



2026 LEGISLATIVE POSITION STATEMENTS

The Florida House and Senate will convene on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, to begin the annual state legislative session in Tallahassee. Below we have shared the Association's legislative position statements that will form the foundation of our advocacy efforts for the session.

ISSUE: Industry Market Enhancement

In the wake of Hurricanes Michael, Idalia, and Helene, timberland owners, loggers and manufacturers have all struggled to find a "new normal." In addition to the storms, manufacturing facilities, world markets, development pressure, and other factors have stressed the fragile balance between forest production and end users.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

We encourage investment in the development of existing and new outlets for wood and wood products in the state of Florida. This includes but is not limited to legislation which creates incentives, tax credits, and workforce training to equip our forest communities to compete and thrive in the changing timber market.

ISSUE: Mass Timber

Mass timber is a relatively new product to the market and has demonstrated its comparability to other materials related to wind, fires, load, and cost. The 2021 International Building Code recognized mass timber as an appropriate material to be used in new construction projects. However, the Florida Building Commission has not yet included mass timber in its updates to the state building code.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

In the absence of clear technical reasons for the continued denial of Mass Timber Provisions in the Florida Building Code, the Association supports legislation directing the Florida Building Commission to include mass timber as an approved material in the state building code.

ISSUE: Florida Building Commission

Florida's Building Commission is currently comprised of 19 members appointed by the governor with preferred input from a variety of stakeholders. Arguably, the wood and wood products industry has

very little opportunity to provide direct input on people seeking appointments to the Commission.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports legislation which expands the Commission to include a specific representative from the wood and wood products industry or at a minimum updating the Florida Building Commission statutes to allow the wood and wood products industry to receive preferred status on the appropriate existing commission seats.

ISSUE: Prohibition on the use of wood/lumber

While the state was largely spared in the 2025 hurricane season, there is no doubt we have seen many strong storms impact the peninsula in recent years. To this end, insurance rates continue to be extremely volatile while the state and local jurisdictions seek to update building codes to mitigate storm damage. To account for the "Florida" challenges, it has been suggested that the state limit or restrict the types of materials which can be used to build in Florida's coastal communities.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association opposes any legislation or rules which seek to restrict, prohibit or eliminate the use of dimensional lumber or other wood products in residential, commercial or industrial buildings. The Association strongly supports the addition of mass timber into the Florida Building Code.

ISSUE: Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

PFAS are a complex family of chemicals which are critical in many of the products we use to power our lives. Not surprisingly, PFAS are not all created equal; each chemical has its own unique structure and use. Recently, legacy PFAS have shown up in locations such as airports, military bases, and fire training centers, most likely due to PFAS being used in many Class B fire suppression foams. Both the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Protection have contemplated new regulations and water quality standards which would include criteria for PFAS. Given their unique nature, there is still much debate on the impacts of PFAS.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports a measured and scientifically defensible approach to the creation and adoption of PFAS standards. Standards must also take technical and economic feasibility into consideration, as well as the attainability of any proposed metrics or numeric criteria for PFAS.

ISSUE: Farm TEAM Card

A priority of Commissioner Wilton Simpson, the 2023 Legislature created the Florida Farm Tax Exempt Agricultural Materials (TEAM) card. Similar to the Georgia GATE card, the Florida card was created to allow farmers to present a card to received sales tax exemptions for which they were entitled as opposed to filling out affidavits at every retail purchase point. The card was created to streamline the purchase process and provide a more efficient process for the farmer.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports the creation of a card similar in concept to the TEAM card, which would be available to those specific companies who directly work in the agriculture or forestry industries and by the nature of use are entitled to certain tax exemptions.

ISSUE: Trucking Weights

The Association has been and continues to be a vocal supporter of a permanent increase in truck weights on federal highways. In 2010, the state legislature approved an increase in truck weights up to 88,000 pounds on non-interstate highways. The limit on federal interstate highways is currently 80,000 pounds.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports federal legislation or policy to permanently increase truck weights for transporters of forestry and ag products on federal interstate highways.

ISSUE: Sales Tax Exemption

The 2022 legislature expanded sales tax exemptions on farm trailers used in the production and transport of forestry and agricultural crops. However, only trailers owned by a farmer as defined in Florida law qualify for the exemption. This excludes a significant segment of trailers used by loggers and other forestry service providers.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports legislation to expand the state sales tax exemption on trailers to include those used in logging and other forest service industries.

