

## A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE FORESTER



LINDA S. CASEY, State Forester

Dear Reader,

We at the Alabama Forestry Commission are very proud to celebrate the 25th anniversary of publishing our magazine, "*Alabama's TREASURED Forests*." Beginning with that first issue in 1982 through the present, our mission has been to provide you, the landowner, with timely information that will be useful in the management and stewardship of your forest.

As some things remain constant, others are changing at a faster and faster pace. One thing that remains the same is the need to challenge and support our youth in their education of our state's magnificent natural resources. In this issue we celebrate the accomplishments of the Coosa County's 4-H Wildlife Team. This team participated in the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Invitational in Cedar City, Utah, and earned the title of National Champions. Additionally, two educational youth camps held in Butler and Sumter counties were well attended by over 70 kids this summer. These camps provide children with the opportunity to experience and learn about Alabama's natural resources, as well as learn about potential careers in the natural resources field. The success of these camps in providing an enriched learning experience is totally dependent on sponsors and volunteers. We express our deepest appreciation to all those sponsors and volunteers who made these camps such a success.

Another area that hasn't changed is the dedication of our employees in serving the landowners and other stakeholders of Alabama's forests. One such employee is Michael Older, AFC Covington County Forester. Mike was recently selected as the Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector of the Year and was honored at the 14th Annual National Tree Farm Convention in Madison, Wisconsin. Another employee demonstrated courage and heroic effort while battling the devastating wild fires that raged in Georgia this summer. James "Jimbo" Robinson, Forestry Specialist in Chambers County, was just one of our 25 Commission firefighters who volunteered to assist our sister state during this crisis. Putting his own life on the line, Jimbo continued to plow a safety zone when he and other firefighters found themselves stranded in the path of an impending firestorm. Stories about both of these AFC associates can be found in this issue.

There are two areas that are rapidly changing. We see an increased need to address the rate that non-native invasive species are spreading across our state, as well as share information on new and emerging value-added opportunities for landowners to market their forests. You can learn about these topics and much more, including how to protect your home against wildfire, in this Fall 2007 issue.

We hope that you will enjoy this anniversary edition of *Alabama's TREASURED Forests*, and we look forward to another 25 years of service to the people of Alabama through this publication.

*Linda S. Casey*