

TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO THE FOREST INDUSTRY, WE NEED TO BE ATTRACTIVE

by Eric Kingsley | FRA Northeastern Region Consultant
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It's no secret that the forest products sector needs to attract people into the industry. No matter what sector or state, anyone I talk to tells me that recruiting and retaining talent is one of their significant challenges. I've written about this before for FRA, including *Exposure to the Woods: Bringing Newcomers to the Forest Industry* and *The Forest Industry Needs More Young Talent*.

In a recent conversation with an industry leader about this issue, I was told what should be strikingly obvious: If we want to attract people to our industry, the industry needs to be attractive. Once you hear this, it's self-evident. This has made me think about what makes the current and future forest industry attractive and how we can position a career in the woods or in a mill as a career path for people to explore.

- While the forest industry need not be the most financially rewarding job a potential employee considers, it does need to provide a level of base pay and benefits that allow the individual – and perhaps a family – to have the opportunity to earn a living and provide a benefits package that addresses health and retirement. Money (and total compensation) isn't everything, but if the job isn't paying enough to provide a living, it's going to be tough to attract people.
- People like to work in the woods, and the forest industry provides very real opportunities to spend your days outside, away from an office, doing something productive. Recent research shows that logging and forestry rate (very) high for on-the-job happiness and meaningful work and low for stress. On a recent mill tour, a couple of employees expressed to me how much they like being part of a team and how much they like the tangible progress they make each day.
- Many young people are in search of a job with a purpose – one that places a strong emphasis on sustainability. The forest industry fulfills this requirement better than most – the growing, managing, and harvesting of trees embraces the responsible use of a renewable resource. Producing products that store carbon and provide environmental benefits, the industry contributes significantly to sustainability – something many workers say is important to their career choice.
- We're at the beginning of an exciting time in the industry (note – "exciting" and "stable" are not synonyms). Paper, lumber, pellets, and other products are going to be the dominant products for the near future, but there are so many emerging ways to utilize wood on the near horizon. Mass timber, biofuels, biochar and so many other products are at the beginning of their evolution. I recently toured a house 3-D printed using wood fiber. Will all of these products succeed? Of course not, but for people drawn to innovation, the forest industry provides a vast frontier.

Of course, for any of this to matter we have to communicate these benefits and opportunities to young people, and expose them to the opportunity, and work together to make the forest products industry an attractive place to work.



NRCS PROGRAMS

USDA'S Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers federally funded, voluntary conservation programs to help private forest landowners, farmers, and ranchers protect and conserve the natural resources we all depend on. The programs support healthy soil, cleaner air and water, and wildlife habitats, while helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

NRCS conservation programs are incentive-based and provide financial assistance to implement conservation practices. NRCS also offers free conservation technical assistance to help producers plan practices. NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs year-round, but applications are ranked and funded by funding cycles, which have state-specific application dates.

The major conservation programs available to forestland owners include:

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers technical and financial assistance for working lands, including field crops, specialty crops, organic, confined livestock and grazing, and non-industrial private forest land.

Rather than take land out of production, EQIP helps farmers maintain or improve production while conserving natural resources on working landscapes.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers technical and financial assistance to help agricultural and forest producers take their conservation efforts to the next level.

The program is designed to compensate agricultural and forest producers who agree to increase their level of conservation by adopting additional conservation activities and maintaining their baseline level of conservation. CSP is for producers who are passionate about conservation and environmental stewardship.

CSP may provide many benefits, including increased crop productivity, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements, and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques. If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven approach to conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural land.

By leveraging collective resources and collaborating on common goals, RCPP demonstrates the power of public-private partnerships in delivering results for agriculture and conservation. Potential partners are invited to propose RCPP projects where NRCS and partners co-invest in impactful and innovative solutions to on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns.

Please contact your local NRCS office for more information about these programs.



