

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Not unlike 2013, the NCFA started 2014 in search of a new leader. Fortunately for the NCFA staff and membership, Frank Rackley, who was serving as the NCFA's Treasurer/President Elect, had recently retired from a 40-year career with Weyerhaeuser and was willing to step into the interim role on January 1, 2014.



*All in a year's work! Frank Rackley also volunteered to teach Forest Products History during the NCFA's Forestry Camp in Wilmington in October.*

At the time, then NCFA President Ray Allen, commented, "Frank has the proper skill set to keep our staff motivated, and he has an excellent working knowledge of our association as a member of our executive committee for the past couple of years."

Allen was correct. The NCFA did not miss a beat with Rackley at the helm as programs were maintained and new initiatives were planned for the year with the expectation that a new leader would take the helm midway through the year. In addition to his management prowess and help with program

development, Rackley also showed off some carpentry skills around the office with the installation of some new shelving in the workroom! He completed the year by volunteering to teach at the NCFA's forestry camp in Wilmington, teaching and entertaining students from Roland Grise and Murray Middle Schools.

Pryor Gibson, a strong ally of the NCFA and the forest products industry during his tenure in the North Carolina General Assembly (1989-1990, 1999-2011), relieved Rackley in May when Gibson was named the NCFA's new Executive Vice President. Appropriately, Gibson's first day on the job was Forestry Day in the Legislature. In his time in the General Assembly, Gibson chaired over 20 committees and was a chief sponsor of numerous forestry, environmental & regulatory legislation. Gibson left the House of Representatives in 2011 to serve as a senior advisor to the governor.

Gibson directed the association's legislative efforts that focused on maintaining sufficient funding for the North Carolina Forest Service, supporting existing tax incentives for forest landowners and forest products companies, and effective wildlife policy. The association also supported efforts on the national level on tax reform and water quality by petitioning support from North Carolina's congressional delegation.

In terms of programs, the NCFA took steps early in February to re-establish its Education Committee, reaching out to existing committee members and recruiting new members. Lori Worley of Weyerhaeuser was elected chair. The committee spent the majority of 2014 reviewing existing education programs, looking for opportunities of improvement and expansion.

*(continued on page 3)*

## BUDGET DISCUSSIONS DOMINATED LEGISLATIVE SESSION

It was billed as a "short session" year, but with fall elections on the horizon, the North Carolina General Assembly debated well into August before finally reaching an agreement on the state's budget and adjourning for the year. The NCFA monitored the deliberations on the budget and other items that might have impacted forestry and the forest products industry.

"While this session was dominated by the need to fund teacher pay increases and addressing our state's health & human services needs, the forestry community had issues that were of concern, and we were able to resolve the majority of them positively for our membership," stated NCFA Executive Vice President Pryor Gibson. "And the ones we didn't, we will continue to work on. We appreciate all of the effort our membership and our various partners have invested into the session."

Maybe the top issue facing forestry in 2014 as it pertained to the budget negotiations was the proposed reduction of funding for the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS).

At the beginning of the session, the General Assembly was looking to adjust the formula for funding between the state and county contributions. Thanks to the diligence of Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler and his staff, the NCFS was able to negotiate a flex-reduction to the NCFS budget of roughly \$750,000. This enables the NCFS to maintain its current staffing levels across the state.

The General Assembly also asked the NCFS to close the budget gap by charging fees for forest management plans and prescription plans that many forest landowners utilize as part of a cost-share application, a present-use value application or general forest management documentation/fulfillment.

The rate for forest management plans is now \$45 plus \$3 per acre involved in the forest management plan. The rate for prescription plans is \$45 plus \$2 per acre involved in the prescription.

Another budget item was the funding of Forestry Museum in

Whiteville. After much discussion, funding was appropriated for the museum with the caveat that the supporters of the Forestry Museum raise \$100,000 by the conclusion of the 2015 year to receive the matching state funds. The NCFA will be reaching out to the forestry community to gauge the support of the museum

*(continued on page 2)*



*Senator Michael Walters, Joe Ross, Joanne Reese and Pryor Gibson pose for a photo during Forestry Day in the Legislature.*

## ENERGIZED EDUCATION

The NCFA's Education Committee was revitalized in 2014 with the election of Lori Worley of Weyerhaeuser as chair and a list of new volunteers that joined the committee. These fresh faces joined some veterans in the education field both within the NCFA membership and other partner associations. The goal of the new committee is to evaluate existing programs and find areas of improvement as well as areas of expansion.

