

# Florida's Forest Resources Plan

*Setting the Course for 2030*



## **II. Florida's Forest Resources:**

***Summary of Public and Division of Forestry  
Comments on the Desired Future Condition,  
Barriers and Actions***

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**A REPORT ON THE INPUT RECEIVED FOR FLORIDA'S FOREST  
RESOURCE PLAN (2005-2030)**

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## **PREFACE**

### **What sources of input were sought?**

Three different sources of input were solicited: 1) The general public through six regional workshops; 2) Division of Forestry (DOF) personnel through six regional workshops, and 3) A DOF Web Site questionnaire that people could respond to anonymously.

### **How was the input obtained?**

Workshop attendees used the DOF Web Site questionnaire (see appendix) as the basis for an interactive, facilitated session to solicit ideas, clarify the ideas, and set priorities on *Desired Future Condition* (DFC) statements, *Barriers* to attaining the DFC, and *Recommended Actions* to achieve the DFC.

People who responded via the Web Site used the same questionnaire without the interactive process.

### **How was the data summarized?**

Workshop input was tallied, and then scored by its relative position in the final voting. For instance, if “contiguous forests” appeared 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> in the six public workshops, the total score would be  $1+3+3+2+1+4=14$ . The *lower* the score, the *higher* the composite priority.

A similar process was used for “barriers” and “actions”, and in general, the more an item appeared, the higher the priority.

For the Web Site responses, scoring was tallied on all 15 DFC statements received and divided by the number of respondents (92). The higher the total score, the higher the priority. Additional statements beyond the 14 listed were listed separately if they met the definition of a forest condition. If not, they were tallied in the Barrier or Action items.

The few email and memo responses that DOF received were integrated into the Web responses.

## HOW THE DFC STATEMENTS WERE CODED

This report summarizes input from roughly 314 participants. The letters and numbers used—for example, FM2—refer to preliminary Desired Future Condition Statements developed as a starting point for public discussion and to stimulate new ideas.

<b>Table 1: Original Desired Future Condition Statements</b>	
<b>(FM) Forest Management (Water, wildlife, Silviculture, recreation, etc)</b>	
1.	Forest lands that are open to a variety of public recreational pursuits.
2.	Sustained levels of water quality and quantity in forested aquifers.
3.	Restoration of declining species such as longleaf pine and cypress
4.	A forest that is growing valuable wood products in demand by the global marketplace.
5.	Working forest landscapes interspersed with pockets of unmanaged, natural forest types.
6.	All forest land is managed under a professionally developed management plan that meets ownership goals and objectives.
<b>(FH) Forest Health and Protection (Fire, invasives, wildland/urban interface, etc)</b>	
1.	Restoration efforts and programs for native species in decline.
2.	No net gain of the levels of non-native, invasive species that are out-competing native trees.
<b>(FC) Forest Conservation (Land protection, retaining forest base, etc)</b>	
1.	A healthy sustainable forest land base supporting biodiversity of native plant and animal species and their habitats.
2.	A stable forest land base where the most environmentally important forests are conserved and protected from development.
3.	Large blocks of contiguous forest suitable to support species such as Black Bear, Florida Panther, and other interior dwelling species.
4.	An urban/rural interface that is planned and designed to minimize loss of life and property from wildfire.
5.	A diverse forested landscape with a variety of native species interspersed with farms, water bodies, and urban pockets connected by greenways.
6.	No net loss of existing forest land and the conversion of marginal farmlands to forest.
<b>(UCF) Urban and Community Forestry</b>	
1.	A healthy and diverse urban forest that is readily accessible to the nine out of ten residents living and working there.

