

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION

FY 2009 Annual Report





Bob Riley Governor of Alabama

The Alabama Forestry Commission is a state agency governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners. Each commissioner, appointed by the Governor of Alabama, serves a five-year term.

Commissioners



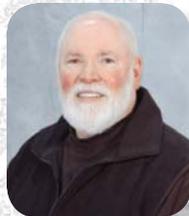
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Division Director*
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Hank McKinley - Interim

Northwest Regional Forester
Dan Lassetter

Northeast Regional Forester
Hank McKinley

East Central Regional Forester
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Gary Cole

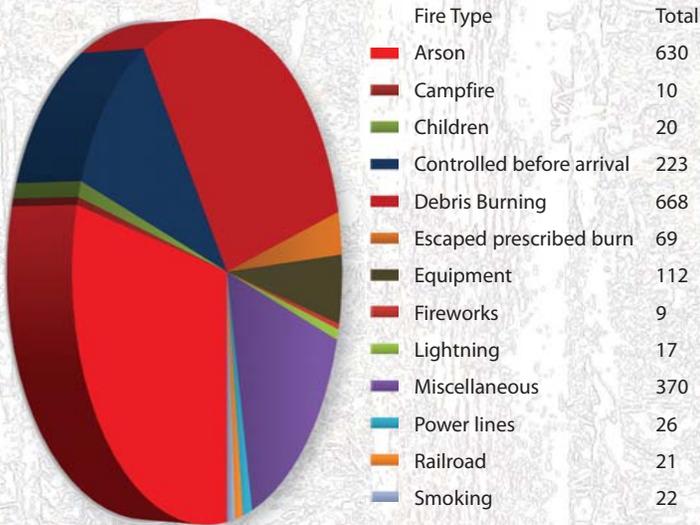
Southeast Regional Forester
Otis French

Our Mission:

We will serve Alabama by protecting and sustaining our forest resources using professionally applied stewardship principals and education. We will ensure that Alabama's forests contribute to abundant timber and wildlife, clean air and water, and a healthy economy.

FIRE SUPPRESSION

Due to an unusually wet year, fire occurrences were well below AFC averages across the state. Rainfall totals for the year throughout Alabama were 20% higher. In the 2009 Fiscal Year, 2,197 wildfires were reported and suppressed, burning 23,427 acres. Average fire size was 10.7 acres. Wildfires destroyed or damaged 22 structures in Alabama; however, 677 homes were saved. Additional fire statistics include 61 structures (other than homes) and 50 vehicles either destroyed or damaged, while 285 structures and 399 vehicles were saved.



AFC men and women provide the public, especially forest landowners, excellent wildland fire protection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These firefighters face difficult environmental factors in the course of responding to, suppressing, and returning from wildfires. In all types of terrain, day and night, in adverse weather conditions, facing unknown hazards, AFC firefighters protect the forests from wildfires and other natural hazards.

A major improvement in the field of fire suppression has been the advancement of technology. For the AFC, environmental enclosed tractor cabs, GPS handheld units for all field personnel, as well as “live” wildfire and burn permit computer-tracking reflect the technological strides made in fire fighting.

TRAINING

The Commission continues to bring our firefighters up to national standards set forth by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). This effort is also in conjunction with a request from the Governor that the AFC lead the state in setting up Incident Management Teams (IMT) that would be able to move into an area during an emergency and coordinate emergency operations. The Commission has now trained four Type 3 teams, with alternates. Three of the four teams have been involved in exercises this year. However some training is still needed before all four teams are fully qualified to national standards. At the same time, the AFC is also training a Type 2 team to national standards, which consists of approximately 30 positions.

During this fiscal year, a total of 17,106 hours were spent on individual training for these teams. Additionally, over 2,500 hours were spent in-state as well as in Texas with hands-on training for particular positions these individuals will fill.

The Commission also trained 23 new employees in Basic Wildland Fire Fighting, Basic Fire Weather, Human Factors on the Fire Line, Incident Command System, Equipment Familiarization, and All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety. The goal of the Commission’s training program is to have employees trained to national standards in both Wildland Fire Fighting and Forest Management, as well as have the ability to provide leadership to other agencies in time of natural emergencies.

COMPACT FIRE DUTIES

As part of our training program, a total of 26 AFC personnel were sent to assist in out-of-state and federal fires this year for over 4,858 man-hours.

While Alabama experienced a mild wildfire season due to rainfall, the state of Texas did not fare as well. The Commission made a major commitment to assist Texas with their year-long struggle with wildfires. This effort included sending 26 firefighters and five tractor-plow fire units. Crews comprised of five personnel and two tractors each were sent on 16-day details, using the tractors to establish fire lines in front of the main fire. Also as part of this detail, the Texas Forest Service allowed the Commission to send along additional personnel in “trainee” positions to assist in building and creating more depth in those wildland firefighters’ positions here at home.

“Protecting our state’s rural areas from wildfire is one of the top priorities of the Alabama Forestry Commission.”



ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION

HAZARD MITIGATION

Completing over 36,592 acres of prescribed burning across the state, the Alabama Forestry Commission continued to assist landowners in protecting their lands from wildfires. Additionally, 991 miles of firebreak construction were accomplished for 599 landowners. Total prescribed burning in the state (including AFC, private landowners, and contractors) involved 19,354 burns on 1,089,840 acres, which is below average for Alabama. The primary reason for the low burning rate was the very wet weather this year.

In an effort to increase prescribed burning, the Commission presented a series of certification classes, training 107 new Prescribed Burn Managers. The AFC also produced continuing education courses for burn managers on prescribed burn planning and fuel management, reaching 102 current burn managers there as well. Because of past education efforts, the Commission anticipates an increase in prescribed burning across the state in the upcoming year. Therefore, the AFC is prepared to add more Certified Burn Manager courses to accommodate the demand.

WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) AND FIRE PREVENTION

Fiscal Year 2009 was the second of a three-year Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) Project totaling \$2.8 million. This project will deliver \$1.4 million from the US Forest Service's State & Private Forests to the Alabama Forestry Commission for community wildfire protection, WUI training, and wildfire hazard mitigation through FY2010.