USDA HURRICANE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

Storm season is here. As a part of your hurricane preparation activities, you should have your farm records completed with USDA Farm Service

Agency. They administer several disaster recovery programs that provide financial assistance to farmers and landowners to help them clean up debris, replant crops and trees, replace damaged equipment and infrastructure, and implement other recovery activities. Recovery assistance will likely be authorized within weeks of a major storm or other disaster, and you will want to be ready.

You will need a farm number to apply for the programs. If you have not worked with USDA before, make an appointment with the Farm Service Agency at your local USDA Service Center to complete forms, register for your farm number, and ensure your eligibility when assistance programs become available. Get this step done now if you haven't yet.

More information about getting started with USDA is at farmers.gov/working-with-us. To find your nearest center, please visit bit.ly/USDAServiceCenters.

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Contact Whitney Hough for details:
850.222.5646 or Whitney@FLForestry.org



D.M. STRATTON HONORED AS 2024 SOUTHEASTERN REGION OUTSTANDING LOGGER



The Forest Resources Association (FRA) and STIHL, Inc. honored D.M. Stratton, LLC of Green Cove Springs, FL, as the 2024 Southeastern Region Outstanding Logger award winner at FRA's Southeastern Region Meeting in Wakulla Springs, FL, in March.

Dillon Stratton III graciously accepted the award on behalf of his family and the entire D.M. Stratton team. He acknowledged that his employees, faith, and family were the reason for his company's success.

D.M. Stratton, LLC was founded in 1958 and is currently a third-generation, family-owned business based in Green Cove Springs, FL. The Strattons are the quintessential logging family, with Dillon (III) taking ownership of the business from his father (Dillon M. Stratton Jr.) in 2015.

D.M. Stratton, LLC received the 2022 Florida Logger of the Year Award at the Florida Forestry Association's Annual Meeting.

MASTER LOGGER TRAINING SCHEDULE 2024

CLE Workshops:

July 18 – Virtual
October 30 – Tallahassee
December 5 – Virtual 2024



Initial Core Training*:

October 10 – Virtual

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

FLORIDA FORESTRY TEACHERS' TOUR 2024



June 18-21, educators from around the state gathered in Fernandina Beach for the Florida Forestry Teachers' Tour. This annual event gives the forest industry the opportunity to tell the forestry story to teachers of all subjects and grade levels. They take back the information and insights they learn in this four-day hands-on experience and incorporate them into their lessons and activities during the school year.

Many thanks to all the sponsors and tour stops who make this event a continuing success! Special thanks to the Florida Forest Service for leading the charge on this important endeavor!

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Many thanks to our new members who joined this quarter and also to the people who recruited them!

Austin, Farley	Miller Byrdine as Trustee
Bell Family Revocable Trust	and Hamilton Anita Yvonne as Trustee
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MG Land Development LLC	

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION



ANNUAL MEETING & TRADE SHOW

Join your friends and business associates at the beautiful Omni Amelia Island Resort for three days of informational sessions and networking events. Learn the current buzz on hot topics. Make new contacts and visit with old friends.

The state's largest forestry trade show is held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting, featuring exhibits by the industry's cutting-edge equipment and service providers. Make sure to meet with all the representatives to find out the latest and greatest developments for forestry professionals in today's marketplace!

If you have any questions, please call the Association office (850.222.5646). We look forward to seeing you in Amelia Island!

REGISTRATION

Register online at FLForestry.org/AnnualMeeting.

HOTEL INFORMATION



The luxurious Omni Amelia Island Resort is nestled in the midst of 1,350 acres with 3.5 miles of private beach. Unparalleled views of the Atlantic Ocean and spacious accommodations can

be found in all rooms. You will undoubtedly be charmed by the unique blend of sea- and forest-themed decorations found throughout the resort.

Room rate: \$189 + \$18 resort fee. Reserve by July 29, 2024.

