create additional uses for small trees and forest biomass. The objective is to remove flammable fuels to reduce the potential for wildfires and to create jobs.

- An assessment is being done to determine how SC can best attract new engineered wood products manufacturing which could provide additional markets for small trees.
- Bio-retention cells using forest biomass are being installed as research and demonstration projects. These cells are a new way to treat storm water runoff from industrial sites and highways. If this technology is adopted by engineers, these cells would create additional markets for forest biomass.

A feasibility study is being conducted to illustrate how utilizing forest biomass can provide energy for Clemson University and to document the wildfire potential reduction and forest management benefits to be gained.

Figure 7.2.1

**Mission Accomplishment
Forest Based Economic Development Impact**

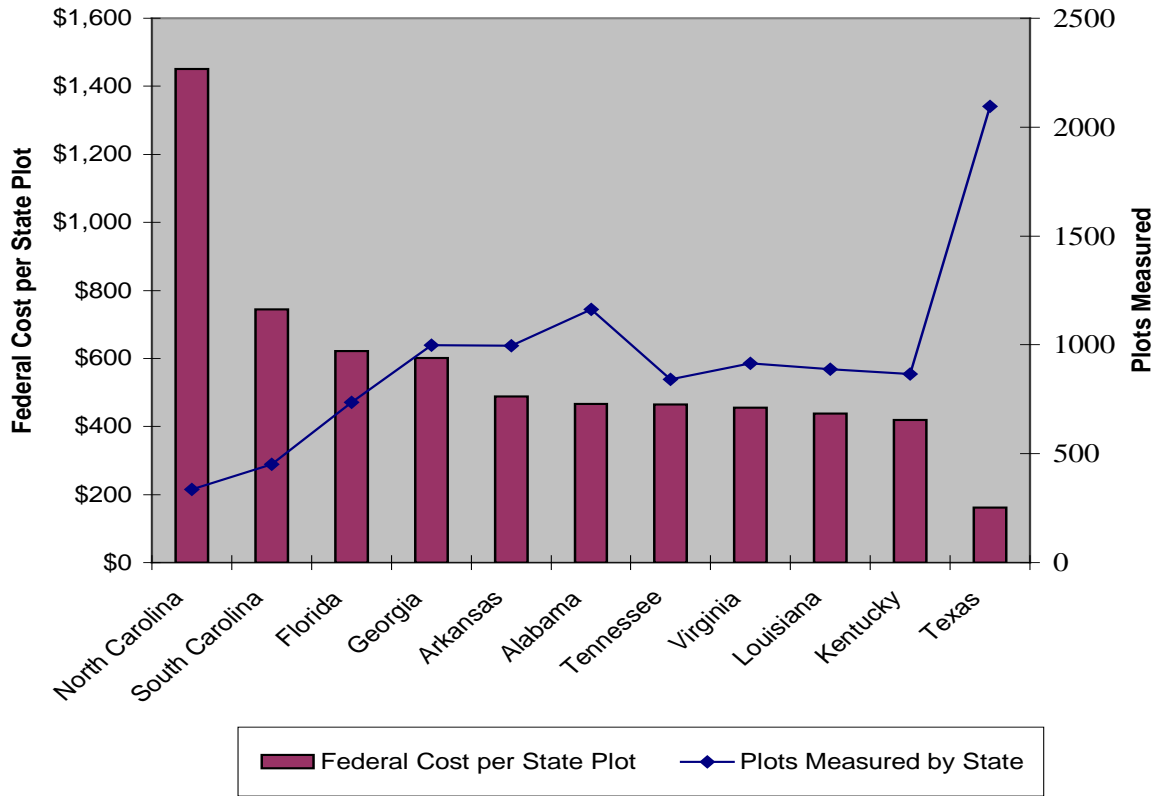


In fiscal year 2002, the Forestry Commission's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program reduced its work force from six crews to three crews as a result of agency budget cuts. The FIA program needs a minimum of four crews to meet the minimum plot production goals of measuring 20 percent of the total number of plots per year.

These budget cuts have caused the FIA program to slip from being a leader among the southern states in productivity and cost containment to nearly last as illustrated in Figure 7.2.2. The Forestry Commission's FIA program has set a goal to reclaim the loss in production by June 2004.

Figure 7.2.2
Mission Accomplishment
Forest Inventory and Analysis Productivity Graph