Two AFC associates are dedicated full time to wildland/urban interface and wildfire prevention in promoting the Commission's legislative mandate to educate citizens about the importance of protecting the forest. These coordinators are funded in part by a hazard mitigation grant from the Forest Service. Additionally, AFC regions and work units have WUI specialists identified to provide program delivery to our customers in the field.

Two financial assistance programs were implemented to provide cost-share assistance for accomplishing wildfire hazard mitigation to communities and individual homeowners in high-risk or fire-prone areas. Alabama homeowners completed \$244,640 worth of wildfire mitigation through defensible space contracts. A total of \$142,740 federal grant funds were dedicated to this cost-share effort, with homeowners contributing the difference of \$101,900 through in-kind services or cash payments to service providers.

The AFC began a new partnership with the Alabama Association of Regional Planning Councils to conduct a series of WUI seminars across the state in an effort to raise public awareness about the impact of growth and development on forest sustainability. Statewide, 16 workshops extended the WUI message to professional foresters, resource managers, planners, developers, elected officials, and other interested practitioners. New concepts such as Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure Planning were introduced. Attendees learned about the value of Alabama's forests in the role of providing ecosystem services, and the potential of using woody biomass for energy production. A total of 45 partners were

involved by providing speakers, meeting facilities, seminar planning, and logistics. Partners included the 12 Regional Planning Councils, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Auburn University, and the US Forest Service, along with support from nine other government agencies and 19 private organizations.

Training Topic	# Sessions	# Trained
Hazard mitigation training	2	48
Urban forestry and tree care	2	48
Community Wildfire Protection Plans	6	90
WUI public seminars/workshops	16	463

WUI coordinators and field specialists conducted statewide training for AFC associates and continued delivering information and education to the public by participating in 35 public and private gatherings with table-top displays illustrating challenges and opportunities in the Wildland Urban Interface, reaching approximately 16,250 citizens across the state. Major venues were: ADEM's Non-point Source Pollution Conference, Alabama Forestry Association's annual meeting, Your-Town Alabama planning workshop, Burn Manager training, county fairs, and outdoor expos. Additionally, WUI coordinators prepared several magazine articles, brochures, exhibits, and public presentations on Firewise and WUI. Another 15,000 "Living With Fire" newspaper inserts were distributed to the public through the volunteer fire departments, regional WUI workshops, newspapers, and public displays. Counties also continued to present wildfire prevention programs to school children across the state (see table below).

Other Fire Prevention/WUI Accomplishments in the Counties	Totals
Community Wildfire Protection Plans	22
Communities given presentations about Firewise Community USA	6
Firewise Community USA nominations	2
Firewise Community USA renewals (Canterbury Estates in Baldwin County)	1
Individual homeowner tree care assists	289
Homeowner Wildfire Hazard Assessments and Mitigation Plans	708
Defensible space created around homes	174
Acres of hazardous fuel mitigation in the WUI (fuel breaks, mulching...)	243.7
Individuals reached with WUI presentations to groups	3,902
Children and adults reached with fire prevention presentations to groups	39,520
Individuals reached with fire prevention personal contacts	1,415
Fire prevention media ads	23

RURAL COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION (RCFP)

The Rural Community Fire Protection Division (RCFP) continues to work with and service volunteer fire departments throughout the state. The RCFP Steering Committee, created under Alabama law, is composed of 25 volunteer firefighters from six Commission regions. This committee monitors all appropriations for the volunteer fire service funded by the Alabama Legislature through the AFC’s budget, and provides recommendations to the State Forester for the distribution of these funds. The committee also monitors the RCFP radio system and makes recommendations on upgrades.

Again this year, the Commission provided assistance to many volunteer fire departments (VFDs) by implementing several beneficial programs:

- Formation of one new certified department, with four more in the process of certification.
- Administered \$1,702,740.60 in grant monies to 990 VFDs, amounting to \$1,719.94 each.
- Complied and worked with all county probate offices on firefighter tags.
- Conducted VFD wildland firefighter training.
- Issued or transferred 16 trucks to VFDs.
- Attended 33 county VFD association and individual VFD meetings.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The AFC’s Law Enforcement section is comprised of eight full-time investigators and a chief. As state peace officers, they specialize in investigating violations of wildland fire laws, thefts of timber or timber-harvesting equipment, and crimes committed against AFC personnel or property.

The goals of this section are simple: reduce fire law violations and forestry-related thefts, and protect AFC personnel and property. This is accomplished through a three dimensional approach – Education, Enforcement, and Involvement. Educational programs aimed at reducing fires and protecting

property are presented to school, civic, and forestry groups throughout the state. Changes within this section for 2009 include the following:

- Re-classification of investigators as “Forest Investigators.”
- Implementation of electronic reporting of forest crimes for inclusion in Alabama’s Annual Crime Report that is submitted to the FBI each year.
- Implementation of a bloodhound program with “Blaze” officially going on duty in September 2009. Blaze the Arson Dog will assist investigators in locating wildland arsonists and be an educational tool for the prevention of wildland arson. An investigator was added to the section who is also Blaze’s handler.
- Installation of an NCIC system in the communications center which allows enforcement officers access to information about persons and/or property during criminal investigations.
- Implementation of an annual awards program through a partnership with the Alabama Forest Owner’s Association to recognize a judge, prosecutor, and AFC investigator for their commitment in protecting our forest resources.
- Acquisition of new handguns and shotguns for investigators at no cost to the AFC, through trade-in of old handguns and shotguns.

During the past year, the Law Enforcement Section received 647 complaints and/or calls for service.

Complaints and/or requests for services:	
Arson	129
Illegal Burning	125
Timber Theft	192
Equipment Theft	39
Illegal Dumping	27
Theft of AFC Property	7
Calls requesting other services or information	128
Total	647

Enforcement Actions:			
Arrests:		Warnings:	
Arson	11	Illegal Burning	48
Illegal Burning	25	Timber Thefts	2
Timber Thefts	10	Other	1
Other	17	Total	51
Total	63		

Fines Imposed:	\$ 21,050.00
Restitution to Landowners:	\$ 218,668.08
Suppressions Costs Levied:	\$ 2,860.28

Public Education/Special Details:			
Blaze Programs	12	Programs/Training Provided	15
Event Security	2	Special Enforcement Details	6



In his first month on duty, “Blaze” made four school appearances with 750 children in attendance.