# COMPOSITE SUMMARY OF ALL INPUT

Table 2: Composite Results: DFC Rankings		
DFC Ranking	Code	Statement
<b>Top Five</b>		
1	FM2	Sustained levels of water quality and quantity in forested aquifers
2	FC1	A healthy sustainable forestland base supporting biodiversity of native plant/animal species and their habitat *
2	FC2	A stable forestland base where the most environmentally important forests are conserved/protected from development *
4	FC3	Large blocks of contiguous forest to support species such as Black Bear, Florida Panther/other interior-dwelling species
5	FH2	No net gain of non-native invasive species that are out-competing native trees
<b>Second Tier</b>		
6	FM3/FH1	Restoration efforts for native declining species such as Longleaf Pine and Cypress
7	FC4	An urban/rural interface that is planned and designed to minimize loss of life and property from wildfire *
7	UCF1	A healthy and diverse urban forest that is readily accessible to the nine out of ten residents living and working there *
8	FM4	A forest that is growing valuable wood products in demand by the global marketplace
9	FM1	Forestlands that are open to a variety of public recreational pursuits

\* Tie

### Most Significant Barriers to Achieving DFC by Priority

1. Lack of a comprehensive conservation education program for general public, legislators, and local officials
2. Uncontrolled development and sprawl
3. Insufficient use of prescribed fire
4. Poorly funded forestland acquisition and management
5. Little or no ecosystem approach to forest management or understanding of same (need more uneven age management, natural areas, etc)
6. A rapidly growing population that is uneducated in the value of forest resources
7. Lack of financial incentives for private forest landowners
8. A lack of diversification of our forest industry (biomass, more sawtimber products, secondary value-added products, etc)

9. Lack of long term comprehensive land use planning at state, county, and local levels
10. Too much focus on pine plantation forestry
11. Too many Off Road Vehicles on forests

**Actions to Mitigate Barriers and Achieve DFC By Priority**

1. Produce and implement a comprehensive communication/outreach plan with specific messages and target audiences (affects many DFCs)
2. Provide more financial incentives to private forest landowners such as property tax reductions for having and implementing sustainable forestry plans (FC2, FM2, FC3)
3. Diversify the forest industry with a variety of products valued by Floridians (e.g., bio-fuels) and a global marketplace (FM4)
4. Use much more prescribed fire with better trained personnel and less liability (FC1, FM3, FH1)
5. Invest in research and applied practices that promote diversity within forested ecosystems (FC1)
6. Hire more expertise in forest ecosystem management and place more emphasis there (FC1, FC3)
7. Limit ORVs to specific places where they'll do little or no harm (FM2, FM1)
8. Initiate more R&D on affordable ways to control invasives, especially on NIPF lands (FH2)
9. Form more partnerships and cooperative agreements for outreach, management, research, etc (affects multiple DFC statements)
10. Increase forestland acquisitions statewide by re-directing or creating new dollars (e.g. forestry license plate, FC2, FC3, FC1, FM2)
11. Accelerate efforts to educate and inform legislators about forests and forest-related issues (affects multiple DFC statements)

**Summary of Six Public Workshops** (about 94 attendees)

<b>Table 3: Summary of Six Public Workshops: DFC Rankings</b>			
<b>DFC</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Top Five</b>			
1	FM2	Sustained water quality and quantity	15
2	FC1	Healthy sustainable forest	18
3	FC2	Stable forestland base *	24
3	FC3	Large blocks of contiguous forest *	24
3	FH2	No net gain of invasives *	24
<b>Second Tier</b>			
4	FM4	Growing valuable wood products	29
5	NEW	An educated public re forests	31
6	FM1	Open to variety of recreation *	32
6	FH1	Restore native species in decline *	32
7	UCF1	Healthy diverse urban forest	34
8	FM3	Restoration of Longleaf Pine & Cypress *	35
8	FM6	Management plan on all forests *	35
8	NEW	Prescribed fire accepted and used *	35

