



2023 Year End Review

Dear FRA Members,

FRA actively produces resources aimed at fostering success for our member companies and their employees. We prioritize safety measures, enhancing skill sets, refining technical and operational expertise, pinpointing workforce solutions, advocating for favorable policies and regulations benefiting our industry, and establishing robust leadership development programs across diverse communication platforms.

Please find below a summary report highlighting FRA's activities throughout 2023. For more information, we encourage you to visit our website. Please note that exclusive FRA resources, such as Technical Releases and Issue Updates, are accessible to members only via our website. If you do not have member access, please contact Vanessa Connelly at vconnelly@forestresources.org. As a reminder, all member company employees are eligible to have access.

FRA Welcomed New President Keith Gray

FRA welcomed Keith Gray as its new president in September 2023. Keith's distinguished career has been marked by an unwavering dedication to the agricultural sector, notably as a top advisor to the Administrator of the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). Keith's extensive USDA involvement includes contributions to the Farm Bill Implementation Working Group, the White House Task Force on Rural Prosperity, and the Multi-Agency Coordination Committee for agricultural disasters, cementing his reputation as a trusted advocate for agricultural prosperity. Within RMA, Keith spearheaded assessments in diverse areas, from IT investments to homeland security, promoting seamless communication and facilitating strategic planning and goal achievement within the agency's leadership team. Keith's knowledge, experience, and vision will lead FRA successfully into the future.

WELCOME



KEITH GRAY
FRA'S NEW PRESIDENT



"I am honored to be selected as the next President of FRA, and I look forward to continuing to grow the organization and advocating for all members across the wood supply chain." **Keith Gray**

In 2023 FRA Produced:



FRA welcomed 19 new members in 2023.

We are stronger with your support!



FRA continued to advocate for our policy initiatives in 2023.

Why FRA Supports the Jobs in the Woods Act (H.R. 5344)(S.3063)

September 2023

Sponsors: Congresswomen Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-OR-5) & Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA-3)

Why the Jobs in the Woods Act Matters:

- The legislation is supported by nearly 60 forestry associations across the U.S.
- Addresses the labor shortage impacting forestry and forestry-related industries.
- Provides grants to existing or establishing workforce and training programs.
- Provides workforce training opportunities to inspire the next generation of forestry workers.
- Prepares students for employment in the forest products industry or Forest Service.
- Targets workforce training for young adults in rural areas and creates career pathway opportunities in the forestry sector.
- Pathway programs allow for immediate job placement.
- Provides young adults a chance to establish a career in the communities where they were raised.

The forest products industry, including loggers and haulers, primary and secondary manufacturers, pulp and paper mills, paper packing plants, and paper facilities, is one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the U.S., sustaining nearly 926,000 families and contributing \$353 billion annually to the U.S. economy. Mill labor shortages are limiting modernization and growth investments in existing and new manufacturing facilities, and the labor pool in the logging sector is aging rapidly. Less than 25% of logging business owners are under 40, 55 is the average age of owner/operators, and approximately 30% of owner/operators are planning to leave the business within five years.

Targeted workforce education and training programs have been effective recruitment tools in computer programming, utility vegetation management, and automotive industries. Regional forest industry training hubs would allow participants to stay in or near their communities, which reduces the cost to participate and affords program developers increased flexibility in adapting training curricula to meet regional needs through ties to local forest product employers. The forestry sector industry struggles to find a trained and skilled workforce at all levels, as an estimated 40-60 percent of young adults are leaving rural forest-based economies for employment opportunities.

The Jobs in the Woods Act, introduced by Congresswomen Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-OR-5) and Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA-3), would create a grant program for nonprofit organizations, state governments, and colleges to utilize workforce training in forestry-related fields – helping prepare students for jobs in the U.S. Forest Service and the timber industry.

The legislation would:

- Create education programs by states, nonprofits, and colleges through grants of \$500,000-\$2,000,000.
- Create programs in rural and low-income areas to spur economic development, bringing thousands of dollars of investments into our rural and underserved communities.
- Create a pool of talented, trained, and qualified applicants to fill timber industry job openings, helping Americans obtain quality jobs to serve and responsibly manage our forest and secure our wood industry supply chain.
- Partner with programs that have proven to help students achieve forestry industry jobs and programs that engage with their local communities.

