

DC Forester December 2005

From the NCSAF Chair

My time in the saddle as NCSAF chair is fast drawing to a close. I would like to thank all of the members of the NCSAF Executive Committee for pulling the freight for our state society. It's been an honor for me to serve and work with executive committee members and representatives from other state societies and SAF National Headquarters throughout the year. Together, the broad range of disciplines and employers represented in NCSAF are what make our professional Society the diverse and talented organization that represents the science and practice of sustainable forestry in the United States.

Our Acting 2005 Vice-Chair, Laura Schweitzer, successfully ran for the 2006 chair position. Wilhelmina Bratton was elected vice-chair for 2006, and will succeed Laura as chair in 2007. Secretary Donna Gehlhaart and Treasurer Doug Powell were re-elected. I'm very grateful to Laura, Wilhelmina, Donna, and Doug for agreeing to run for these positions and serve our Society in 2006 and beyond. I look forward to working with them as immediate past chair in 2006.

NCSAF began the year with 313 members; I'm disappointed to say that as of the end of November, our membership had fallen to 305, 8 members short of our 2005 membership goal of 313. This continues the gradual decline in membership experienced in recent years in NCSAF, most other state societies, and our national Society.

The decline in SAF membership, and increase in recent years of other professional societies and interest groups claiming to also represent and advocate science-based forest resource management, was addressed in the Forward to SAF's Volunteer Organizational Structure Task Force Report issued during 2005. Unfortunately, the report failed to provide recommendations for countering this declining membership trend. NCSAF provided comments on the report to the SAF President and Council, including a recommendation that the SAF Council initiate a survey of grassroots national membership to determine the breadth and scope of forest-related disciplines that the membership would like to have represented in the Society.

Acting vice-chair for 2005, who we elected as chair for 2006, Laura Schweitzer, and I offered this recommendation as an action item at the House of Society Delegates' meeting at the national convention in Fort Worth in October. HSD approved the action item, forwarding the recommendation to the council. Following extensive discussion at council's meeting earlier this month, the current president of SAF and vice-president took this subject under advisement. They will bring back to council their suggestions for how to engage membership in this discussion in 2006. Please get involved when this engagement occurs during 2006—it's up to us to determine the corporate identity that best represents our broad range of science-based forest disciplines.

NCSAF is very fortunate that member Mary Coulombe successfully ran for the District 7 Council Representative. Because District 7 includes the much larger Allegheny SAF as well as NCSAF, rarely does a NCSAF member get elected to council. The 11-member council is the national governing body of SAF and meets several times every year for decisions on budgets, national office affairs, and other SAF business matters. Please wish Mary a successful term on the council and let her know how you would like SAF's governing body to represent you and continue to improve SAF. I'm very grateful to both Mary and Wilhelmina Bratton for agreeing to run for the council seat. While Wilhelmina wasn't successful in her bid for council, NCSAF is blessed that she agreed to run and was elected as vice-chair for 2006.

Another notable event in 2005 is the development of NCSAF's web site, at <http://www.ncsaf.net>. If you haven't already done so, please check out the site. Send Brian Keightley, webmaster and communication chair information that you would like posted on the site. Many thanks to Brian, Membership Chair Jim Culbert, Phonathon Chair Tim Resch, and others that provided input for successful development of this site. Please use it and don't feel shy making suggestions and/or providing material for the site that would be of interest to fellow members and the general public.

We had what I consider an excellent and unique offering of programs throughout the year. I want to especially thank 2005 Program and Issues Forum Chair Wilhelmina Bratton and the other members of the program committee for developing our 2005 luncheon program. I'm sure that no other state society can hold a candle to the range and stature of national forest policy luncheon speakers that NCSAF enjoyed during 2005.

USDA Secretary Mike Johanns spoke at a luncheon in November, and greatly appreciates the contribution that SAF makes toward forestry in the U.S. NCSAF member and Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and the Environment Mark Rey gave an informative report on USDA's contributions to the response to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma in late September.

Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson shared his perspectives on emerging trends and challenges in forest management in the U.S. in June. Department of the Interior National Fire Program Coordinator Jim Hubbard, since named as new Forest Service Deputy Chief for State & Private Forestry, informed us on federal and cooperator efforts to reduce the risk to communities and resources from wildland fire under the National Fire Plan in November.

On July 1, a group of European foresters shared a luncheon with NCSAF during their visit to the U.S. in observation of the Forest Service Centennial. Agriculture Under Secretary Rey spoke on behalf of NCSAF and the Department of Agriculture, and Professor Dominique Danguy des Desert of the French Forestry School at Nancy, France, gave a presentation on American-French cooperation on forestry throughout the years.