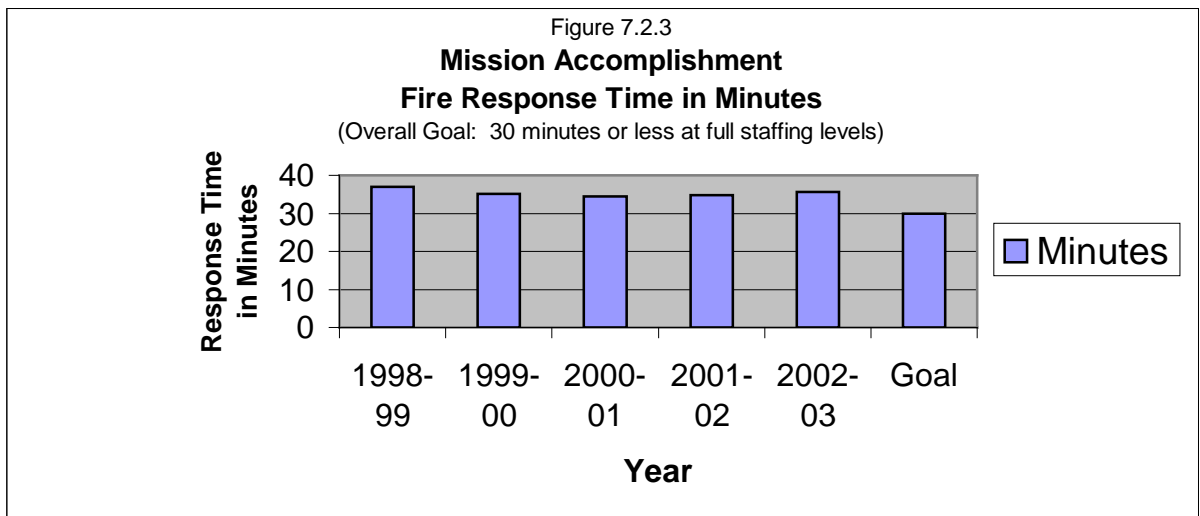
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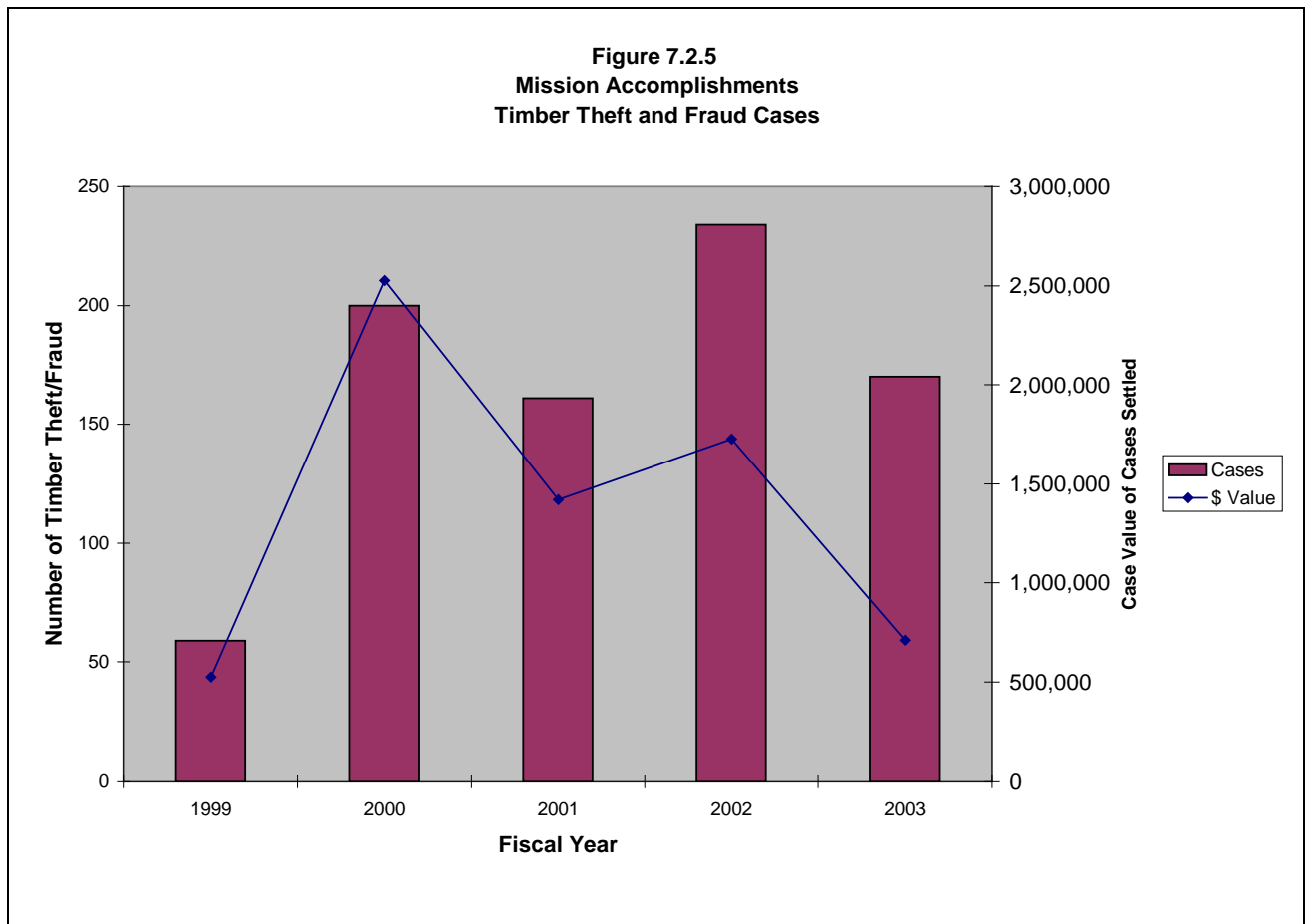
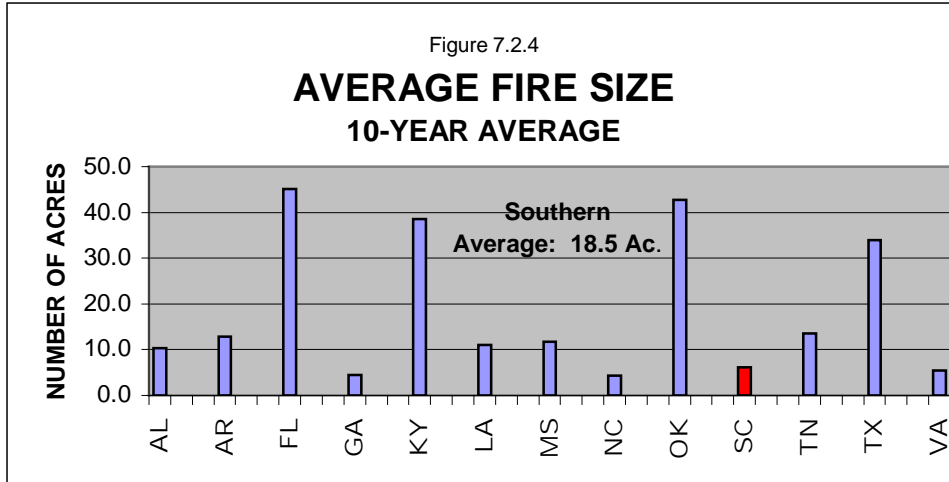
Protect the Resource

Response time to wildland fires is dependent upon many factors, some of which are beyond our control, such as traffic congestion and budget related staffing levels. We refer to fire response time as the time from when we receive the first report of a wildfire until the time our fire warden arrives on the scene.

Internally we measure the different segments of response time and strive to improve each segment with a goal of reducing overall response time to 30 minutes or less at full staffing levels. Figure 7.2.3 illustrates that our average response time has increased from FY01 to FY03 by 3.8%. Budget mandated reductions in staffing from attrition, early retirement incentive programs, and reductions in force have caused this time to increase.



The Forestry Commission measures and compares the average fire size with twelve additional southern states. The average fire size is 18.5 acres per fire for the thirteen southern states. South Carolina has the fourth smallest average fire size - 6.1 acres per fire as shown in Figure 7.2.4.