\* Tie

<b>Table 4: Comparison of Six Public Workshops: DFC Rankings</b>						
<b>DFC Ranking</b>	<b>Milton</b>	<b>Tallahassee</b>	<b>Lake City</b>	<b>Tavares</b>	<b>Palmetto</b>	<b>Lantana</b>
1	FM2	FC1/FC3	FM2	Other <sup>2</sup>	FC2	FM2
2	FM1	FM2	FM4	FC1 *	FH2	FC1
3	F41/F42	FM4	FH2	FC2 *	FC1	FC3
4	FC1	FH2	FC2	FM2	FC3	UCF1
5	FC2/FC3	Other <sup>1</sup>	FC1	FC3	FH1	FM3/FM6

<sup>1</sup>. Prescribed fire accepted and used

<sup>2</sup>. Uneducated public

\* Tie

### **Most Significant Barriers to Achieving DFC By Priority**

1. Uncontrolled development and urban sprawl (\*\*\*\*)
2. Lack of conservation education with public (\*\*\*)
3. Population explosion and pressure to develop more forestlands (\*\*\*)
4. Lack of long term land use planning at state, county, and local levels (\*\*)
5. Lack of public acceptance of prescribed fire (\*\*)
6. Insufficient planning to prevent urban sprawl (\*\*)
7. Insufficient money to achieve DFC (\*)
8. Legislative failure to pass right laws to protect forests (\*\*)
9. Cumbersome land acquisition process
10. Rapidly rising forestland prices
11. Fragmentation and parcelization
12. Uneven playing field for competing with foreign wood
13. Lack of markets for small diameter wood
14. Disconnect between population centers and forests
15. Death taxes as related to land tenure decisions
16. Forest ecosystem values don't have high monetary value
17. Lack of money to sustain biodiversity

### **Actions to Mitigate Barriers and Achieve DFC By Priority**

1. Provide incentives to private landowners as part of a growth management program (\*\*\*\*)
2. Educate general public and officials as to what needs to be done to enhance ecological and economic integrity of Florida's forests: a) forest landowner incentives, b) growth management,

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\* Denotes multiple mentions

- c) prescribed fire, d) control of invasives and exotics, e) adequate funds for conservation management (\*\*\*)
3. Enact a statewide land use plan (\*\*)
  4. Increase funding for forest acquisition and management (\*\*)
  5. Eliminate the death tax (\*)
  6. Fund the Rural and Family Lands Program (\*)
  7. Reduce property tax for forest landowners that have adequate management plans (\*)
  8. Minimize urban sprawl by modifying laws, planning, and zoning (\*)
  9. Enact legislative revision to simplify and speed up land acquisition
  10. Re-direct or create new revenue (e.g. forestry license plate)
  11. Integrate programs such as Florida Forever and Project Learning Tree (PLT) in all public school curricula
  12. Create economic incentives for “urban infill”
  13. Expand use of bio-fuels
  14. Provide incentives for research and technology on new (wood) product development
  15. Sell intangible benefits from forests (e.g. water)
  16. Support PACs
  17. Require environmental science in 9-12 grades
  18. Educate all politicians on forest values
  19. Institute a state income tax (to discourage immigration)
  20. Re-evaluate rules and regulations for importing exotic plants and animals
  21. Encourage major plant sellers (e.g. Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowes, nurseries) to promote use of native plants
  22. Increase biodiversity by greater preservation of forestland (e.g. natural areas)
  23. Expand DOF’s urban and community forest program
  24. Require referendums on (proposed) zoning changes

# SUMMARY OF SIX DIVISION OF FORESTRY WORKSHOPS (ABOUT 128 ATTENDEES)

**Table 5: Summary of Six Division of Forestry Workshops: DFC Rankings**

DFC Ranking	Code	Statement	Points
<b>Top Five</b>			
1	FM2	Sustained water quality and quantity	7
2	FC1	Healthy, sustainable, biodiverse forest	13
3	FH2	No net gain of invasives	23
4	FC2	Stable forestland base	25
5	FC3	Large blocks of contiguous forest	28
<b>Second Tier</b>			
6	FC4	Planned urban/rural interface *	32
6	FM4	Growing valuable wood products *	32
7	UCF1	Healthy, diverse urban forest	33
8	NEW	Increase forestland acres *	35
8	FM1	Open to variety of recreation *	35

