

# Mississippi Forestry Commission

*Protection – Management – Information*

# 2015

## Annual Report



The mission of the Mississippi Forestry Commission 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.

*Photo by Leslie Robertson, courtesy of National Association of State Foresters*



## 2015 - Annual Report

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The Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) has been a leader in the protection, management, and sustainability of our state’s forests for over 85 years. The MFC provides expertise, information, and support to keep Mississippi’s 19.8 million acres of forestland healthy, productive, and profitable.

We are proud of our service to the public and our protection of the state’s valuable forest resources. Committed to delivering quality services and assistance to both rural and urban landowners, the Mississippi Forestry Commission looks forward to the continued privilege of caring for Mississippi’s trees, forests, and natural resources.

In addition, we are proud to have achieved American Tree Farm certification on Mississippi’s School Trust Lands (Sixteenth Section Lands) that provide over \$20 million annually to support public education.

We appreciate our partners who provide support, collaboration, and implementation of many of our programs and services. We work hard to maintain and develop our relationships with natural resource agencies, organizations, and individuals. These relationships ensure that the citizens of Mississippi receive the best assistance and service possible.

I would also like to thank our state leaders, commissioners, staff, partners, and citizens for their continued support and assistance in making 2015 a successful year.

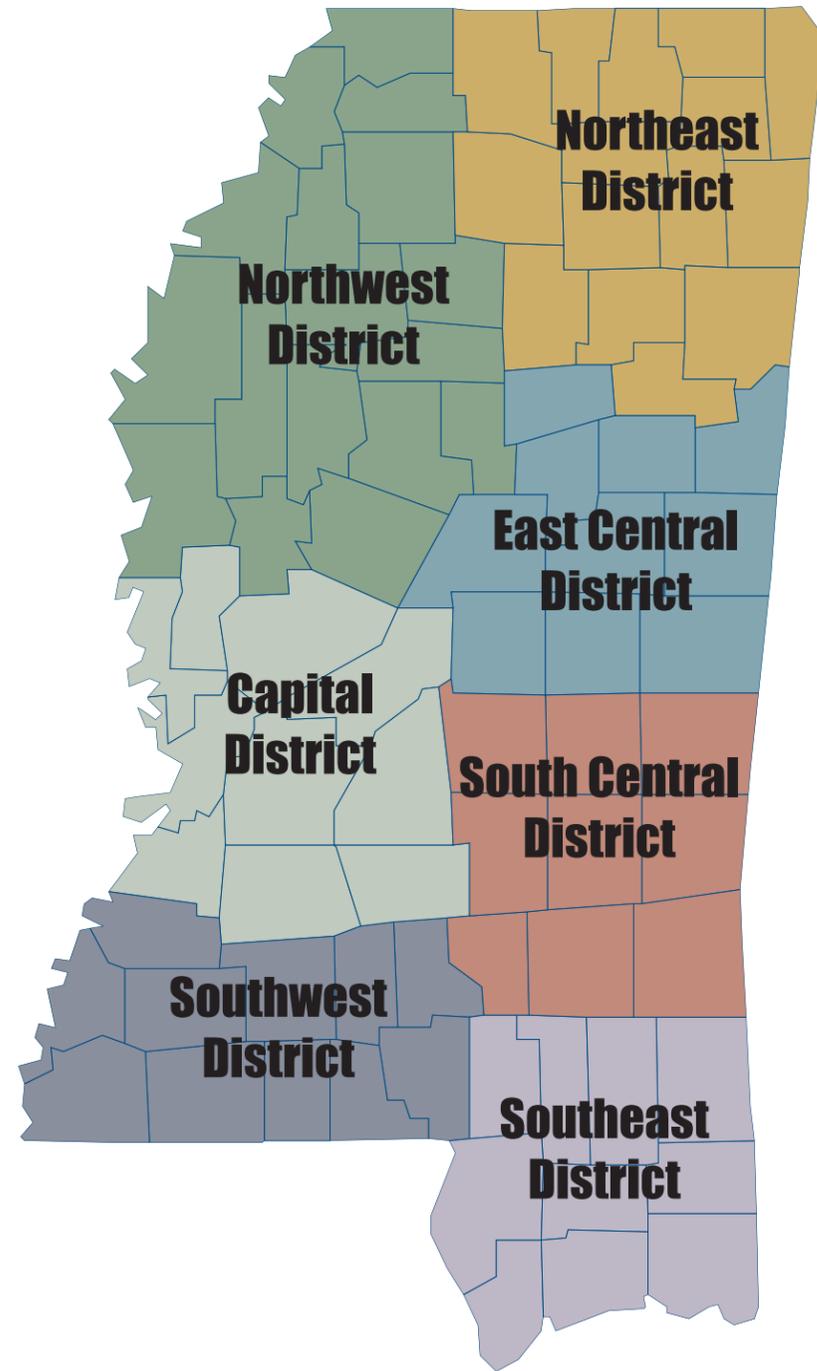
Please feel free to contact our office anytime, we look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,

