

In Their Own Words...

Letters to the AFC

To Linda Casey,
Montgomery, Alabama:

January 14, 2013

On behalf of the Dauphin Island Park & Beach Board and Dauphin Island community at large, I wanted to thank you so much for all of your help and support over the last few months with the Audubon Bird Sanctuary. The work that was done went a long way for the health and recovery of the Bird Sanctuary and we could not have made the progress we made without the help of the Alabama Forestry Commission.

Gary [Cole], Benji [Elmore], and Josh [Ransier] were a pleasure to work with and I really appreciate all of their help. I hope that our working with the Alabama Forestry Commission will lead to a long-term partnership, and please know that we would love to help you in any way possible in the future. Again, thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Matthew W. Capps
Executive Director
Dauphin Island Park & Beach Board
Dauphin Island, Alabama

To Gary Cole,
AFC Southwest Regional Forester
Brewton, Alabama:

March 12, 2013

I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the Alabama Forestry Commission for the pleasant and professional manner of your employee, Benji Elmore. Benji performed a controlled burn on my timber property in Clarke County, Alabama.

We have been following the Alabama Forestry Commission's guidelines and suggestions with Benji's help and are extremely proud of the success we have had on our property.

Thank you so much for your guidance and allowing us to work with Benji Elmore to improve our property.

We would like to continue working with you and Benji on maintaining the guidelines set by the Commission in the future.

Thank you again,
David B. Ball
Paradise Farms
Mobile, Alabama

To Paul Williams,
Cleburne AFC Work Unit Manager
Heflin, Alabama:

March 8, 2013

I walked over my land in Borden Springs today to check out the burn of Monday. It was terrific . . . a good clean burn over almost all of the land [117 acres of longleaf]. I am sorry I could not be there, but we were traveling . . . and I'm glad you went forward with the burn.

Thanks for all your help.

Best Regards,
Tom Leslie
Atlanta, Georgia.

To Tim Browning,
Pickens County AFC,
Carrollton, Alabama:

May 6, 2013

I would like to thank you for your generous contribution made in support of the 47th Annual Aliceville Forestry Field Day. We had a great turnout! The students, teachers, and spectators all enjoyed the events and the lunch that was provided by Aliceville High School. It is only with your support that this event has been so successful for the past FOUR decades! Thank you sincerely for your contributions,

Dean Lewis
Chairperson, Forestry Field Day 2013
Aliceville Area Chamber of Commerce
Aliceville, Alabama

April 26, 2013

To Walker County AFC,
Jasper, Alabama:

Hello, my name is Beth-Anne Blair. I was one of the teachers from Sumiton School. I just wanted to write to say "Thank You" so much for today. We had a wonderful time and our kids really enjoyed it. We walked away feeling like our kids had learned so much. I have to say, it was obvious that you guys had put a lot of planning and thought into the activities for the day. It was very, very well organized. We hope we are able to come back next year.

Thanks so much,
Mrs. [Beth-Anne] Blair
Sumiton, Alabama

Fall 2013

June 13, 2013

To Elishia Ballentine,
Montgomery, Alabama:

Thank you for a great magazine. As an Alabama native, I am proud of AFC and the great work the Commission does and of the outstanding publication.

Martin W. Brunson, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Catch-A-Dream Foundation
Starkville, Mississippi

In Their Own Words (Continued)...

June 7, 2013

To Linda Casey,
Montgomery, Alabama:

Please allow me to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Joseph Donnelly for making my recent visit to Alabama extremely worthwhile.

Last month I traveled from my home in Arizona to Alabama to see my 40-acre property of longleaf pine in Baldwin County. After cogongrass spraying the last two years and a prescribed burn last year, I wanted to see what there was to do for the property for the next two or three years.

On my first day, Mr. Donnelly made time to meet at the property despite any other responsibilities he may have had. Just as two years before, like an old friend, he was waiting for me – friendly and professional. In the hour we walked the property, he readily discussed the numerous questions I had sent him in advance about prescribed burns and fire lanes, cogongrass and other invasive species, timber stand improvements, and NRCS programs, various harvest options, natural regeneration, and risks from disease and fire . . . as I had been concerned about possible fire losses, I again asked Mr. Donnelly about fire risks. I had to smile and laugh when he told me the risk was very low because the property was “burned” and has the best firefighting crew in the country so close by. In parting, Mr. Donnelly invited me to the Baldwin County Forestry Field Day on Thursday . . .

That evening as I left Alabama, I was quite satisfied with what could be done for the property. For that I have Joey Donnelly to thank for his timely, professional guidance. Now I already look forward to returning to Alabama to see the natural regeneration, to see Joey Donnelly and some of the other fine people I met at the field day, and to enjoy more of Alabama’s natural beauty.