The committee had several productive meetings during the year and expects to move towards program development in 2015.



Teachers pose with their Goods from the Woods Boxes collected at the North Carolina professional development workshop for science teachers held in Winston-Salem.



Tonia Burger helps a student with a compass during the Land Measurement portion of the NCFA's Forestry & Environmental Camp in Wilmington.

One immediate enhancement will be the addition of a new Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Academy in the Piedmont in 2015. This Academy will join the ranks of the already successful programs operating on an annual basis in New Bern and Asheville. The New Bern and Asheville Academies hosted 70 teachers this past year. The Academies are residential workshops where teachers spend the week visiting forests and forest products facilities, seeing a direct connection between trees and the various products produced in North Carolina.

Sixth grade students in Greensboro and Wilmington participated in the NCFA's Forestry & Environmental Camp in 2014. Staffed by NCFA volunteers, students were tested on the final day of camp in a spirited competition on the topics learned earlier in the week.

The NCFA staff would like to thank all of its members who volunteered to serve on the Education Committee, volunteer at a Forestry & Environmental Camp, host a visit during the Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Academy, and/or volunteer to make a presentation to a school or civic group.

NCFA education partners/sponsors include the North Carolina State University Forestry Extension, the North Carolina Forest Service, North Carolina Farm Bureau, and the North Carolina SFI State Implementation Committee. ♦

## SFI PROVIDES CRITICAL FUNDS

Each year, the North Carolina SFI State Implementation Committee (NC SFI SIC) awards grants to deserving programs that further the principles of SFI. Collectively, the grant program distributes over \$100,000 annually.

The NCFA's Education and ProLogger programs have benefitted tremendously over the past few years from the NC SFI SIC grant program. The Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Academy, Forestry and Environmental Camps, and ProLogger training received \$55,000 in 2014. In addition, grant funds helped the NCFA produce 1,000 Goods from the Woods Boxes. Roughly 600 of these boxes were distributed to science teachers in the fall (see photo above) and the remaining boxes will be shared with members and educators upon request throughout the year. ♦

## Budget Discussions Dominated...(from page 1)

in an effort to meet this challenge grant.

Often times in budget discussions, several items will get introduced and then later dropped as the process of review and negotiations continue over an extended period of time. This legislative session was no different.

One item that was dropped included a proposed increase to the highway tax. The successful effort to keep this rate stable was led by the Automobile Dealers Association with the NCFA as one of the many supporting organizations.

Another item removed was an effort to modify the current Workers' Compensation rules. The proposed changes had the possibility of increasing the burden on employers. This effort was guided by the Home Builders Association and the Retail Merchants Association.

One item that was clarified for the state was cervid deer management by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. The focus of the issue was addressing the Chronic Waste Disease (CWD) that can impact deer herds. Both organizations are committed to a comprehensive prevention policy regarding CWD and are now equipped to meet the issue if it were to become a problem. At this point, CWD has not been a problem in North Carolina. ♦

## CONSTANT COMMUNICATIONS

The NCFA continues its efforts to keep its membership up-to-date with the important issues facing forestry and the forest products industry on the state and national levels. If you have not signed up yet for the NCFA's Weekly E-Mail Newsletter, you can do so online at [www.ncforestry.org](http://www.ncforestry.org). The weekly release includes hot topics, a calendar of events, and links to other organizations.

In 2014, the NCFA experimented with a bi-monthly production of its newsletter, TreeLine. The publication underwent a change in format as well, switching to more of a magazine stock paper. The goal is to return to a monthly publication in 2015.

Staff continues to make improvements to its new website, updating calendar of events and topics important to members in addition to accepting online payment for membership dues and registration to the NCFA's Annual Meeting.

The NCFA also maintains a Facebook page. Please join us there as well! ♦



NCFA members Fay Raynor, Chuck Daniels and Ken Stuart took advantage of Forestry Day in the Legislature and journeyed to Raleigh to meet with their elected officials.



(l-r) Grace Lawrence with the Friends of the Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District presented the BC Raynor Friend of the District Award to Chris Brown with the NCFA and Jaime Teel with the NC SFI SIC.

