



**FLORIDA  
FORESTRY  
ASSOCIATION**

# PINES & NEEDLES

Summer 2023 Volume 78, Issue 2 Printed June 21, 2023



## LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

*Provided by Association  
lobbyist Jim Spratt,  
Magnolia Strategies LLC*

Highlights of the 2023 state legislative session:

**Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: SB 1164 (Sen. Collins) / HB 1279 (Rep. Alvarez):** This legislation, also referred to as “the agency package,” contains a broad list of clean-up clarifications and modernizations within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Of specific interest to Association members, both the Senate and House bills create the Florida Farm TEAM card. Similar in concept to the Georgia GATE card, the Farm Team card would enable agriculture producers to present the card at time of purchase to receive the sales-tax exemptions on items used in agriculture which are exempt from sales-tax. The Farm Team Card presents a significant opportunity to modernize and enhance efficiency for agricultural and silvicultural operations as the card would replace the certification and affidavit forms producers are currently required to file with a retailer in order to receive the sales-tax exemptions to which they are entitled.

**Immigration (SB 1718):** This legislation, which was a priority of Governor DeSantis, updates several sections of Florida law. Most notably the new law requires all business entities with more than 25 employees to verify employment eligibility of \*new\* hires using E-Verify. Governor DeSantis has already signed this bill into law. It will become effective July 1, 2023.

The Association opposes this legislation because it creates undue, burdensome regulations by, at a minimum, placing employer hiring decisions in the hands of an unreliable federal database system.

**Taxation (HB 7063):** The legislature spent the last several weeks of session negotiating a sweeping tax overhaul which included a sales tax exemption for materials used to construct or repair permanent or temporary fencing to contain, confine, or process cattle. Most notably, however, the package **prohibits local municipalities from levying special assessments on agricultural land.** This specific piece of the larger tax package was a priority for Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson, the Association, and the agricultural industry at large.

**Interest of Foreign Countries (SB 264):** The focus of this legislation has popped up around the country in various forms and fashions. Shortly after the November election, several Florida elected officials, including Commissioner Simpson, held public events expressing an interest in prohibiting ownership of agricultural lands by foreign countries. To be clear, as defined in this legislation, the foreign countries which are the focus of the bill are defined as “foreign countries of concern” and are listed as the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Republic of Cuba, the Venezuelan regime of Nicolás Maduro, or the Syrian Arab Republic, including any agency of or any other entity of significant control of such foreign country of concern.

This legislation would, among other things, prohibit any individual, partnership, corporation or other individual or business organizations located in or owned by an individual or other business instrument tied to a Foreign Country of Concern from purchasing agricultural land.

**Agricultural Lands SB 1184 (Sen. Collins) / HB 1343 (Rep. Tuck):** As amended, this legislation prohibits the levy of any special assessment of lands classified as agriculture; authorizes construction or installation of housing for agricultural employees on agricultural lands; prohibits local governments from adopting land use or zoning restrictions, conditions, or regulations that require termination or surrender of agricultural classifications for certain property; and authorizes the use of portable restrooms as permanent facilities on agricultural lands.

This legislation **failed** on day 60 of session, yet some of its pieces found their way into other bills which passed this session.

**Trespassing SB 648 (Sen. Collins) / HB 933 (Rep. Alvarez):** This legislation would have opened another pathway for agricultural lands to be “posted” for the purposes of Florida’s trespass laws. Specifically, the bills would have given an agricultural landowner the ability to only post at a point of ingress and the corner boundaries of the property. The legislation would not have changed the existing rules or parameters which agricultural landowners follow today for purposes of “posting” their lands but would have provided an alternative for future legal posting.

This legislation **failed** to pass both chambers.

**Organic Material SB 1472: (Sen. Bradley) / HB 1361 (Rep. Truenow):** This legislation would have prohibited local governments from adopting any ordinance,

regulation, rule, or policy to prohibit, restrict, regulate, or otherwise limit collection, storage, processing, or distribution of organic material products and provided that such activities are bona fide farm operation & lands associated with such activities are agricultural.

This legislation **failed** to pass both chambers.

## Budget:

### FDACS

During the legislative session, the Florida Forestry Association enjoys the opportunity to work with the Department and the legislature on key appropriations requests from the Florida Forest Service specifically and the Department generally. The 2023 Session provided many budget success stories which are a reflection of the respect the legislature has for Commissioner Simpson and his staff. The Association wishes to thank Commissioner Simpson and the Florida legislature for their commitment to these key budget items.

