Tree Country

August 2016

the employee newsletter of the **South Carolina Forestry Commission**

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from the desk of

STATE FORESTER

Gene Kodama

Good day,

I hope you are all having a good summer! In this month's column, I want to share a story about recent activities on the land where we live in Berkeley County. We received Tree Farm certification in 2015 and now call it our Walnut Bluff Tree Farm; we have lived on the tract since 1992 and managed it for timber production, wildlife, and recreation.

This past May, we conducted the final harvest on our planted loblolly pine stand and are now preparing for reforestation. Though I have had the opportunity as a forester to manage forests owned by others for almost four decades, managing our own trees has been a much more meaningful opportunity and a true blessing.

When I was working for legacy Westvaco Corporation and living in Walterboro in 1991, we bought a 67-acre forested tract in Berkeley County thinking that one day we would retire near our hometown of Moncks Corner and would have it to manage or build a house on. Little did we know that in 1992, I would be transferred to Westvaco's Summerville office only about 10 miles from the forestland. So we decided to build a house on the forestland we bought rather than buy another suburban house nearby. That decision set in motion a string of other forestry and family activities that have continued to this day.

The tract we bought contained about 35 acres of loblolly pine that had been planted in 1974 and a portion of Wassamassaw Swamp, the headwaters of the Ashley River. Hurricane Hugo had blown down about a third of the trees in 1989, so the planted pine had been thinned by Mother Nature, and

State Forester Gene Kodama views loblolly pine sawlogs harvested on his and wife Karen's Walnut Bluff Tree Farm.

all the stems and undergrowth were still on the ground making the tract almost impenetrable.

We cut the first path into the tract from the paved road (US Highway 176, called Broad River Road in Columbia, SC) with a chain saw. We felt like the country's first settlers when opening an access point into the tract. The first tree harvest we conducted created an entrance and rear exit road, a house site, and openings for wildlife plantings. Revenue from this harvest was used to help with the costs of building a road and clearing the house site.

The next tree harvest was a thinning of the planted pine in 2005. We examined every planted pine tree on the property and marked the poorest quality trees for removal plus all the poles that we could find to capture their high value. Most of the revenue from this harvest was put back into the land to improve the road system and landscape, and build a one-acre pond and stock it with fish.

This issue's cover features the clean understory of a pine stand at Piedmont Forestry Center that results from periodic prescribed burning.

Kodama's pond decorated with snowfall in February 2010.

In between tree harvests, we improved access, built trails, and pruned trees to be kept around the house and pond site. This past spring, we decided to conduct the final harvest of the planted pine, which was now 42 years old and beautiful in numbers and quality. The 2005 thinning and subsequent growth had produced a beautiful stand of almost all sawtimber and more large poles. We have already used some of that revenue to continue improving the homestead including putting a new roof on the house. Planning is now underway to do more remodeling and some landscaping. We have also set aside funds to plant more pines and get a new crop growing. And, best of all, we still own the land and can continue to live, hunt, and fish on it, manage the trees, and leave that legacy for our children and future generations.

So, forestry and forestland have been great to my family in many ways, and we cherish having had these opportunities. We will continue to tell this rewarding story to encourage others about the wonderful field of forestry.

Please have a blessed day,

Gene

Employee News

New Employees

We would like to welcome three new employees who started working for the agency July 5.

GraceAnna Schilz is the new Horry/Marion Project Forester. GraceAnna started July 5. She is from Michigan but calls Conway home now. A graduate of Michigan Technological University, she previously worked for the US Forest Service on a fire crew.

GraceAnna Schilz

Steven Broom is the new FIA Forester in the Piedmont Region. Steven attended Clemson University and lives in Whitmire. He previously worked for the Georgia Forestry Commission and the National Park Service.

Steven Broom

Paige Garris is the new dispatcher in the Coastal Regional Dispatch Center. Paige lives in Walterboro and attended Colleton County High School. She previously worked at Rite Aid Pharmacy as a Pharmacy Tech.

Paige Garris

Welcome to the agency!

PERSONNEL NEWS

Ben Kendall has been named the Assistant Forest Director at Manchester State Forest. Ben was previously the Project Forester for Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda counties.

Coastal BMP Forester **Clay Chaplin** resigned from his position Aug. 2, and Calhoun/Orangeburg Sector Forest Technician **Barrett Williams**, resigned July 15. Fairfield/Newberry Sector Forest Technician **Eli Collier** resigned effective Aug. 1. We wish them all the best!

Dorchester/Lower Charleston Sector Forest Technician **Michael Grooms** retired July 8 after almost 30 years with the Commission. Fiscal Technician **Lisa Mowbray** retired from the agency Aug. 1. Lisa worked for Nursery and Tree Improvement and the Accounting Section for over 17 years. She worked for state government for 32 years. Congratulations, Michael and Lisa!

RETIREE NEWS

Retired Lexington County Ranger and Harbison Equipment Operator **Bill Catoe** passed away July 18. Bill started with the agency as a warden in 1982 and later became the country ranger. He retired and came back to work on Harbison State Forest. His caring heart, sense of humor, and willingness to help anyone will be greatly missed!

Water Handling Class Taught at Harbison State Forest

On one of the hottest days in July, 23 employees dressed in full safety gear had S211 training on Harbison State Forest. The course, held July 6-8, teaches the use of portable pumps and water handling equipment.

Jacob Morrell, Logan Bell, Brad Bramlett, and Rickey Jones fill up a "pumpkin" to use with a hose lay.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

State Forester Gene Kodama Kodama inspects some marked poles on his and wife Karen's Walnut Bluff Tree Farm in Berkeley County before harvesting the stand.

Talk about creative engineering...This tractor/car was seen in Bamberg County pulling a planter. Not sure if the car engine was used to run the tractor or if it was just for looks, but it sure was an interesting sight.

Forest Technician Blake Weathers practices on the foam nozzle during S211 training on Harbison State Forest.

Forest Technician Phillip Reddick and Forest Health Coordinator David Jenkins start the pump during water handling.

USFS Management Review and Partnerships Meeting

On July 28, headquarters staff hosted representatives from the US Forest Service's Region 8 office in Atlanta for an interim review of the agency's federally funded programs. These reviews normally occur on a five-year cycle, but the last full review in South Carolina was held in 2009. Participants from the US Forest Service included Ken Arney, Assistant Regional Forester; Daniel McInnis, Environmental Issues and Policy Analyst; and Don Duerr, Director of Forest Health.

