



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

660 North Street, Suite 300
Jackson, MS 39202

www.mfc.ms.gov

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Contact:

Brighton Forester

Public Relations Director

(601) 359-2821 office

(601) 500-0489 cell

bforester@mfc.state.ms.us

Two Mississippi forest landowners featured in regional *People of Forestry* video series *Southern Group of State Foresters promotes forestry in the South*

JACKSON, Miss. – Mississippi landowners Ken Martin, president and CEO of Cato-based logging company Mar-Cal Inc., and Vickie Roberts Ratliff, a fourth-generation timberland owner from Winona, are two of nine forestry professionals featured in the [Southern Group of State Foresters'](#) (SGSF) new regional series of videos, *People of Forestry*, designed to increase awareness of southern forests and the many professional opportunities the forest industry provides.

Produced by the Atlanta-based video production and public relations firm [KPKinteractive](#), the series received grant funding made available by the U.S. Forest Service. [Martin](#) and [Roberts Ratliff](#) are the subjects of one-minute videos about their roles in the forestry profession, and are also included in the longer videos [Conserving Our Forests](#) and [Our Southern Forests](#).

A spotlight on management of a crucial, sustainable resource

“Mississippi has one of the biggest timber economies in North America, forestry is a 12.79 billion dollar industry in our state - and private landowners are the driving force,” said Charlie Morgan, State Forester, Mississippi Forestry Commission. “Martin and Roberts Ratliff have strong ties to the land through their family legacy. They are great examples of landowners dedicated to the sustainable management of their forestland.”

Martin and his two sons manage several hundred acres of timberland, including the land where his father started out in the 1960s. Martin’s family land provides sustainable timberland for quality wood products; home for healthy cattle; a playground for his grandchildren; and a livelihood and legacy for his entire family.

Roberts Ratliff encourages other minority landowners to sustain family forestry legacy. She also understands the economic, environmental, and social benefits of having a certified tree farm, which can yield sustainable income and higher prices for timber.

Conservation of an important economic legacy

"Our southern region has many passionate, committed foresters, firefighters, and landowners. Through this *People of Forestry* video project, we are proud to showcase some of the industry's

top working professionals,” said Joe Fox, State Forester, Arkansas Forestry Commission and the Southern Group of State Foresters’ chair. “The project will also spotlight the many economic, environmental, ecological, health and social benefits of our abundant forests and why greater awareness is needed to sustain them far into the future.”

On behalf of SGSF, [KPKinteractive](#) traveled to seven of SGSF’s 13 member states to document *People of Forestry*, using an interview-driven and cinematic style to capture each person’s story. Their video crew captured Martin’s lifelong commitment to the forest products industry at several Rankin County locations, and Roberts Ratliff’s interactions with other landowners in Noxubee County during one of her workshops, as well as a forestry consultation and tourists visiting her homestead in Montgomery County.

A showcase of forestry professionals and career opportunities

Southern forestland measures more than 230 million acres, covering more than 30 percent of the nation’s total forestland and generating more than \$200 billion in annual revenue, providing for more than a million jobs. By featuring people of forestry, such as Martin and Roberts Ratliff, SGSF’s video marketing project aims to raise general awareness and support for forestry; to better promote all forestry topics for which SGSF is trying to effect change; and to increase awareness among youth to encourage their pursuit of forestry as a career.

Click on the titles linked below to view videos in which Roberts Ratliff and Martin are featured:

[People of Forestry: Vickie Roberts Ratliff of Mississippi](#)

[People of Forestry: Ken Martin of Mississippi](#)

[Conserving Our Forests](#)

[Our Southern Forests](#)

To view the entire *People of Forestry* series, visit the Southern Group of State Foresters’ [YouTube](#) channel and follow them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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About the Mississippi Forestry Commission

Established in 1926, the [Mississippi Forestry Commission](#), (MFC) protects the state’s valuable forest resources from wildfire, manages approximately 480,000 acres of forested School Trust Land, and delivers quality forest management services and assistance to both rural and urban landowners. Our mission is to provide active leadership in forest protection, forest management, forest inventory, and effective forest information distribution, necessary for Mississippi’s sustainable forest-based economy. The MFC looks forward to the continued privilege of caring for Mississippi’s trees, forests, and natural resources.

About the Southern Group of State Foresters

The [Southern Group of State Foresters](#) (SGSF) is a non-profit organization consisting of State Foresters from Alabama, Arkansas, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands and Virginia. SGSF’s mission is to provide leadership in sustaining the economic, environmental and social benefits of the South’s forests. SGSF is committed to identifying and addressing existing and emerging issues and challenges that are important to southern forests and citizens.



Landowner Vickie Roberts Ratliff of Winona, Mississippi, stands by the certified tree farm sign on her property.



Landowner Ken Martin of Cato, Mississippi, being interviewed by the video crew from KPInteractive.