Request:

Cosponsor the Jobs in the Woods Act (H.R. 5344)

The Forest Resources Association (FRA) represents the interests of nearly 350 organizations and businesses in the forest products industry. Our members include forest landowners, suppliers, consuming mills, associated businesses, and state forestry associations. FRA promotes the interests of its members in the economic, efficient, and sustainable use of forest resources to meet the needs of the wood fiber supply chain through private enterprise. FRA members are represented in all states and the congressional districts.

For more information, please contact:

- Deb Hawkins, FRA President, 202-296-2937 or dhawkins@forestresources.org
- Tim O'Hara, FRA Vice President of Government Affairs, 218-360-7865 or tohara@forestresources.org

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Jobs in the Woods Act

In 2023, the forestry workforce quickly became a top priority among FRA's members. Shortage of skilled and unskilled workers throughout the wood supply chain impacted daily operations. The FRA policy team worked with Members of Congress and the House Agriculture Committee staff to draft and introduce the bipartisan bicameral Jobs in the Woods Act legislation. This legislation would provide grants to forestry workforce programs to enhance or develop immersive pathway workforce programs for the forestry sector. Our goal is to include the provisions of the Act in the initial text of the Farm Bill. The Hill, a top U.S. political website read by the White House and more lawmakers than any other site, published an FRA op-ed about Jobs in the Woods Act and the workforce challenges the industry is facing.

Policy Initiatives

Why FRA Supports H-2B Reform

September 2023



Why More H-2B Visas are needed:

- Demand for H-2B forestry workers continues to be high. Currently there is a three- to five-year tree planting backlog.
- More H-2B visas are needed so employers can hire non-immigrant guest workers in a timely manner.
- Seasonal workers plant more than 85% of the acres of trees planted in the United States each year.
- Only two percent of the H-2B forestry jobs are filled by U.S. workers.
- Congress must provide a permanent and meaningful cap relief for the H-2B visa program as a standalone measure or as part of other relevant legislation.
- Congress must include H-2B cap relief in the FY 2023 final spending bills.

The forestry sector relies on seasonal H-2B visa forestry workers when there are not enough available U.S. workers to fill these short-term, remote, and itinerant jobs. The Congressionally mandated cap of 66,000 H-2B visas is inadequate to meet the labor needs of seasonal businesses. Currently, demand exceeds the cap by two to three times. Every H-2B worker supports an additional 4.6 American jobs and contributes to the economy of rural forest-dependent communities.

- A 2020 Government Accountability Office report concluded that "counties with H-2B employers generally had lower unemployment rates and higher average weekly wages than counties that do not have any H-2B employers."
- Before receiving H-2B guest workers, businesses are required to advertise the available jobs to U.S. workers. In FY 2020, the number of U.S. workers who applied for these forestry jobs was only enough to fill two percent of the available positions.
- H-2B forestry workers plant more than 85% of the trees on public and private forestland each year. That amounts to planting 1.5 billion trees on nearly 2.2 million acres.
- More H-2B forestry workers will be needed to replant trees on forest lands devastated by wildfires and hurricanes and to address worker shortages. Currently, there is an estimated three- to five-year tree planting backlog on public and private forestlands. The USDA Forest Service has a 7-million-acre backlog of acres that require tree planting.
- Sixty percent of the employers of H-2B forestry workers stated that they anticipate their labor needs to increase in the next one- to three-years. Seventy-three percent said there would not be enough H-2B visas available to meet their tree-planting needs.
- The percentage of businesses that did not receive visas for all the H-2B forestry workers they requested doubled from 16% in FY 2019 to 32% in FY 2020.

Request:

- ◆ Support legislation that provides an exemption from the H-2B cap for forestry workers to address the multi-year tree planting backlog on public and private lands.
- ◆ Support an H-2B Returning Worker Exemption OR other meaningful cap relief in a final fiscal 2024 Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill or any fiscal 2024 spending measure.
- ◆ Support permanent H-2B cap relief.

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H-2B Guestworker Visas

H-2B forestry workers are critical to replanting forests following timber harvest or natural disasters. Demand for visas greatly exceeds the current cap of 66,000. FRA worked with the H-2B Workforce Coalition to include language for F.Y. 2023 appropriations that allowed The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to release an additional 64,716 supplemental visas for F.Y. 2024. FRA also submitted comments on a proposed rulemaking that would modify the H-2B visa program. The Modernizing H-2 Program Requirements Oversight and Worker Protections is a DOL-proposed rule that would expand the department's investigative and enforcement authority. FRA urged the DOL to remove these sections and several other problematic proposals prior to the publication of a final rule.