The Forestry Commission has 45 commissioned officers including 2 full time investigators trained and experienced in arson, forest product theft and fraud, and related crime investigations. During the year, investigators cleared 170 timber theft and related cases involving timber valued at \$710,148. In addition 30 cases were pending court or pleas at the end of the year with a timber value of \$146,824.

Figure 7.2.6. One of the most effective methods of preventing wildland fires is to investigate every fire and prosecute law violators. Our forest wardens are the first line of defense, conducting preliminary cause and origin determination on fires they suppress. If there is a violation or need for further investigation, a Forestry Commission officer or investigator is called in to conduct a more extensive investigation and make charges if warranted.

Over the last five years officers have averaged conducting extended investigations on approximately 28% of fires, of these, 32% resulted in prosecutions. Our officer numbers have been reduced through budget constraints over the last three years. All but 2 of our officers have multiple duties involving fire suppression, forest management, and law enforcement, our goal is to increase the number of extended investigations on fires to 50% and increase prosecutions to 50% of extended investigations.

Figure 7.2.6

Five Year Average of Fires, Extended Investigations, And Prosecutions

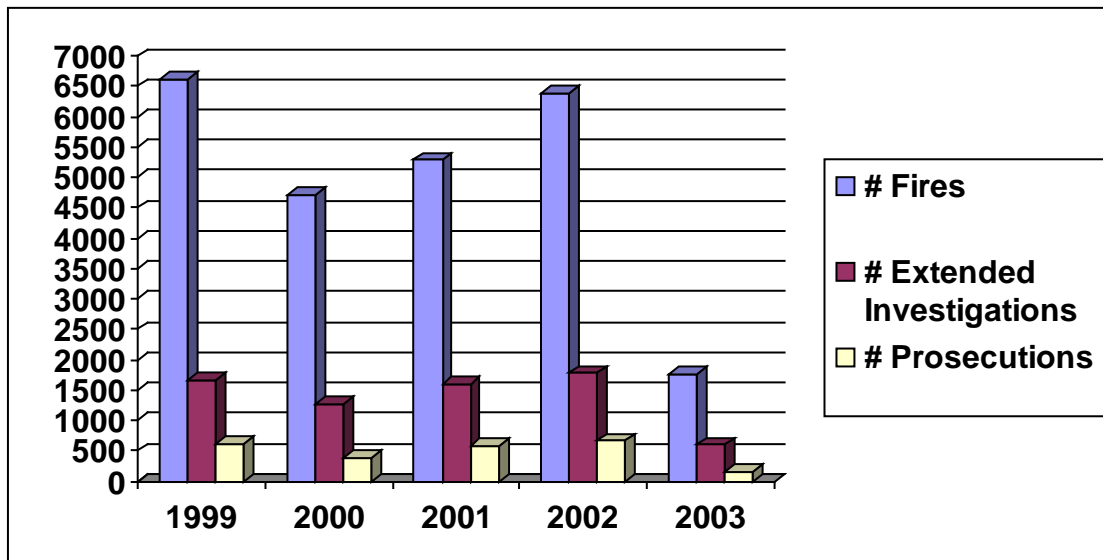


Figure 7.2.7 shows compliance with harvesting Best Management Practices from previous surveys. Compliance for harvesting BMPs was 84.5% in 1991, 84.7% in 1993, and 89.5% in 1994, 91.5% in 1997. A new survey was initiated in the fall of 2001 to update BMP compliance. Two hundred sites were located and inspected for compliance with BMPs relating to timber harvesting throughout the state. Compliance with harvesting BMPs rose to 94% in the initial phase of a two-year study. In the winter of 2002, site preparation BMPs were evaluated on the same 200 sites and an additional 100 site prepared tracts. A third and final site visit to each monitoring location was conducted in early 2003 to determine site preparation BMP compliance, regeneration methods, site stabilization, conversion to other uses, and other related factors. Compliance with BMPs for site preparation fell slightly to 96.4%. Results from this round of monitoring are currently being analyzed for publication.