FEDERAL EXCESS PERSONAL PROPERTY (FEPP)

During Fiscal Year 2009, the Commission continued to participate in two programs whereby the agency is responsible for obtaining Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) from military bases in the southeastern United States. The AFC screens and receives equipment that is to be used not only in its own wildland fire suppression activities, but also by volunteer fire departments across the state who assist the Commission. Through the Government Services Administration (GSA) Donation Cycle Program, this equipment must be carried on the AFC's inventory, and then must be returned to the federal government for final disposition after its usefulness has been exhausted. The Firefighter Property Program (FPP) allows the agency to screen on a higher level, resulting in better and newer equipment. This second program also allows the agency to directly transfer title to the volunteer fire departments.

Through these two programs, the Commission acquired over \$1.2 million in wildland fire suppression and emergency medical services equipment this year. Items acquired included 53 trucks, 8 collapsible tanks, 464 glove inserts, 60 leg bags, 8 fire rakes, 18 flashlights, 6 small air compressors, drinking systems, generators, field packs, assorted mechanic hand tools, shovels, etc. The agency issued or transferred 16 truck titles to volunteer fire departments, as well as 5 generators and 6 drop tanks. Another 13 trucks have been processed through the shop and are awaiting issue at this time.

Old federal property is currently being sold at the AFC's Central Shop in Autaugaville, with over 120 lots in the sale.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Alabama Forestry Commission operates and maintains two complete radio systems and over 200 tower sites.

The UHF radio system is provided for the volunteer fire service. These repeaters are maintained by the AFC 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at no cost to the departments. The process is currently underway to meet the December 2012 FCC mandate requirements for narrow banding the UHF system well ahead of schedule.

Commission personnel use the VHF system statewide for routine communication, fire prevention, and wildfire suppression operations. In 2008, a decision was made to consolidate the eight dispatch centers into one centralized operation. This statewide communication center, located in Montgomery, became operational on March 31, 2009. Furnished with state-of-the-art equipment, the center has three pods for telephone operators and six pods for dispatchers, with the capability of simultaneously handling twelve phone calls and six dispatch calls.

During implementation of the narrow banding process of the VHF system, it was necessary to replace 400 radios that did not meet specifications. Complete narrow banding, including updates, will be finalized by Thanksgiving 2009. Two technicians were added at the Montgomery radio shop, enhancing the ability to complete the new dispatch center on schedule as well as meet the FCC's deadline for narrow banding ahead of schedule.

FOREST HEALTH

With forest pests continuing to be a serious threat in our state, monitoring efforts and surveying techniques to detect, identify, and prevent these pests from reaching epidemic levels are effective methods to protect and sustain Alabama's forests.

Again this year, the Alabama Forestry Commission monitored the state for possible outbreaks of southern pine bark beetle. Aerial flights were conducted to specifically detect southern pine beetle (SPB), the most destructive. For the last four years, however, the number of SPB infestations has continued to decline, with 2009 having some of the lowest numbers of detected spots on record. With a mild summer, a cool autumn, and an adequate amount of precipitation, the number of SPB infestations for August/September flights was only 18 with 445 infested trees. Ips engraver beetle and black turpentine beetle occurrences were also quite low this year.

Occasionally, other pests are detected by aerial flights, and this year approximately 200 acres of defoliated baldcypress trees were visually recognized during a routine flight over Wilcox County. Cypress looper (*Anacamptodes pergracilis*), along with cypress twig gall midge (*Taxodiomyia cupressiananassa*), were eventually identified as the particular pests, with control methods recommended. Other insects detected in 2009 – mainly by general observation and ground surveys – included pine tip moth, oak borers, linden looper, and pink-striped oakworm.

Non-native invasive insects were also cause for major concern in 2009, especially with the detection of a couple species in neighboring states. This year, the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) spread into the southeast region for the first time, being detected in Virginia and Kentucky. In late July, the red-bay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*), already in the Southeast, was detected in Jackson County, Mississippi, a county that borders Alabama. Other species bearing watch included gypsy moth, Asian longhorned beetle, and Sirex wood-wasp. Meanwhile, a nationwide "Do Not Move Firewood" campaign was launched, warning outdoor



enthusiasts and avid travelers to halt the unintentional spread of such non-native insects by transporting insect-infested firewood.

Also in 2009, interesting results continued to be discovered from Alabama's 2008 "Early Detection – Rapid Response" project. Survey traps had been established statewide on five sites to detect the presence of non-native bark beetles, and a non-native ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus octiesdentatus*) was detected in one of the traps in August 2008. (This was only the second time this particular exotic insect was discovered in the United States, the first time being in Louisiana earlier in 2008.)

However, in a more thorough follow-up survey conducted by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in the spring of 2009, the species was not found again at that site.

From other types of surveys, non-native pathogens were monitored in Alabama this year as well. The annual deployment of traps for *Phytophthora ramorum*, the pathogen that causes sudden oak death disease, was conducted at seven selected nurseries, with a positive finding discovered at three nursery sites. A secondary examination of the sites was completed in late spring, indicating inconclusive results on the existence and spread of this pathogen into the local native environment.

A series of training sessions for Commission associates was prompted by loblolly pines succumbing in recent years to "Pine Decline," an unfamiliar disease complex, in addition to the more common annosus root rot, pitch canker, and southern pine beetle. Workshops conducted in each region instructed employees in how to distinguish between these different pests.

Causing more destruction to Alabama's forest ecosystem than insects and diseases combined are invasive exotic plants. For years, landowners have dealt with kudzu, privet, tallowtree, mimosa, Japanese climbing fern, golden bamboo, and others. Now cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) has moved into the forefront as the most dangerous and notorious non-native invasive species in Alabama.

A cogongrass database and infestation map were completed in 2009 from assessment data. Training sessions and landowner workshops were conducted to educate the general public on the woes of this noxious weed. Finally, three demonstration sites were established and analyzed for herbicide selection and efficacy. The effort to eradicate cogongrass continued with the award of a \$6.3 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Grant to the Alabama Forestry Commission, ultimately contracted to Larson and McGowin, Inc.



AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) PROGRAM

The Alabama Forestry Commission's role for economic recovery, funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Program is focused on the implementation of two distinct programs: 1) The Regional Longleaf Pine Restoration Initiative and Fuel Reduction; and 2) Alabama State Cogongrass Task Force's War on Cogongrass.