Safe Routes Act

FRA had the Safe Routes Act re-introduced in the House and Senate. This legislation would improve the safety and efficiency of hauling raw forest products by allowing access to the interstate at existing legal state weights. FRA additionally supported several transportation bills that passed out of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that will be up for a floor vote in 2024. These bills would permit states to set up a pilot program allowing trucks to haul 91,000 pounds on the interstate if trucks were equipped with a sixth axle, improve the efficiency of attaining a commercial driver's license, and allow a ten percent variance for trucks hauling dry bulk materials on the interstate.

Why FRA Supports The Safe Routes Act (H.R. 2493, S.1818)

September 2023

Sponsors: Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) & Congressman Mike Gallagher (R-WI)



Why Support the Safe Routes Act:

- Provisions of the Safe Routes Act allow trucks transporting logs, pulpwood, chips or biomass access to the safer U.S. Interstate Highway System at legal state GVW.
- Limits transportation distance to 150 air miles from point of harvest to storage or processing facility on interstates which are three to four times safer than rural secondary roads.
- Provides for state legal weight tolerance in effect on the enactment date of the legislation. States cannot arbitrarily raise their weight limits after the bill is passed into law.
- Reduces pedestrian and vehicle encounters with log trucks.
- Saves fuel and reduces emissions and damage on state rural roads.
- Improves the U.S. forest industry's global competitiveness.

In the U.S., weight limits on interstate highways are established by the federal government while weight limits on other roadways are established by state or local governments. State weight limits for log trucks exceed federal interstate highway weight limits in all major timber-producing states. This disparity discourages log trucks from traveling loaded on interstate highways. Log trucks traveling on non-interstate roads have a greater risk of accidents as they encounter two-way traffic, intersections, school zones, pedestrians, and driveways. Allowing trucks transporting raw forest products (logs, pulpwood, chips, or biomass) access to the U.S. Interstate Highway System at legal state gross vehicle weight (GVW) is safer.

- A 2020 study published in the peer-reviewed *International Journal of Forest Engineering* assessed the safety benefits of allowing log trucks access to the interstate highway system. The results of the research show that allowing state-legal truck weights and configurations access to an interstate route for a short distance that avoided small towns, school districts, and intersections would improve safety, reduce CO2 emissions, cause less damage to rural roads, and reduce transportation costs for small logging businesses (Conrad, 2020).
- Another separate study of log trucks in Georgia showed that 50 percent of accidents occurred in urban areas. This same study also showed that 41 percent of the log truck accidents occurred within five miles of an interstate (Conrad, 2018).
- Findings of a nationwide study of fatal log truck crashes in the U.S. stated that the most common pre-crash event occurred when another vehicle traveled into a truck's lane from the opposite direction (Cole, 2019).
- All these studies suggest that moving log trucks to interstates would be safer.
- This suggestion is supported by a pilot project in Maine where trucks are permitted to haul heavier weights. The Maine Department of Transportation statistics showed that truck accidents decreased 23 percent, the number of fatalities decreased by 33 percent, and property damage was reduced by 11 percent after the pilot went into effect.
- The Maine pilot is consistent with national findings that rural interstate highways are three to four times safer than secondary roads (Maine DOT, 2010).
- Reduces the carbon footprint of transporting raw forest products as less fuel is used due to fewer stops and shifting, and a shorter, more direct route provided by the interstate.

Request:

- ◆ Cosponsor Safe Routes Act (H.R. 2493, S.1818)
- ◆ Vote in favor of House Bills
 - H.R. 3372 authorizes a pilot program allowing trucks to haul 91,000 pounds on 6 axles on interstates
 - H.R. 3013, S. 1649 streamlines the process to obtain a commercial drivers license (CDL)
 - H.R. 3318 establishes a 10% axle weight variance for dry bulk materials

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Policy Initiatives

Why FRA Supports Forest-Based Biomass

September 2023



Why Carbon Neutrality Matters:

- The concept of biomass carbon neutrality, recognized as scientifically valid around the world, is the bedrock of the forest products industry's sustainability claims.
- Regulatory uncertainty around how or whether carbon emissions from biomass combustion will be counted threatens the viability of the forestry, forest products and bioenergy sectors.
- Well managed forestlands provide clean air, forest products, and bioenergy. This cycle is repeated through renewal of forestlands that are more abundant in the U.S. than in 1952.
- Carbon storage in the U.S. has increased annually over the last 30 years.