Figure 7.2.7

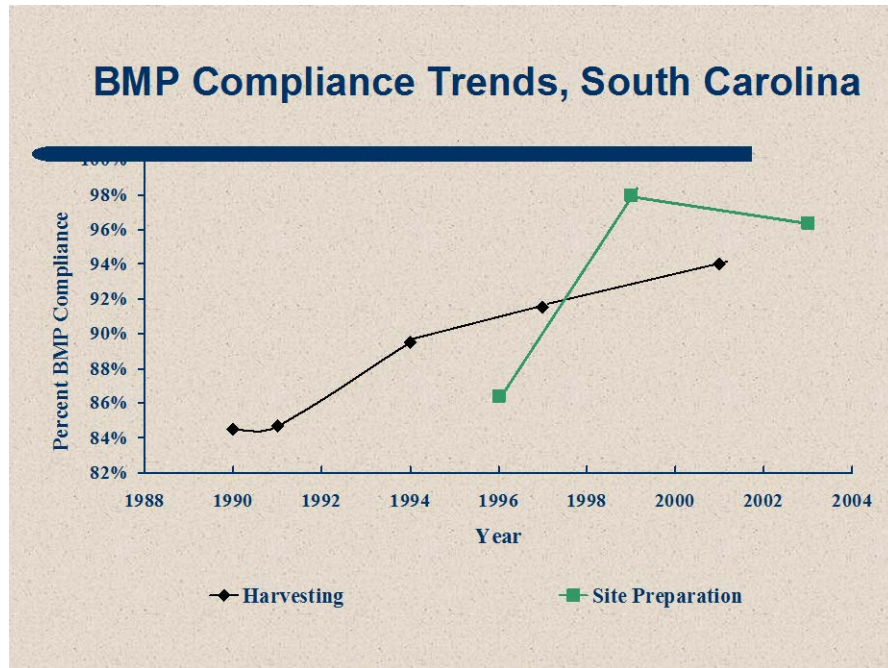
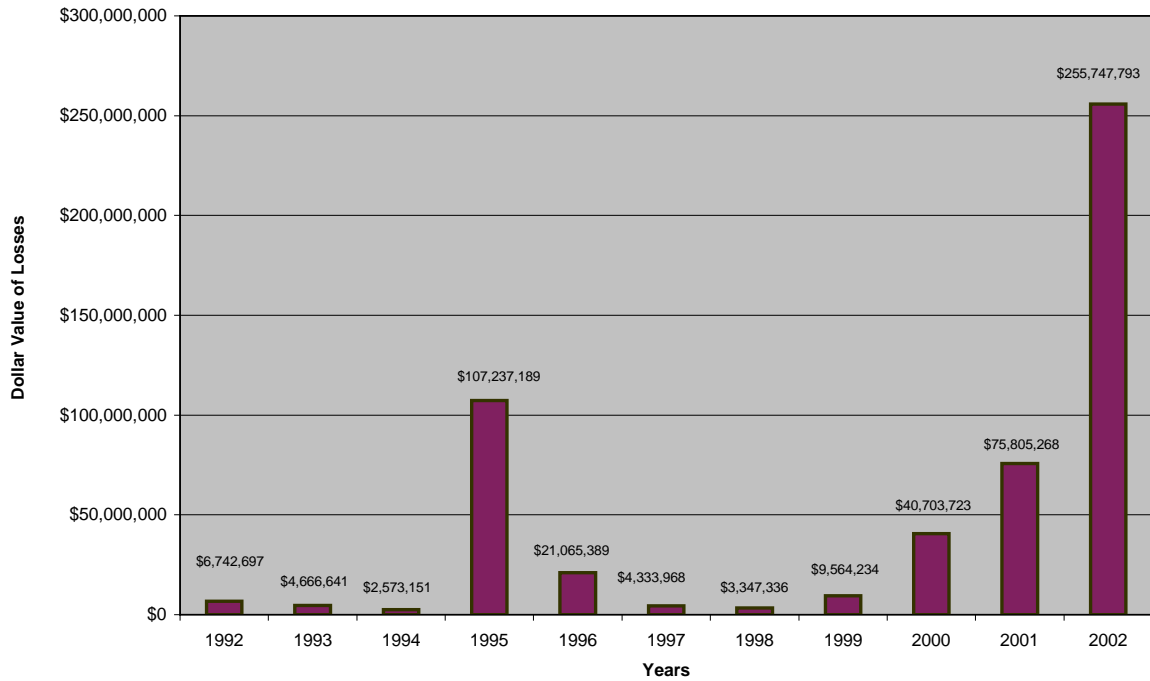
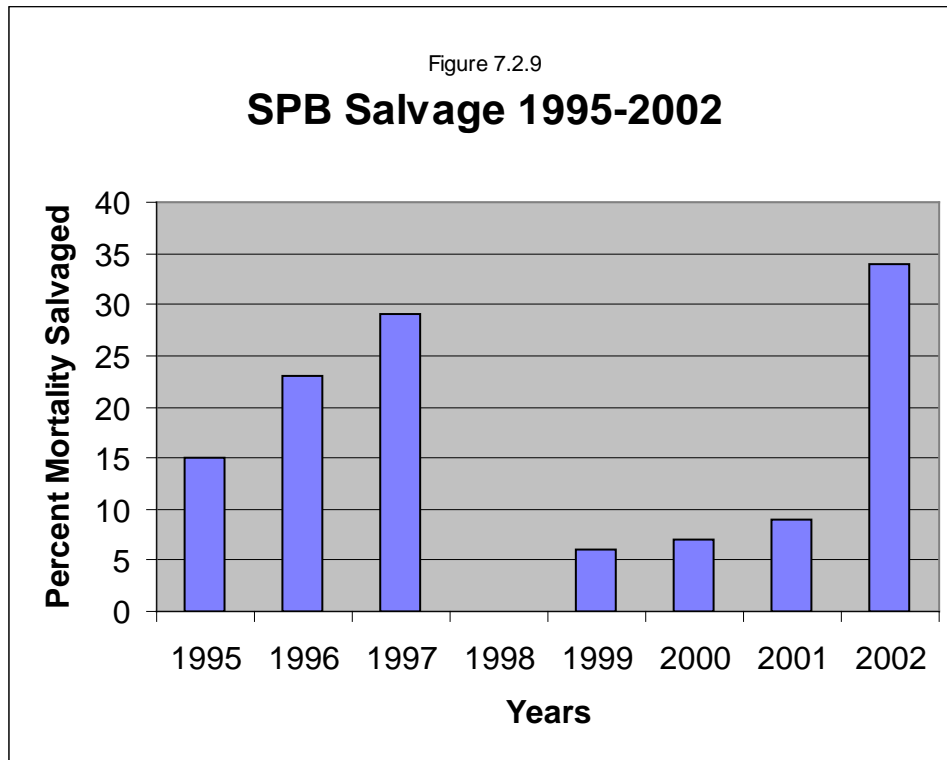