\* Tie

**Table 6: Comparison of Six Division of Forestry Workshops: DFC Rankings**

DFC Ranking	Milton	Tallahassee	Lake City	Tavares	Palmetto	Lantana
1	FC1/FC3	FM2	FM2	FC1 <sup>2</sup>	FM2	FM2 <sup>5</sup>
2	FM2	FC2	FM4	FM2 <sup>2</sup>	FH2	FC1 <sup>5</sup>
3	FC2	FC1	FC1	FC3 <sup>3</sup>	UCF1	FC2
4	FH2	FH2	FH2/FM3	FH2 <sup>3</sup>	FC1	FC4
5	FC4	FC4	Other <sup>1</sup>	FC2	Other <sup>4</sup>	FM1

<sup>1</sup> Increase forestland acres

<sup>2, 3, 5</sup> Tie

<sup>4</sup> Increase % of forests in sustainable condition

## Most Significant Barriers By Priority

1. Development pressure (\*\*\*\*)
2. Poorly funded forestland acquisition and management (\*\*\*\*<sup>1</sup>)
3. Rapidly growing population that is uneducated re forests (\*\*\*\*)
4. Lack of forest conservation education for the public (\*\*\*)
5. Accelerated urban sprawl (\*\*)
6. Insufficient funds to attain DFC (\*\*)
7. Lack of land use planning at all levels (state, county, local) (\*\*)
8. An ununiformed public (\*)

\* Denotes multiple mentions

9. Public apathy (\*)
10. Subdivisions not being designed with fire in mind
11. skyrocketing forestland values
12. Conflicting political interests
13. Financial constraints for acquiring and managing environmentally important forests
14. Lack of economic viability for sustaining forests
15. Poor wood utilization for miscellaneous forest products
16. Inability to compete with foreign wood prices
17. Lack of incentives for private forest landowners
18. Counties and cities change land use plans to favor development

### **Actions to Mitigate Barriers By Priority**

1. Use more PSAs and other communication methods to educate general public (re forests) (\*\*\*\*\*)
2. Provide more financial incentives to private forest landowners for all resources (\*\*\*)
3. Increase forestland acquisition statewide (\*\*\*)
4. Accelerated effort to educate legislators about forest management (\*\*)
5. Give a property tax break for forest landowners that have and execute a multiple-use management plan (\*\*)
6. Initiate tax incentives for private forest landowners for all resources (\*)
7. Enact tougher zoning laws
8. Fund the *Rural and Family Lands Program*
9. Enact new rules and regulations for (controlling) development (e.g. living greenways)
10. Limit number of people moving to Florida to a sustainable level—limit development until infrastructure built
11. Use impact fees for moving to Florida to pay for infrastructure
12. Petition city and county commissioners to keep green space—seek change in laws
13. Control, restrict, or eliminate development in environmentally sensitive areas
14. Leave natural areas around development
15. Develop a sustainable forestry funding source (e.g. tax, license plates, etc) for operations and a “TNIS” grants program
16. Push for development rule changes that will require greenspace in all new developments
17. Maintain the *Florida Forever* program
18. Stop importing foreign wood

# SUMMARY OF WEB SITE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (92)

Table 6: Summary of Web Site Responses: DFC Rankings			
DFC Ranking	Code	Statement	Points
<b>Top Five</b>			
1	FC2	Stable forestland base	9.4 <sup>1</sup>
1	FC3	Large blocks of contiguous forest	9.4
3	FM2	Sustained water quality and quantity	9.3
4	FC1	Healthy, sustainable bio-diverse forest	9.2
5	FH2	No net gain of invasives	9
<b>Second Tier</b>			
6	FM3	Restoration of declining species	8.9
7	FH1	Restore native species in decline	8.8
8	FC6	No net loss of forestland & convert marginal ag land	8.6
9	FC4	Planned urban/rural interface	7.5
10	UCF1	Healthy, diverse urban forest	6.8
11	FM6	Management & plans on all forests	6.6
12	FM1	Open to variety of recreation	6.3
13	FC5	Diverse forested landscape	6.1
14	FM5	Working forest landscapes w/pockets of natural forest types	5.1
15	FM4	Growing valuable wood products	3.8