To reserve online, please visit the Annual Meeting section of the Association's website -- FLForestry.org. To make reservations by phone, call 1.888.261.6161. Tell them you are attending the Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting to receive our special room rate.

2024 Membership Contest

Every \$1 in dues generated = 1 point
Example: Friend of Forestry member @ \$70 = 70 points

The recruiter with the most points (250 minimum) on 12.31.24 wins!

Prize: \$250 Visa Gift card compliments of **hello CREDIT UNION**

Contact Whitney Hough (Whitney@FLForestry.org) for details.



ASSOCIATION ADDRESS

The Association is phasing out the use of its P.O. Box. Please use our street address instead:

**402 East Jefferson Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301**

2024 TIMBER TOPPERS GOLF CLASSIC

Wednesday, August 28, At 8 AM ET



Do not miss this year's Timber Toppers Golf Classic! The Amelia River Club is quickly becoming the premier golfing experience on Amelia Island. It offers something for all golfers! Sculpted around a forest of live oaks, sabal palms, pines, and wax myrtles, this Tom Jackson-designed track is one of the most prestigious courses in all of North Florida.

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.**

WOMEN OF FORESTRY NETWORKING BRUNCH

Wednesday, August 28, At 9:30 AM ET



The Women of Forestry Brunch is back by popular demand! Please join us for a casual networking event over mimosas. The brunch aims to encourage women in the forestry community to get to know each other better.

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

THE SWINGIN' MEDALLIONS

Thursday, August 29, At 7 PM ET



Bring your dancing shoes and bop to the beat of the Swingin' Medallions! This iconic band will bring all the best beach music to life with their superb sound and showmanship.



AUCTIONS

In addition to our traditional silent auction, we will also be hosting a live auction again 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 • Jewelry
Hotels, Trips and Vacation Home Rentals
Golf Equipment and Outings • Hand-Crafted Wood Items
Hunting and Fishing Equipment Experiences:
Hunting Trips, Fishing Trips
Behind The-Scenes Tours, Etc. • Knives and Guns • Art
Gift Certificates (Retail and Restaurants)
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 or 850.222.5646.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, August 27, 2024

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM Trade Show Set-Up & Silent Auction Open
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM Registration Desk Open
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Forestry Council Meeting
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Prescribed Burn Working Group
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Registrant Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

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
9:30 AM - 11:00 AM Women of Forestry Networking Brunch
Logging, Jessica Johnson
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Breakout Session:
Navigating Forestry Regulations, Allan Charles
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM Lunch on your own
2:00 PM - 4:05 PM General Session:
Resilience in Florida: Opportunities through Forestry, Wesley Brooks
Use of AI to Quantify Environmental Services, Alina Zare
NRCS Funding Programs, Juan Hernandez
4:15 PM - 5:15 PM Board Meeting
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Welcome Reception/Exhibitor Meet & Greet

Thursday, August 29, 2024

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
10:00 AM - 11:25 AM General Session:
Alpha-gal Syndrome (AGS) & Other Tickborne Diseases, Samantha Davis & Tom Termer
European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), Mark Pitts
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM Breakout Session:
Farm Bill Program, Juan Hernandez & NRCS Staff
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Lunch on your own
12:00 PM - 1:15 PM Master Logger Lunch:
Safety-on-Site, Darlene McDonald
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM General Session:
Forest Economics, Marshall Thomas
2:45 PM - 3:45 PM Trade Show Social & Silent Auction Final Bidding
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM Dinner Reception
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM President's Dinner
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM The Swingin' Medallions

Available ML Credits: 8 hours • Available SAF Credits: 8 hours

FIREARM RAFFLE

\$20 donation per ticket or donate \$100 and receive 6 tickets!

ONE Winner's Choice of any ONE of the following:

- Mossberg SA-410 Turkey Bottomland
- Smith & Wesson M&P 10mm
- Tikka T3X Lite Bolt .243

Drawing to be held August 29 during the Annual Meeting Trade Show Social. 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.

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