There was continued robust support for the **Fresh From Florida Program** (\$17 million). In addition, the legislature invested \$100 million in the **Rural and Family Lands Program**.

Specifically within the Florida Forest Service, the legislature provided:

- o \$4.1 Million **Road, Bridges and Maintenance;**
- o \$12 Million for **Replacement Fire Equipment;**
- o \$1.4 Million for the acquisition of (2) **Fixed-wing aircraft;** and
- o \$4 Million for **Reforestation.**

Furthermore, the legislature provided the Department with the budget authority to spend the remainder of a \$97 million appropriation from 2022 which was designed to fund **Wildfire Suppression Activities.**

Lastly, the legislature also provided the Department the authority to spend the remaining balance of **Reforestation** funds which were allocated in 2022.

### FDEP

Through the Working Forest Partnership and other groups, the Association often lends support where appropriate on budget items of importance to our many partners. Most specifically, the Association is pleased that the legislature continued funding at the \$50 million level for **Spring Restoration** projects. In addition, the legislature included \$100 million for the **Florida Forever Program.**

## BMP IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY RESULTS



For the 2021 Silviculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Implementation Survey, foresters with the Florida Forest Service evaluated 3,490 practices on 155 individual forestry operations (sites). This cooperative effort involved 79 individual public and private landowners and covered 18,859 acres in 37 Florida counties. Of the visited sites, 125 were located on private non-industrial, 11 on industrial, and 19 on public forest lands.

Eighty-five percent of the sites surveyed were 100% compliant with all applicable Silviculture BMPs. No site scored below 82% for its overall BMP implementation rate. The average overall Silviculture BMP compliance rate for all sites was 99.1%, a slight decrease from 99.7% in 2019.

The full report can be found online at [fdacs.gov/bmps](https://fdacs.gov/bmps) in the Program Resources box.

## RURAL AND FAMILY LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM



Florida Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson is encouraging landowners to apply to the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.

The Rural and Family Lands Protection Program is an agricultural land preservation program designed to protect important agricultural lands through the acquisition of permanent agricultural land conservation easements.

The program partners with farmers and ranchers through conservation easements and aims to safeguard working agricultural operations that contribute significantly to the state's economy and production of food and fiber.

Simpson helped secure \$400 million in funding for the program over the last two years.

Landowners can submit their online application through July 27 at [bit.ly/RFLPP](https://bit.ly/RFLPP).

## FEDERAL PROTECTION FOR HOGNOSE SNAKE IN FUTURE?



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to reconsider extending Endangered Species Act protections to the nonvenomous southern hog-nosed snake.

The **Center for Biological Diversity** petitioned the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2012 to protect the snake, which inhabits Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. In 2015, the service announced that, based on the best available science, protections for the tiny snake "may be warranted." In 2019, the service reversed course, denying the snake endangered species status and the protections that come with it. The center filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in January challenging the 2019 decision. As a result, Fish and Wildlife agreed to re-evaluate and make a new decision by August 2025.

## MASTER LOGGER TRAINING SCHEDULE



### CLE Workshops:

July 20 – Virtual  
November (TBD) – Field Training  
December 7 – Virtual

### Initial Core Training\*:

October 12th - Virtual

\*Please note that this is now a one-day class.

Registration information can be found online at [FLForestry.org/Programs/Master-Logger](https://FLForestry.org/Programs/Master-Logger)

If you have any questions, please contact Krista Harvard at 850.222.5646 or [Krista@FLForestry.org](mailto:Krista@FLForestry.org)

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

As we embark on a new century, we remain grateful to all those who have made these past 100 years possible: our members! We are excited to welcome these businesses and individuals who have joined us this spring:

Adleman, Linda & Harold	MBF Family Trust
Allen, Marvin	McDuffie, Dal & Lee
Alonso, Saul	McNeill-Walker LLC
Archer, Jeff	Messick, Dalton
Barineau, Chase	Montoya, Eugene & Jimmie
Bear Creek Mine LLC	Mountain East, Inc.
Benton, Stephen	Pafford, Hank
Blakely, Mildred	Pafford, Sr., Tony
Bradwell, Willis R	Paramore, Richard
Bristol, Clifford S.	Parker, Gerald
Butler, Robert	Peddie, Robert
Carnes, Robert	Peeples, Justin
Chason, Sterling	P+J Timber Inc
Clara Farm, Inc.	Pelt, Justin
Clariant Corporation	Presnell, Paul
Conner, Franklin G.	Price, Jacqueline A.
Crossbow Land Company, LLC	Rogers, Walter Carlton
Cypress R Farms Inc.	Roper, Tyler
Delk, Jena	Royals, Nate
Dogwood Farm	Sadler, Lee
Eubanks, Johnny B.	Segovia, Saud
Feagle, Marlin	Shade Farm Properties LLC
First Coast Land & Timber, LLC	Shelton, Grady W.
Fowler, Grant	Shimer, Leon
Francise & Francise, Inc.	Singletery, Larry
Gaskin Side Camp, LLC	Smith, James R.
Harrell Family Partnership #1, LTD	Stoddard, Darrell
Hazen Family Partnership	Stone, Ian
Hickory Hill Farms, LLC	Superior Pine Hunting Club
Hurst, Stephen John	Tarapani Banther & Associates LLC
Hurtado, Arnoldo	Tarapani, Townsend
Jax Tree Removal	Thompson, James H.
Jones, Cory	Trimble Forestry
Jones, Jessie	VanLandingham Farms, Inc.
LDD Timber, LLC	Walbolt, Sylvia
Lewis, Eddie	Wells, Timothy
M+M Land Services	Wilkerson, Alvin
Mann, John P.	Winn, Stephen R.
Maxwell Farms LLC	Yon Creek Plantation, LLC

## ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

### 2023 ANNUAL MEETING & TRADE SHOW



The Florida Forestry Association's 2023 Annual Meeting & Trade Show is an event that forestry professionals and enthusiasts should not miss. This year, the Association is celebrating its 100th anniversary, which makes the event even more special. The meeting provides an excellent opportunity for anyone interested in forestry to learn, network, and celebrate this historic milestone.

The meeting will be held August 29-31 at the beautiful Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Miramar Beach, FL. This location is a longtime favorite of Association members for many reasons: good scenery, good friends, and good times can always be found there!

Attendees will have the opportunity to attend informative sessions and workshops, as well as interact with other forestry professionals from around the state. The event provides a platform for professionals to exchange ideas, share experiences, and build relationships. Attendees will have the chance to meet with industry leaders, government officials, and representatives from various organizations.

The Annual Meeting is also a chance to have some fun. The event features various social activities, including a golf tournament, a women's brunch, and a silent auction that seems to get bigger and better each year. This year, we are also adding a LIVE auction to the mix!

In honor of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Swinging Medallions, the iconic South Carolina shag band best known for their classic hit, "Double Shot of My Baby's Love," will be performing live on Thursday evening after the Closing Dinner! Make sure to pack your dancing shoes. This is sure to be a night to remember.

For event details, registration, and hotel reservations, please visit [FLForestry.org/Annual-Meeting](https://FLForestry.org/Annual-Meeting).

If you're interested in sponsoring or donating an item for the auctions, please contact our Director of Membership, Whitney Hough, at 850.222.5646 or [Whitney@FLForestry.org](mailto:Whitney@FLForestry.org).

We look forward to celebrating our 100th anniversary, marking both the progress we have made and our excitement for the future. We hope you will be able to join us.

### HOTEL



The Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort has been named the #1 resort on Florida's incomparable Emerald Coast. Combining a picture-perfect beach experience with exquisite dining, fabulous shopping & top-rated live entertainment, the resort offers something for everyone! Room rate: \$159 + resort fee. **Reserve by August 4, 2023.**

Make reservations by phone: call 1.800.320.8115. Tell them you are attending the Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting - Code 24M9Q9 - to receive our special room rate. Reserve online: visit the Annual Meeting tab of the Association's website at [FLForestry.org](https://FLForestry.org).

## 2023 TIMBER TOPPERS GOLF CLASSIC



Do not miss this year's Timber Toppers Golf Classic! The resort's golf courses have earned it a designation as a top golfing destination! Use this registration form to sign up to hit the links for an invaluable networking experience with other forestry professionals and friends! Golf is open to all Association members and their guests. Meeting registration is not required to play in the tournament, but golfers must register for the tournament in advance to ensure a spot.

### FIREARM RAFFLE

\$20 donation per ticket or donate \$100 and receive 6 tickets. The winner may choose ONE of the following:

- Sig Sauer P365 X-Macro 9mm
- Remington 700 .270 WIN
- CZ 712 12 Gauge

Drawing will be held 8/31/23 at the Annual Meeting. You do not have to be present to win. For tickets or more information, please contact Whitney Hough at 850.222.5646 or Whitney@FLForestry.org.