Awards from these "Stimulus Grants" total \$8,038,000 with an estimated 179 seasonal and temporary jobs being created. The duration for a portion of these grants is expected to extend into the 2012 fiscal year for completion. Involvement with these grants will create significant enhancements to the health and productivity of public and private forestlands within the state of Alabama.

In 2009 the Alabama Forestry Commission conducted 65 cogongrass workshops across the state with over 2,556 attendees.

STEWARDSHIP

Forests cover more than 22 million acres of the Alabama landscape, roughly two-thirds of the state, supporting an abundant and diverse population of plants and animals. This diversity is sustained with a program for non-industrial private landowners called Stewardship. The guiding principle in stewardship is “multiple-use management” which consists of conserving biological diversity, maintaining and improving productive capacity, maintaining forest health, protecting soil and water resources, acknowledging carbon cycles, sustaining socioeconomic benefits, as well as voluntarily complying with laws and best management practices guidelines.

The three main programs used to promote stewardship in Alabama are the “National Forest Stewardship” sponsored by the US Forest Service, the “American Tree Farm System” sponsored by the American Forest Foundation, and “TREASURE Forest” sponsored by the Alabama Natural Resources Council. Each of these programs is designed to acknowledge a landowner’s efforts and provide assistance in properly managing his or her property according to recognized stewardship principles.

In 2009, 4.6 million acres were currently certified under these stewardship programs in Alabama, which represents 21 percent of the commercial forestland across the state.

Fundamental to all three stewardship programs is a written forest management plan. This key component provides a flexible, yet structured outline and schedule of appropriate management activities designed to help landowners achieve stated objectives.

In 2009, the Alabama Forestry Commission responded to 114 web application forms from landowners interested in managing their property under the stewardship philosophy. Each of these requests was followed up with a visit from an agency resource professional. AFC associates also assisted private landowners by providing stand management recommendations for specific situations, as well as guidance with various cost-share assistance programs.

LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE/COST-SHARE PROGRAMS

Landowner assistance programs are available to help landowners improve their timber production, enhance wildlife habitats, and conserve “Threatened and Endangered” species and their ecosystems. These “cost-share” programs provide financial incentives for installation of a variety of forestry practices. AFC foresters and technicians provide technical assistance to forest landowners with on-the-ground advice and written recommendations. A summary of these activities follows:

Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) Prevention and Restoration Program

The Alabama Forestry Commission administers an incentive program to encourage landowners to improve forest health and thereby lower the risk of Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) infestations in their pine stands. This is accomplished through thinning overstocked pine stands. In 2009, AFC county offices received requests from 123 landowners to thin 6,966 acres under funding from the 2008 SPB Prevention and Restoration Grant. Through this program, approved applicants had lowered the SPB hazard on a total of 3,666 acres of pine timber on 70 tracts by the end of the 2009 fiscal year. Additionally, Commission foresters and technicians made 313 stand management recommendations on a total of 25,179 acres using state funding.

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)

A total of 71 applications were received from nine Black Belt counties for a total sign-up of \$505,000. The national office gave the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) an extra \$100,000 for a total of \$200,000 to fund applications. This amounts to approximately 25 applications approved in Pickens, Dallas, Hale, Macon, and Sumter counties. The remaining applications will be batched with 2010 sign-ups, and the AFC will encourage NRCS to expand the program to include the remaining Black Belt counties in 2010.

Alabama Agricultural & Conservation Development Commission Program (AACDCP)

This state program lost most of its funding several years ago, but has gradually re-established a forestry budget in all of the conservation districts. In 2009, AFC foresters wrote stand management recommendations for 126 landowners on 4,888 acres.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The USDA Farm Service Agency administers the CRP program. As Technical Service Providers for CRP, Commission foresters wrote plans for 11,529 acres on 298 tracts in 2009.

Stewardship/Forest Management Accomplishments FY2009			
Program	Landowners Assisted	Impact (Acres, miles, people)	
Stewardship Management Plans	397	53,030	acres
New Certifications	175	50,522	acres
Stand Management Recommendations	2,676	152,910	acres
Tree Planting	205	8,231	acres
Timber Stand Improvement	328	10,259	acres
BMP Investigations/ Consultations	295	2,178	acres
Prescribed Burning	640	36,592	acres
Firebreak Plowing	599	991	miles
Forestry Consultant Referrals	568	N/A	
Wildlife-Specific Recommendations	93	1,101	acres

Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program (EFCRP)

The Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program (EFCRP) is a USDA Farm Service Agency program instituted after the hurricanes of 2005 devastated much of the forestland in the Coastal Plain areas of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Although applications were no longer accepted in EFCRP after January 31, 2008, there were 25 referrals remaining to be serviced in 2009 for 2,318 acres.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Forest Health Special Initiative

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) set aside Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding to target forest health improvement practices. This special Initiative was termed the EQIP Forest Health Initiative (FHI). In 2009, forest health improvement practices were recommended on 205 tracts for 19,213 acres.

Parameters	Number of Sites	Alabama 2009 % Implementation	13 Southern States 1997 - 2007 % Implementation
Harvesting	246	96	89
Site Prep	70	98	90
Forest Roads	243	93	86
Stream Crossings	125	96	85
Streamside Mgt Zones	202	92	88
Firebreaks	84	90	73
Chemical Application	120	100	97
Overall	243	97	87

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs) FOR FORESTRY

This is the first fiscal year that the Alabama Forestry Commission collected Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation data based on the protocol by the Water Resources Committee of the Southern Group of State Foresters. This data will aid in the educational efforts of the AFC and forest industry when dealing with silvicultural practices that may affect water quality in the waters of the state. Traditional silvicultural practices include logging, road building and maintenance, reforestation, site preparation, prescribed burning, herbicide application, fertilization, and any other silvicultural activity.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), the Commission monitors implementation of BMPs for forestry



on an annual basis. This year a total of 246 sites were randomly selected for the survey. The sites were located on the property of 188 different landowners, representing some type of harvest on 26,550 acres. Each site was visited on the ground and implementation was evaluated for the following parameters: timber harvesting techniques, site preparation, forest roads, stream crossings, streamside management zones, firebreak stabilization, forest chemical application, and overall implementation of BMPs on the tract. Significant risk to water quality from failure to implement a BMP was found on three tracts that were evaluated. Two more tracts showing significant risk were discovered through inspections for technical assistance for federal or state cost-share practices. Educational activities corrected these problems.