The concept of biomass carbon neutrality (net zero carbon emissions) is grounded in the fact that carbon emissions from biomass combustion are fully offset by working forest landscapes. These landscapes continually absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, release oxygen, and store carbon in the products manufactured from active forest management. A balance of young, intermediate, and mature forests is needed to address climate change effectively.

- Younger forests are more efficient at sequestering CO₂, while older forests store more carbon.
- Through forest management operations, biomass is produced, which, when utilized, creates markets and provides economic activity for rural economies.
- Biomass is used for energy to heat homes and to generate electricity.
- Because of the ongoing efforts of the forest products sector, there are more trees in the U.S. today than there were in 1952 and more tons of carbon stored in forests.
- The forest industry's commitment to sustainability, growing and maintaining healthy forests will ensure that the cycle of tree growth, harvest, and replanting will maintain healthy, viable forests into the future.
- The carbon-neutral nature of biomass harvested from sustainably managed forests has been recognized repeatedly by studies, government agencies, institutions, legislation, and rules around the world, including guidance from the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the reporting protocols of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Request:

- ◆ Maintain existing statutory directive that federal agencies recognize the carbon neutrality of forest-based biomass in any final FY 2024 appropriations legislation.
- ◆ Include provisions in the 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization legislation that builds upon the appropriations rider by binding federal agencies and departments to embrace biomass carbon neutrality in any federal environmental or energy rulemaking.



FRA strongly supports a provision originally enacted as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 that directs the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Agriculture to implement a coordinated policy that fully reflects the carbon-neutral nature of forest-based biomass fuels and energy. Codifying the concept of biomass carbon neutrality was a significant victory for every link in the biomass value chain. However, since the biomass provision was included in an appropriations measure, the language is in jeopardy of expiring if it is not explicitly reauthorized. With this in mind, FRA respectfully requests support for legislative language reauthorizing the biomass provision for fiscal year 2024.

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Forest-Based Biomass

FRA has been active in 2023 advocating at the national level for forest-based biomass energy to be considered carbon neutral in federal energy and environmental policymaking. The F.Y. 2024 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bills (House and Senate) reauthorize provisions that direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Departments of Energy and Agriculture to embrace biomass energy as carbon neutral. While final appropriations for 2024 have not been approved, we are optimistic that this directive will be reauthorized early in the year. In addition to the appropriations space, FRA has been collaborating with other forest products trade associations to include biomass carbon neutrality language in the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization. Leadership on both Agriculture Committees appear receptive to this effort, and we are optimistic for a favorable outcome in 2024 when the Farm Bill will be finalized.

European Union Deforestation Initiative

FRA has been closely tracking developments on the European Union Deforestation Initiative (EUDR), a recently enacted law requiring companies trading in cattle, cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber, soy, and wood, as well as products derived from these commodities, to conduct extensive diligence on the value chain to ensure the goods do not result from recent deforestation, forest degradation, or breaches of local environmental and social laws. One of the more onerous provisions is its insistence that producers from even those countries categorized as "low risk" deploy geolocation tracking technology to ensure sustainable fiber sourcing. FRA participated in a recent meeting at the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) office, where officials acknowledged the unworkability of the E.U. measure and pledged to continue to engage E.U. officials to revise the policy, which will take effect at the end of 2024.

Northern Long-Eared Bat

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) along with interim management guidance for the species on April 1, 2023. FRA worked with the USFWS to develop reasonable conservation measures outlined in the interim guidance. Final guidance for the NLEB will be published in April 2024. The USFWS also approved the Lake States Region Bat Habitat Conservation Plans in early 2023, a process FRA has led in the region since 2018. FRA staff additionally worked with the Forest Service in Region 9 leadership in an effort that resulted in clearing existing timber sale contracts from potential NLEB guidance on Federal Lands. FRA's work on the NLEB will assist us as additional bat species are listed as endangered during 2024.