Sincerely,
David Weiss
Tucson, Arizona

April 3, 2013

To Bruce Springer,
AFC East Central Regional Forester
Montgomery, Alabama:

I felt compelled to write you following a recent experience with two of your employees, Blake Kelley and Ricky Porch. I rarely write letters; unfortunately when I do, it is to address a problem. This, however, is different.

Mr. Kelley and Mr. Porch were outstanding in their service and professionalism from initial contact through job completion. For this, in my opinion, they should be commended. Recently they performed a prescribed burn on my farm property in Rockford. With the initial consultation, they made recommendations, described the process and outlined the conditions and timeframe for completing. The project was accomplished flawlessly. Their attention to detail and follow-through is recognized and appreciated. Perhaps the biggest “surprise” was receiving a call following the burn – Mr. Kelley simply wished to know if I was “...satisfied and if there was anything else they could do for me.”

The private sector could learn a few things from your two state employees: 1) communication, 2) attention to detail, 3) follow through, and 4) follow up.

Thank you for the service you provide and the people you have delivering.

Sincerely,
Mike W. Sanford
Hoover, Alabama

To Linda Casey,
Montgomery, Alabama:

May 29, 2013

I would like to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the help provided to us by the Alabama Forestry Commission, more specifically the Franklin County Office.

I would particularly like to commend two of your employees, Neal Taylor and Casey Nichols. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Nichols were very instrumental during our recent prescribed burn. Both were very professional and demonstrated a desire to see that the burn went as planned.

I am very happy to report to you that due to the concerted efforts of these two professionals, Neal and Casey, along with close coordination with the Russellville Fire Department, that all aspects of the evolution went as good as it could have.

It is very encouraging to know that the Alabama Forestry Commission has such capable and qualified employees. Their professionalism is second to none and it gives me great confidence knowing that we have the required resources for future evolutions of this nature if warranted. Their tireless efforts as well as job performance were exceptional.

Thank you once again for your help and the Russellville Electric Board looks forward to working with the Alabama Forestry Commission, Franklin County office, in the future.

Sincerely,
Charles R. Canida
CEO, Russellville Electric Board
Russellville, Alabama

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May 6, 2013

To Paul Williams,
Cleburne AFC Work Unit Manager,
Heflin, Alabama:

As you know, your staff was on our property last week to perform firebreak and water diversion construction with your organization's John Deere tractors. Forestry Specialists Richard McCain and James Barker each worked on these projects over a two-day period: Tuesday, April 30, and Wednesday, May 1, 2013. Their performance exceeded our expectations!

Both my son Mark and I want to thank you for this fine service by these forestry professionals. Their work was performed on time, to our specifications and completed seamlessly in every aspect. They vastly improved our existing rutty interior dirt roads and also built over two miles of new firebreaks in a relatively short time.

Of interest, both of these men, independent of the other, told us (not less than a dozen times each) . . . "if you see something you don't like, please tell me and I'll do what you prefer." That is exceptional service and directed to the property owner's interests, which is a rare occurrence these days. Their personal interest, professionalism, promptness, and strong work ethics are very much appreciated by my family. We commend both of them! You have, in our view, two very special people on your staff. We hope our paths cross again, and soon.

Thank you for them and also thanks to you. Your organization holds a special place in our thoughts and minds.

April 10, 2013

To Johnnie Everitt and Daniel Goggans,
Colbert County AFC,
Tuscumbia, Alabama:

I just wanted to say "THANK YOU" for the excellent program that you presented for the Tuscumbia Kiwanis Club on April 9, 2013. I have already received some very positive feedback on the program.

It is important to educate people about the work of the AFC, particularly with regard to wild-fire and prescribed burning - which is exactly what you did.

Thanks again!
Tom Counts
Wildlife Biologist
Conservation Services of Alabama
Tuscumbia, Alabama

To Linda Casey,
Montgomery, Alabama:

June 6, 2013

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the help provided to the City of Russellville by the Alabama Forestry Commission during our recent prescribed burn. Mr. Neal Taylor and Mr. Casey Nichols both did a great job and were very professional during the burn. They were both very prepared and very helpful in making sure everything went as planned. Their hard work and job performance were exceptional. Thank you again for your help and the City of Russellville looks forward to working with the Alabama Forestry Commission in the future. Please call on me any time I can be of assistance to your office.

Sincerely,
David R. Grissom
Mayor, City of Russellville
Russellville, Alabama

June 12, 2013

To Paul Hudgins,
Butler County AFC
Greenville, Alabama

I really enjoyed being a part of this year's Natural Resources Camp. I was truly impressed by what y'all have going on and especially by the fact that you have so many community volunteers who are willing to support and be involved in the camp. That is fantastic!

I had a blast going to beautiful Mussel Creek with your wonderful group of campers!

Thanks for letting me join you,
Mona Scruggs Dominguez
Water Quality Education Specialist,
Alabama Water Watch
4-H & Youth Development,
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Auburn University, Alabama