

SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
Committee Report – Forestland Resources Committee
Chair – Gary Calkins
Meeting of 16 October 2016
Baton Rouge, LA

Chaired by: Gary Calkins

Committee Members Attending: **Martin Blaney, Arkansas**
Casey Phillips, North Carolina
Gary Burger, South Carolina
Brian Chandler, Tennessee
Duck Locascio, Louisiana
Gary Calkins (Chair), Texas

Committee Cooperators Attending: Micah Thorning, USFS
Andrew Schmidt, AFWA
Mike Harris, USFWS
Jimmy Bullock, NAFO/RMS

Others: Fred Hagaman, LDWF
Kenny Ribbeck, LDWF
Michael Gregory, AGFC
Mary Pfaffko, GADNR

The Committee discussed at length ways that the US Forest Service and State Agencies could improve relations across the SEAFWA area. As such, Micah Thorning with the US Forest Service was invited for an open discussion on how improvements could be made. Discussions involved examples of State/USFS cooperation, collaboration, or problems. No direct solutions were reached, however, all felt that conversations should continue.

Jimmy Bullock with Resource Management Service presented information pertaining to the National Alliance of Forest Owners and the management / protection of “Species at Risk”. NAFO consists of approximately 50 million acres of working forest making this group an important partner in the conservation of at risk species especially in early successional forests, open pine, riparian, and aquatic habitat.

Mike Harris with the US Fish and Wildlife Service updated the committee concerning at risk, petitioned, candidate, and proposed for listing species. The majority of these are in the SE Region. The USFWS is working with States to acquire data concerning petitioned species and has its next 7-year work plan completed for at risk species.

Andrew Schmidt with AFWA presented NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife 2.0 and explained it was improved by integrating inputs at the local level. NRCS National

Headquarters acquires information from state agencies to direct management dollars. The Committee was made aware of the Wetland Forest Initiative, an initiative made up of primarily NGO's to protect bottomland forests throughout the southeast. This group has recently formed and is presently coordinating with several environmental and conservation groups to form a steering committee. The Committee agreed that involvement with the group was beneficial for the SEAFWA States and wildlife/forest resources.

The committee was briefed and provided handouts by Kenny Ribbeck (LDWF and WRC Member) concerning the Wildlife Resources Committee Action Items and discussed issues the WRC was presently working on.

The committee discussed the new Committee Operational Guidelines recently approved by the Directors. The role of the committee and the Director's expectations of the committee were outlined. The primary topic for this committee was to develop a continuity of leadership plan. To this end, the committee agreed to institute a Past-Chair position to ensure continuity.

The Committee entertained a discussion on the pros and cons of State owned forests being certified under one of the certifications programs. The primary focus and concern of all members was the cost/benefit of participating in the process. Some States had large Regulatory hurdles to participation as well.

The Committee was updated on the final 4(d) rule for NLEB released January 2016. This was an issue the FRC was directly engaged in for several years and the information provided from SEAFWA contributed to this positive ruling. Additionally, the Committee was made aware of the listing of the black pinesnake as well as proposed listing of the Louisiana Pine Snake. The Committee was reminded to stay engaged with these issues.

The Committee discussed Neonicotinoid insecticide issues as it pertains to pollinators and the ban of Neonicotinoid on USFWS Refuges.