Policy Initiatives



Mature and Old-Growth Inventory and the Advanced Notice of Rule Making Industry Call to Action

Author: [Lindsay Warness](#) | FRA Western Region Manager

In April of 2022, President Biden signed Executive Order 14072, *Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies*. This order was directed to the Department of Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS), instructing them to define and inventory old-growth and mature forests on lands managed by those agencies within one year. These agencies were tasked with defining, identifying, and inventorying old and mature growth on more than 178 million acres. As the USDA FS and DOI BLM began this enormous task, they asked for public input on defining old and mature growth across many ecosystems. Overwhelmingly, the team received input that no single definition of old-growth or mature growth applies to the many ecosystems across the United States.

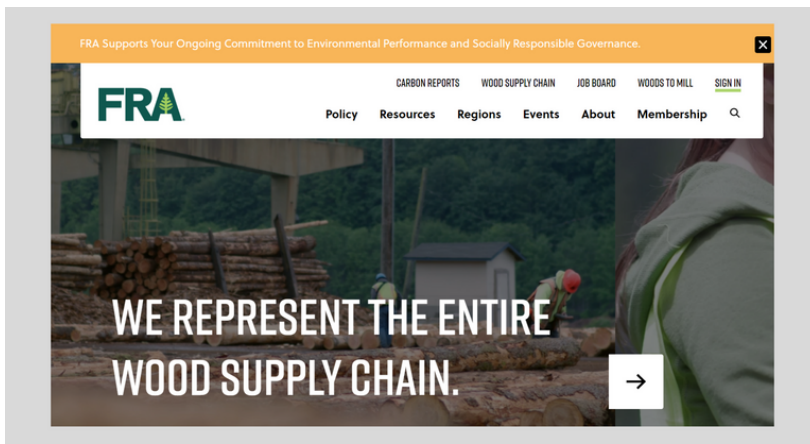
According to the executive order, once the definition and inventories are completed, the FS and BLM are required to:

Mature and Old-Growth Forests

President Biden directed the U.S. Forest Service to define, inventory, and recommend policies to protect mature and old-growth forests on federal lands. In December 2023, the Forest Service published a Notice of Intent (NOI) that proposes to amend all 128 Forest Service Plans to include old growth protections. This may negatively impact timber harvest levels on federal lands. FRA has been actively communicating our concerns with the Forest Service regarding a mature and old-growth forest protection policy while serving on several roundtables and preparing and submitting comments on the proposed NOI.



FRA Website



FRA's new website, launched in 2022, continues to deliver dynamic and engaging content relevant to the industry with an enhanced user experience. Users can easily navigate through our robust array of resources and seamlessly reach valuable region-specific content. Members can access high-definition educational videos, industry-relevant webinars, meeting presentations, and our valued Technical Releases and Safety Alerts.

You can also keep up to date with the latest government affairs news on our dedicated policy page that features our weekly Issue Updates. FRA webinars, meetings, and other educational opportunities are eligible for CFE credits.

Timber Harvesting Safety

FRA Safety Alerts: Logger Safety

LOGGER SERIOUSLY INJURED BY FALLING CHIPPER KNIVES
Released by: Clay Hixon, FRA Southeast Region Manager, clayh@forestresources.org

SAFETY ALERT - SEPTEMBER 2021 21-9-12

BACKGROUND
On a clear summer day in the Southeastern Region, a logger was preparing to service an in-woods chipper. The machine was locked out and tagged out in preparation for a knife exchange and other routine maintenance. Weather was not a contributing factor.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS
The logger had over 30 years of experience operating in-woods chippers and was highly trained in all aspects of timber harvesting. He is a member of several professional associations and actively engaged in various leadership positions within the industry.

UNSAFE ACTS AND CONDITIONS
Chipper knives were placed on top of the chipper directly over a moving apparatus. Other co-workers were unaware of the amount of hazard while performing maintenance on the machine.