The rate of implementation for each category of practice helps show where and what kind of education is needed, as well as which audience needs addressing, whether it be the general public, private landowners, or forest industry. This year

alone, 30 training and/or public presentations were made that dealt with BMP education:

- 7 presentations for 200 private landowner contacts
- 2 presentations for 55 high school or college students
- 8 presentations for 234 AFC associates
- 6 presentations for 163 state or local government officials
- 7 presentations for 357 forest industry contacts

All of these presentations were accredited for continuing education and/or Professional Logging Manager (PLM) points for attendees. There were 72 invitation and/or courtesy checks made on active logging sites representing another 6,731 acres where PLM credit was awarded.

Internal AFC audits were performed on 68 sites across the state representing another 9,655 acres where some type of silvicultural activity took place and work was accomplished, mainly fire lanes, by AFC crews. As this information is digested and confirmed, educational efforts will be initiated. There have been two such trainings held in different regions of the state so far, where AFC associates were trained on how to properly install water diversions.

The state BMP coordinator represented the AFC by participating on two subcommittees of the Southern Group of State Forester's Water Resources Committee which published *Silvicultural Guidelines for Bottomland Hardwood Management* and *Woody Biomass Guidelines*. He is also active with the State Implementation Committee of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and all ten Clean Water Partnerships (CWP) in Alabama. The Commission also has an appointed associate active within each of these CWP basins and sub-basins on the local level.

The AFC successfully completed the first year of the 319 grant with ADEM and is half-way through the second year. Two Coastal Alabama Forestry Pre-Harvest Planning Workshops were held to educate loggers, landowners, and natural resource professionals on the benefits of pre-harvest planning in the state's coastal counties. From these workshops as well as the cooperation of the Tennessee CWP and the local Resource Conservation & Development Council, this workshop material was expanded to meet the needs of all the timber owners in the state. As a start, 500 copies of the written material and CD versions will be provided to the governmental agencies in the northern part of the state. As grants are available it should go statewide.

Currently, 32 Alabama companies are SFI members with the numbers growing every day. BMP implementation data continues to be in high demand for this program and is an integral part of SFI audits by third parties.

Complaint resolution through education involved 45 complaints statewide, 40 of which were resolved at the AFC level. Of these, 22 were valid and 23 were deemed invalid or not forestry-related issues. Eight complaints were sent to ADEM for further action, while five are still being resolved.

FOREST INVENTORY & ANALYSIS PROGRAM

Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) is a nationwide timber and forest resource inventory that has been ongoing for over 70 years in Alabama. The US Forest Service had conducted the survey until 1997, when that agency and the Alabama Forestry Commission entered into an agreement in which the AFC would begin collecting field data while the Forest Service would continue to derive statistical summaries from this data.

FIA data is the primary source for forest resource information. The forest industry sector relies heavily on this data for making multi-million dollar decisions pertaining to new mill development and expansion of existing mills. Foresters also use the information for determining areas in Alabama that may require more intensive forest management, reforestation, and/or protection. FIA data is obtained from permanent inventory plots located primarily on a 3x3-mile grid across the entire United States. There are a total of 5,572 FIA survey plots located in Alabama, and each plot is re-surveyed approximately every five to seven years.

In FY 2009 a total of 734 plots were surveyed by the Alabama FIA crew. This year the AFC allotted six full-time FIA forester positions to conduct the survey (five field foresters and one program coordinator). The foresters collect a wide variety of forest resource information from each plot. This data is then transferred to the Forest Service in Knoxville, Tennessee for compilation and analysis. Each year FIA statistics are updated and made available for query on the



Forestry Commission crews surveying FIA plot internet.

FIA data collected in 2008 indicated that there were 22.7 million acres of timberland in Alabama, which is a decrease of nearly 223,000 acres since 2000. Individual or family-owned forests accounted for 14.6 million acres or 64.3 percent of the state's timberland.

Despite the small decrease in timberland area, timber volume increased by 5.8 percent since 2000. Additionally, this data showed that annual timber growth on timberland exceeded annual removals of timber by 31.9 percent for the period 2001 to 2008.

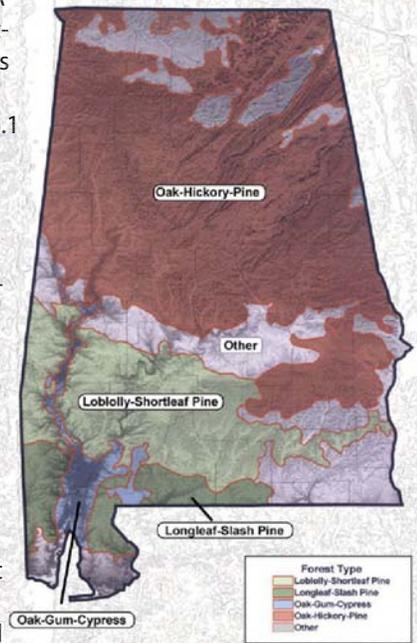
According to the 2008 FIA data, the "loblolly pine-shortleaf pine" forest type group is predominant in Alabama, occupying approximately 36.1 percent of the total timberland area. The "oak-hickory" forest type group is the second most predominant, accounting for approximately 32.1 percent of the timberland acreage.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

2009 continued to be a busy year for GIS activities at the Commission. Of prime concern was an effort to pull together the GIS mapped information for all of the agency's Forest Stewardship Management Plans. A request was issued during the summer to all county offices to send the spatial component (polygons) that they have created locally on their desktops. This geo-spatial information depicts the size and location of the Forest Stewardship Management Plans that have been created over the past ten years. This effort resulted in the creation of an ESRI enterprise geo-database consisting of 8,213 polygons that represent over 913,130 acres of active Forest Stewardship Management Plans. This information is critical for the reporting and tracking of our forest management activities both in-house and to the US Forest Service.