Gene Kodama provided an overview of the agency, explaining the organizational structure of the SC Forestry Commission and describing some of the budget challenges we have faced during the last several years. He also highlighted the successes of the Act 271 funding, which has allowed the agency to provide safer, more reliable fireline equipment. Gene mentioned the difficulty the agency is having in attracting and retaining foresters.

Forestry Commission program managers then described the agency's major programs such as forest management, forest protection, forest resource development, water quality, and information and education. Each presentation included highlights of key partnerships that enable the agency to fulfill its mission.

Commission staff meet with USFS representatives to review the agency's federally funded programs.

Feedback from the US Forest Service staff was very favorable, stating that the SC Forestry Commission provides excellent services to its customers and compares very well with other state forestry agencies across the South.

On July 29, agency staff provided the new US Forest Service Regional Forester Tony Tooke an abbreviated version of the program review that took place July 28. Accompanying Mr. Tooke were Rick Lint, Forest Supervisor for the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests; Cherie Hamilton, Acting Forest Supervisor for the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests; Ken Arney; and Daniel McInnis. Mr. Tooke outlined his priorities for the Southern Region of the US Forest Service, which includes an increased level of active forest management on the national forests. Rick Lint explained that in South Carolina this means an increased amount of timber harvesting on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. Mr. Lint pointed out that some of the challenges they face here in our state include maintenance of recreation areas and over 39,000 miles of roads as well as changing demographics of national forest users.

Management

- Russell Hubright

Upcoming Forest Health Training Available

The Insect & Disease team of the South Carolina Forestry Commission, in conjunction with Southeast Regional Extension Forestry, will be hosting a two-day forest health training. This training is open to all Commission foresters and forestry technician IIs and IIIs and will highlight common threats to our forests and identify suitable management options for dealing with these pests.

The training will be held at the Environmental Education Center at Harbison State Forest Aug. 16-17. If you would like to register for this training please contact Kevin Douglas at kdouglas@scfc.gov.

Forest Health

- David Jenkins

SCFC Hosts SGSF Communications Committee

The South Carolina Forestry Commission hosted the Southern Group of State Foresters' Communications Committee's annual summer meeting in Charleston, S.C., July 25-28. Staff from the Communications and Public Information Division planned and conducted the successful four-day meeting, and Forest Management Chief Russell Hubright, Forest Protection Chief Darryl Jones and Director of Administration Stephanie Meetze attended the first day of the meeting.

State Forester Gene Kodama welcomed the group of about 25 communications and public relations directors and their staffs from around the Southeast by sharing a brief history lesson on Charleston and the Palmetto State before giving a presentation about the state's forest resource, the agency's organization and the issues affecting forestry in South Carolina.

The Communications Committee met to review and update its strategic plan for the coming year and begin work on several new regional outreach projects promoting forestry and its contributions to communities throughout the southern U.S.

In addition to making final recommendations on several grant proposals related to communications infrastructure, metrics, training and professional development, the committee heard reports from its liaisons to other SGSF committees and established the framework for a series of broad forestry education and outreach videos that will begin to take shape over the next year.

"This was one of our most productive meetings in recent memory, mainly because of our ambitious agenda," said outgoing committee chair Wendy Burnett, director of public relations for the Georgia Forestry Commission. "I believe our work this week set the tone for a creative outpouring of messaging that will not only strengthen SGSF's position as the leader of forestry-related issues in the South, but also raise awareness of forestry's importance in the public consciousness."

Members of the SGSF Communications Committee, along with their partners from the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and Southern Regional Extension Forestry, convened in Charleston, S.C. for their annual summer meeting.

Prime among the committee's special projects in the next year is a Forest Inventory and Analysis video that will tout the benefits of the 88-year-old FIA program, whose annual census data is used extensively by civic leaders, community planners and industry to make long-term decisions regarding, among other things, wood production and utilization rates. The video will be leveraged to garner more financial support from elected officials and congressional budget leaders.

New to this year's meeting was a special day-and-a-half session for each of the 13 southern states' conservation education/outreach coordinators, who met for the first time to share ideas, best practices and success stories. Incoming committee chair Tim Phelps, Tennessee Division of Forestry's communications and outreach unit leader, presided over the special session and hopes to continue to bring these coordinators together on a regular basis.

State Forester Gene Kodama welcomes the SGSF Communications Committee to Charleston.

Also participating in the meeting were Texas State Forester Tom Boggus, who serves as SGSF's liaison to the Communications Committee; Gary Wood, the Southeast coordinator for the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy; Brent Peterson and Holly Campbell from Southern Regional Extension Forestry; and Amanda Cooke, communications director for the National Association of State Foresters.

The SGSF Communications Committee meets biannually, rotating between host sites in the 13 member states; its next meeting will be hosted in Florida Jan. 9-12, 2017.

Information

- Doug Wood

Volunteers Needed at Upcoming Wood Magic

Education

- Matt Schnabel

It's that time of year again! It is time to begin scheduling volunteers for this fall's Wood Magic Forest Fair (WMFF) events. Please consider volunteering your time to help South Carolina's students know the importance of forests and the forest industry to their everyday lives. To learn more about the WMFF, go to our web site at www.state.sc.us/forest/wmfair.htm to view last year's annual report.

There will be three events again this year:

Sept. 20-23	Piedmont Forestry Center (Tamassee)
Oct. 10-14	Harbison State Forest (Columbia)
Nov. 15-18	Hobcaw Barony Discovery Center (Georgetown)

To conduct these programs we need approximately 30 volunteers each day to serve as guides, instructors, and helpers. Each volunteer is given a t-shirt, lunch, and the satisfaction that they have helped provide the youth of our state an important pro-forestry experience.

To sign up, first visit the WMFF web site at http://www.state.sc.us/forest/woodmagic.htm to see what days and positions are available (this is updated weekly). You can also find lesson plans, driving directions, and other information at this site. Then contact Matt Schnabel to let me know for which days and positions you would like to volunteer. Please note the above website is not where you sign up, but where you see what volunteer slots are still needing to be filled.

We look forward to everyone's support of the Wood Magic Forest Fair program. If you have questions give me a call at (803) 896-8892 or email me at mschnabel@scfc.gov.

SAVE THE DATE...

The Commission will be hosting a preventive worksite screening Oct. 25 and free flu shots will be available at the headquarters office Nov. 1. Employees who will be in the Columbia and surrounding area are welcome to participate. More information will be forthcoming.