## WOMEN OF FORESTRY NETWORKING BRUNCH



Ladies, please join us as we celebrate the incredible women working in forestry and the amazing spouses of those in the field. We're taking it to the next level with fantastic conversation, lasting connections and delicious cocktails.

The brunch is free, but you must register to attend.

## AUCTIONS



In honor of our centennial celebration, we are going live! In addition to our traditional silent auction, we will also be hosting a live auction this

year. We need your support to make this year's auctions the biggest and best we've ever had.

You can be a part of this effort by 1) donating items and 2) bidding on items. We always have phenomenal donations, so we encourage everyone to bid high and bid often on them!

### Suggested Items:

*Sports Items and Autographed Memorabilia*  
*Hotels, Trips and Vacation Home Rentals*  
*Golf Equipment and Outings • Hunting and Fishing Equipment*  
*Experiences: Hunting Trips, Fishing Trips, Behind The-Scenes Tours, Etc.*  
*Gift Certificates (Retail and Restaurants)*  
*Knives and Guns • Art • Hand-Crafted Wood Items • Jewelry*  
*Tickets to Entertainment or Sporting Events*

All donors are welcome to bring business cards, brochures, etc. to put on the table with the auction item.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact [Whitney@FLForestry.org](mailto:Whitney@FLForestry.org) or 850.222.5646.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Tuesday, August 29, 2023

- 10:00 AM–6:00 PM Trade Show Set-Up & Silent Auction Open
- 1:00 PM–6:00 PM Registration Desk Open
- 5:30 PM–7:00 PM Registrant Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet

### Wednesday, August 30, 2023

- 6:30 AM–6:00 PM Registration Desk Open
- 6:30 AM–8:00 AM Early Bird Coffee
- 6:30 AM–10:00 AM Trade Show Set-Up
- 6:45 AM–7:45 AM Tee-Time Coffee & Golf Registration
- 8:00 AM–1:00 PM Timber Toppers Golf Tournament Shotgun Start
- 10:00 AM–7:00 PM Trade Show & Silent Auction Open
- 10:00 AM–11:30 AM Women of Forestry Networking Brunch
- 10:00 AM–12:00 PM Breakout Sessions:  
 Pitch Canker Tolerance: *Andrew Sims, UF/IFAS Cooperative Forest Genetics Research Program*  
 Mass Timber Construction: *Chris & Shawna Meyer, University of Miami School of Architecture*
- 12:00 PM–2:00 PM Lunch on your own
- 2:15 PM–3:45 PM General Session:  
 History of Forestry Regulations - *Jeff Vowell, F4 Tech*  
 Succession Planning – *Tammy Cushing, UF/IFAS FFGS*
- 4:00 PM–5:00 PM Board Meeting
- 5:30 PM–7:00 PM Welcome Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet

### Thursday, August 31, 2023

- 6:45 AM–12:00 PM Registration Desk Open
- 6:45 AM–8:00 AM Early Bird Coffee
- 8:00 AM–10:00 AM Awards Breakfast
- 10:00 AM–4:00 PM Trade Show & Silent Auction Open
- 10:30 AM–11:45 AM General Session:  
 Florida Climate Smart Agriculture Initiative:  
*Tom Hoctor, UF Center for Landscape Conservation Planning, & Ernie Shae, Solutions from the Land*  
 Current Status & Challenges Facing Logging Businesses in FL & GA: *Joe Conrad, UGA*  
*Harley Langdale Jr. Center for Forest Business*
- 11:45 AM–1:30 PM Lunch on your own
- 11:45 AM–1:15 PM Master Logger Lunch:\*  
 Identifying & Managing Forests of Exceptional Conservation Value: *Ann Duff, WestRock*
- 1:30 PM–2:20 PM General Session:  
 Leading Generations to Make Bold Change:  
*Megan Cantrell, UF Department of Agricultural Education & Communication*
- 2:30 PM–4:00 PM Trade Show Social & Silent Auction Final Bidding
- 5:00 PM–6:00 PM Dinner Reception
- 6:00 PM–9:00 PM Closing Dinner & Swingin' Medallions
- 8:00 PM–9:00 PM Auction Item Pickup & Trade Show Teardown

**\*THE MASTER LOGGER LUNCH IS OPEN TO EVERYONE. HOWEVER, ONLY MASTER LOGGERS REGISTERED FOR THE FULL MEETING MAY ATTEND AT NO CHARGE. OTHERS WISHING TO ATTEND MUST PURCHASE A TICKET BY AUGUST 15, 2023.**

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