The Pinchot Institute and the Forest Service sponsored the exchange with European foresters. SAF founder and the first Chief of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, studied forestry at Nancy throughout Europe early in the 20th Century. SAF 2005 President Dr. John Helms shared his perspective on issues affecting SAF, including the process for member comments on the VOS Task Force, in mid-March. Finally, community forestry practitioners from across the country presented a panel at a luncheon in April when they were in Washington for the annual Legislative Days.

Continuing a NCSAF tradition, the Phonathon was held on three evenings in April at SAF's National Headquarters, Wild Acres, in Bethesda, MD. Many thanks to Phonathon Chair Tim Resch for coordinating volunteers to call other members across the country who had not renewed their

membership for 2005 for their efforts. This unique contribution of NCSAF to the national Society always has positive results as individual NCSAF members personally contact members from across the country. That personal touch always results in substantial re-instatement of members who hadn't renewed, sometimes because they had forgotten and other times because they didn't agree with the focus of SAF nationally. The date hasn't yet been set for the 2006 Phonathon, but I'll be there and I hope that you will too to give Tim and the rest of us a hand.

A good turnout of NCSAF members spruced up the landscaping at Wild Acres one beautiful spring morning, yet another unique contribution of NCSAF to the national Society. Many thanks to Spring Cleanup Chair "Fitz" Fitzgerald for organizing the event, with help from Bob Van Aken and Rod Young. My sympathies go to Fitz for the recent passing of his father.

The 2005 Oktoberfest was held at Wild Acres on October 1 on a beautiful fall day. Participation was not large, but good fellowship and fine food were shared by all. If members have an idea for some other type of event at which NCSAF members and our families can casually socialize, please contact Oktoberfest Chair Meredith Webster, Chair Laura Schweitzer, or me with your ideas.

Finally, I hope that you were able to attend the 2005 holiday party on December 8. I was disappointed that I was unable to attend because of medical reasons.

Next year's national convention will be in Pittsburgh, within easy driving distance of the metropolitan D.C. I encourage all NCSAF members to seek the opportunity to attend the 2006 convention, especially if you've never before attended a national convention.

As my tenure as 2005 Chair of National Capital Society of American Foresters comes to a close, I would like to thank all of you for your loyalty to SAF and your contributions to our society. Remember, the executive committee has plenty of opportunities for service. As a volunteer organization, SAF can only be what we members make it.

I've clearly gained a lot more personally and professionally from serving as chair than I've contributed, not least of which was participation in the 2005 National SAF Leadership Academy. I encourage all of you to consider serving as NCSAF officer, committee chair, or committee member to enhance your professional development.

Loren Ford
NCSAF chair

Thoughts from Michael Lester, Outgoing Council Representative

It's hard to believe that I'm writing my last column as your council representative. The last three years have gone by very quickly, and these have been exciting and challenging times for the Society of American Foresters. Serving on council has been one of the best professional experiences of my life, and I will truly miss it.

The good news for Council District VII is that you are in great hands with Mary Coloumbe. The incoming council members were invited to the December council meeting, and I got the chance to see Mary in action. She has a keen grasp of the issues, and clearly has your interests and the interests of SAF at the forefront. She will be a great addition to council.

There are so many things I want to express in this last column, and no doubt the press of time will rob me of the ability to touch on all of them. In my estimation, the four most important events that occurred during my tenure in council were the Volunteer Organizational Structure (VOS) Task Force report, the continuing decline in membership, the recognition of the importance of the SAF Leadership Academy, and the hiring of the new Executive Vice-President and CEO, Michael Goergen.

Three of those events were very positive for SAF; however the decline of membership is an ongoing concern. I've written whole columns about three of those events (Leadership Academy, VOS Task Force, and membership), so there's no need to go into great depth on them, with the exception of the VOS Task Force Report. Council's action on the VOS Task Force report is included in a separate article.

I would like to talk about the hiring of Michael Goergen as EVP and CEO. As you all know, Michael succeeded Bill Banzhaf in that role. For many of us Bill had personified SAF, and it was hard to imagine someone else in that role. At the time, Michael was doing a phenomenal job as SAF's policy director. He clearly was blessed with organizational skills, but he was also fairly young and the EVP position is a big job.

I believe Michael has succeeded beyond anyone's expectations, and let me say that those expectations were already high. Michael's success was also a message that age can be greatly overrated as an indicator of success. It is clear from his intelligence, maturity, judgment, and sheer inability to be intimidated, that he is the right choice.

Moreover, Michael Goergen will be the first to tell how blessed we are with the national office staff. I made the mistake at the last council meeting of trying to single out individual members of the staff, and inevitably left out folks that I wanted to thank. In order to avoid that mistake, I will simply say we are extremely fortunate to have a staff as talented and hard working as the national office staff. It is money extremely well spent.