Fun Facts

- The United States is divided into 50 states. However state each varies in size considerably. The smallest state is Rhode Island with an area of just 1,545 square miles. By contrast the largest state by area is Alaska with 663,268 square miles.
- Alaska has the longest coastline in the United States at 6,640 miles.
- The hottest temperature recorded in the United States (and in North America) was in Death Valley, California on July 10, 1913. The temperature measured 134°F (56°C).

Geography.about.com

Programs

Cherokee Foothills Joint Chiefs Hope to Improve Upstate Landscape

A meeting of the Cherokee Foothills Joint Chief Meeting was held at the Andrew Pickens Ranger District Office July 7. Attending on behalf of the SCFC were Anderson/Greenville/Oconee/ Pickens Project Forester Trey Cox, Piedmont Firewise Field Coordinator Bill Wiley, Firewise Coordinator Steve Moore and Piedmont Regional Forester Mike Bozzo.

This group consists of members from federal (USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service), state (SC Forestry Commission, Georgia Forestry Commission, SC State Parks, and Clemson University), and non-governmental organizations (The Nature Conservancy and Resource Conservation & Development) in a collaborative effort.

The Cherokee Foothills Joint Chiefs have adopted the Cherokee Foothills Fire Adapted Landscape Restoration Project. This project involves three objectives:

1. to expand the capacity within the landscape to restore forest health and reduce fuel loads by using prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, and non-native invasive species treatments on public and private lands
2. to improve habitat for at-risk species
3. to create educational / outreach programs and develop management plans for private citizens living in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) utilizing such programs as Firewise and Ready, Set, Go!

Members of the Cherokee Foothills Joint Chiefs met July 7 to discuss its objectives and unite the partner organizations.

Piedmont Region

- Mike Bozzo

Federal Excess Equipment Sale

We currently have a federal excess equipment sale going online. GSA (General Services Administration) out of Atlanta is handling the sale. Visit https://gsaauctions.gov/gsaauctions/gsaauctions/, go to "Browse By Location,", then click on "South Carolina." There are 47 items up for sale.

The website will have pictures of each item, a description, the current bid, and when the bid closes. All items are located at our warehouse complex at 5500 Broad River Rd; Columbia, 29221. Please fill free to pass this along to anyone that might be interested. Contact Billy Cockrell, Warehouse Manager, at (803) 667-1062, or Brad Bramlett at (803) 896-8810 if you have any questions.

Scientists Envision Feeding Wastepaper to Cows During Droughts

Colombian scientists may be exploring one of the more creative ways of recycling wastepaper—using it as cattle feed during drought seasons. The idea stems from the fact that newspaper is 55 percent cellulose, which can be turned into energy by ruminant animals such as cattle and sheep, Farmers Weekly reported June 11. In their test, University of Colombia researchers are combining wastepaper in a total mixed ration diet at 15 percent to see if it makes viable cattle feed. Such a solution would help sustain livestock during drought seasons, which usually occur every three to seven years. Previous experiments, however, have yielded poor results, where the cellulose found in paper is lignified and not very digestible.

Programs

Spartanburg Landowner Recognized for Stewardship

John E. Gossett, Jr. was recently awarded stewardship recognition for the property he manages in Spartanburg County. Spartanburg/Union Supervisor/Forester Jon Barker submitted Gossett for recognition after working with him to manage and improve his property. Gossett has a stewardship plan that was prepared by Jon Barker and Jaime Jones and uses it to help him keep his many different tracts and stands working for him. Gossett is a great example for utilizing our services and applying them on the ground. Congratulations to Gossett for this accomplishment.

Stewardship

- Jaime Jones

Spartanburg/Union Supervisor/Forester Jon Barker presents John E. Gossett, Jr. with his stewardship recognition.

National Woodland Owners Survey Results Published

Data from the most recent National Woodland Owners Survey (NWOS) was published in July and builds upon previous NWOS work. Below are some of the highlights of the latest findings:

The complete data set can be found at www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos/results/.

- There are an estimated 10.7 million family forest ownerships across the United States who collectively control 36 percent or 290 million acres of the nation's forestland.
- In the South, 154 million acres are under 4.5 million family forest ownerships, with an average size of 34 acres and an average tenure of 22 years.
- Between 2006 and 2013 there was a net loss of 5.1 million acres of family forestland. The exact reason for this loss is not known and deserves further research, but likely reasons include conversion of forestland to other uses, such as agriculture and development, parcellation, and fragmentation that reduce the size of holdings to less than the one acre threshold used in the Forest Service definition, and transitions of ownerships to limited liability partnerships and other legal entities.
- Approximately 18 percent of the family forestland (almost 50 million acres) is owned by people who indicate they are likely or extremely likely to sell or pass on all or part of their forestland in the next five years.
- On average, family forest owners are older, more likely to be male, less racially diverse, and more educated than the general US population. However, between the 2006 and 2013 the percentage of female owners went up from 11 percent to 22 percent. In addition, the education and income levels of family forest owners both went up.
- Similar to previous studies, the most commonly cited reasons for owning forestland are the beauty, wildlife habitat, and nature protection the forestlands provide. Another common objective is family legacy, being able to pass land on to heirs. The low relative importance of financial objectives found is supported by the fact that 83 percent of the family forest ownerships report receiving no annual income from their forestland. Only 18 percent report commercially harvesting trees in the last 5 years, with 29 percent reporting doing so at some point during their ownership tenure.
- Most owners are willing to be active stewards of their land, but most owners are not participating in programs be they traditional landowner assistance programs or more recently available programs such as those promoting carbon sequestration. Program effectiveness will likely increase with more explicit incorporation of amenity-oriented ownership objectives, increased emphasis on intergenerational transfer of land, and a focus on traditionally overlooked owners, such as females.

Beech Island Agricultural Club Invites Historical Guests

On Saturday, July 2, Resource development Director Tim Adams spoke to the Beech Island Agricultural Club (BIAC) about the Forestry Commission's Nursery & Tree Improvement Program (N&TI). The BIAC is the oldest, active agricultural club in the United States, dating back to 1846. The group proved to be an enthusiastic audience with a good deal of interest in forestry.