Other 2009 GIS Section activities included:

- Research to acquire a new Forest Stewardship Management Plan application that would incorporate both the tabular (textual) information and spatial (mapping) component into one plan writer application, accommodating the requirements for NRCS Conservation Plans and Tree Farm certifications.
- Preparation of Outreach Program databases was sent to nine of the 13 Black Belt counties. This parcel-level information will be used to assist the AFC in contacting underserved forest landowners in this region of the state.
- Participation in the Governor's GIS Advisory Committee that will create and implement a business plan for GIS information at local, state, and federal levels.



URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM

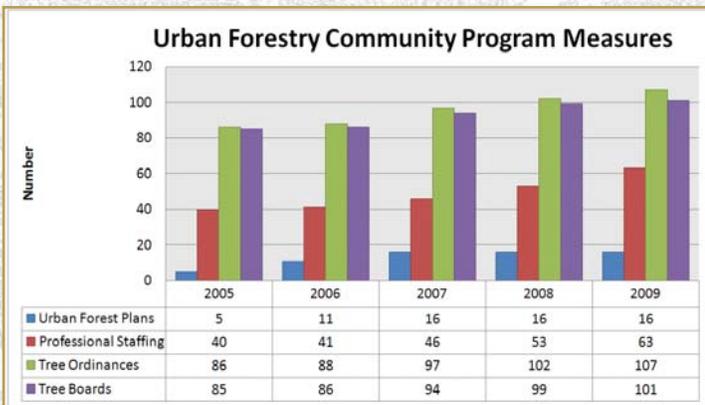
The Commission's Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) Program strives to help Alabama towns and cities professionally manage their urban forest for the benefit of people. The agency provides technical and federal financial assistance to accomplish this goal. The primary program measures are communities that hire professional staff, complete tree inventories and management plans, create effective tree ordinances, and

establish tree boards. The AFC provided 356 urban forestry assists in 2009.

The US Forest Service awarded \$348,010 to the AFC through the Urban & Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program. These federal funds were used to support an Urban Forestry Coordinator position, an Extension Specialist in Community Forestry Development, and a competitive grant program. The competitive grant program awarded \$190,010 in federal funds to support eight urban forestry projects, including one green infrastructure demonstration project. The U&CF grant recipients were the City of Jacksonville, the City of Florence, the City of Tuscaloosa, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, the Talladega County School Board, and the City of Montgomery (two awards).

Since 1979, the Commission has supported the National Arbor Day Foundation's "Tree City USA" program. Alabama had 74 communities that met Tree City USA standards, eight that attained Growth Award status, and two utility companies that achieved Tree Line USA recognition.

Alabama Community Accomplishments



MARKETING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The past year was very stressful for forest products industries as the global economy slowed to a snail's pace. Several companies closed their doors either temporarily or permanently. However, there was an indication of recovery in progress during the last quarter of fiscal year 2009. Housing starts have increased and the New York Stock Exchange has shown growth as well. Companies are investing millions to refurbish and reopen closed mills, and there has been an increase in timber stumpage prices across the state.

The Alabama Forestry Commission continued to provide forest resource information as requested to assist companies making financial decisions and planning future investment in Alabama. The agency serves as a member of the Alabama Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Advisory Committee that advises the Association of Alabama Regional Planning Councils (AARPC) as they measure and monitor the state's economic development efforts. AFC employees in all six regions participate in their local Regional Planning Councils' activities. A Memorandum of Understanding was developed and signed by the Alabama Forestry Commission and the AARPC, pledging mutual support in economic development

efforts, especially as they affect forest industry and forest resources. The Commission also serves as a board member of the Alabama Agribusiness Council and the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) "Services, Utilization and Marketing Task Force," which developed a carbon trading publication.

Alabama's "Forestry Team" remains active and shares information and resources as available to provide information on carbon sequestration and carbon trading, along with woody biomass market development and ecosystem services markets being developed. Links to the all these services and activities can be found on our website at www.forestry.alabama.gov.

REVENUES FROM STATE LANDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Timber Sales	Sale Value	Revenue to AFC
Department of Conservation:		
Clay County Lake	\$84,250.00	\$8,425.00
Department of Mental Health:		
Boy's Colony Tract	\$152,650.00	\$15,265.00
Alabama Forestry Commission		
Choccolocco State Forest	\$331,720.00	\$331,720.00
Total	\$711,409.40	\$498,199.40
Prescribed burning	Acres	Revenue
Department of Mental Health		
Searcy Tract	106	\$1,910.00
Dr. Bell Tract	202	\$3,990.00
Romulus Tract	60	\$1,600.00
Total	368	\$7,500.00
Department of Conservation		
Bibb County Lake	100	\$2,100.00
Chambers County Lake	40	\$840.00
Clay County Lake	40	\$760.00
Lamar County Lake	26	\$646.00
Madison County Lake	33	\$779.00
Monroe County Lake	68	\$1,220.00
Washington County Lake	67	\$1,165.00
Total	374	\$7,510.00
Total	742	\$15,010.00
Management Fees	Acres	Revenue
Dept of Conservation	4,786	\$4,786.00
Dept. of Mental Health	5,088	\$5,088.00
Total	9,874	\$9,874.00
Grand Total		\$523,083.40

OUTREACH

This past year, the Alabama Forestry Commission reorganized the Outreach program structure. Each of the six regions appointed an Outreach Coordinator, who will be responsible for disseminating new program information to their respective regions.

Activities included partnering with other agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and using GIS technology for database preparation to identify under-served landowners in nine of Alabama's Black Belt counties and enroll them in a Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI). Designed to encourage traditionally under-served landowners, this program allows them to implement specific conservation practices (i.e. prescribed burning and fire lane installation) while the AFC provides technical assistance. With a total estimated value of \$460,000 worth of practices spread throughout six counties and 69 landowners, the collaborating partners deemed this project a success and have expanded the coverage area to 13 Black Belt counties for a second CCPI cycle.

The Commission continued to participate in annual outreach-related activities around the state such as the Annual Meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund; Tuskegee University's Annual Farmers' Conference and Annual Agricultural Fair; the Annual Small Farms Research Center's Risk Management and Community Outreach Conference at Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical (A&M) University. This year Outreach also helped plan and execute the Annual Southern Forestry Conclave which, for the first time, was hosted by Alabama A&M University.