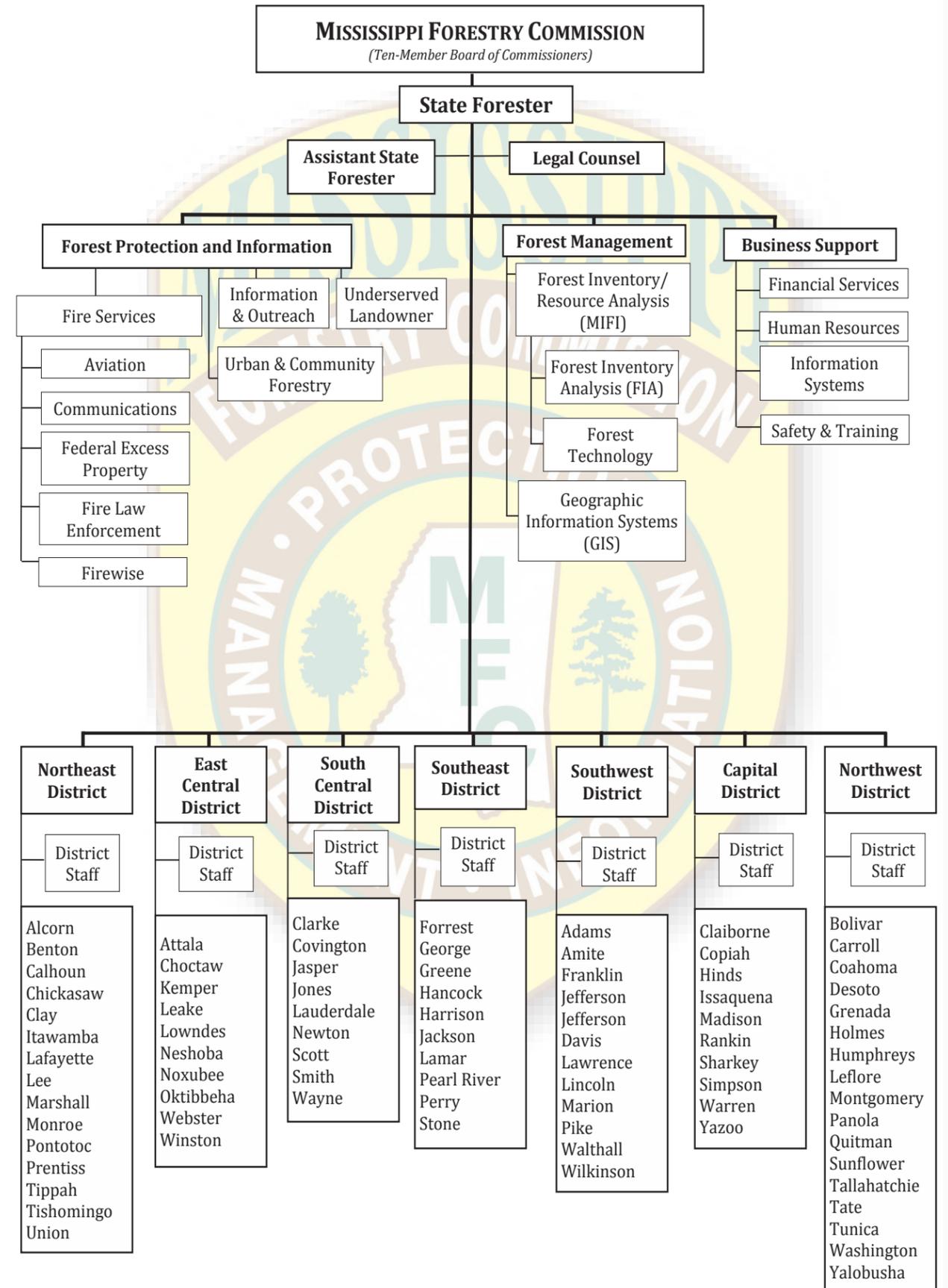
Charlie Morgan  
State Forester



Mississippi Forestry Commission Administrative Districts



Photos by Leslie Robertson, courtesy of National Association of State Foresters



Fiscal Year 2015 Agency Organizational Chart

### MS Statewide Forest Inventory

During Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15), the Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory/Forest Management Department provided direction and support to several program areas carried out on private and public lands.

The MFC's Resource Analysis Program oversees the development, implementation, and management of the agency's geographic information system. This statewide system provided information on fires, public/private lands, and urban/community forestry programs. In 2006, the Mississippi Legislature passed a law that brought the Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory (MIFI) under the oversight of the Mississippi Forestry Commission, making it an agency program. In an effort to promote economic development of the state's forest resources the MFC, in conjunction with the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), provided forest resource information and maps for economic development. A statewide assessment of forest resources has been maintained utilizing satellite imagery to estimate forest removals, regeneration, and developmental stages of forest cover.

In FY12, the MFC began to re-inventory the state's forestland. The re-inventory is a continuous project, during which MFC personnel work to complete data collection on 20% of the state per year. In FY15, the MFC used the information compiled during the inventory to respond to resource requests for forest product, ethanol conversion, and wood pellet facilities. The re-inventory that is currently in progress will provide the necessary data to keep Mississippi's forest based economy competitive. Maintaining an updated analysis of the state's forest resources is critical information for both existing and potential new industries.

The forestry and forest product industry has a \$12.3 billion dollar economic impact on the state of Mississippi and represents almost 70,000 jobs.

### Forest Management

The MFC is charged by state law to: "promote sound forest management practices, which maintain the integrity of the environment and provide for our state's future natural resource needs" (Miss. Code Ann. 49-19-3). The MFC offers a variety of forest management services to private landowners and public forestlands of Mississippi, such as Sixteenth Section Lands and other state agency properties.

The Mississippi Forest Action Plan was created in response to a requirement of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (U.S. Farm Bill). In FY10, the MFC completed a statewide forest resource assessment and a long-term statewide forest resource strategy titled Mississippi's Assessment of Forest Resources and Forest Resource Strategy. This assessment and strategy allowed Mississippi to receive funds under the amended Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act. The assessment provided an analysis of forest conditions and trends in the state and delineated priority to rural and urban forest landscape areas. The strategy provided general long-term plans for investing state, federal, and other resources to effectively stimulate (or leverage) desired action and engage multiple partners. In FY11, the state assessment and strategy was put into action and effectively became known as the State Forest Action Plan. In FY15, the State Forest Action Plan continued to act as a set of guidelines for forest management activities conducted by the Commission throughout the state.