The council is an interesting entity that isn't well understood by a lot of SAF members. We represent 11 geographic regions, and we are currently set up to be roughly equal in number of members. This works out fairly well for our district, District VII, because we consist of only two state societies, the Allegheny and National Capital. District II consists only of Oregon. District IV stretches from Canada to Mexico. So you can see that being a council representative is not the same for all of us.

Having said that, it is amazing how much work we get done on the 2-3 weekends per year we meet, as well as the abbreviated meeting at the national convention. But the most important lesson from council for me is the genuine civility that characterizes our meetings. Sure, someone gets their nose out of joint on occasion, but those situations stand out by their rarity.

Many of the people I feel closest to on council are those with whom I frequently disagree. Those disagreements are never personal, and we never (well, rarely) lose sight of the fact that we all have the success of SAF as our primary motivator. It would be a much better world if we could transfer the civility and mutual respect that characterizes our council meetings to the rest of humanity (no, I'm not going to break out into a John Lennon song).

However, there are other issues on the horizon that we need to be aware of and some of them are going to be difficult to resolve, because they deal with well-intentioned disagreements about our

future as a professional society. Fundamentally, they involve asking the question of “who we are” as a professional society in a time of change.

We need to grapple with the issue of diversity. We need to understand why we have a smaller percentage of females as members than we have as a percentage of graduates of forestry schools. What is happening to make SAF less appealing to women as practitioners and scientists than it was when they were choosing majors and careers? We also need to understand why the profession of forestry has so little appeal to people of color when they are choosing majors and careers.

Another issue revolves around the question of how inclusive SAF should be. This debate has been around for awhile. The earlier controversy was whether SAF membership should be limited to folks with four year and graduate forestry degrees. Over the years, the movement has been to be more inclusive, with Technician, Conditional Professional (degree within broad field of forestry, but non-SAF accredited) and Associate (degree not within the broad field of forestry) members able to vote and hold all offices except council and president.

However, I believe that we need to open full membership to any discipline that is critical to managing our forest ecosystems. Most of these folks have their own professional societies (wildlife, fisheries, soils, etc.), and we are not likely to ignite a mass exodus in our direction. However, I contend that these professionals are critical to management of forests, given the services that society demands from our forest resources, those that would like to join us should be fully welcome. I should point out that most of those folks can currently become professional SAF members through the route of conditional professional membership, but I think we will have missed our primary window to attract them by then. And perhaps more importantly, technician members, who are already of significant importance at every level of SAF, should be allowed to hold all offices.

In addition, it is time to open a dialogue about our name. I am fiercely proud to be a member of the Society of American Foresters, and have an embarrassing number of garments with SAF embroidered on them (as well as having pretty well outfitted my three daughters in them). But does our name reflect who we are in 2005 as well as it did in 1900? Does it mean the same thing to people just entering the profession that it does to people who have a few years under their belts? I'm not sure what the answer is, but I think it is time to at least ask the question.

Finally, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support of SAF and for allowing me to serve you and the Society of American Foresters as your council representative for the last three years. I also want to thank Nancy McKinley, my wife, and my daughters Darcy, Kelsi, and Hali, for their support and understanding while I disappeared from family events and obligations. I sincerely believe that SAF is a great organization and can be even greater with all of our support. See you in Pittsburgh for the national convention October 25-29.

Carpe Diem.

Michael Lester
Council Representative, District VII

Council Actions on the Volunteer Organizational Structure Task Force Report

The following is a summary of the actions that the SAF Council took at its' December 5th meeting on the Volunteer Organization Structure Task Force Report. The full report and actions can be viewed in the accompanying attachment.

Council found the VOS Task Force recommendations on organizational structure to be most useful in focusing attention and discussion throughout the Society on whether SAF had the appropriate structure to address its mission throughout the next decade. Council thanks the task force for this stimulation and thanks all units and members for the time spent on developing thoughtful responses. Council believes that this discussion and subsequent actions have now ensured that SAF is well-positioned to address future challenges. Here is a summary of the actions:

- Reaffirmed the existing structure: 11 districts, each with an elected council member, provides the best balance between efficient governance and effective representation.
- SAF Leadership Academy will be funded in 2006.
- SAF National Conventions will continue annually.
- A student representative will serve as a non-voting member on council to ensure a better integration of student participation.
- The National Student Assembly is now called Student Congress to more fully reflect student representation in SAF.
- The Forest Science and Technology Board was renamed as the Science Board, which will move forward with experimenting with alternative mechanisms designed to integrate science more prominently within the Society.

Having addressed structural issues, SAF can now focus on ways and means of enhancing the Society's functions. Council encourages continued unit and member discussion on this topic which is fundamentally a local issue. All members and units are encouraged to discuss and implement whatever programs and activities will enhance SAF's vitality. The approach taken will undoubtedly vary among units and districts and this is to be encouraged.