Alabama Forestry Camp

Focusing on friendships, team building, and exposure to the Forest and Natural Resource Fields, a total of 35 high school boys and girls attended Alabama Forestry Camp this past June. For the 12th year, the camp was held once again at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund's Rural Training and Research Center located in Epes (Sumter County), Alabama.

This year brought the return of forestry-related competitions with both individual and team concepts. Training in different competitive challenges throughout the week

culminated with an exciting final day of competition to wrap up the annual camp. Students competed individually in tree identification, measurements, tree aging, as well as compass and pacing. Group activities included archery, pulpwood toss, bucksaw, and crosscut saw. These events brought a cross-section of students from across Alabama, allowing them to bond as teams to accomplish the challenges set before them.

Coordinated jointly by the Alabama Forestry Commission, The Federation, and Tuskegee University, this year's camp was conducted by an Incident Command Team comprised of AFC personnel directing the daily activities. Each day students ventured out on field trips including tours of a TREASURE Forest owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Williams (sponsored by the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association), Westervelt Management Area (sponsored by the Westervelt Company, Inc.), Tom Beville Lock and Dam/Visitors Center on the Tenn-Tom Waterway (coordinated by the US Army Corps of Engineers), Oakhurst Farms commercial fishery, Westervelt Sawmill, and Moundville Archeological Park and Museum.

Additionally, students were also treated to presentations on various topics during the week such as urban forestry presented by Auburn University, hunting and fishing demonstrations by Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, a wildlife presentation by Alabama A&M University, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology presented by the Alabama Forestry Commission, an arson investigation demonstration by "Blaze" the Arson Dog and Officer Donnie Parker of the AFC, and a motivational lecture given by the Alabama Department of Agriculture Assistant Commissioner, Teresa Smiley.

The success of the Alabama Forestry Camp each year is dependent on those organizations and individuals that sponsor the camp in cooperation with those who assist with its daily operation.

Butler County Natural Resources Youth Camp

For the fourteenth year, the Butler County Forestry Planning Committee's Natural Resources Youth Camp provided a number of Butler County youth the opportunity to become more aware of the value of forest resources to Alabama's environment and economy, and the relationship these resources have to their everyday life. An outdoor classroom was the setting for 30 energetic and inquisitive



sixth-grade students, chosen by their school principals and science teachers to attend this three day/two night camp. This offers them the opportunity to learn about forestry, wildlife, ecology, tree identification, fire protection, forest products, soil and water conservation, and the people who manage these vast Alabama resources.

Instructors from the Alabama Forestry Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Resource Management Services, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Farm Service Agency, Alabama Forestry Association, Alabama Ornithological Society, and others hold "hands-on" classes concerning forestry-related subjects which included native plants, wildlife management and identification, non-game birds, as well as several Project Learning Tree activities. In addition, an on-site visit from Callaway Gardens provided an up-close visit with some local birds of prey.

An opportunity to spend time in one of Alabama's many creeks is often a highlight of the camp. Campers spend time exploring the creek channel looking for inhabitants and are often surprised at what they find. The final day provides a chance for the camper's to display their marksmanship in different shooting sports event such as shotguns, rifles, black powder, and archery.

Since the beginning of this unique camp experience, the opportunity has been provided at no cost to the campers or their families. Funding for this project comes from tremendous support from the forest community, private individuals, and civic clubs.

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION'S WEBSITE

After the redesign of our website in 2008, the Commission has continued to update and expand the content to help educate landowners and citizens about forestry and forest management techniques. Updates include, but are not limited to, the latest information regarding "Biomass," cost-share programs, cogongrass, and protecting homes from wildfire.

The AFC also launched a web-based "Service Providers" database which allows landowners to easily search for forest companies doing business in their county. These companies

- Aerial Photography
- Beaver Control
- Boundary Line Maintenance
- Consulting Forester
- Fireline/Break/Road Construction
- Herbicide Applicators
- Insects & Disease Detection
- Land Appraisal
- Mowing/Mulching
- Pine Straw Harvesting
- Prescribed Burning
- Registered Surveyor/GPS Mapping
- Residential - Hazards Fuel Reduction
- Residential - Tree Care Services
- Site Preparation
- Timber Appraisal
- Timber Buyers/Loggers
- Timber Sales
- Timber Stand Improvement
- Tree Planting
- Urban Forestry Consultant
- Whole Tree Chipping
- Wildlife/Pond Management



are listed in 23 categories. Service providers that would like to be added to the database can contact their local Commission office or submit a request to the webmaster.



ALABAMA'S TREASURED FORESTS MAGAZINE

The AFC continued to publish *Alabama's TREASURED Forests* magazine during 2009. This publication, designed to educate forest landowners with proper management techniques and forestry information, is circulated three times per year to over 14,000 subscribers and is also posted on the Commission website.

Due to the popularity of the Summer 2008 "Invasive Species" Special Edition, the AFC reprinted an additional 1,500 copies in 2009.



"BLAZE" MEDIA CAMPAIGN

To help reduce the number of arson fires in Alabama, the AFC created and implemented an educational campaign promoting "Blaze" the Arson Dog and the Arson Hotline. Utilizing federal fire mitigation grant money, this media blitz included over 5,700 radio spots broadcast on 65 radio stations across the state. Also included were two digital billboards and 16 poster billboards across rural Alabama.

Educational promotional material was also created to promote Blaze and the hotline. This material is used during school programs and appearances by Blaze.

The AFC reached over 63,000 Alabama citizens through educational tours, presentations, and workshops in 2009.

PERSONNEL

The Alabama Forestry Commission Personnel Office has a continued role of 1) supporting the Commission leadership in identifying the most qualified candidates, 2) facilitating employee career growth and development, and 3) providing support as needed for employees on the front lines, ultimately working to provide quality service to Alabama landowners.

Utilizing effective personnel management procedures, the Personnel Office has oversight for ensuring actions with regard to appointments and separations, payroll and benefits, readiness and training, safety, and other auxiliary services for 333 employees statewide.

This past year, the Personnel Office has focused on encouraging awareness and wellness for Commission associates by:

- Facilitating a one-day New Employee Orientation
- Participating in regional meetings providing a "Human Resources" perspective
- Coordinating professional development and technical training opportunities
- Organizing a week-long Employee Appreciation Week to applaud the contributions of each AFC employee.