### Private Lands

In FY15, the MFC continued to provide technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners in Mississippi. Seventy percent of Mississippi's timberland (13.86 million acres) belongs to an estimated 350,000 NIPF landowners, with parcels of 10 acres or greater. The MFC provided technical and financial assistance to NIPF landowners through programs designed to enhance and protect natural resources.

#### FY15 Statewide Accomplishments

<b>Private Lands Activities</b>	
Landowners Assisted	7,480
Forest Management Plans	1,369
Acres	130,111
<b>Public Land Activities</b>	
Timber Sale Receipts	\$20,571,912
Number of Sales	215
Acres Regenerated	7,661
Boundary Line Maintenance (Miles)	602
Firebreak/Woods Road Maint. (Miles)	684

<b>Forest Resource Development Program</b>	
Acres Regenerated or Improved	24,496

<b>Prescribed Burning</b>	
Private Lands (Acres)	16,582
Public Lands (Acres)	4,498
<b>Total (Acres)</b>	<b>21,080</b>

### Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) was authorized by the 1990 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act to identify and protect environmentally important, private forestlands threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The FLP is funded in partnership with the USDA Forest Service, and helps support local efforts to protect environmentally sensitive, privately owned forestlands through land acquisition and conservation easements. A Statewide Assessment of Need (AON) was completed in 2007 as the first step in identifying three Forest Legacy areas (North, Central, and Southeast Mississippi) where important natural forest communities existed on private lands that were potentially threatened by conversion from urban and suburban growth, or other threats.

In FY15, the Commission closed on the 518 acre Escatawpa River conservation easement acquisition. Two other grants were awarded for fee acquisitions totaling \$5.04 million that will protect 3,200 acres of working forests on the Pascagoula River in southeast Mississippi.

The Pascagoula River tracts will provide fish and wildlife habitat, protection of bottomland hardwoods, swamp forests, longleaf pine habitat, and public access. The MFC's partners for these two grants include: the Nature Conservancy, the Land Trust for the MS Coastal Plain, and private landowners. Both Pascagoula River tracts are scheduled to close in FY16, and will include additional protected forested acres through matching non-federal contributions.

### Forest Resource Development Program

The Forest Resource Development Program (FRDP) was established in 1974 by the Mississippi Legislature to aid in the development of Mississippi's forest economy. In FY15, this program provided cost-share funding for tree planting and forest improvement practices for the purpose of long-term timber production. This program helped offset landowner's expenses by reimbursing a portion of the costs associated with implementing specific forestry practices designed to produce timber and enhance wildlife development. Cost-share payments covered 50 to 75 percent (depending on the practice) of the total cost of implementing these forestry practices, with a maximum limit set for each individual practice.

Eligible landowners may receive up to \$7,000 of FRDP assistance per year. In return, the landowner agrees to protect the area receiving FRDP assistance from fire and grazing, and to properly manage the area for a minimum of ten years.

On average, more than \$2 million is distributed each year to private forest landowners in Mississippi through the Forest Resource Development Program, which provides cost-share funding for tree planting and forest improvements.

### Forest Stewardship Program

The Forest Stewardship Program promoted natural resource planning on non-industrial private forestlands in FY15. Landowners not classified under forest management programs were encouraged to utilize stewardship management through the development and implementation of a Forest Stewardship Management Plan. Forest Stewardship Management Plans are based on sound management principles designed to restore and protect forest resources and improve fish and wildlife habitats.



The Forest Stewardship Program was funded by the USDA Forest Service and administered by the MFC in FY15. Technical assistance was provided by local, federal, state, and private natural resource agencies and organizations.

The State Plan for the Mississippi Forest Stewardship Program provided the framework for how the Forest Stewardship Program is conducted in Mississippi. The plan also contains stewardship background, guidelines, and forms for landowners and resource professionals.



Photos by Leslie Robertson, courtesy of National Association of State Foresters

## Public Lands

The MFC provided forest management assistance to boards, agencies, and other entities having jurisdiction over approximately 480,000 acres of non-federal public forestlands in Mississippi. In FY15, the MFC managed three state forests (Kurtz, Camden, and Jamie L. Whitten) and assisted school boards with forest management on Mississippi School Trust Lands, commonly referred to as Sixteenth Section Lands. The MFC also rendered assistance to the other various agencies, boards, departments, and entities that had jurisdiction over state and other public lands in Mississippi.

In FY15, the Mississippi Forestry Commission continued to be a nationally recognized leader in forest management technology. Several unique software products have been created specifically for forest management activities:

- A Geographical Information System (GIS) application called Spatial Information Management System (SIMSMap).
- A computer-driven forest management plan developer called PlanWriter.
- A new Plot Allocator, which allowed employees to more efficiently collect data, and meet statistical objectives faster.
- Handheld computers that allowed technicians to monitor for sampling errors during the inventory.
- Trail/game cameras that monitored the number of loads leaving logging sites (for accountability purposes).

In FY15, the revenue from timber sales on non-federal public lands, including Mississippi School Trust Lands, totaled \$20.57 million.



Photos by Leslie Robertson, courtesy of National Association of State Foresters

“Our goal is to sustainably maximize School Trust Land timber sale revenue by applying a more intensive timber management process. These funds directly benefit the local school districts and the children attending those schools.”