ISSUE: Tort Reform

Frivolous lawsuits and abuse of the court system directly impact the cost of doing business in Florida, create higher insurance premiums, slow job growth and creation, and remove any predictability from a system where profit margins are increasingly smaller. We appreciate the work Florida's legislature has

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completed over the years to minimize frivolous lawsuits and protect all business including Florida's wood and wood products industry. We recognize there is still work needed within the broader world of tort reform.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports any efforts by the legislature to further discourage or eliminate frivolous lawsuits. Whether they are broadly focused or narrowly tailored to a specific area, each improvement can lead to reduced business costs and a stable business environment.

ISSUE: Immigration Reform

Over the past several years, there have been multiple state legislative proposals requiring employers to use the federal E-Verify system to verify the legal status of their workers.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association believes immigration reform is a national issue and should be dealt with at the federal level rather than on a state-by-state basis.

ISSUE: Tangible Personal Property Taxes

Under Florida law, businesses are required to pay taxes on all tangible personal property. The taxes are collected by local governments and are a vital part of local government revenues. Florida's constitution provides a nominal amount of relief through an exemption to a small portion of the tax, but agricultural and forest products businesses pay a significant bill statewide.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports passage of the proposed Florida constitutional amendment to eliminate tangible personal property taxes on agricultural and forest lands.

ISSUE: Labor Contracting

The United States Department of Labor is currently working on new regulations which have the potential to fundamentally change how independent contractors are classified by employers. Most notably, the proposed rules would require a contractor to calculate the hours worked for each individual client; in the event one client receives the predominant daily/ weekly work hours, the contractor would be considered a direct employee of that client.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association opposes any proposed rules that would fundamentally change the contractor/client relationship. We believe all businesses should be able to contract out specific duties as best suits their business model, regardless of the hours involved.

ISSUE: Critical Wetlands

During the 2023 Florida legislative session, the legislature passed updates to Florida water law. These updates enabled water management districts to develop a database of wetlands and other hydrologic features for the purposes of conservation and to meet existing requirements under Florida's minimum flows and levels (MFLs) laws. While the intent is laudable, in practice some water management districts have set up

systems where landowners who have critical wetland features are automatically included in the database and must take action to "opt out."

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association supports legislation or rules that allow impacted landowners to "opt into" inclusion in the database, rather than requiring them to "opt out."

ISSUE: Air Quality Regulation/EPA's PM 2.5 Rule updates

Florida remains the national model for the success of prescribed burning as an effective land management and wildfire mitigation tool. Although Florida's program receives much national recognition, there are groups who aggressively push to eliminate fire as a management tool. EPA's recent move to lower the PM 2.5 microns standards have the potential to severely impact prescribed burning in Florida and throughout the nation. The PM 2.5 rules set standards and ranges of particulate matter in the air for the purposes of determining air quality and public safety. The new standard of 9 microns per cubic meter is very low and provides almost no variance from baseline natural air measures absent of human activity. This change by EPA to a lower PM 2.5 standard will undoubtedly limit the number of actual burning day in a calendar year in Florida. In some locations throughout the U.S., it could eliminate prescribed fire completely, which in turn increases the threat of wildfire and its severe impact on our nation's air quality.

Florida Forestry Association Position:

The Association strongly opposes rules which unrealistically limit land managers' ability to utilize prescribed fire as a cost-effective and efficient management tool. The Association supports allowing the removal of prescribed fire emissions from annual state standards to protect prescribed fire programs nationwide. As Florida's population continues to expand and people move into forest-rich areas, it would be foolish and dangerous to eliminate our most effective wildfire prevention tool.

Priority Budget Issues:

Florida Forest Service –

Rural & Family Lands Program	\$150 M
Wildfire Equipment Replacement	\$20 M
FL's Future Forest Reforestation Program	\$4 M
Maintenance	\$21 M
Land Management	\$20 M
Emergency Wildfire Management	\$64 M

UF/IFAS –

Workload	\$6.3 M
4H Camp Cherry Lake Facility	\$5 M
Center for Artificial Intelligence in Ag	\$4.5 M

Department of Environmental Protection –

Springs Protection Funding	\$50 M
Florida Forever Funding	\$100 M

EUDR UPDATE



Member states in the European Council have formally adopted amendments to the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). This marks the last major legislative step to introduce a new one-year delay and simplifications to the new law requiring companies to ensure that products imported to or exported from EU markets no longer contribute to deforestation and forest degradation globally.

Highlights of changes that will impact forestry include:

- 12-month postponement for all operators:** A one-year delay for all operators and traders until December 30, 2026, with an additional six-month extension for micro and small operators (until June 2027).
- Commission simplification review:** The Commission is tasked with conducting a simplification review by April 30, 2026, which will focus on reducing administrative burdens and proposing legislative amendments where necessary.
- Streamlined due-diligence responsibilities within the EU:** Only the first downstream operator in the EU supply chain will be responsible for collecting and retaining the reference number of the initial due diligence statement. They will not be required to pass the numbers further down the chain.

