A photograph of a tall pine forest. The trees are very tall and thin, with a dense canopy of green needles. In the lower right foreground, a person is standing, providing a sense of scale. The overall scene is a lush, green forest.

The Alabama Forestry Commission

Caring for Alabama's Future

A Message From the State Forester

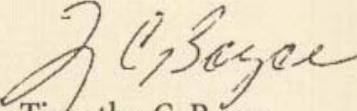
Alabama is blessed with an abundance of diverse forestland. These forests, almost all of which are privately owned, are important in many ways. They provide a large portion of the items we use in our daily lives: jobs for people, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and a variety of environmental benefits.

The Alabama Forestry Commission understands the value our forests have to the state's economy and environment. As a state agency we are providing leadership and guidance to ensure that Alabama's forest resources are properly managed and protected.

The mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission is threefold:

1. To protect the forests from wildfire, insects and disease.
2. To help landowners responsibly manage their forests, using professional technical assistance, to benefit themselves, their land and society.
3. To educate the public about the importance of our forests.

The Alabama Forestry Commission is dedicated to carrying out this mission because we care about Alabama's future.



Timothy C. Boyce
State Forester

Alabama Forestry Commission policy prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion or handicapping condition.

The Alabama Forestry Commission

Natural beauty is one of Alabama's greatest assets. Our forests are a large element of that beauty, from the stately longleaf in south Alabama to the mountainous stretches of hardwoods in the north part of the state. In fact, forests make up 22 million of Alabama's 32 million acres. More than 400,000 private, nonindustrial landowners own 70 percent of those forests. Who is taking care of this resource? **The Alabama Forestry Commission is committed to helping landowners keep their forests healthy, abundant, and productive. We do this in a number of ways.**

Protection

Protecting Alabama's rural areas from wildfire is the number one priority of the Alabama Forestry Commission. Wildfires burn thousands of acres of forestland in our state every year. But through efforts of the Forestry Commission, volunteer fire departments and other cooperators, those wildfires are decreasing. The average size wildfire has steadily decreased during the most recent 10-year period.

The Forestry Commission has a modern, aggressive detection system that allows us to discover and suppress wildfires in the most efficient way possible. A fleet of airplanes regularly patrols over the forest and looks for wildfires. In addition, the public can report wildfires 24 hours a day through a toll-free telephone system. When a wildfire is reported, a dispatch center sends Forestry Commission crews, volunteer fire departments and other cooperators as needed to suppress it.

Most wildfires in Alabama are suppressed by Forestry Commission crews. They use bulldozers with fire plows to remove the vegetation that fuels the fire, which stops it from spreading. Some crews are also equipped with small pumper units that spray water or foam for fire control.

But suppressing wildfires is not our only concern. Fire prevention is an important aspect of Forestry Commission operations. A good fire prevention program makes citizens aware of fire hazards and leads to



a reduction in the number of wildfires in the state. A part of fire prevention is the wildfire investigation/enforcement program. **Many Forestry Commission personnel are trained law enforcement officers who investigate cases of arson and timber theft.** Each incident is investigated to determine its cause, leading to appropriate enforcement action against the responsible party.

Volunteer fire departments are an essential part of the team when it comes to suppressing wildfires. **The Forestry Commission works to help establish, train and maintain rural community fire departments in every county.** This strong partnership of government and volunteer agencies working together provides cost-efficient, effective service. Money appropriated by the Alabama Legislature is distributed by the Forestry Commission each year to more than 900 volunteer fire departments. The volunteers raise funds, maintain equipment, train and respond to emergencies in their communities.

Although most people don't realize it, insects and diseases harm the forest even more than wildfires. In fact, they destroy 43 times more trees than wildfires. Pine bark beetles are the most destructive forest insects in the South. The Southern pine beetle is the most common bark beetle found in Alabama. **The same airplanes used to detect forest fires are used by the Forestry Commission to locate areas where the Southern pine beetle is causing damage.** The landowner is then notified and advised on how to control the infestation.

Alabama participates in the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Health Monitoring Program on an annual basis. A team of foresters examines over 200 sites every year to monitor the trees and record their health status. The monitoring program has shown that Alabama's forests are quite healthy, with only a few areas of concern.

Alabama's Best Management Practices for Forestry outlines how to conduct forest management activities while protecting water quality. **The Alabama Forestry Commission offers assistance to landowners and timber harvesters on how to best use BMPs.** Forestry Commission employees provide planning assistance before, during and after forest management practices such as timber harvests and road construction.



Forestry Commission personnel are some of the first people called on for assistance in a natural disaster. Our equipment is frequently used to clear debris from roads in emergency situations like hurricanes, ice storms and tornadoes. Law enforcement officers in the Forestry Commission help protect property and restore order during these types of situations. In addition, our aircraft are used to help officials assess damages from the air.

Landowner Service

Just like any other crop that is grown, the trees in a forest must be managed to meet their fullest potential. **The most important forest management program of the Alabama Forestry Commission is TREASURE Forest.** The word TREASURE is an acronym for **T**imber, **R**ecreation, **E**nvironment, **A**esthetics, for a **S**ustained, **U**seable **R**Esource. TREASURE Forest promotes multiple-use forest management through landowner education and technical assistance. To be a TREASURE Forest, the property must have been nominated and inspected to ensure that it meets minimum standards. Certified landowners receive a TREASURE Forest sign to display on their property. After five years the property must be recertified. There are over 1,200 landowners who have achieved this recognition in Alabama. Together they are managing more than 1.6 million acres.

The TREASURE Forest Program is sponsored by the Alabama Forestry Planning Committee (AFPC), a group of federal, state and private organizations that have a commitment to helping improve the state's forests. The AFPC makes recommendations on how to most effectively deliver forestry programs like TREASURE Forest to the private landowner. This cooperation among private and government organizations extends to the county level as well. County forestry planning committees meet regularly to discuss issues and coordinate forestry-related activities on a local level.