Charlie Morgan, State Forester

## Sixteenth Section Lands

The MFC is charged by state law to manage forested Mississippi School Trust Lands (commonly referred to as Sixteenth Section Lands) located in 67 counties throughout the state. In addition to timber production, management considerations also include: wildlife, soil and water quality, aesthetics, and other appropriate benefits of forestlands. The MFC ensured that proper care was taken to manage school trust lands sustainably, and that Best Management Practices (BMPs) were employed during the management process in FY15. The revenue from timber sales on Mississippi School Trust Lands and other public lands in FY15 totaled \$20.57 million. Local school districts are the primary recipients of this timber-generated revenue.

The MFC converted their collective management data into a GIS system to prepare the first comprehensive Sixteenth Section Land Assessment. This assessment, together with more intensive forest management practices, allowed the MFC to meet their goal for timber-generated revenue on school trust lands. The Sixteenth Section Land Assessment is what also gave the MFC the opportunity to have the school trust lands certified by the American Tree Farm System, the first ever large scale certification of public lands in the nation. This certification ensures that school trust lands will remain sustainably managed for the benefit of future generations.



## Forest Health

In FY15, the MFC provided forest pest detection, evaluation, and control recommendations for all private and state-owned timberlands (as well as urban areas) in the state of Mississippi. The agency conducted at least one statewide aerial survey this fiscal year, and additional surveys when deemed necessary by insect / disease conditions. Once identified, insect and disease spots were ground checked to determine the exact cause and extent of damage.

The southern pine beetle (SPB) continued to threaten more pine timber in the southern region of the United States than any other forest insect. In response to this ongoing hazard, the MFC continued their partnership with the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the USDA Forest Service Health Protection (Southern Region) to administer a Southern Pine Beetle Prevention / Education Program. This Program aimed to teach landowners about the benefits of thinning, in order to reduce the risk of SPB hazards. The associated SPB cost-share program was designed to provide a financial incentive for landowners who applied approved first thinning management practices to their pine stands, in order to reduce the risk of southern pine beetle infestation.

The second leading insect to threaten pine timber in the South continued to be the Ips engraver beetle. Drought conditions and stress from severe winds can cause Ips engraver beetle populations to increase dramatically.



Photo by Bjorn Oakland, Norwegian Forest Research Institute

Extreme weather patterns in Mississippi led to a unique mix of forest health issues associated with either too much or insufficient rainfall. Many parts of the Mississippi River basin experienced near-record rainfall during late winter/early spring, causing very high water levels in some areas. Flooding damage from prolonged inundation during the growing season damaged an appreciable number of lowland water oaks and other hardwood species in these areas. Following heavy rain through winter and spring, rainfall became very scarce through the summer, causing dangerously dry conditions throughout the state.

In FY08, the MFC launched a plan to mitigate the damage caused by invasive non-native plant species to the state's forestland. The Exotic Invasive

Species Plan addresses the detection, identification, information, control and abatement of six species of concern that are either impacting or have the greatest potential to impact the forest resources of Mississippi. These species are: cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*), kudzu (*Pueraria montana*), Chinese tallowtree (*Sapium sebifera*), Chinese/European privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), Japanese/glossy privet (*Ligustrum japonicum*), and Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*). The plan also addresses the need to develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations to achieve common goals regarding invasive species.

In an effort to stop the spread of invasive pest species through the transportation of non-native firewood into the state, the MFC continued to reach out to the public regarding the “Don't Move Firewood” campaign. In FY15, MFC employees distributed promotional items at 31 venues across the state, including: SEC football games, MS State Fair, MS Wildlife Extravaganza, and the MS Garden and Patio Show.

### Mississippi Invasive Plant Control Program for Cogongrass Suppression

Cogongrass	
Applications from Landowners	300
Applications/Landowners Inspected	300
Total Infested Spots Treated	2,795
Total Infested Acres Treated	575.3

Cogongrass is an aggressive invasive species that chokes out native vegetation, burns at extremely hot temperatures, and devastates native ecosystems. Infested areas of cogongrass are found on more than one million acres throughout the southeastern United States.



### Fire Services

The Fire Services Department includes four divisions: Aviation, Communications, Rural Fire Assistance, and Fire Law Enforcement.

In 1926, the Mississippi Legislature mandated that the MFC protect the state's forestland from wildfire. At that time, wildfires consumed more than five million acres of timberland each year.

The MFC continued to provide assistance to Mississippi and other states with weather-related events, such as: hurricanes, ice storms, and large scale wildfires. The Fire Services Department also coordinated and managed the MFC's wildland firefighting resources within the state. The MFC collected the necessary data to make sound decisions and long-range plans to ensure the adequate allocation of resources needed for pre-suppression and suppression of wildfires. The MFC also managed 12 remote area weather stations (RAWS) strategically located across the state as part of a national grid. These weather stations provide localized forestry and fire-related weather forecasts.