Council will begin discussing the broad issues of "who we are" and "what kind of Society we want to be" at its March 2006 meeting. Units and members have already provided many initial thoughts on this broad, important topic and these will form the basis for discussion. Any further ideas or comments can be transmitted to council through any of the 11 council representatives or chairs of HSD and the Science Committee. At its March 2006 meeting council will determine whether a process is needed for further discussion and communications, and, if so, what might represent an appropriate timeline to bring this issue to a formal conclusion.

NCSAF Membership Update

As of the end of November 2005 NCSAF had 305 members, which is a little short of our 313 membership goal for 2005.

The following NCSAF membership change occurred in November. A big welcome to our transfer-in member!

New
None

Reinstated
None

Transferred In
F. Randolph Knight, Jr., CF – from South Puget Chapter

Transferred Out
Charles B. Goehring – to Southwestern Wisconsin

Jim Culbert
Membership Chair

Secretary Johanns Addresses NCSAF

On November 15, 2005, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns spoke to NCSAF members in a luncheon at the Whitten Building in Washington, DC. Secretary Johanns addressed issues related to forestry and the next Farm Bill. He talked about his travels around the country to participate in Farm Bill listening sessions, in which he heard about the need for provisions in the Farm Bill that includes forestry.

He believes that the upcoming Farm Bill must attempt to address issues facing private landowners in this century rather than continuing policies that were developed 85 years ago. As we face the challenge of remaining World Trade Organization compliant, the Secretary said that we could develop and expand conservation programs to assist private forest landowners.

Appalachian Society of American Foresters 85th Annual Meeting

People, Products & Practices – The 3Ps of Forest Certification

January 25 - 27, 2005

Doubletree Hotel

Charlottesville, Virginia

Sponsored by

The Skyline Chapter

Virginia Division

of the Society of American Foresters

Technical Program (Thursday and Friday, January 26 & 27)

Pre-Conference Workshops: Wednesday, January 25, 2006

For more information see: www.apsaf.org/meeting.htm

Online registration is available for conference and hotel at www.apsaf.org

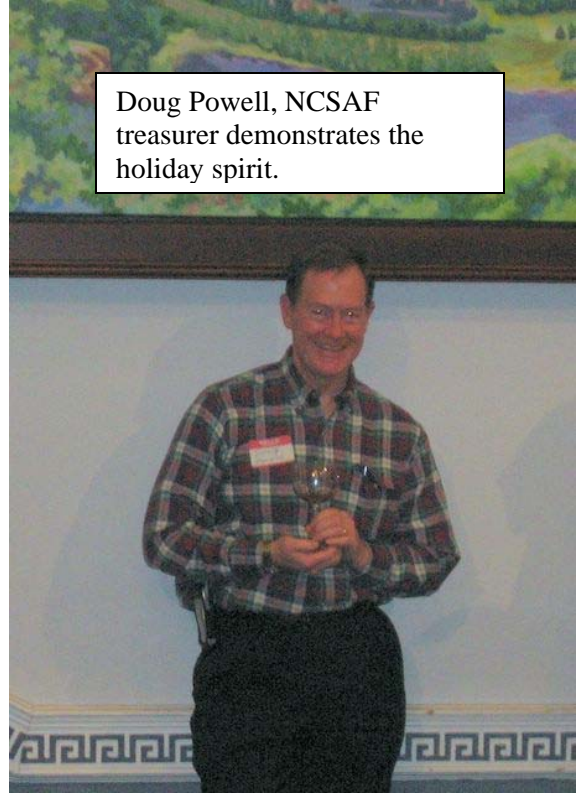
All registrations must be received by January 23rd.



Michele Harvey, (l) receives her Fellow award from Jim Culbert, (r) membership chair.



Doug Powell, NCSAF treasurer demonstrates the holiday spirit.



John Witherspoon (l), immediate past chair and Doug Powell, NCSAF treasurer



John Witherspoon (l), immediate past chair welcomes Mary Coulombe (r), new council representative. Doug Powell looks on.



Seasons Greetings

2006 NCSAF Calendar of Events

Date	Description	Contact
January 14	Executive Committee Meeting 10 AM – Noon	Laura Schweitzer
January 15	DC Forester deadline	Jennifer Plyler
January 28	Wine Tasting and Auction Fundraiser (more details in the January <i>DC Forester</i>)	Mary Coulombe
February 15	DC Forester deadline	Jennifer Plyler
March 15	DC Forester deadline	Jennifer Plyler
April 15	DC Forester deadline	Jennifer Plyler
May 15	DC Forester deadline	Jennifer Plyler
June 15	DC Forester deadline	Jennifer Plyler
October 25-29	National SAF Convention in Pittsburgh, PA	Terry Clark clarkt@safnet.org

2005 NCSAF LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Vacant	Nominating and Prof. Recognition Chair	W: H:	
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