The BIAC meets monthly on the first Saturday of every month. Their membership is capped at 100 members. South Carolina Governor and US Congressman James Henry Hammond's Redcliffe plantation is nearby on Beech Island, and he founded the farmer's club. Over the years, guests of the club have included two U.S. Presidents, Grover Cleveland and William Howard Taft. Each meeting is opened by reading the minutes of the previous monthly meeting, the meeting 100 years ago and the meeting 150 years ago. In the minutes from 100 years ago, during WWI, the minutes reflected a discussion about the poor quality of pork from hogs fattened on peanuts instead of corn. There was no mention of WWI in the minutes. The menu for each meeting has been refined over 170 years and includes traditional recipes for pork barbecue, lamb barbecue, potato salad, slaw, rice and hash, and lemonade to drink.

William Howard Taft, 27th President of the United States and the first President to use a car for official transportation. Here he and Mrs. Taft are leaving the Bon Air Hotel in their 1909 White Steamer for the Beech Island Farmer's Club. This was the first car ever to come to the BIAC. John D. Rockefeller was also a guest of the club on this occasion.

The clubhouse walls are covered with pictures of former members and notable guests.

Forest Resource

- Tim Adams

Just for Fun

Can you find the 10 employees in this photo from the 1990 Personnel Conference in Myrtle Beach that still work for the agency? See if you can find Russell Mixson, Russell Hubright, Lois Edwards, Tim Adams, Lowe Sharpe, Jeff Baumann, Mike Bozzo, Walt Woodrum, Roy Boyd, and Tony Ashley.

FY 2016 Sets New Low Fire Record

Here is a comparison of fires, acreage burned, and average acreage burned per fire for the last 40 fiscal years. FY 2016 set a new record low for a fiscal year for both the number of fires and acreage burned – beating out last fiscal year which had the previous record lows. Smoke management burn notifications and call volume to the automated burn notification system were also lower compared to previous fiscal years. Among the many contributing factors was the extremely wet weather across the state this past year.

Did You Know?

The number of wildfires in FY 2016 was significantly lower than in any previous fiscal year.

Previous FYs Average	FY Fires	FY Acres Burned
5 Year	2,067	13,130.9
10 Year	2,365	15,973.0
15 Year	2,851	18,872.6
20 Year	3,143	19,760.9
25 Year	3,529	21,942.6
30 Year	3,910	23,120.7
35 Year	4,524	27,257.8
40 Year	4,801	28,106.5
FY 2016	989	5,445.5

Fires Numbers Over the Last 40 Years

Fiscal Year	Fires	Acres Burned	Avg. Acres Burned per Fire
1976	8,899	75,185.0	8.45
1977	6,636	25,138.8	3.79
1978	6,836	30,536.4	4.47
1979	7,018	23,894.6	3.40
1980	4,293	15,483.2	3.61
1981	14,405[1]	94,909.0	6.59
1982	6,459	28,868.8	4.47
1983	2,572	7,825.1	3.04
1984	5,137	23,378.4	4.55
1985	12,487	105,421.6[1]	8.44
1986	5,889	34,373.7	5.84
1987	3,963	18,497.9	4.67
1988	8,516	42,614.1	5.00
1989	5,850	29,092.2	4.97
1990	4,861	20,476.6	4.21
1991	4,329	30,535.7	7.05
1992	7,331	41,835.0	5.71
1993	3,852	24,378.8	6.33
1994	6,468	40,074.0	6.20
1995	3,377	16,524.5	4.89
1996	3,623	23,417.3	6.46
1997	3,204	21,730.7	6.78
1998	1,943	10,425.1	5.37
1999	6,615	35,156.1	5.31
2000	4,715	21,399.3	4.54
2001	5,283	29,933.8	5.67
2002	6,378	49,371.8	7.74
2003	1,760	9,182.0	5.22
2004	3,409	21,394.5	6.28
2005	2,283	13,477.2	5.90
2006	3,020	16,294.2	5.40
2007	2,972	16,677.1	5.61
2008	3,678	21,921.5	5.96
2009	2,001	30,739.4	15.36
2010	1,639	8,443.9	5.15
2011	3,094	22,390.1	7.24
2012	2,192	16,960.1	7.74
2013	1,799	10,223.3	5.68
2014	1,823	9,425.0	5.17
2015	1,427	6,655.8	4.66
2016	989[2]	5,445.5[2]	5.51

[1] Highest on record for a fiscal year

[2] Lowest on record for a fiscal year

Highest acreage burned for a fiscal year was 240,504.3 acres in 1950.

As Storm Activity Increases, So Does the Importance of Fire Safety

Message from the State Fire Marshal's Office: Tips for Safe Candle Use When the Lights Go Out

Not only has hurricane season arrived, but severe weather all across the country can happen during the summer months, which often leads to the temporary loss of electric power. The U.S. candle industry and state fire marshals advise consumers to take critical safety measures if using candles or other open flames during a power outage.

An estimated 26 percent of fatal candle fires occur during the loss of electrical power. While flashlights and battery-powered lamps often provide a safe source of light during these power outages, candles are frequently utilized as a backup source of light during lengthy periods.

Power outages as a result of hurricanes and severe weather cannot be avoided, but accidental candle fires can. The National Candle Association and the National Association of State Fire Marshals recommend the following precautions to keep your family and home safe:

- Pillar candles and container candles are a better choice during a power outage than taper candles. Broader-based candles are less likely to be accidentally knocked over. When possible, candles should be enclosed within glass globes for added protection from burns or fire.
- Place candles on a stable surface in a fire resistant holder that is at least 12 inches away from anything flammable, including upholstered furniture and window drapes. For added safety when the lights go out, a candle in its holder may be placed on a stable, nonflammable surface, such as a metal cookie sheet, frying pan or ceramic dinner plate.
- Avoid moving a burning candle during a power outage if possible. It is easy to trip in the dark or brush against something flammable. Container candles may be too hot to handle, causing you to drop the container, which could start a fire.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Try to restrict people and candles to one room in the house so the location of family members and candle flames always can be accounted for. Always extinguish candles upon leaving a room.
- Make sure the candles are well out of the reach of children and pets. Young children are especially apt to bump into things when a room is unfamiliarly dark.
- Don't use candles to search for something in a closet or small confined space. Many items in closets like clothes, papers or boxes are flammable and could accidentally ignite.
- Never fall asleep while candles are burning. Extinguish all candles before going to bed, and never use a candle as a nightlight.
- Extinguish candles safely. Extinguish the candle by cupping your hand behind the candle flame before blowing it out – or, better yet, snuff out the flame with a metal candle snuffer. A spark or ember, if blown from the candle, could ignite combustibles nearby.

To learn more about candle fire safety, visit http://candles.org/fire-safety-candles/.