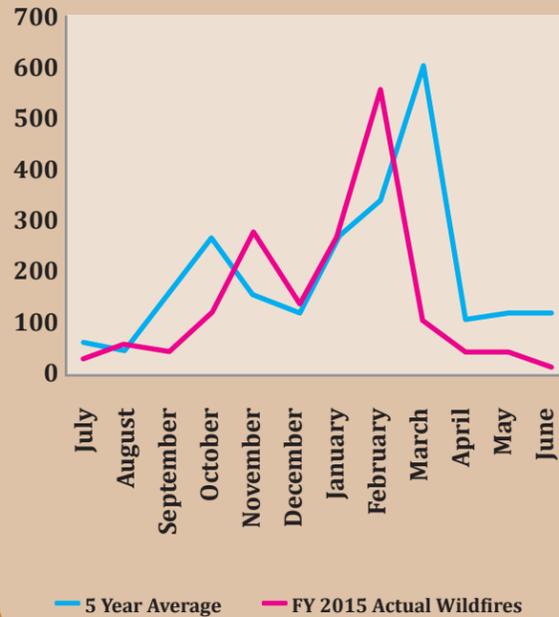
#### FY15 Wildfires by Cause

Cause	# Wildfires	# Acres Burned
Lightning	8	50
Campfire	4	90
Smoking	6	18
Debris Burning	780	8276
Incendiary	740	10,923
Equipment Use	40	544
Railroad	4	13
Children	10	66
Miscellaneous	119	2,704
Re-ignition	45	712
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,756</b>	<b>23,396</b>

The following weather and fire information resources are available on the MFC website:

- Fire Danger Rating (USDA Forest Service Wildland Fire Assessment System)
- Current Weather
- Forecast
- Fire Danger Rating and Color Code
- Keetch-Byram Drought Index
- Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC)
- National Weather Service Enhanced Radar Image Loop for the United States
- NWS Enhanced Radar Image Loop for Lower Mississippi Valley Sector
- NWS Fire Weather Report

#### Number of Wildfires for FY 2015



While great strides in wildfire prevention, detection, and suppression were made, wildfires still continued to plague the state. In an effort to reduce the number of wildfires caused by careless behavior, burn bans are issued by each County's Board of Supervisors and approved by the MFC. Burn ban notifications are listed on the MFC's website: [www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov).

### Communications

Dependable radio communication is an essential element of the MFC's ability to deploy firefighting resources, and maintain situational awareness of wildfire activity. The Communications Department is responsible for maintaining and upgrading the MFC's communication network (which spans across the state).

Components of the network include: mobile radios in the agency's fleet of vehicles, and lightweight hand-held radios for field personnel, which provide statewide communication between dispatch centers and field personnel.

In FY11, the first set of radios was purchased for the Mississippi Wireless Integrated Network (MSWIN) system as required by the Mississippi Wireless Communications Committee (WCC). During FY15, the MFC continued to implement and use the new radios. The MSWIN system provides interoperable emergency radio communication across the state with all levels of government, agencies, and organizations.

In FY15, the MFC suppressed 1,756 wildfires, which burned 23,396 acres. The average wildfire size for FY15 was 13.3 acres.

### Aviation

In FY15, aerial surveillance was used to detect and manage wildfire activity. On large fires, planes flew above the fire, delivering real-time information to firefighting units on the ground about the current fire situation. The MFC's Aviation Department also provides service and support to Forest Health, and other forest management program areas.

### Rural Fire Assistance

The MFC provided assistance to Mississippi's volunteer fire departments through the Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) Program and the Fire Fighter Program (FFP), administered by the MFC through an agreement with the USDA Forest Service.

Since 1956, the FEPP Program has allowed the Forest Service to loan property to state forestry agencies for the purpose of fighting wildland and rural fires. The MFC delivered the first FFP equipment in FY10. The use of the equipment is reserved for wildland/rural firefighting and emergency response situations. Approximately 70 percent of the property involved in the FEPP program in Mississippi is sub-loaned to local fire departments. Approximately 90 percent of all equipment acquired through FFP is transferred to local fire departments. In FY15, MFC's FEPP/FFP programs issued 31 vehicles and 74 other pieces of equipment with an estimated value or acquisition cost of \$5.57 million.

In FY15, the Mississippi Forestry Commission awarded 52 grants totaling \$165,000 to volunteer fire departments.

### Volunteer Fire Assistance Program

Formerly known as the Rural Community Fire Protection Program, the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program provided grants to eligible rural volunteer fire departments (VFDs) for the purchase

of wildland firefighting and personal protective equipment in FY15. The Mississippi Forestry Commission administers this program through an agreement with the USDA Forest Service. In FY15, the Mississippi Forestry Commission awarded 52 grants with a total value of \$165,000 to volunteer fire departments. These grants were used to purchase wildland firefighting ready-kits, which contained protective clothing and gear for 520 volunteer firefighters.

### Firewise

In FY15, 27 homes were destroyed, 12 homes were damaged, and 2,049 homes were threatened by wildfire activity. Is your home Firewise?

Firewise is an educational program for homeowners and community leaders. This program is for anyone living in, or connected to, the wildland/urban interface. Information is available on how to design, construct, landscape, and maintain a home or community to withstand a wildfire without the aid of firefighting resources on scene. Firewise literature can be found on the MFC's website: [www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov).

Firewise Workshops were conducted throughout the state in FY15. These one day workshops were provided free of charge to the public, and brought citizens together to learn about protecting their communities in the wildland/urban interface. Participants learned how to assess the fire danger of their own home, and how to maintain their home or community to better withstand a wildfire.

There are five communities in Mississippi that have been officially designated as Firewise Communities/USA Communities. They are:

- Snow Lake Shores in Benton County, MS.
- Lake Hillsdale Property Owner's Association in Pearl River County, MS.
- Gloster in Amite County, MS.
- Noxapater in Winston County, MS.
- Ethel in Attala County, MS.

### Fire Law Enforcement

The MFC and the Mississippi judicial system have the shared responsibility to pursue the arrest and conviction of woods arsonists (individuals who show little or no concern for Mississippi's citizens and forest resources). The MFC is charged with pursuing retribution in instances where negligence caused wildfires that result in the expenditure of state and/or federal funds.