JACK VOGEL JOINS FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL LEGENDS



In February, longtime Association member and past president John Thomas "Jack" Vogel will take his place among Florida agriculture's most distinguished leaders with his induction into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame.

When: Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 6 PM EST

Where: Entertainment Hall
Florida State Fairgrounds
4800 U.S. Highway 301 N.
Tampa, Florida

Buy tickets: bit.ly/VogelAgHallofFame

For more information about the banquet, the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame, and Jack Vogel, please visit FloridaAgHallofFame.org

MASTER LOGGERS AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Registration is now open for our 2026 CLE workshops and core training.



Dates for our 2026 CLE Workshops:

February 28 – Branford

June 25 – Virtual

October 8 – Virtual

December 10 – Virtual

Dates for the 2026 Core Training:

May 6 – Gateway College, Lake City

October 22 – Virtual

Register and learn more at

bit.ly/LoggerTraining

Questions?

Contact Krista Harvard: Krista@FLForestry.org or 850.222.5646.

WORKING FOREST PARTNERS



Working Forest Partners (WFP) is a diverse statewide coalition with representatives from all aspects of the forest industry, environmental advocacy groups, and governmental agencies who share an appreciation of Florida's working forests and their significant benefits. The group held its annual roundtable discussion on December 12, 2025, at Tall Timbers Research Station in Tallahassee.

Co-chaired by Mark Milligan, the Association's Communications Committee chair, and Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida's Executive Director, the group discussed issues with areas of common interest and support. The group discussed challenges currently facing Florida forestry and brainstormed together to offer vital solutions.

"These meetings are important because they keep lines of communication open and strengthen our alliance," said Interim Association Executive Vice President Brittany Varn. "Our WFP friends understand that solid markets make it possible for forestland owners to keep growing trees, ensuring the sustainability of Florida's forests. They have stood with us as we battle to have mass timber included in the state's building code, for example. We are grateful for their support and look forward to working with them on other issues of mutual concern."

Many thanks to all the Partners and Association members who took part in this beneficial meeting!

VISIT OUR ONLINE STORE



Show your support for the Association with our branded merchandise! We are currently featuring a selection of stylish hats, visors, polos, socks, and ties that will up your fashion game while promoting the industry you love.

Scan the QR code to shop now!

*Look good. Feel proud.
Support the mission.*



MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS & SHOOTS

RSVP for membership meetings to Whitney at 850.222.5646 or Whitney@FLForestry.org

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

11 AM-1 PM (Eastern)
Bradford Sportsmen's Farm
Graham, Florida
RSVP Deadline: March 4

Sporting clays shoot immediately following.
Team of 4: \$500, includes cart
Individual: \$130, includes cart

Register for this shoot online at bit.ly/bradfordshoot or by scanning this QR code:



Wednesday, March 19, 2026

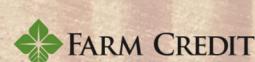
11 AM-1 PM (Central)
Hard Labor Creek Plantation
Chipley, Florida
RSVP Deadline: March 12

Skeet shoot immediately following.
Team of 4: \$500
Individual: \$130

Register for this shoot online at bit.ly/hardlaborshoot or by scanning this QR code:



LUNCHES PROVIDED BY:



or by mailing a check to:
Florida Forestry Association/402 East Jefferson Street/Tallahassee, FL 32301



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

We are excited to welcome these businesses and individuals:

Cooper, Richard

Davenport, Christopher

Davis, Tommy

Dewey B Crowe Jr, Etal

English Family Enterprises LTD

Fearington, Mercer

Harrell, Lee

Harrison Millard C Revocable Trust

Hollingsworth, Steven

Iamonia LLC

Lewiswood Properties

Mistletoe Lodge LLC

Nelson, Brandy

Oak Point Trust

Old Magnolia LLC

Parker, Bill

Playground Hunt Club

Quinque Farm

Roberts, Fred

Tedesco, Lynne

The Back 40 Hunt Club

Tolley Silviculture LLC

Van Cleave Enterprises, Inc.

Wallace, Michael

Watkins Properties LLC

Wooten, William

GET INVOLVED!



The success of any organization depends on an engaged membership. An easy and effective way to be active in the Association is through our committees: Government Relations, TREEPAC, Environmental, Steering and Communications.

To join a committee, go to bit.ly/FLForestryCommittees

HUNTING FOR WAYS TO SAVE?



Did you know Association members receive special reduced rates for liability insurance for hunting leases and timberland from Outdoor Underwriters? For more information, please contact Krista Harvard (850.222.5646) or Krista@FLForestry.org.

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