IP Partners with Amazon to Make Sure You Never Run Out of Paper

Offices may never run out of paper again thanks to International Paper Co.'s participation in an Amazon.com Inc. program that replenishes supplies with the push of a button. IP's Hammermill brand is the first paper manufacturer to participate in Amazon's Dash program, which allows users to reorder supplies by pushing a physical button that's Wi-Fi connected, B2B E-Commerce World reported July 5. IP is one of 50 new additions to Dash, which offers this service to more than 150 items across household, groceries, health/personal care, beauty, pet care, and kids/babies categories. The button costs $4.99, but that amount is refunded as credit when the first order is made through Dash.

NEWS FROM Around the state

SC Envirothon Celebrates Its 20th Anniversary

For the 100 or so high school students who participated in this year's SC Envirothon, Friday June 13th wasn't a day filled with ominous thoughts or superstitions, but one laden with deep thought, excitement and accomplishment. The 20th annual SC Envirothon competition was held at the Sandhill Research and Education Center in northeast Columbia. High school students from around the state began their competition journey before day-break, loading vans and buses to attend, vying for the coveted reward of scholarship funds and a paid trip to Ontario, Canada.

After completing college-level exams in Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and Invasive Species, and presenting an argument based on a given scenario for the Oral Presentation station, teams of five ate lunch and awaited their fate while exam graders and orals judges calculated final scores. When it was all said and done, Spartanburg High's Team B was announced as the Third Place finisher, Spartanburg Day School Team A followed with Second Place, and Spartanburg High's Team A took top honors, finishing in First Place. Each student on a winning team received a scholarship award valid for five years.

In July, the North American Envirothon will be held in Ontario, Canada at Trent University in Peterborough where winning teams from over 40 states and nine Canadian Provinces will compete. Stay tuned for updates to see how well the Spartanburg High team represents South Carolina – maybe Canada is our good luck charm!

SC Envirothon has provided more than $87,000 in college scholarships to participating students over its 20 years. Kellee Melton, chair of the

2016 South Carolina Envirothon participants.

Steering Committee said, "As a student, your participation in today's event is preparing you to take on a leadership role which will shape the future of natural resources and the health of our environment. You will be the innovators who encourage others to be good stewards of the land. Your dedication and desire to be a part of SC's Envirothon is a clear indication that you are poised to be a future leader...".

With a mission to advance environmental awareness through an outdoor venue for high school students, to assess their knowledge of natural resource management issues, and to promote a life-long commitment to environmental stewardship, the SC Envirothon is nothing without the coaches who participate and motivate their students to attend, and the students themselves who go beyond the given materials to research topics, study the materials, and work together to achieve those top scores. All of the participants in the 2016 SC Envirothon are commended for their efforts.

The SC Envirothon is coordinated by the SC Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the SC

2016 SC Envirothon Winners – Spartanburg High School Team A Students: (Left to right) Sam Fowler, Hawkins Shepard, Nathan Brown, Luke Martin and Nan Miles.

Forestry Commission, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Central Carolina Technical College, Francis Marion University, Florence County Environmental Discovery Center, SC Soil and Water Society and Clemson University Sandhills Center. Major financial sponsors are the SC Conservation Districts Foundation, Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund, SC Association of Conservation Districts, and SC Forestry Foundation. If you would like more information, visit the website at www.dnr.sc.gov/education/Envirothon, or contact SC Envirothon Coordinator, Marc Cribb by telephone at (803) 734-6367.

Department of Natural Resources

Atta Boy

In a letter to Forest Management Chief Russell Hubright dated July 6 from Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt regarding **Scott Phillips'** involvement with the Golden Triangle Fire:

Dear Russell,

I wanted to let you know how much Scott Phillips was a benefit to the Golden Triangle Fire IMT. Scott always does as a great job as Plans Section Chief and this fire was no exception. He was willing to take on many responsibilities so that I could concentrate on other duties. He even put boots on the ground to scout out the fire perimeter and provide updated reports to the duty officer. His maps added a professionalism to the team and I appreciated his service and great attitude.

Sincerely,
Ron Holt
Black River Unit Forester/IC Golden Triangle Fire

In a letter to Environmental Coordinator Herb Nicholson from Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt regarding **Eric West's** involvement with the Golden Triangle Fire:

Dear Herb,

I wanted to let you know how much Eric West was a benefit to the Golden Triangle Fire IMT. He scouted out lines and assisted Scott Phillips who served as the Plans Section Chief by providing information as a field observer and part of the situation unit. He was very willing to help in any way possible and I appreciate his service and great attitude. I know he would have been willing to do a great deal more and it was helpful that he contacted me and asked if he could help while I was en route to the fire.
Sincerely,
Ron Holt
Black River Unit Forester/IC Golden Triangle Fire

In a letter to State Forester Gene Kodama dated June 10 from Marc Cribb regarding **Trip Miller's** involvement in the 2016 SC Envirothon:

Dear Mr. Kodama,

Friday May 13th marked the 20th Anniversary of the SC Envirothon. High school students from all parts of the state descended upon the Sandhill Research and Education center near Columbia for the competition. To celebrate the 20th event, the teams, advisors and volunteers were treated to a cookout.

This year's winning team is from Spartanburg High School. In July, the Spartanburg team will compete in the North American Envirothon in Ontario, Canada along with over 50 other U.S. and Canadian teams.

The continued success of the SC Envirothon is due in large part to the support from partnering agencies like the South carolina forestry Commission. On behalf of the SC Envirothon Steering Committee and the volunteers, thank you for the assistance of James "Trip" Miller at the SC Envirothon, and thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Marc L. Cribb
Program Manager, Conservation Districts, SC Department of Natural Resources

In an email from dated June 19 from Russell Chandler regarding **Coastal Urban Forester Frances Waite's** involvement at a recent AMP meeting. The Advance Mitigation Project is an initiative that the SC Department of Transportation is undertaking to help establish wetland mitigation banks in advance of needing them for road projects.

Good morning all,

One of the big things that came from our meeting was courtesy of Frances Waite from SC Forestry Commission. She brought up the GIS model that was generated as a collaborative effort between SCFC and Green Infrastructure Inc. and how she thought it may be possible to use that work as a solid foundation for our application. Frances has reached out to Green Infrastructure and they are willing to demo their model and answer any questions we may have on how we can use some of their existing methodology to assist us in our efforts...

Thanks!