Woods arson has historically been the leading cause of wildfires in Mississippi. In an attempt to abate the problem, the Mississippi Legislature established fire law enforcement positions within MFC in 1993. The duties and authority of these officers are limited to woods arson cases. These officers may "... issue citations for any violation of those laws designed for the protection from fire recklessly or with gross negligence being communicated on the lands of another" (Miss. Code Ann. 49-19-3).

During FY15, MFC Investigators handled six felony woods arson cases. These cases included the arrest of thirteen different individuals in Hancock, Amite, and George Counties. Three cases have been heard by the Grand Jury and indictments were filed in two cases. In the remaining case, the Grand Jury did not find sufficient evidence for an indictment.

MFC Investigators handled eight misdemeanor cases in FY15. Investigators issued four citations and filed one affidavit charging the perpetrators under the woods arson statute. In both felony and misdemeanor cases the total of pending restitution was approximately \$35,000.

In suppression cases, MFC Investigators directly handled twenty-two cases. The responsible parties

were invoiced for the incurred costs, which totaled approximately \$27,000. The total amount involved in all pending civil and criminal cases in FY15 was \$62,000. This includes suppression, misdemeanor, and felony restitutions. In cases where totals were pending at the end of FY15, this data will be added to figures reported in FY16. The total number of all cases (criminal or civil) investigated in FY15 was approximately one hundred fifty.

Accidental fires, such as escaped debris burns, are as costly as those set on purpose. Accidental fires require the same actions and resources to suppress as arson fires.



### Forest Information

The Forest Information Department provided support to all MFC program areas in FY15 through the development of displays, exhibits, brochures, and other informational material. This Department was responsible for overseeing media relations, internal and external information distribution, agency publications, and continued management of the MFC's online presence. The Forest Information Department also utilized mass media outlets (radio, television, and print) and social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) to release forestry and agency information to the public. Multiple delivery methods were used in order to reach the public in the most effective manner possible.

### Public Outreach

During FY15, the Public Outreach Division of the Forest Information Department continued to provide support to MFC program areas by providing public information, outreach programs, and communication resources. The Public Outreach Division maintains an active outreach program designed to educate young people and adults about forestry and related issues, as well as the agency's mission and services. Local outreach activities such as: civic club presentations, forestry field days, and visits to school groups were carried out across the state to reach individuals at the community level.

#### MFC Outreach Program

Adult and Youth Programs	216
Participants	59,852*

\* Data does not include participants from the MS State Fair, MS Wildlife Extravaganza, or the MS Garden and Patio Show.

Two topic-specific outreach programs were housed within the Public Outreach Department in FY15, the Firewise Program and the Underserved Landowner Outreach Program.



### Underserved Landowner Outreach Program

The Underserved Landowner Outreach Program is a collaborative project between the MFC, Alcorn State University, and the USDA Forest Service. This program offers assistance to underserved Mississippi landowners and has three primary goals:

- To provide outreach support and technical assistance to underserved landowners.
- To encourage young people to seek careers in forestry.
- To work with Alcorn State University to develop and/or enhance projects of mutual forestry interest.



### Urban and Community Forestry

The MFC provided assistance and training to urban areas in the development of community forestry programs in FY15. This included support to counties and municipalities regarding the development of tree ordinances, street tree inventories, and urban forest management plans. The MFC also provided technical advice to builders regarding tree preservation during construction and helped homeowners with advice on insects, diseases, and other urban forestry issues.

In FY15, the MFC's Urban and Community Forestry Program provided 8 financial assistance grants totaling \$112,700 to state and local governments, non-profit groups, and educational institutions.

The Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grant Program is funded through a grant from the USDA Forest Service for administration, demonstration projects, and educational programs. The purpose of the Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grant Program is to aid in the development of long-term, self-sustaining urban and community forestry programs. The goal of the Urban and Community Forestry Program is to inspire or enhance local or statewide urban and community forestry programs.

The Urban and Community Forestry Division also provided leadership, financial aid, and technical support to the Mississippi Urban Forest Council (MUFC). The MFC worked collaboratively with this volunteer organization to provide a series of regional workshops focused on the Community Revitalization with Trees Program. Six regional communities were selected as model projects to demonstrate implementation of long term, locally sustainable community forestry programs.

The Urban Forestry Division and the MUFC also promoted and administered the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA®, Tree Campus USA®, and Tree Line USA® programs in Mississippi.

### Tree Line USA®

The Tree Line USA Program recognized organizations that employed best practices in public and private utility arboriculture. Utility companies that demonstrated urban forestry and utility management co-existing for the benefit of the community, qualified to apply for this designation. The 4-County Electric Power Association and Entergy Corporation were two utility companies in Mississippi recognized by the Tree Line USA Program in FY15.

### Tree Campus USA®

The Tree Campus USA program recognized college and university campuses that:

- Effectively managed their campus trees.
- Developed connectivity with the community beyond campus borders to foster healthy, urban forests.
- Worked to engage their student population utilizing service learning opportunities centered on campus and community forestry efforts.

In FY15, Mississippi had three college campuses recognized as Tree Campus USA schools: Mississippi State University (MSU), the University of Mississippi (UM), and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM).

### Tree City USA® Communities

The Tree City USA Communities Program recognized cities and towns that met four core standards of sound urban forestry management:

- Maintained a tree board or department.
- Had a community tree ordinance.
- Spent at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry.
- Celebrated Arbor Day as a community.

There were 26 Mississippi cities and towns certified as Tree City USA Communities in FY15.