\* Tie

<sup>1</sup> Total points divided by number of respondents = score

## ***New Desired Future Condition Statements Offered by Respondents***

1. Forests managed with uneven age systems with little soil disturbance and no bedding or windrowing—and increased use of prescribed fire (\*\*\*\*\*)
2. Healthy forests free of ATVs and a sensible burn program (\*\*\*\*\*)
3. Forests that are renewed with repetitive prescribed burns (\*\*)
4. Forests with sustainable ecosystems rather than simply pine plantations (\*\*)
5. Forested lands that have reasonable access for recreational activities (\*\*)
6. Restored natural Longleaf Savannah including wiregrass and other historical ground cover plants natural to these sites (\*)
7. Forestlands accessible to all groups of outdoor enthusiasts including ORVs
8. Forests should be models for protecting historic Florida natural communities and plant species, not tree farms

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\* Denotes multiple mentions

9. Diverse types of forests such as hardwood swamp and cypress forests interspersed with hardwood hammocks and wet prairie with scattered uplands
10. Viable management on forest ownerships with fewer than 50 acres of land
11. Landscape level planning of forest (ecosystems) and associated habitats
12. Forests void of mechanical or motorized access
13. Return the (forest) landscape to pre-1900 condition
14. Old growth forest (100-400 years) is part of the mix
15. Forests with substantial “buffer zones” on the perimeter in which new development is highly regulated
16. A diversified (forest) industry with a certification process for wood grown sustainably
17. Set aside areas for non-human use (natural areas?)
18. Managed forests for wildlife first, timber yield second
19. Forests with protected Federal and State (endangered) plant species
20. Large areas of pristine and restored forest with full range of wildlife species
21. Hydrological restoration
22. Travel corridors for wildlife
23. Marginal farmlands managed as habitat more appropriate to the land features, not necessarily forest
24. Less invasive species

### **Most Significant Barriers to Achieving DFC By Priority**

1. Insufficient use of prescribed burning (\*\*\*\*\*)
2. Lack of an educated (re forests) general public, legislature and local government (\*\*\*\*\*)
3. Little or no ecosystem approach to management
4. Insufficient staff (DOF) and funding (\*\*\*\*)
5. More assistance to private forest landowners (\*\*\*\*)
6. No understand of what Florida ecosystems should be like—species present and density and arrangement—how compositional and structural elements affect functional maintenance of ecosystems (\*\*\*)\*
7. Too many 4-wheelers (\*\*\*)
8. Unguided urban sprawl (\*\*\*)
9. Unfavorable tax climate to keep lands in forests (\*\*\*)
10. Insufficient public input into management decisions on public lands (\*\*\*)
11. DOF’s focus on just pre-plantation forestry
12. Insufficient scientific staff (e.g. ecologists) in DOF (\*\*)

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\* Denotes multiple mentions

13. Too much emphasis on traditional silviculture (\*\*)
14. Increasing invasive, exotic species (\*\*)
15. A state government that favors development and growth (\*\*)
16. Inadequate and affordable control measures for invasives on NIPF lands (\*\*)
17. Out of control developers (\*\*)
18. Big business and greed
19. Lack of research on forest management
20. Too much environmentally sensitive (forest) land exposed to development
21. Recreation taking back seat to biodiversity
22. Too much dependence on pulpwood
23. Prescribed burning liability
24. Forest fragmentation
25. Lucrative development (\$)
26. Property rights issues
27. Artificially inflated property values
28. No enforcement of anti-dumping laws
29. A disregard for quality science
30. Too many feral hogs
31. Use of fire plows on public lands
32. Increasing public impacts on forest resources
33. Rapidly increasing water demands
34. Trade barriers, unknown markets, and not enough emphasis on wood energy/transportation fuel
35. Negative perceptions about the effects of fire on pulpwood plantations
36. Lack of trained personnel for prescribed burning
37. Management plans that don't emphasize biodiversity
38. General public perception that invasive species belong
39. Slow acquisitions
40. Not producing enough value-added products for a global economy
41. Excessive government regulation
42. Not enough old growth forest
43. Insufficient wildlife underpasses
44. Slow and unfair policies for purchasing private forestland or easements
45. Ignorant administrators and managers re ecosystem management
46. Inadequate biological surveys
47. Closure of too many forest roads
48. Not enough selective/uneven age management