A significant action of the Personnel Office involved revising the professional classification structure to identify and distinguish unique responsibilities assigned, and also allow the AFC to compete with today's industry partners for associates, considerate of diversity in education and experience.

In line with our core values, the Commission remains committed to the prohibition of discrimination in all programs, activities, and operations on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or disability. Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.

Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of program information are encouraged to contact the AFC's state headquarters at (334) 240-9300.

If an individual believes they have been discriminated against by the Alabama Forestry Commission, a complaint may be filed by calling toll free (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD) or by writing to:

US Department of Agriculture Office of Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

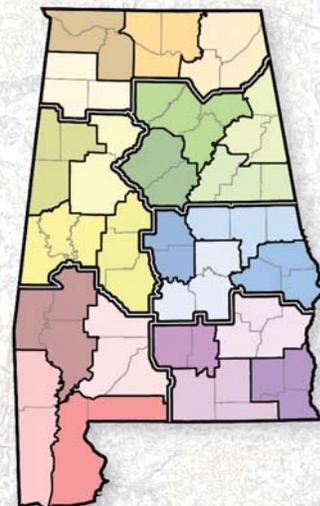
The Alabama Forestry Commission is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Current AFC Staffing:

- 333 Employees
- 67 County Offices
- 24 Work Units*
- 6 Regional Offices
- State Headquarters

* Matching colors depict Work Units
= Region Boundaries

Contact information is located
on our website
www.forestry.alabama.gov



ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

The Administrative Division is responsible for ensuring the administrative programs of the Commission are within state regulations and guidelines. This division is responsible for overseeing many yearly functions, which help the agency run successfully. Staff members continuously strive to improve procedures to provide administrative services both efficiently and effectively. A few division accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2009 include:

- Monthly production of the agency Accomplishment Scorecard – The reporting objectives may change from year to year, depending on the immediate mission of the State Forester and the Leadership Team. This scorecard is a snapshot of the agency's objectives and year-to-date status.
- Revision of the Agency Strategic Plan – This living and evolving document helps provide employees a road map of where we are trying to go and what outcomes are expected.
- The payroll function of the agency moved to the responsibility of the Administrative Division. A new reporting and data entry system was implemented, with further refinements to be added as needed. This new system makes completing payroll easier.
- A new accountant was hired to handle the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Program or "Stimulus Grants" issued under President Obama's administration. This person will be responsible for tracking all monies associated with stimulus grants.

**Alabama Forestry Commission
Statement of Operations For Fiscal Years Ending September 30**

	Actual			
	FY08	FY09	FY09 Budget	Balance
Personnel	14,594,917	15,221,665		
Fringe Benefits	5,233,604	5,659,624	5,659,624	
In State Travel	264,961	358,851	402,988	44,137
Out Of State Travel	58,195	51,223	40,220	(11,003)
Repairs and Maintenance	438,601	583,810	587,197	3,387
Rental and Leases	93,514	118,497	108,180	(10,317)
Utilities and Communications	705,307	734,260	733,337	(923)
Professional Services	1,175,174	759,073	942,194	183,121
Supplies	1,215,402	1,436,563	1,250,859	(185,704)
Transportation Operations	2,034,664	2,027,449	1,747,140	(280,310)
Grants and Benefits	5,347,402	7,101,008	7,448,621	347,613
Capital Outlay	79,816			
Transportation Equipment	1,114,632	76,090	76,090	
Other Equipment	193,499	355,320	220,080	(135,240)
Transfers				
031 Expenditures	32,549,687	34,483,435		(45,239)
Revenue Budget				
AFC Funds:				
Severance Tax	5,270,942	4,407,842	4,346,123	(61,720)
Timber and Turpentine	43,313	43,136	43,136	
Fishing Permits	2,769	5,605	5,605	
Fines and Forfeits	6,212	4,892	4,892	
Radio Leases				
Oil Royalties	16,359	8,655	8,655	
Insurance Proceeds	124,724	43,925	43,925	
Miscellaneous	34,774	30,560	30,560	
Prior Year Refunds	18,136	4,443	4,443	
Contract Services				
Equipment Sales	32,674	125,991	125,991	
Timber Sales	1,342,429	165,127	165,127	
Other Sales	43,005	52,000	52,000	
Seedling Sales				
Donations				
Intragovt Sales	34,524	21,352	21,352	
Equipment Rentals				
Other Rents	58,187	49,060	49,060	
Plowing Firebreaks	224,881	261,681	261,681	
Prescribed Burning	377,858	490,679	490,679	

	Actual (continued)			
	FY08	FY09	FY09 Budget	Balance
031 AFC Funds	7,630,787	5,714,946	5,653,226	(61,720)
031 State General Fund	15,118,938	14,082,001		
Federal Funds				
Federal Grants	8,733,865	3,789,555	3,789,555	
Federal Agreements				
Federal Reimbursements	903,477	1,068,438	1,068,438	
Interfund Federal Reimbursements	67,284	162,225	162,225	
031 Federal Funds	9,704,626	5,020,218	5,020,218	
Local Funds				
County Appropriations	126,439	47,821	47,821	
Acreage Assessments	1,857,117	1,771,304	1,857,117	85,814
Local Grants	11,862	26,950	26,950	
031 Local Funds	1,995,418	1,846,075	1,931,889	85,814
Budgetary Transfers In(Out):				
Supplement				
Severance Tax - County Share				
Operating Transfers				
Capital Transfers				
031 Transfers				
AFC Balance Forward	230,269	2,145,857	2,145,857	
Federal Balance Forward	8,000,000	8,000,000	6,000,000	(2,000,000)
Local Balance Forward				
Total Forward	8,230,269	10,145,857	8,145,857	(2,000,000)
031 Revenues and Transfers	42,680,038	36,809,096		(1,975,906)
Appropriation Unit 050				
Capital Transfers				
Capital Outlay				
Unallotted Capital Transfers				
Reserve for Capital Outlay				
Agency Funds Available	42,680,038	36,809,096		(1,975,906)
Agency Expended and Reserved	32,549,687	34,483,435		(45,239)
Prior Period Adjustments	15,506	1,550	1,550	
Ending Cash Balance	10,145,857	2,327,212	396,545	(1,930,667)

Unaudited; includes reserves for encumbered funds



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