### Tree City USA Communities in Mississippi

<b>Biloxi</b>	<b>Ocean Springs</b>
<b>Columbus AFB</b>	<b>Olive Branch</b>
<b>Diamondhead</b>	<b>Oxford</b>
<b>Ellisville</b>	<b>Pascagoula</b>
<b>Greenville</b>	<b>Pearl</b>
<b>Gulfport</b>	<b>Ridgeland</b>
<b>Hattiesburg</b>	<b>Sandersville</b>
<b>Hernando</b>	<b>Senatobia</b>
<b>Keesler AFB</b>	<b>Southaven</b>
<b>Laurel</b>	<b>Starkville</b>
<b>Long Beach</b>	<b>Tunica</b>
<b>Lucedale</b>	<b>Tupelo</b>
<b>Meridian</b>	<b>Winona</b>



Photo by Leslie Robertson, courtesy of National Association of State Foresters

The Arbor Day Poster Contest is no longer sponsored nationally by the Arbor Day Foundation. However, the contest was continued statewide in FY15 by the MFC and the MUFC.

### 2015 Arbor Day Poster Winners

Student	School
1st: Kara Hilliard	Oxford Intermediate School
2nd: Sheridan White	North Jones Elementary
3rd: Maggie May	Magnolia Heights School

### 1st Place Arbor Day Poster



### Champion Tree Program

*Champion Trees of Mississippi*, the official publication of the Mississippi Champion Tree Program, recorded the largest trees of various species growing in the state. Of the 175 trees registered as Mississippi Champions, nine are also national champions and five are national co-champions.

### Business Support

The Business Support Department consists of four service-oriented divisions: Financial Services, Information Systems, Human Resources, and Safety and Training. During FY15, these divisions provided services to support the MFC's program areas and employees across all seven administrative districts.

### Financial Services

Financial records of the MFC are maintained in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and conform to state and federal laws defined by the Comptroller, Examiners of Public Accounts, and the USDA Forest Service. A component of Financial Services, the Purchasing Division, ensured that the MFC followed all state purchasing laws and requirements.

### Information Systems

The Information Systems Division continued to provide technical support and assistance to the MFC's computer network. During FY15, in addition to providing maintenance and technical support to the MFC network of servers and workstations, the Information Systems Division completed the virtualization of the agency's server based infrastructure. Following implementation, these advancements reduced server total cost of ownership (TCO) by up to 80%. They have also dramatically reduced power consumption costs.

In addition, the Information Systems Division began the deployment of Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) to further capitalize on the savings from the server virtualization, into the desktop computer environment. VDI deployment should be completed during the second quarter of FY16, while full implementation will likely press into the fourth quarter of FY16.

### Human Resources

The MFC's Human Resources Division maintained personnel administration for all MFC employees. In



FY14, the MFC had four hundred forty-nine full-time and two part-time authorized employee positions. Authorized positions for FY15 were the same, and included four hundred forty-nine full-time and two part-time positions.

### MFC Employees\*

Position	FY14	FY15
Full Time	449	449
Part-Time	2	2

\*Does not include federally-funded, time limited positions.

### Safety and Training

The Safety and Training Division stresses the importance of safety in all program areas of the MFC. In FY15, tools, techniques, and training opportunities were provided to teach employees safe and effective workplace habits. Continuing education and training opportunities were available for each employee in FY15, these opportunities were essential to enhancing job skills and fostering personal development and growth. Some examples of training courses included: forest management, pipeline safety, prescribed burning short course, fire safety, defensive driving, EEOC annual seminar, B.O.R.F. ethics seminar, wildland firefighter training, and equal employment opportunities in the workplace training.



## MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION - OPERATING FUNDS

### Fiscal Year 2015 Income and Expense Statement through June 30, 2015

#### Comparative to June 30, 2014

Income	6/30/15	6/30/14	Increase/ (Decrease)
48000 General Funds	\$19,071,100	\$17,487,780	\$1,583,320
40615000 Severance Tax	3,003,896	2,851,803	152,093
40639000 Acreage Tax	1,381,548	1,441,009	(59,461)
43100000 Miscellaneous Income	74,773	87,340	(12,567)
43500000 Criminal Law Assessment Fines	5,254	12,295	(7,041)
43300000 Rent of State Property	48,415	48,945	(530)
43300000 Rent of Office Space	-	-	-
42100000 Forestry Programs (Grants)	1,918,936	2,506,248	(587,312)
43100000 Sub-Grants (DEQ)	32,476	7,175	25,301
43200000 Crew Assistance - Private Lands	940,004	396,692	543,312
43210000 Crew Assistance - Public Lands	1,596,483	1,487,679	108,804
43250000 Sale of Real Estate	-	50,000	(50,000)
43250000 Sale of Property/Scrap	1,394	43,154	(41,760)
43220000 Sale to Fed Govt.	424	917	(493)
43250000 Other Sales	95,274	1,250	94,024
49130000 Transfer from Other Funds	-	421,755	(421,755)
43510000 Other Refunds	30,537	901	29,636
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>\$28,200,514</b>	<b>\$26,844,943</b>	<b>\$1,747,690</b>
<b>Accounts Receivable:</b>			
Billable Services	568,761	355,869	212,892
Federal Reimbursements	1,034,152	-	1,034,152
State Reimbursements	-	-	-
<b>Net A/R</b>	<b>\$1,602,913</b>	<b>\$355,869</b>	<b>1,247,044</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$29,803,427</b>	<b>\$27,200,812</b>	<b>2,602,615</b>
<b>Expense:</b>			
Salaries	\$17,186,563	\$18,076,517	(889,954)
Travel	113,211	93,973	19,238
Contractual	3,028,562	2,756,507	272,055
Commodities	2,175,523	2,379,210	(203,687)
Capital Outlay other than equipment	-	6,250	(6,250)
Equipment	205,363	403,128	(197,765)
Vehicles	105,320	409,549	(304,229)
Wireless Communication Devices	2,200	620	1,580
Subsidies, Loans, and Grants	3,024,600	3,159,005	(134,405)
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$25,841,342</b>	<b>\$27,284,759</b>	<b>\$(1,443,417)</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>3,962,085</b>	<b>(83,947)</b>	<b>4,046,032</b>

Total Encumbrances thru November 2015:  
(cash not expended, only authority reserved)

NOTE: AR now reflects current monthly billing as well as past due balances.