## PROVEN PROLOGGER

The NCFA's ProLogger program reflected the bounce back of the forest products sector as a total of 121 ProLoggers completed the base program in 2014. Courses were held in New Bern, Winston-Salem, and Marion. In total, there are 1,423 ProLoggers enrolled in the program. The continuing education training element, which was Module 14, set new achievement standards in 2014. Only a mere 83 ProLoggers fell out of the program.

The topics for the module training are established annually by representatives from the Safety, Logging and Transportation Committee (SLTC) and the North Carolina SFI State Implementation Committee (NC SFI SIC). The topics generally address updates to the SFI standard, trends in safety and environmental issues, and best business practices.

At the first meeting of the year, the SLTC and NC SFI SIC host a joint meeting where a various of topics common to both committees are addressed. In 2014, committees joined forces to update the ProLogger guidelines for 2014-2016, agreeing to several updates including the reinstatement procedure for a ProLogger who has fallen out of the program. A ProLogger can now apply for re-issntatement within the past two years by meeting certain criteria. In the past, any ProLogger who wanted to be reinstated had to take the base class again. A complete list of the guidelines can be found online at [www.ncforestry.org](http://www.ncforestry.org) under the ProLogger page.

NCFA staff would like to thank all of its member companies that sponsor module training classes throughout the year. We would especially like to thank Joe Evans, who in addition to hosting several classes annually, served as chair of the SLTC for the past two years. Thanks also to our awesome partners - Forestry Mutual Insurance, North Carolina Department of Labor, Carolina Loggers Association, and the North Carolina Forest Service. ♦



*Joe Evans chaired the SLTC for the past two years. Thanks Joe!*



*Roger Miller with the NCFS discusses water quality with ProLoggers during a base class session in Marion. Miller has volunteered to teach at the NCFA's ProLogger base class countless during his career. Thanks for your expertise Roger!*

## The Year in Review...(from page 1)

The NCFA sponsored two forestry camps for sixth grade students in Greensboro and Wilmington and supported two installments of the Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Academies in Asheville and New Bern.

In terms of professional training, the NCFA's ProLogger program continued to add new loggers through the base course. The ProLogger program continues to be a cooperative effort with Forestry Mutual Insurance Company and several state agencies such as the North Carolina Department of Labor and North Carolina Forest Service, and the Carolina Loggers Association. At year's end, there were just over 1,400 ProLoggers who earned and maintained ProLogger status.

The NCFA staff would like to thank our membership for its continued support over the past year! ♦

## MEMBERSHIP & FINANCIAL REPORT

The NCFA's membership rose steadily during 2014 and eclipsed the 4,000 member mark in the fall. The NCFA implemented a new dues structure, subdividing the existing 11 membership categories into 17 groups. The new categories sought to clarify members and to properly identify new and emerging markets within the forest products industry. The dues increase, which was roughly a 10 percent bump across the categories, was met with mixed reaction by the membership. Some were concerned about the new rate, but in the end, most members realized the association had not raised its dues since 2000.

In terms of fiscal health for the combined budgets of the NCFA and the Forest Education & Conservation Foundation, the association posted positive numbers at year's end for the second consecutive year.

To clarify budget discussions, members should know that the North Carolina Forestry Association and the Forest Education & Conservation Foundation are two separate entities on the books, working together to forward the mission of the NCFA. The North Carolina Forestry Association is a 501c6 non-profit association that enables staff to lobby on the behalf of its members. The FECF is a 501c3 which is a non-profit educational and charitable association.

The budget established by the NCFA's Executive Committee and approved the NCFA's Board of Directors at the start of 2014 put the association on a course to finish the year with a balanced budget. In actual, program expenses tracked as projected, but NCFA staff expenses were lower than expected due to staff vacancies during the year. Dues income did not quite meet budget expectations, but the totals did grow from 2013 levels. Consequently, the NCFA was able to make a modest contribution to its reserve fund.

The NCFA expects to move forward in 2015 with a balanced budget and a goal of enhancing and expanding its education and outreach programs. ♦



*NCFA members enjoyed a reception dinner on the grounds of the Grandover Resort at the NCFA's Annual Meeting. And yes, the weather cooperated!*

## REGULATORY UPDATE

At the national level, the top regulatory items were the potential listing of the Northern Long-Eared Bat to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the proposed Hardwood Checkoff program.