ACCIDENT
The logger proceeded to open the control panel door to access the grease fittings during maintenance procedures. The logger was unaware that another employee had placed the sharpened knives on top of the control panel. The knives were not placed in a wooden transport box, and their

INJURY
The knives fell approximately three feet and onto the logger's left arm inflicting serious lacerations and extensive muscle and tendon damage in the forearm. The outer edge of the victim's boot was also sliced off; however, his steel toe protection diverted the knife away from his foot preventing any damage to his lower extremities. Other crew members immediately administered first aid, applied a tourniquet, and called 911. The victim was transported by company truck to meet the Emergency Medical Technicians at a nearby intersection. After triage by on-site paramedics, he was airlifted to a regional trauma center for further medical treatment. Trauma surgery was required to restore blood flow to his left arm and hand, as well as to repair the extensive damage caused by the accident. Frequent physical therapy was required to restore a sufficient range of motion in his left arm. The accident resulted in an lost time injury of 12 weeks.

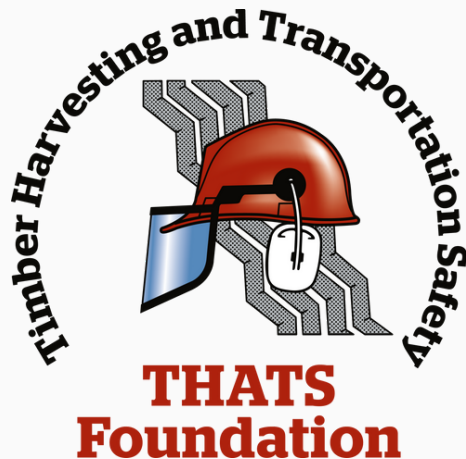
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION

- Always transport chipper knives from storage location to the chipper in a wooden transport box or similar device.
- Designate a safe area for knife box placement on the chipper during servicing.
- Implement a chipper safety program that includes limiting employee access to essential personnel during servicing, especially during the knife exchange process.
- Always attempt to identify potential hazards in your immediate workplace before performing tasks.



Timber Harvesting Safety Manual

FRA continues to focus on wood supply chain safety issues with informational Safety Alerts, Woods to Mill articles, and updated safety publications produced in 2023. FRA's Timber Harvesting Safety Manual is under review and the 2023 edition will be available early this year. The manual is an essential guide to safety and general information on accident prevention in timber harvesting with ground-based logging systems. In 2024, FRA will continue to look at ways to reduce risk and improve safety for supply chain operators in our industry.



A \$10,000 grant was approved by the THATS Foundation for the Pennsylvania Sustainable Forestry Implementation (SFI) Committee to expand their logger training into an online format. The first phase of this project was completed in 2023, and the balance of the grant money was requested and released. When complete, the project will allow loggers easy access to training, the freedom to schedule their training times, and the confidence that SFI training requirements are met.



FRA National Meetings

2023 FRA Annual Meeting



FRA's 89th Annual Meeting, in conjunction with the Southcentral Region Spring Meeting, took place May 8-10 and drew 190 members and friends to Point Clear, AL, for committee work, educational sessions, and the governance decisions that will guide the Association through the coming year.

The FRA Annual Meeting included special guest speakers such as Senator Katie Britt (R-AL), Craig Lorraine, Senior Vice President of Fiber and Sustainability Operations, Enviva, and Leon Sequeira, Attorney, LRS Law, and former Assistant Secretary of Labor at the DOL.

During the May 9 National Awards Dinner, FRA President Deb Hawkinson was recognized ahead of her retirement later in the year. Deb was thanked for her years of service and dedication to both FRA and the industry.



2023 FRA Legislative Fly-In



In September, FRA held its first in-person legislative fly-in since 2019, with members from across the country taking part. Participants met with almost 100 congressional offices, half of which were meetings with Members of Congress. This was an excellent opportunity to advance our priority policy issues and educate legislators and their staff on the importance of the wood supply chain to the forest products industry. Regional and state teams worked to promote FRA policy priorities, emphasizing workforce development, transportation, and the carbon neutrality of forest-based biomass.

Woods To Mill

Our Woods to Mill communications continue to provide valuable content to members on the most pressing issues facing the industry. New in 2023, FRA embarked on a University Series. The series provides higher education Forestry Departments an opportunity to showcase forestry programs, research, innovative workforce initiatives, and common relevant issues affecting our wood supply chain community.

Several articles, such as [Help Wanted, Now Hiring: Workforce Shortages in the Forest Products Industry](#) by Les Werner, Director, Wisconsin Forestry Center, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and [Part of the Workforce Challenge is a Demographic Challenge](#) by FRA's Northeastern Region Consultant Eric Kingsley, address workforce challenges and barriers to recruitment. Attention to important topics such as forest products markets and producer price indexing for logging were also covered. A full list of our Woods To Mill publications can be found on [FRA's website](#). FRA plans to continue its popular University Series in 2024, and a Carbon Series will debut in early Spring.