## FY2015 Board of Commissioners

**Floyd "Buck" Hobbs, Chairman**

2479 Hwy 309 South  
Byhalia, MS 38611  
Home Phone: (662) 838-2056  
Cell Phone: (901) 490-1541  
Email: hobbs5h@aol.com  
\*Term Expires: January 19, 2017  
Representing: At Large

**Joseph E. Pettigrew, Vice-Chairman**

P. O. Box 592  
Kiln, MS 39556  
Cell Phone: (228) 493-8733  
Email: petigru@aol.com  
\*Term Expires: June 30, 2017  
Representing: 4th Congressional District

**Neil Black**

187 Biglane Road  
Ellisville, MS 39437  
Phone: (601) 498-3038  
Alt Phone: (601) 752-2696  
Email: neilablack60@yahoo.com  
\*Term Expires: March 19, 2017  
Representing: At Large

**Larry Homan**

P.O. Box 39  
Fulton, MS 38843  
Office Phone: (662) 862-2125  
Cell Phone: (662) 891-2208  
Email: tristate@intop.net  
\*Term Expires: June 30, 2018  
Representing: 1st Congressional District

**James Cummins**

P.O. Box 10  
Stoneville, MS 38776  
Office Phone: (662) 686-3375  
Fax Number: (662) 666-4780  
Home Phone: (662) 686-4592  
Cell Phone: (662) 820-5703  
Email: jcummins@wildlifemiss.org  
\*Term Expires: non-expiring  
Representing: Ex-officio

**Mike Mikell**

P. O. Box 247  
Port Gibson, MS 39150  
Phone Number: (601) 431-6535  
Email: mikellpfsi@hotmail.com  
\*Term Expires: June 30, 2019  
Representing: 2nd Congressional District

**Dr. George Hopper**

Mississippi State University  
Box 9680  
Mississippi State, MS 39762  
Office Phone: (662) 325-2953  
Fax Number: (662) 325-0015  
Email: ghopper@msstate.edu  
\*Term Expires: non-expiring  
Representing: Ex-officio

**Al Hankins**

P. O. Box 575  
Grenada, MS 38902  
Work Phone: (662) 226-2961  
Cell Phone: (662) 417-2600  
Email: alberthankins@live.com  
\*Term Expires: June 30, 2019  
Representing: At Large

**Jim Luckett**

5187 Dogwalk Road  
Tutwiler, MS 38963  
Home Phone: (662) 627-3882  
Cell Phone: (662) 902-7348  
Email: jluckett@nwsolutions.us  
\*Term Expires: June 30, 2018  
Representing: At Large

**Ken Martin**

951 Cato Road  
Mendenhall, MS 93114  
Phone: (601) 942-7513  
Email: kmartin951@aol.com  
\*Term Expires: June 30, 2020  
Representing: 3rd Congressional District

## MFC Administrative District Offices

**Mississippi Forestry Commission**

Charlie Morgan, State Forester  
660 North Street, Suite 300  
Jackson, Mississippi 39202  
Phone: (601) 359-1386  
Fax: (601) 359-1349

**Northeast District**

Stacy Lewis, District Forester  
1711 McCullough Boulevard  
P.O. Box 703  
Tupelo, MS 38802  
Phone: (662) 842-5312  
Fax: (662) 680-9999

**South Central District**

Jack White, District Forester  
2705 Highway 15 South  
P.O. Box 348  
Bay Springs, MS 39422  
Phone: (601) 764-2711  
Alt. Phone: (601) 764-3061  
Fax: (601) 764-3037

**Northwest District**

Mark Williams, District Forester  
1801 Highway 51 South  
Grenada, MS 38901  
Phone: (662) 226-3321  
Fax: (662) 226-0170

**Southeast District**

Mike Lee, District Forester  
1528 South Azalea Drive  
P.O. Box 430  
Wiggins, MS 39577  
Phone: (601) 928-5261  
Fax: (601) 928-3174

**Capital District**

Dale Oliver, District Forester  
3139 Highway 468  
Pearl, MS 39208  
Phone: (769) 218-6830  
Fax: (601) 420-6027

**Southwest District**

Randy Chapin, District Forester  
515 County Farm Lane Northeast  
P.O. Box 749  
Brookhaven, MS 39602-0749  
Phone: (601) 833-6621  
Alt. Phone: (601) 833-2598  
Fax: (601) 835-0188

**East Central District**

Buck Buchanan, District Forester  
14941 Highway 16 West  
P.O. Box 429  
Philadelphia, MS 39350  
Phone: (601) 656-1381  
Fax: (601) 656-8739

For a complete list of district offices & program areas  
please visit our website [www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov).

\*Members by statute may serve until they are replaced after their expiration date.



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660 North Street, Suite 300  
Jackson, Mississippi 39202  
[www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov)