

FRA REGION ACTIVITY REPORT

SOUTHEASTERN Region



ISSUES & TRENDS

COVID-19

For much of 2020 and continuing into 2021, COVID-19 has introduced more market volatility and made planning and forecasting difficult. The COVID-19-related safety precautions and social distancing hindered the level of daily interaction somewhat and caused some productivity decline in some cases.

Market Conditions

Southern lumber, plywood, and OSB products experienced unprecedented markets for a period of time in 2020, and those products should see good markets in 2021. Wet weather and logging and trucking labor shortages impacted harvesting production to meet that demand at times during 2020 and are likely to be a continuing factor impacting productivity and logger viability in 2021.

Guestworkers

The H-2B guestworker visa program problems and COVID-19-related restrictions on tree-planting and nursery workers entering the U.S. from certain countries continue to disrupt efforts to complete full reforestation plans during the winter months. Southeastern Region (SER) members are grateful to FRA for its past and ongoing efforts and successes in making headway on H-2B policy issues.

FRA ACTIVITY

Region Policy Committee Meetings

Spring Meeting - April 29, 2020 – The SER Policy Committee met virtually to discuss items relevant to the region. Topics discussed included:

- A national update from FRA President Deb Hawkinson.
- A roundtable discussion of activities and legislation affecting the region's wood fiber supply chain.
- H-2B guestworker visa shortages & its effects on industry tree-planting season; and COVID-19-related impacts on mill production, logging productivity, and trucking availability.
- A conversation on whether to revive the FRA Timber Harvesting and Procurement Short Course.

Fall Meeting - September 17, 2020 – The SER Policy Committee met virtually to discuss items relevant to the region.

Topics discussed included:

- A national update from FRA President Deb Hawkinson.
- A roundtable discussion of activities and legislation affecting the region's wood fiber supply chain.
- The very strong demand for building products and the effect on mill output; and company COVID-19-related safety practices.
- The FRA Timber Harvesting and Procurement Short Course.

FRA Timber Harvesting and Procurement Short Course

FRA's SER coordinated with FRA's Southcentral Region to restart the Timber Harvesting and Procurement Short Course last held in 2008. The shortcourse is designed to provide industrial forestry education for harvesting and wood procurement professionals generally in the early years of their career. A team comprised of Southeastern and Southcentral Region members reviewed past agendas and presentations in an effort to decide which topics to cover. Work continues, and the event will hopefully be held in the Fall of 2021.

ON THE HORIZON

Spring 2021 virtual SER meeting or webinar and fall 2021 Joint SER Policy Committee & FRA Southwide Timber Security Group meeting dates and locations are still to be determined, based on when COVID-19-related concerns abate.

Possible FRA Timber Harvesting & Procurement Shortcourse to be held jointly with Southcentral Region at Auburn University in the fall of 2021 or 2022.