The NCFA joined national coalitions on both issues by signing onto petitions and reaching out to the North Carolina delegation with position statements. The NCFA does not support the listing of the Northern Long-Eared Bat on the ESA since the top threat to the bat is white-nose syndrome (WNS). The NCFA remains neutral on the Hardwood Checkoff program since member companies are on both sides of this issue. In both cases, comment periods and discussions lasted throughout the year with no clear resolution or decision.

On the state level, a tax reform approved in 2013 impacted small farmers and forestland owners in 2014. Those who do not generate \$10,000 in annual income no longer had access to a tax exemption on farm equipment and supplies. The NCFA will follow up on this issue in 2015. ♦

## TREE FARM GREATNESS



*Dwight & Judy Batts were the 2014 National Tree Farmers of the Year.*

Dwight and Judy Batts were named the American Tree Farm System's National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year at the ATFS Annual Meeting in July of 2014.

It marked the second time that a North Carolina Tree Farmer earned this prestigious title in the past six years. Bob and Jean Cooper were named the ATFS National Tree Farmers of the Year in 2008.

In addition to his volunteer efforts with the North Carolina Tree Farm program and the American Tree Farm

System, Dwight Batts has served as a member of the NCFA's Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

The North Carolina Tree Farm program has made tremendous strides since being revitalized in 2000 by the dynamic volunteer duo of Dave Woodmansee and Al Weller. The NCFA was a strong supporter of their efforts during these rebuilding years and remains a committed partner with the program that now has over 900 certified Tree Farms. For more information on the North Carolina Tree Farm program, please contact Leslie McCormick, Executive Director of the North Carolina Tree Farm Program, at (919) 917-8646 or nctreefarm@gmail.com. ♦

## HUNT CLUB INSURANCE

The NCFA's Hunting Lease Liability Insurance program continues to be popular with landowners and hunt clubs alike. Over 500 hunt clubs participated in 2014. The insurance policy runs from August 1 - August 1 each year. Please contact Ann Harper (800) 231-7723 ext. 1 for hunt club insurance assistance. ♦

## GREENSBORO GETAWAY

A total of 220 members participated in the NCFA's Annual Meeting held in Greensboro in 2014. The meeting featured some great entertainment, including the Band of Oz and Gaming Night, informative speaker presentations, and a great host in the Grandover Resort.

If you missed the meeting, the presentations are still on the NCFA's website. The morning segment focused on water quality, concluding with a panel discussion. The afternoon portion addressed transportation challenges as well as an election forecast from political expert John Davis.

On Thursday evening, NCFA member Stewart Gregg was presented with the NCFA's highest award, the Distinguished Service Award, for his contributions to forestry and the NCFA over his storied career.

"Stewart Gregg has spent his career working with landowners and promoting sustainable forestry," stated NCFA President Ray Allen. "Stewart has been a constant over the years in our education program for school children and teachers. We appreciate his willingness to donate his time and talents to teach the next generation about forestry and our forests."

A member of the Society of American Foresters for 50 years, Gregg has taught at every camp the NCFA has offered across the state for the past 15 years. From Asheville to Wilmington, Gregg has taught at them all. ♦



*(l-r) Stewart Gregg accepted the NCFA's Distinguished Service Award from NCFA President Ray Allen.*

*(left) FFPAC Chair Charles Jones and NCFA President Ray Allen present Representative Michele Presnell with the Friend of Forestry Award at the NCFA's Annual Meeting.*



*Forestry Day in the Legislature is a great opportunity for NCFA members to meet and speak with members of the General Assembly.*



In addition to making campaign contributions, the FFPAC also made two special presentations at the NCFA's Annual Meeting. Representative Michele Presnell and Senator Brent Jackson were presented with a Friend of Forestry Award for their support of forestry issues in the North Carolina General Assembly. ♦

The FFPAC maintains three levels of support among its members - Gold, Silver and Bronze. Gold members contribute \$500 annually while Silver is \$250 and Bronze is any contribution below \$250.

In 2014, the FFPAC's reverse raffle raised \$20,000 and awarded a cash prize of \$5,000 that was split between the last two ticket holders. The event will once again be held this year in conjunction with Forestry Day in the Legislature on May 20, 2015.

Formed in 1999, the Friends of Forestry Political Action Committee (FFPAC) played an active role in the 2014 fall elections by supporting 41 candidates for office by distributing \$34,500. The FFPAC raises funds annually through a reverse raffle drawing and contributions.

## FRIENDS OF FORESTRY PAC SUPPORTS 41 IN 2014

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Raleigh, NC  
Permit No. 459