Figure 7.2.8
SPB Losses in SC 1992-2002



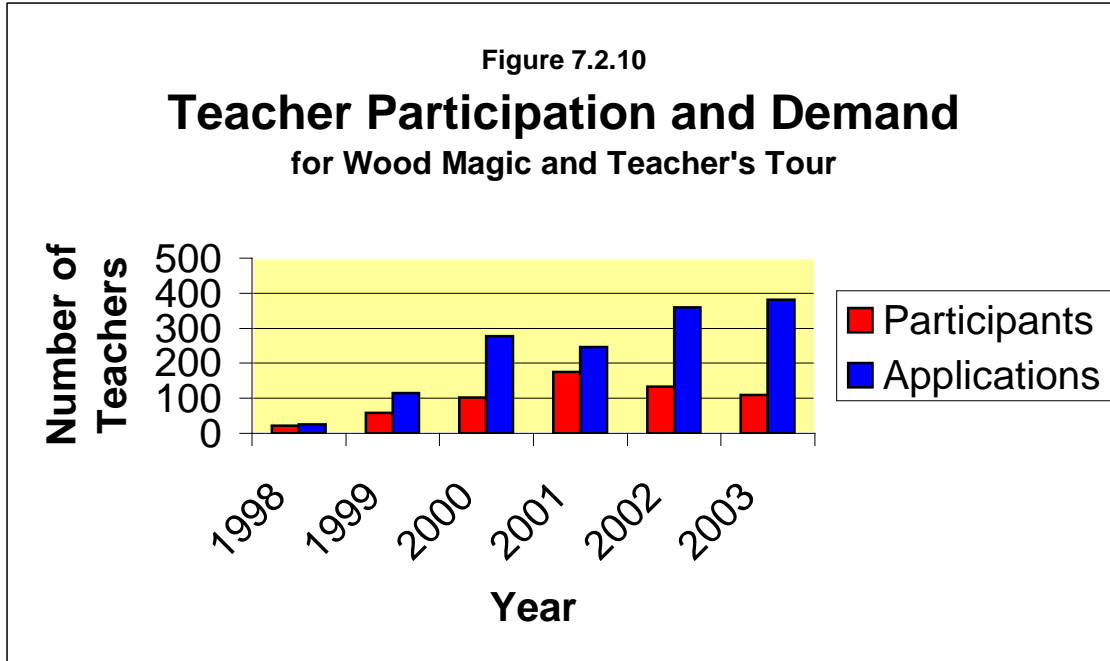


The SCFC is charged by law with the detection, evaluation and suppression of insect and disease pests on forestlands in South Carolina. During Southern Pine Beetle outbreaks we survey all forest properties within the designated outbreak zone. Individual infestations are located during these aerial surveys and ownership of affected areas is determined. Landowners with detected beetle spots are then notified of their problem and offered advice and assistance in controlling their insect infestation. The Insect & Disease staff and other agency personnel accomplish surveys and landowner notifications. (See Figure 7.2.8 & 7.2.9)

Raise Awareness About the Resource

The Forestry Commission strives to reach South Carolina's school children through "train the trainer" programs for teachers such as Project Learning Tree (PLT) and the annual S.C. Teachers Tour. The Wood Magic Forest Fair, designed for fourth graders, also equips teachers to explore such topics as sustainable forestry and recycling. Each of these programs meets the state's educational requirements for teacher certification and/or classroom instruction.

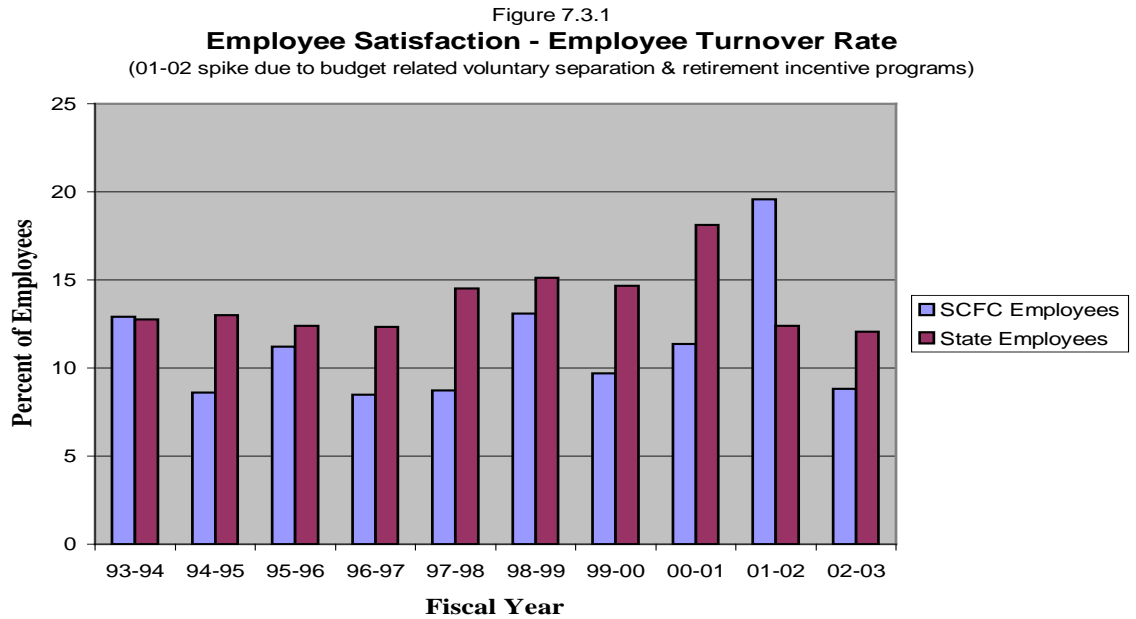
In recent years, interest in and applications for both the Teachers Tour and the Forest Fair have exceeded the number of programs we were able to offer. The primary limiting factor is the growing scarcity of qualified instructors due to SCFC and cooperator staff reductions.



7.3 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of employee satisfaction, involvement, and development?*

During the period from 7/96 to 10/00 a total of 65 Employees received performance pay increases or pay bonuses in recognition of outstanding contributions to the agency. We consider this financial recognition incentive to be a high priority, and we will strive to reinstate these programs once budgets improve and funding becomes available.

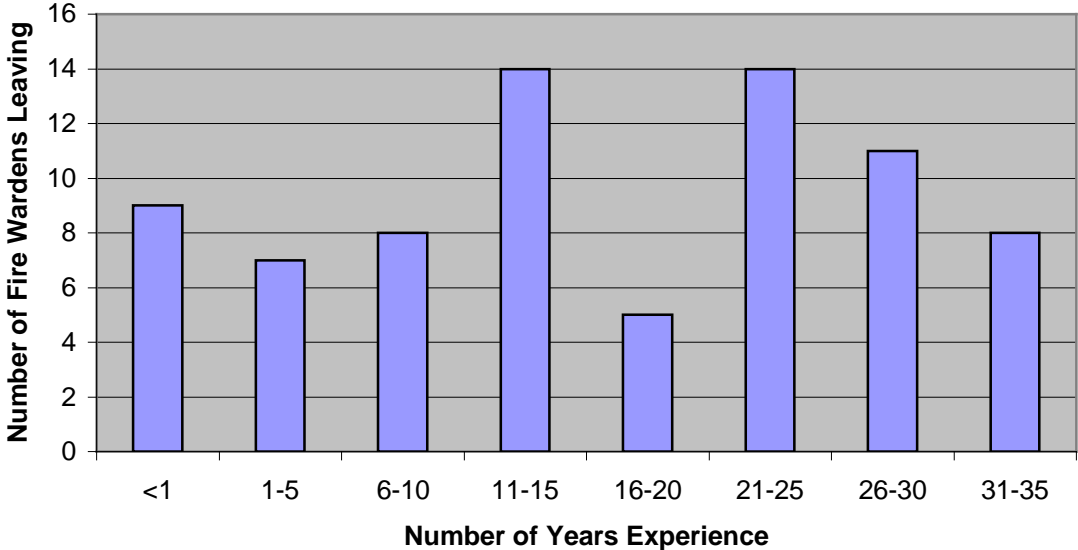
The average state service for all state employees is 11.8 years, compared to the average state service for Forestry Commission employees of 14 years. We believe this comparison is indicative of our employees enjoying their work and their working environment.