Russell Chandler
Environmental Assistant – RPG 1
Environmental Services Office, South Carolina Department of Transportation

Trees and Water

from the **TREE CITY USA® BULLETIN**

As the population of our nation grows and cities expand, the care of our finite water resource is becoming increasingly important. Trees play an integral role in the future quality and quantity of the surface water and groundwater that sustain us.

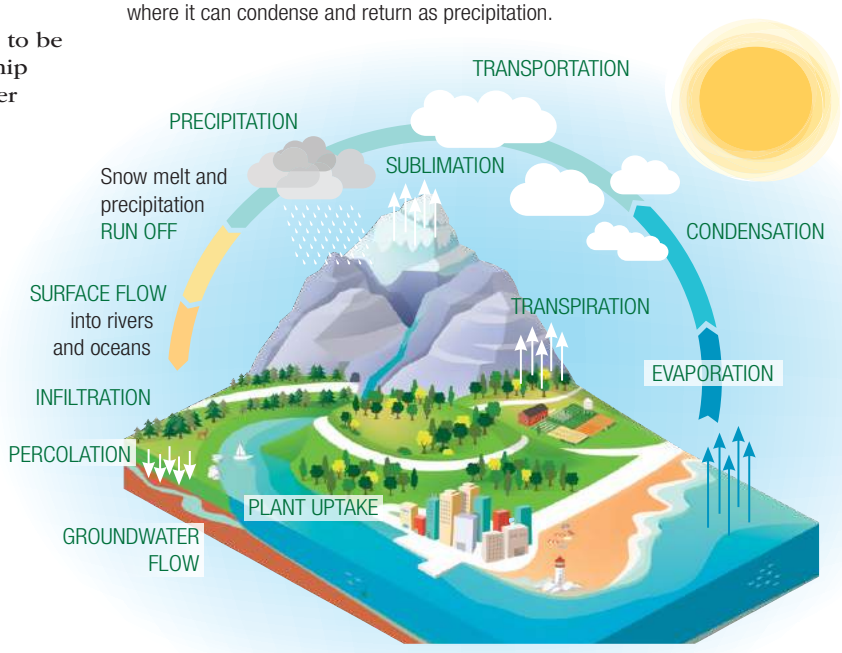
The intricate relationship between trees and water is increasingly important and represents two precious resources in need of careful management.

A soils professor once told his students, "Don't ever let me hear you call soil 'dirt.' Soil is not dirt. That thin layer of soil that covers our earth is essential to our very existence." So it can be said of water — another resource we sometimes take too much for granted. Certainly there is plenty of it. As most schoolchildren know, oceans cover 71 percent of the earth's surface. Unfortunately, that salty mass represents 97 percent of the world's water supply, leaving only 3 percent fresh and drinkable.

Trees and water have an inextricable relationship and one that deserves the attention of tree boards, urban foresters, and anyone else concerned with the sustainability of our communities. George Perkins Marsh, considered by some to be the father of environmentalism, recognized this relationship and began sounding the alarm in 1874, just two years after the first Arbor Day. In his book, *The Earth as Modified by Human Action*, Marsh warned of what happened to nations in the Mediterranean region when they stripped the trees from their land. His writing laid the foundation for forest reform in America and the laws and agencies that have protected our land and waterways since the dawn of the 20th century.

Today there is renewed concern. At least 36 states anticipate freshwater shortages in the near future. Climate change and mega-wildfires threaten our forests that provide surface water to more than 180 million Americans. Importantly, urban trees are part of the water picture, but they present us with a paradox. Our community trees use and need water, but they also contribute to the water cycles that make rain and provide a cost-effective way to help purify waterways through stormwater retention.

Trees play an important role in the cycle that restores moisture to the atmosphere, where it can condense and return as precipitation.



ALSO READ ABOUT ...

- How trees help make rain and control stormwater runoff
- How to obtain a beautiful poster that shows the differences between communities with and without trees in yards, parks, and along streets
- A predictive computer model
- How to water trees efficiently
- … and more

Arbor Day Foundation®
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410

The above summary is taken from Tree City USA Bulletin #82. More copies of the TC USA bulletins can be ordered from the Arbor Day Foundation at: 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410 or online at: www.arborday.org.

Employee Service Awards

Service Awards for August

Employee's Name	Position	Location	State Service
Eddie Freeman	Forest Technician	Dillon/Florence	30 years
David Poston	Forest Technician	Cherokee/Chester/York	30 years

State Forester Gene Kodama presents Lexington/Richland Supervisor Sam St. Louis his 10-year service certificate (for July).

Procurement Manager Emily Smith receives her 10-year service certificate (for July) from State Forester Gene Kodama at the July staff meeting in Columbia.

Forest Technician David Poston receives his 30-year service certificate from State Forester Gene Kodama at the headquarters in Columbia. Accepting with David is his son Paul.

25 Common American Customs Considered Offensive in Other Countries (Part 6)

MSN Business Insider

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

6. Being fashionably late

Americans often make appointments for "around x" or "x-ish." Being a few minutes late, or as we even call it "fashionably" late, is standard to Americans, but unacceptable in many other countries (like Germany), where leaving people waiting is taken as you thinking your time more valuable than everyone else's.

Human Resources

MoneyPlus Medical Spending Accounts

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued rules regarding claims substantiation for spending account debit cards. To avoid IRS tax penalties, participants should provide documentation to WageWorks for review and substantiation. Undocumented transaction amounts will be reported to the IRS as income on a participant's 2016 W-2 or 1099 form and will become subject to all applicable employment taxes, including federal and state income tax withholding and FICA.

Participants who use their myFBMC card for MoneyPlus medical spending account reimbursements should provide documentation of those transactions. To view myFBMC card transactions, login to www.myFBMC.com. Select "My Account." Choose "My Card Transactions" and select "Previous Year Payment Card Transactions" from the menu box. Click "Go" to see a list of transactions for the 2015 plan year. Transactions marked as ineligible require documentation.

Human Resources
- Lynn Rivers

To avoid tax consequences, two options are available for participants:

1. Submit proper documentation for the outstanding, unsubstantiated expense(s). Fax documentation to WageWorks at (888) 800-5217. The documentation must contain the name of person receiving service, service date, type of service, the service provider and the amount paid for the service.
2. Submit other eligible paper claims with third-party receipts in amounts equal to, or greater than, the unsubstantiated claim(s). These paper claims will be automatically substituted to offset the undocumented card transactions. The substituted claims must be for expenses incurred within the same plan year as the undocumented transactions.

For questions, call WageWorks at (800) 342-017, Monday- Friday, 7 a.m. - 10 p.m., ET.

Preventive Screening Benefit

This benefit is provided at no cost to employees, retirees, COBRA subscribers and their covered spouses if their primary coverage is the Standard Plan or the Savings Plan. The screening includes blood work, a health risk appraisal, height and weight measurements, blood pressure and lipid panels. After the screening, you will receive a confidential report with your results and recommendations for improving your health. Taking this report to your doctor may eliminate the need for tests. If there is not a preventive screening at your office, visit one of the participating screening providers listed below. You need to take a voucher with you to your appointment The voucher is located at www.peba.sc.gov/assets/preventivescreeningvoucher.pdf.

Participating Preventive Screening Providers

Walk-in

All Doctor's Care locations. Visit https://doctorscare.com/locate to find the location closest to you.

Carolina Center for Occupational Health
4600 Goer Drive, Suite 205, North Charleston , SC 29406
(843) 554-1029 www.ccohcaes.com

By Appointment Only

Carolina Occupational Health Screening Group/North Greenville Fitness
907 N. Main St., Travelers Rest, SC 29690
(864) 915-2015 https://www.ccohcares.com

Fitness Forum Occupational Testing Services
120 E. Elm St., Florence, SC 29506
(843) 661-3814 http://www.ffots.com

HealthWorks of Palmetto Health
1333 Taylor St., Suite 3-H, Columbia, SC 29220
(803) 296-5920 https://www.palmettohealth.org/medical-services/other-services/healthworks

Mackey Family Practice
1025 W. Meeting St., Suite 200, Lancaster, SC 29720
(803) 286-5223 http://www.mackeyfamilypractice.com

Human Resources

Upcoming Events

Below are events through December 2016 for PEBA Perks, regional preventative screening, and regional pre-retirement seminars. To register for any of the events, click the corresponding links.

PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR DATES

Aug. 22	Columbia	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=321
Sept. 19	Greenville	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=322
Sept. 26	Columbia	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=326
Oct. 7	Conway	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=344
Oct. 17	Greenville	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=328
Nov. 4	Rock Hill	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=325
Nov. 7	Charleston	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=323
Nov. 10	Beaufort	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=324
Dec. 5	Columbia	www.peba.sc.gov/events/detail.asp?key=327

Human Resources
- Lynn Rivers

Health, Basic Dental Premiums Will Not Increase in January 2017

There will not be any increases in the employee premiums for the health or basic dental and Dental Plus plans for the 2017 plan year.

Increase to Retirement Contribution Rates for Employees

The Aug. 1, 2016 payroll will reflect the new retirement rates for employee withholdings. Below is a chart of the new employee/member and employer contributions. Please see PEBA's retirement benefits site at https://www.peba.sc.gov/retirement.html for further information.

The following contribution rates are for fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).

Employee/Member

Retirement plan	Member contribution rate
SCRS	8.66% of earnable compensation
State ORP	8.66% of earnable compensation
PORS	9.24% of earnable compensation

Employer contributions

Retirement plan	Employer retirement contribution	Insurance surcharge[1]	Total employer rate	Incidental death benefit contribution[1]	Accidental death contribution
State agency, public school district and institutions of higher education employers					
SCRS	11.41%	5.33%	16.74%	0.15%	N/A
PORS	13.84%	5.33%	19.17%	0.20%	0.20%
State ORP[2]	6.41%	5.33%	11.74%	0.15%	N/A

[2]An additional 5 percent must be remitted directly to the participant's State ORP investment provider.

CURRENT JOB OPENINGS

POSITION: RE-Advertisement Trades Specialist III
CLOSING DATE: 09/5/16 11:59 PM

AGENCY HIRING RANGE - MIN: $22,182.00 **AGENCY HIRING RANGE -** MAX: $31,614.00

LOCATION: Sumter County, South Carolina

JOB TYPE: FTE - Full-Time

NORMAL WORK SCHEDULE: Monday - Friday (8:30 - 5:00)

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

THIS IS A RE-ADVERTISEMENT. PREVIOUS APPLICANTS NEED NOT RE-APPLY. YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS POSTING. Under general supervision, performs semi-skilled to skilled trade duties in performance of repairs and maintenance of Manchester State Forest infrastructure. Operates complex motorized equipment to maintain the state forest road system by performing ditching, grading, sloping, and shaping duties and spreading gravel. Performs minor maintenance work on equipment. Inspects and maintains roads, trails, barricades, boundary lines. Performs fire suppression activities to include constructing firebreaks and assisting with prescribed burns and other Timber Stand Improvement activities. Operates motorized equipment to perform building/grounds/construction and maintenance to include repairs to buildings, sheds, docks, signs, etc. Inventories state forest property tools. Performs administrative recordkeeping activities. Assists with forest and wildlife management, protection and maintenance duties.

MINIMUM AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

A high school diploma and three (3) years of trade experience that is directly related to the area of employment. Must be able to operate complex motorized equipment. Must pass the Class A, commercial driver's license written test prior to hire and the practical test within 90 working days. Must pass the agency's physical fitness test that requires a two (2) mile walk carrying a 25 lb. pack in 30 minutes. Firefighter registration with the State Fire Marshal's Office, criminal records check and drug test are required.

POSITION: Human Resources Specialist
CLOSING DATE: 08/15/16 11:59 PM

AGENCY HIRING RANGE - MIN: $26,988.00 **AGENCY HIRING RANGE -** MAX: $38,460.00

LOCATION: Richland County, South Carolina

JOB TYPE: FTE - Full-Time

NORMAL WORK SCHEDULE: Monday - Friday (8:30 - 5:00)

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Under general supervision, performs benefits administration to include retirement, health, dental, life, disability, vision and MoneyPlu$ pretax programs; advises employees when completing paperwork (electronic/paper) and making changes for special eligibility situations and during annual enrollment; prepares Long Term Disability claims, verifies direct entries for billing and completes monthly reconciliation reports; calculates retirement contributions/final payments. Monitors the SCEIS missing, unapproved time reports; assists employees with routine work hours and leave entry discrepancies; enters online data for employee's under FMLA, LWOP; corrects leave/work hours discrepancies; monitors and extends holiday compensatory hours. Conducts new hire orientation, organizes educational benefits meetings; verifies immigration documents and keys data into E-Verify federal database. Coordinates employee separation and processes applicable separation paperwork. Notifies supervisors of random alcohol/drug screen testing; maintains employee personnel files; generates employee service certificates and orders state pins; drafts benefit articles/emails for the employee newsletter; notifies employees regarding health/wellness screenings.

MINIMUM AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

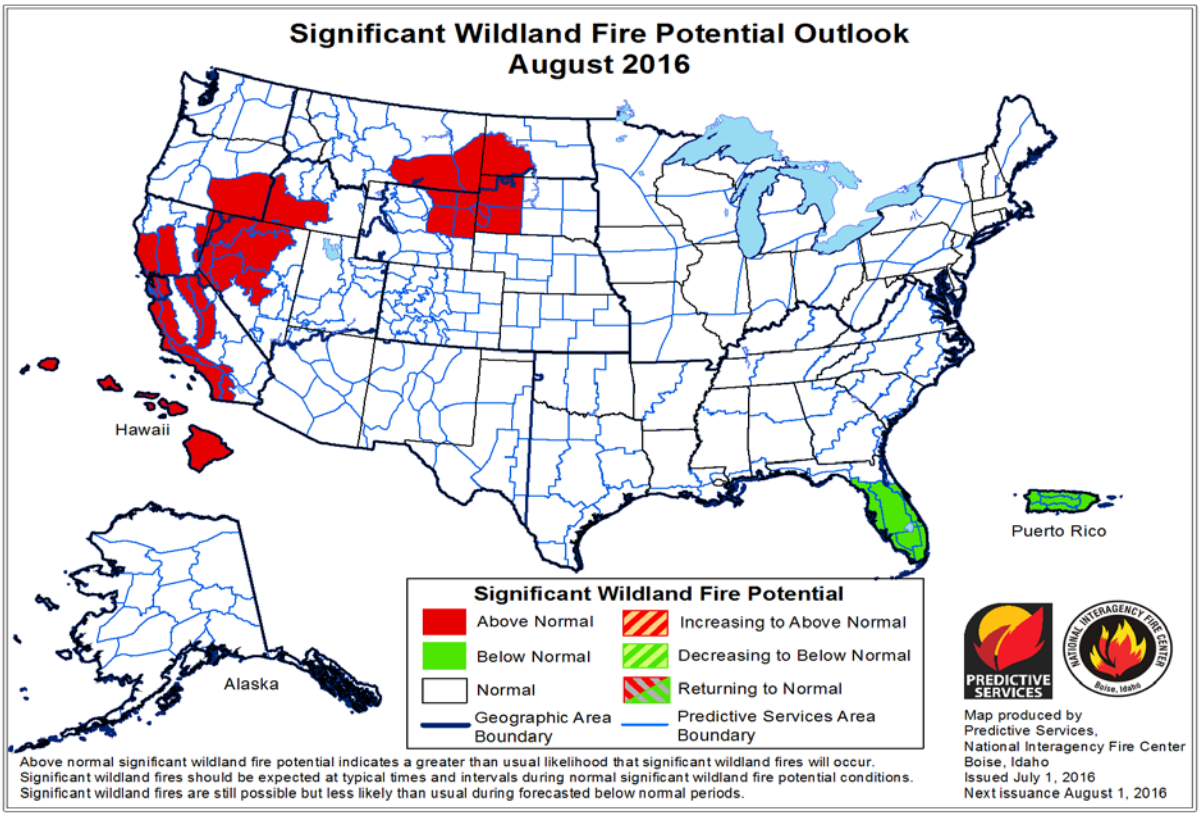
A high school diploma and four (4) years work experience in a human resources environment or four (4) years of, equivalent combination of education and experience for the applicant to meet the requirements of the position.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

SCEIS work experience directly related to the job duties.

Fire Weather Outlook

Southern Area:
Below normal significant wildland fire potential will be present across portion of Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico through July before returning to normal in Texas in August and Florida in September. For the remainder of the Outlook period dryness will increase fall fire potential across the Appalachian States.



Short term dryness levels have increased from June for the interior southeastern states. Pending significant periods of summer thunderstorms, expect this trend to be the harbinger of the increasingly drier pattern which will eventually become more apparent within the Southern Area in the coming months. While recurring periods of rain activity during July should be expected, the isolated to scattered nature of the rain activity and the highly variable amounts of rain will allow the fine and medium fuel moistures to fluctuate widely. As in past years, any prolonged or especially intense drying from tropical system subsidence could result in regional amplification of fire potential. Puerto Rico will likely remain in moist conditions as an elevated Atlantic tropic development pattern will likely influence an area from the Gulf of Mexico east to the northeastern Caribbean Sea.

Expect a continued cooling and eventual emergence of a more La Niña looking episode by the last few months of the year. In addition, as the ENSO state evolves, the tropical development threat increases for the core of the season and could be a huge wild card in terms of high rain fall into the South. Any landfalls or coastal approaches would necessarily alter any emerging drier fuel moisture picture. La Niña will eventually produce drier and warmer-than-average weather and higher wildfire threats for the Southern area. Expect to see continued overall low to average fire potential and mostly light daily fire activity through the summer as dryness continues to evolve into the Fall. For the northwest region of the Area to the Southern Appalachians, persistent below average rainfall continues the drying conditions and will be the primary concern. However, at least through July, a progressive weather pattern and typical humid summertime condition should keep the occurrence of above average fire activity in check. After this time, an above average temperature and trending drier rain outlook should be expected to produce a higher risk wild fire environment for the Southeast leading into the fall leaf drop period.

Current Fire Numbers for South Carolina

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

Time Period	JULY		FISCAL YEAR	
	FIRES	ACRES	FIRES	ACRES
5 Year Average	141	1,176	1,646	9,744
10 Year Average	146	931	2,162	14,889
Current FY[1]	137	517	137	517

[1]To date for current fiscal year

Trees in Song

Goin to plant a weeping willow
On the banks green edge it will grow grow grow
Sing a lullaby beside the water
Lovers come and go - the river roll roll roll

Song: "Brokedown Palace"
Artist: Grateful Dead
Album: American Beauty (1970)
Listen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9uyMjzmT3k

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

ONLY YOU...

Which employee decided after 16 years of working in forestry to commit to spreading Smokey's message in a very unique way?

Doug Mills

Photo of the Month

Edisto Unit Forester Pete Stuckey sent in this photo of a shrimp boat taken in Five Fathom Creek near McClellanville.

Quote of the Month

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

Desmond Tutu

Please send in your photos or news to Michelle Johnson at mjohnson@scfc.gov.