University Series Issue #12:

Stephen F. Austin State University's Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture

Author: Amy Neal | External Communications Specialist | Stephen F. Austin State University College of Forestry and Agriculture

Located in the piney woods of East Texas, Stephen F. Austin State University's Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture proudly provides students with in-field experiences, state-of-the-art equipment, and access to 12 million acres of forests. The education students receive at SFA is backed by a rigorous curriculum taught by nationally recognized faculty members. We offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees encompassing the areas of forestry, environmental science, and geospatial science. Our Bachelor of Science degrees in forestry, environmental science, and geospatial science each include unique concentration areas, specializations, and tracks that meet the interests and career goals of graduates.

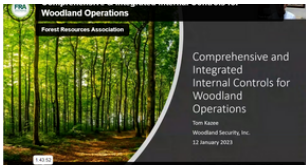


Emerging Leaders Program

FRA is continuing its successful Emerging Leader Program in 2024. These virtual meetings offer a four-month facilitated session with experienced leaders in the industry. Participants hear firsthand from leaders about their insights, experiences, and the skills they deem essential to succeed and include exemplary leadership practices that can positively impact careers. The program is also designed to help FRA member companies invest in their people by encouraging them to be engaged and develop their skills. It is a win for our emerging leaders and the overall wood supply chain community to invest in the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. As a Certified Professional Coach (CPC) and executive leader for over 20 years, FRA Past President Deb Hawkinson will meet separately with each participant and discuss strategies to help them achieve their goals and address other business-related issues.



Webinars



OPERATIONS

Comprehensive and Integrated Internal Controls for Woodland Operations



WORKFORCE

Recruiting Talent in Today's Digital Age



RESEARCH

The Role of Forests in Climate Change Mitigation—A Review of FIA Data



POLICY

Implications of the European Union Deforestation Regulations

FRA hosted seven webinars this year, all approved for SAF CFE credits. The subject matter was wide-ranging and relevant.

January 2023

Comprehensive and Integrated Internal Controls for Woodland Operations - Tom Kazez, Director, Woodland Security, Inc.

February 2023

The Role of Forests in Climate Change Mitigation—A Review of FIA Data - Grant Domke, Team Leader, Research Forester, Northern Research Station Forest Inventory & Analysis, U.S. Forest Service

March 2023

Wisconsin Forestry Careers Coalition - Moving Forestry Forward - Les Werner, Professor of Forestry, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

July 2023

Implications of the European Union Deforestation Regulations- Jennifer Conje, Program Specialist, the Policy for the International Programs Unit, USDA-Forest Service

August 2023

Recruiting Talent in Today's Digital Age - Bryce Lemmons, Signature Transport, Jerome LaChance, New Wave Digital Solutions, and Bruce Pollock, BiCoastal Media

September 2023

FRA 2023 Legislative Fly-in Preparation – Tim O'Hara, Vice President, Government Affairs, FRA, and Pat Rita, Principal, Orion Advocates

December 2023

Recruiting and Retaining Entry-level Employees in a Manufacturing and Industrial Environment - Bob Marsenich, President of Glacier HR Services, Inc., and Alli DePuy, Co-founder of Inspired Classroom

Webinars are available to FRA members at forestresources.org.

FRA's 2023 National Award Winners

National Outstanding Logger Award

FRA and STIHL honored A.M. Logging, LLC of Millheim, PA, as the 2023 National Outstanding Logger at FRA's Annual Meeting in Point Clear, AL. FRA Chairman Pete Stewart presented Mark Byler, Andrew Miller, and Wes Miller with a plaque to commemorate the accolade, and Doug Hollis, Territory Manager with STIHL Southeast, Inc., presented the worthy winners with a \$1,000 check on behalf of STIHL, recognizing them for their achievement.



Mark, Andrew, and Wes graciously accepted the award. The owners acknowledged that their employees and families were the reason for their company's success. Wes Miller remarked that A.M. Logging, LLC proudly supports Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and would donate the \$1,000 received from STIHL at the Log A Load For Kids parade.