An important service that the Alabama Forestry Commission provides to landowners is a multiple-use forest management plan. This is

a document prepared by a forester or a forest technician that contains written recommendations for a tract of land. It is made up of a description of the property and its resources, maps, and a list of scheduled multiple-use activities to help landowners best manage their forest.



The Alabama Forestry Commission is committed to helping landowners keep their forests healthy, abundant, and productive.

Alabama's forest and wood products industry contributes about \$13.2 billion to the state's economy each year.

In addition to written plans, Forestry Commission employees frequently provide advice on items like proper tree selection for planting projects, how to prepare a site for planting, the need for timber harvests, practices that will benefit wildlife, the causes of dying trees, prescribed burning and other improvements.



To assist landowners in managing their property, the Forestry Commission helps administer cost-share programs. An example is the Alabama Agricultural and Conservation Development Commission Program, which provides cost-sharing for practices aimed at erosion control, agricultural water quality improvement, and improving forest resources. This is one of several programs which may partially reimburse landowners who plant trees or do timber stand improvements.

Prescribed burning is another service the Forestry Commission offers to landowners. Prescribed burning is the controlled use of fire to achieve forest management objectives. By reducing the amount of debris (leaves, twigs, limbs, etc.) on the forest floor through prescribed burning, the chances of a harmful wildfire are lessened. Prescribed burning can also be used to control unwanted plant growth and to improve wildlife habitat. Close to a million acres of land is prescribed burned by landowners in Alabama each year.

Trees must be harvested to produce the wood products we use every day. We must also ensure that trees will be available for the future. To help do this, the Alabama Forestry Commission operates a nursery that grows seedlings for landowners to purchase and plant. **Our nursery not only grows commercial species for timber production, but also grows trees that help attract and feed wildlife such as deer, turkey, quail and many nongame animals.**

Because we rely so much on wood in our daily lives, many jobs in Alabama depend on the forests. The forest products industry is the number one manufacturing sector of Alabama's economy. This industry is spread across the entire state, with forestry-related jobs in every county. Alabama's forest and wood products industry contributes approximately \$13.2 billion to the state's economy each year and has an annual payroll of over \$1.9 billion.

It is important that we know what composes our forest resource and how much of it exists. **To keep this information current, the Alabama Forestry Commission is cooperating with the U.S.**

Forest Service and forest industry to conduct a survey and update it on a regular basis. Timber growth, species composition and many other factors that affect the forest are being surveyed. This valuable information will be used by a number of different agencies and organizations.

The Forestry Commission works with other agencies and groups to develop, attract and locate opportunities for Alabama's forest products firms. This close working relationship with private and governmental organizations has tremendously enhanced Alabama's effort to expand our existing forest products industries. The forest products industry is the number one investor in Alabama, putting more than \$8 billion in new plants and equipment over the last 10 years.

As Alabama becomes a more urban state, the trees in our cities take on even greater importance. **The Forestry Commission works to enhance the quality of life in urban areas by improving the management of urban trees.** Properly planted and maintained trees can increase property values and reduce energy costs. Cities that have tree programs and meet other criteria are certified by the National Arbor Day Foundation as Tree City USAs. We work closely with cities to help them develop and improve their tree programs so they can meet the criteria for certification.

Education

Another focus of the Forestry Commission's mission is to educate the citizens of Alabama about the economic and environmental importance of our forests. Often this is done by visiting schools and civic clubs to make presentations. It is also achieved through developing field days for children and teachers across the state.

To support these educational activities, the Forestry Commission produces printed materials and videos that explain the value of our forests or tell how to conduct specific forest management practices. **One of the items produced is *Alabama's TREASURED Forests*.** This quarterly magazine supports the multiple-use concept of the TREASURE Forest program by publishing articles on a variety of subjects. This publication is a useful tool for landowners that helps them learn how to manage their forestland more productively.



How Can We Help You?

The Alabama Forestry Commission is a state agency that has been protecting the forestland and serving forest landowner needs for almost 60 years. It is overseen by a seven-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the governor. The state forester and assistant state forester manage the agency's day-to-day operations.

To help assist all citizens of the state and provide on-the-ground assistance, there is an Alabama Forestry Commission office in every county. A county manager and county staff carry out programs and activities at the local level.

The Alabama Forestry Commission is dedicated to helping the citizens of Alabama manage their forests wisely. For more information on how we can assist you, please contact your county office of the Forestry Commission or one of the regional offices listed below.

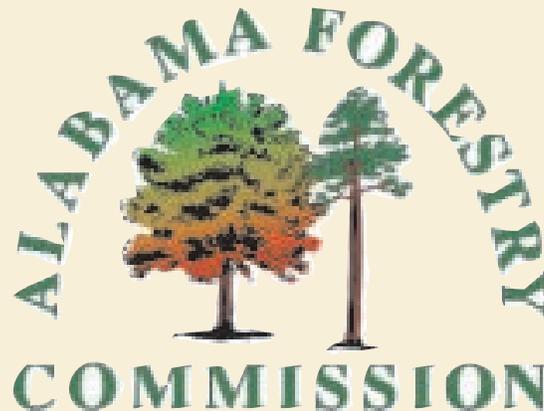


Northwest Region 1-800-452-5923
P.O. Box 599
Northport, AL 36476

Northeast Region 205-916-0569
244 Goodwin Crest Dr. Suite G125
Birmingham, AL 35741

Southeast Region 1-800-922-7688
P.O. Box 1185
Ozark, AL 36361

Southwest Region 1-800-672-3076
P.O. Box 178
Brewton, AL 36427



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