The SCFC turnover rate in 01-02 increased drastically as a direct result of budget related Voluntary Separation Programs and Retirement Incentive Programs implemented in the agency to minimize layoffs.

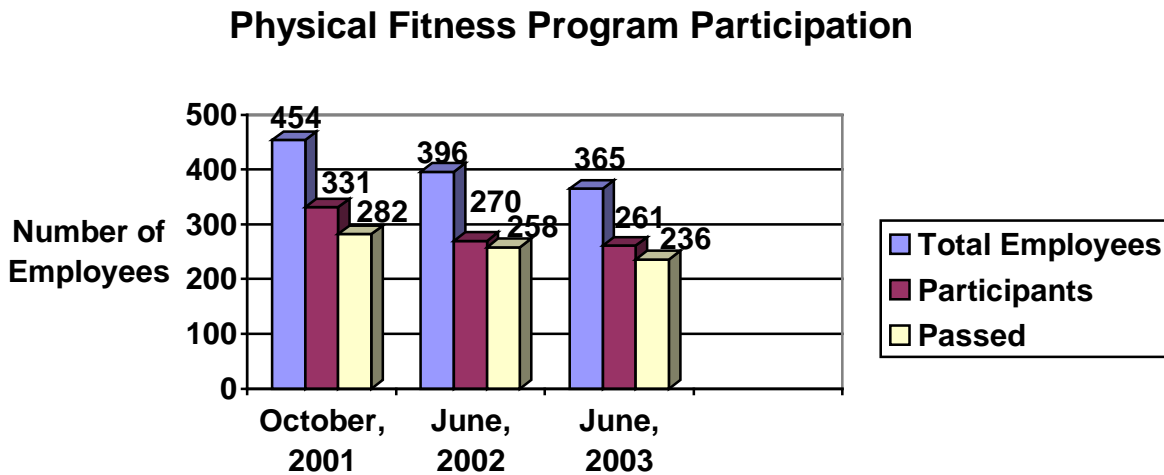
Forestry Wardens comprise 42% of the total number of agency employees, which is the largest job category of employees in the agency. During the period 7/1/98 – 6/30/03, of the 76 Wardens who left employment, 47 retired. Figure 7.3.2 shows the experience level of the 76 who left employment. Not only does Figure 7.3.2 demonstrate the longevity and successful careers of many of our wardens it also points out the need for extensive recruitment efforts and effective new employee training programs.

Figure 7.3.2
Employee Satisfaction Recent Five Year Turnover Among Fire Wardens



During the period 1/1/97 – 6/30/03 statistics from the Office of Human Resources show 1365 grievances were filed by state employees. Of that number, only 2 were filed by Forestry Commission employees. This is an indicator of employee satisfaction.

Figure 7.3.3



The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test (walking 2 miles with a 25 lb. pack in 30 minutes or less) as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness. Several states have begun implementation of physical fitness programs to reach this goal. The SCFC is a leader in this effort, with other southern states looking at our program to use as a model.

Participation in the Physical Fitness Program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. Figure 7.3.3 shows that the total number of employees and number of fireline employees have been significantly reduced due to mandated budget cuts. It also shows that while the number of employees taking the physical fitness test has decreased, the percentage of employees taking the test and passing has increased from 85% in 2001 to 90% in 2003. This is the result of most employees realizing that they needed to improve their physical fitness level and taking the necessary steps to do so.

7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of supplier/contractor/partner performance?

Our trends are to look for opportunities for privatizing processes and services where appropriate. Current processes and services that are provided by vendors are reviewed on a periodic basis to determine cost effectiveness. Adjustments have been made to improve the cost effectiveness and the quality of services being rendered. Pre-conference bid meetings are scheduled with suppliers to ensure that there is a clear understanding of agency expectations. We are currently using vendors to provide air detection services, servicing of light vehicles, fuel mitigation demonstrations in wildland urban interface areas, pine straw production enhancement on state forest, and cone collections for longleaf seed.

The use of contract seedling lifting crews at Taylor Nursery in Edgefield County has improved our ability to meet our customer’s seedling needs in a more efficient manner. Prior to using contractors, seedlings were lifted and packed with temporary workers or work-release inmates from a nearby correctional facility, with production rates typically under 500,000 seedlings per day. Production rates have doubled using contract labor with production rates of 800,000 to 1,000,000 per day. This allows the nursery to respond to large requests for seedlings in a

timely manner, even in unfavorable weather conditions. Agency employees ensure the quality of our seedling products by inspecting random samples of packed seedlings.

7.5 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and citizenship?*

We are subject to financial audits, Federal Aviation Administration inspections and regulations, and OSHA regulations. We have audits in the areas of accounting, purchasing, insurance, classification, and compensation. They have all been performed without findings of audit exceptions in each of the past four years.