STIHL Incorporated serves as the sponsor of the FRA Regional and National Outstanding Logger Awards.

National Technical Writing Award

FRA honored Amy Juliana, Science, and Technology Manager with the Society of American Foresters, as the 2023 National Technical Writing Award winner for her Technical Release “National Forest Products Week Essay Contest” at the FRA Annual Meeting on May 9. FRA Chairman Pete Stewart presented Amy Juliana with a plaque recognizing the honor and a check for \$500 from FRA.

FRA NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS WEEK ESSAY CONTEST
Technical Release • December 2021

The response from our teachers has been overwhelming. "I appreciate the opportunity to use a wonderful project to work on virtually. If my students submit and I hear about our favorite topic!" "What a unique opportunity and I affirm that this may make for students' best year for supporting the educational enrichment of all students in science of forestry."

Our students are excited to participate in the contest. Thank you for supporting our community with your passion.

"Thank you for creating this opportunity for students to use their knowledge and writing skills to read and practice their research and citation skills."

I was so happy to see the students so involved and excited about writing.

RESULTS AND IMPACT
The essay contest has grown in exciting and unexpected ways throughout the five-year run. For the first year, I was hoping for 100 entries," said Juliana. "The contest had a huge response, but I was really pleasantly surprised that our teachers in our state. I was told that if teachers would be willing to hold an online program to their already busy schedule. The first year the NCFCA received over 1,000 entries from 114 students. There was not something better on our hands with the essay contest."

In the following year, the NCFCA added additional opportunities to engage the growth in enrollment of the program. This year teachers to select and submit the top five essays from each state to increase the quality and increase the quantity of essays.

Over the next few years, the program continued to grow, reaching new heights, and developing our reach into these areas in NC where forestry education was missing. In 2019, COVID-19 changed everything. According to Juliana, "I was unsure if our program would come alive. The way we reach our students at our programs. Most North Carolina schools were virtual, and our students were being asked to do so much for their students. I changed the submission requirements to accommodate virtual students and hopes for the best. I was overwhelmed with the response and impressed at our teacher's dedication to connect students to real-world challenges."

In 2020, the essay contest concluded with entries from 183 schools across the state. The most NCFCA had ever received. One year later, COVID-19 continues to impact our state, but our program has proved to meet the needs of today's students. This year, the contest gave an additional 1.7% NCFCA membership over 200 members from 167 schools with participation from 66 out of the 102 NCFCA chapters. Juliana estimates the contest engaged over 5,000 students.

APPLICATION AND COST
Funding and support for the essay contest comes from a unique partnership. With the help of the North Carolina Forest Service, and the North Carolina Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee, the NCFCA awards grants to provide for our students and teachers.

The NCFCA begins promotion of the contest in August. Essays are collected throughout the first nine weeks of school and submissions are due by the Friday of Forest Products Week, typically the first week of October.

Essays are evaluated using standardized rubric criteria and are graded based on a student's effectiveness in assessing the writing process. Judges from the North Carolina Forestry Association and the North Carolina Forest Service review all entries and select finalists. Judges have one month, and winners are announced the first full week of December.

Prior to the pandemic, the NCFCA Director of Education presented awards with an in-person award celebration along with representatives from the North Carolina Forest Service. Since 2020, celebrations have been held virtually. The NCFCA hopes to continue in-person award celebrations in years to come.

About the Sponsors:
The North Carolina State Implementation Committee is committed to promoting the sustainable management of forests in North Carolina.

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

The NCFCA Forest Service's primary position is to create abundant and quality forest resources for the state to meet its present and future needs.

FRA Chairman Pete Stewart presented Amy Juliana with FRA's 2023 National Technical Writing Award.



2023 Year End Review

**In 2023, FRA welcomed 19 new members.
We are stronger with your support!**

- Mainline Natural Resources, PC
- Myno Carbon
- Caddo Sustainable Timberlands
- Georgia Forestry Association
- JM Longyear
- L&R Timber
- Payne's Environmental
- Speyside Bourbon Cooperage, Inc
- Minnesota Logger Education Program
- Williams Forestry & Associates
- The Beck Group
- J. McCoy Lumber
- CM Biomass
- Schneider
- Mississippi Loggers Association
- Aymium
- Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group
- Michigan Association of Timbermen
- Fidelis Forestry, LLC