49. Parcelization of large forest tracts
50. Lack of info to small NIPF landowners
51. Senior DOF staff too heavy handed with management practices
52. Population increases
53. FDEP, et al not enforcing more existing laws that protect wetlands, forests, endangered species
54. Florida encourages tourism
55. Not enough Conservation Easements for private forest landowners
56. Insufficient use of wood waste products
57. Back door policies and laws (favoring development)
58. Impact costs for developers are too weak
59. Lack of leadership in local planning departments
60. No forest education for newcomers
61. Not enough work coordination with County Commissioners and planners

### **Actions to Mitigate Barriers By Priority**

1. Conduct a comprehensive education outreach program for everyone involved with forests including general public (\*\*\*\*\*) \*
2. More use of prescribed fire (\*\*\*\*\*)
3. Limit OHV/ATV vehicles to specific places where they'll do little or no harm (\*\*\*\*\*)
4. Diversify vulnerable forest industry with biomass for electric generation and new value-added products
5. More emphasis on ecosystem management (\*\*\*\*)
6. Increased training and number of professionals doing prescribed burning (\*\*\*)
7. More aggressive controls for invasives
8. Form more partnerships for outreach, research, management, etc (\*\*\*)
9. Hire more expertise in ecosystem management (\*\*)
10. Conduct research on alternative management (\*\*)
11. Invest in research and applied practices that promote diversity throughout the forested ecosystem (\*\*)
12. Target independent owners with 25 acres or more (\*\*)
13. Designate license tag for forests and dedicate those funds to acquisition and management
14. Increase logging in sand pine scrub communities where prescribed fire has not been applied
15. Increase native species restoration

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\* Denotes multiple mentions

16. Pass a state insurance program to reduce liability for burning
17. Encourage strong comprehensive plans for counties
18. Encourage cooperation of large landowners with transfer of development rights
19. Provide tax discounts for those practicing sustainable forestry
20. Target state, county, city involvement with workshops, school presentations, signage, et al
21. More private forest landowner outreach
22. Remove feral hogs
23. Work for more favorable trade laws and policies
24. Increased training for professionals on invasive, exotic species
25. Institute preferential pricing for certified (green) forest products
26. Publish and market a recreational guide to Florida's State Forests
27. New construction adjacent to wildfire-dependent communities should be built/designed to co-exist with fire
28. Hire more law enforcement
29. Conduct more biological surveys
30. Promote the Stewardship Program with NIPF owners
31. Impose impact fees for parcelization
32. Get more \$ from recreational user fees
33. Have user groups police themselves (with Cooperative Agreements)
34. Stop managing State Forests for just timber—include all resources, uneven age management instead of plantation rows
35. Thin more of the pine plantations: they're overstocked
36. Target private forest parcels adjacent to State Forests for acquisition
37. Reduce destructive timber practices such as roller chopping and deep furrowing
38. Encourage new development within City limits
39. Eliminate hunting
40. Increase use of volunteers and partnerships
41. Increase wildlife corridors
42. Use alternative paper/pulp producing vegetation
43. Pine plantation forestry means loss of biodiversity and loss of healthy habitat
44. Advance Agricultural Department out of only crop promotion
45. DOF should have model, demo forests for ecosystem management
46. Educate legislators on benefits of wood energy