7.6 *What are your current levels and trends of financial performance?*

Figure 7.6.1

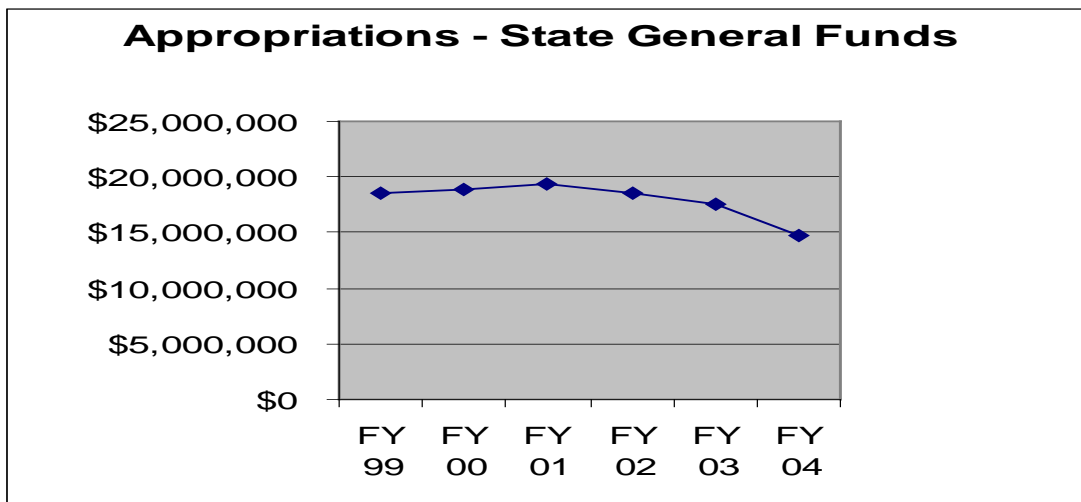
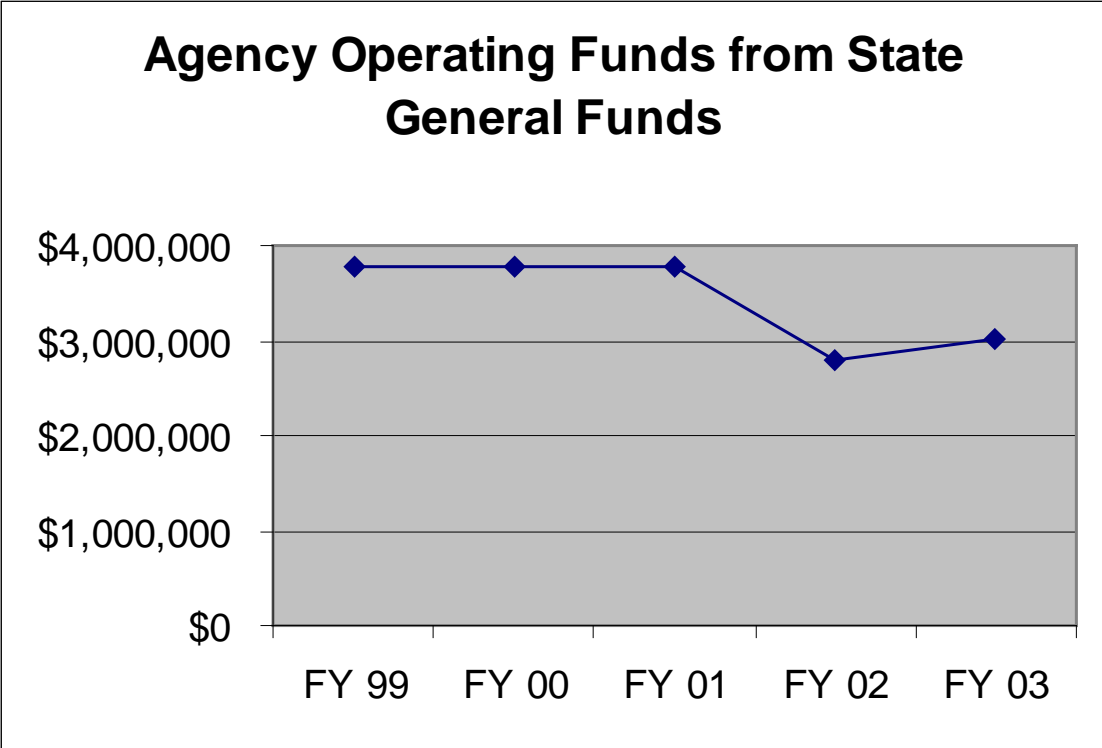
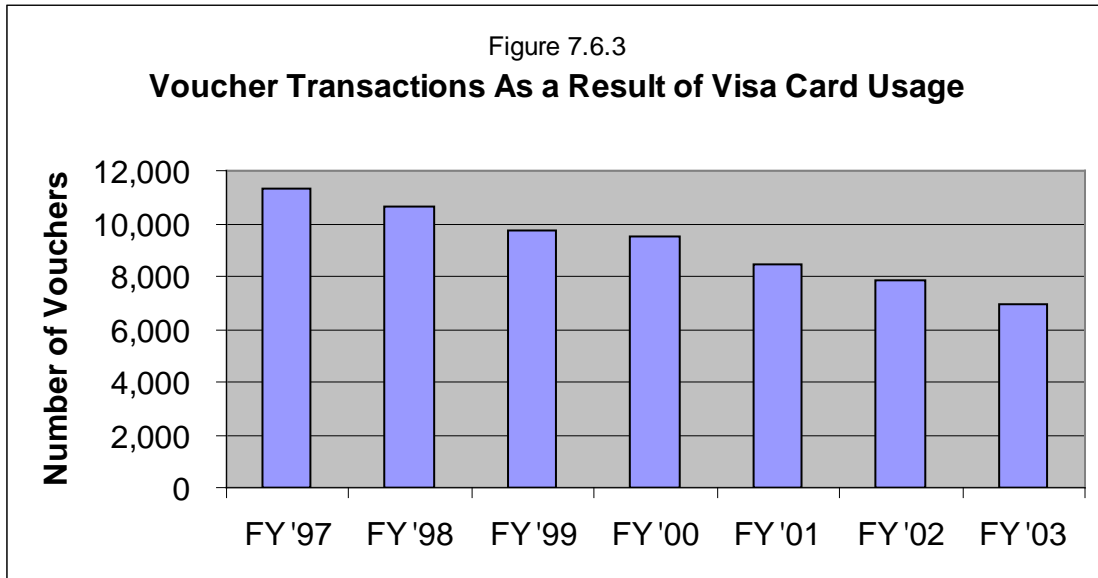


Figure 7.6.2



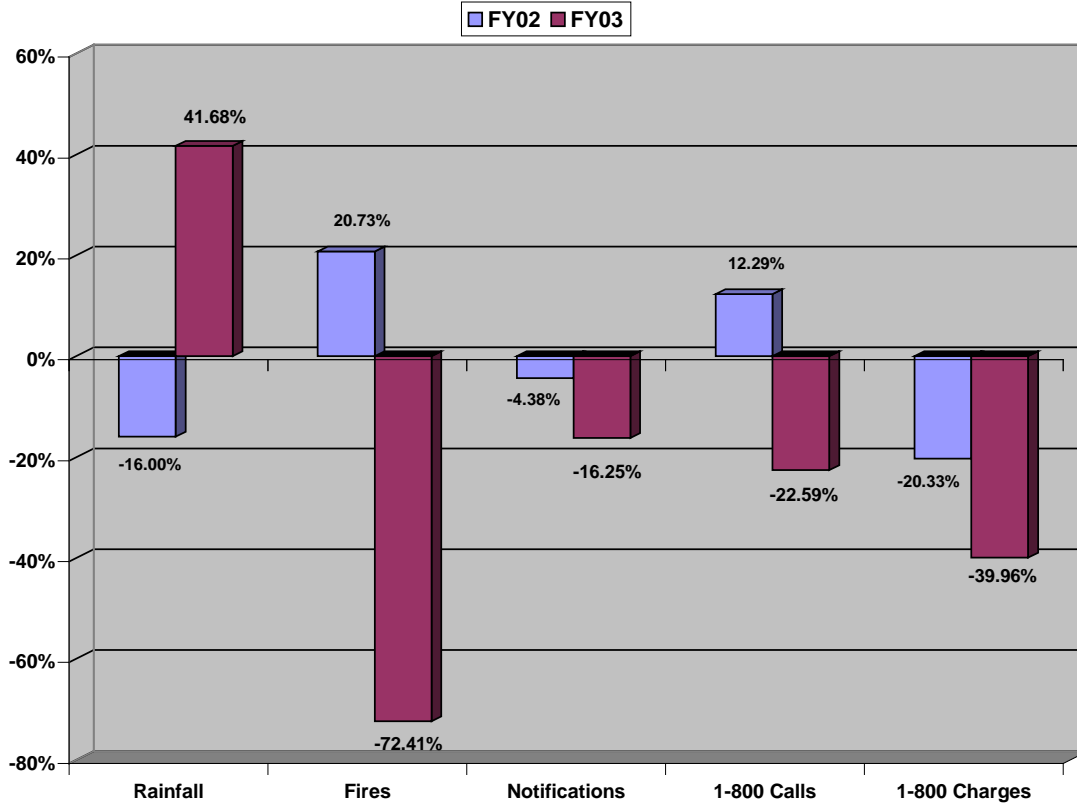


The number of voucher transactions has been reduced over the past 7 years as a result of using the Visa card program. This has helped reduce the need for 1 FTE (see Figure 7.6.3).

IMPROVED EFFECIENCIES BY AUTOMATING BURNING NOTIFICATIONS

Figure 7.6.4

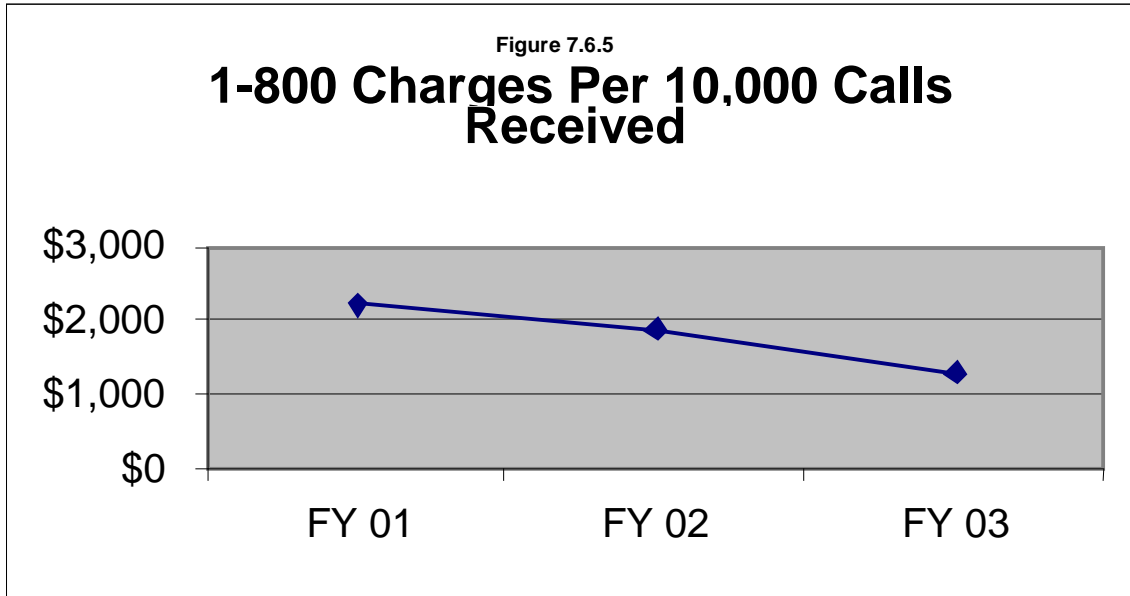
Percent Change From Previous Fiscal Year



In FY02, the Forestry Commission began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildlife and agricultural purpose, to an automated notification system. This greatly improved the efficiency of the Forestry Commission in handling these calls, dispatchers handling other calls, and substantial savings in 1-800 charges.

The above chart shows the percent change from the previous fiscal year in the amount of rainfall, number of fires, number of burning notifications, number of 1-800 calls, and charges for those 1-800 calls. By routing all burning notifications except those for forestry, wildlife and agricultural to the automated notification system, the Forestry Commission decreased the charges in 1-800 calls by 20.33% in FY02 when compared to FY01. This was even when rainfall decreased by 16%, fires increased by 20.7%, 1-800 calls made to the Forestry Commission increased by 12.29%, and only a slight 4.38% decrease in the total number of notifications taken.

An additional 39.96% savings in 1-800 charges was seen in FY03. Only part of this savings can be attributed to the 22.59% reduction in 1-800 calls due to a decrease in fires and notifications as a result of an increase in rainfall for the year. The rest is due to the improved efficiencies in the handling of these calls with the automated notification system.



The SCFC received an average of over 366,000 burning notifications per year by 1-800 calls during the past three years. In FY02 the SCFC began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildfire, and agriculture purposes, to an automated notification system. This greatly improved the agency's efficiency in handling these calls, as well as in dispatchers handling other calls. These changes resulted in substantial savings in 1-800 charges.