

EXTENSION FOREST RESOURCES

ANNUAL REPORT 1986-87

I. Changes in Service Environment

The severe financial hardship and trend towards part-time farming among many small and medium sized farmers, and new Federal conservation legislation have expanded interest in forest management in general, and in increased income production from forestry in particular. Furniture and lumber imports have substantially increased competition in the wood products industry and created a greater awareness of the need to improve processing efficiency and marketing skills. These trends are expected to continue, placing greater demands on Extension specialists and agents at a time when the total N. C. Agricultural Extension Service budget is decreasing. This makes priority setting and careful planning even more critical than in the past.

II. Faculty

- A. Rick Hamilton - recipient of the North Carolina State University Outstanding Extension Service Award

VI. Extension and Public Service

Greater awareness among young people of the economic and environmental role of forest resources is vital to continued management of these resources for multiple uses. Project Learning Tree (PLT) is a national program sponsored by the American Forest Council and Western Region Environmental Education Council. This award winning environmental

education program is designed to give young people, K through 12, a better understanding of the place forest resources play in our lives. In 1986 the program was introduced into North Carolina with leadership provided by the Extension Service and North Carolina Forestry Association. At the recent National PLT coordinators meeting, North Carolina was recognized as runner-up for the outstanding state for 1986. During the year over 1000 N. C. school teachers and youth leaders attended 1-day training sessions on the use of PLT in the classroom. It is estimated that over 30,000 youth have already been exposed to the program. The effort has been so successful because of the high quality of the program and the close working relationship developed between the Dept. of Public Instruction, Extension and other agency and private foresters. Also started last year was the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. This includes training in shotgun, rifle, pistol, archery, black powder and hunting. The program is being piloted in 6 counties. It provides an opportunity to attract older youth to 4-H where they can be given a fuller appreciation of natural resources.

Efforts continue to find more effective ways to communicate with our potential clientele. The Woodland Management Correspondence Course developed last year by Extension Forest Resources and edited by Gary Blank was revised and distributed regionally by Forest Farmers Association and the Extension Services of 14 states. The course, costing \$50, is expected to reach a new, potentially influential, landowner audience that may not be familiar with Extension, or interested in attending meetings or workshops. Approximately 1200 copies of the course have been distributed in the first 6 months. The

Forestry Information Source Book was another publication developed to increase awareness about forests and forestry. The 52 page book contains forestry facts for the state, provides information on public and private sources of assistance, forestry publications, audiovisual aids, and educational opportunities. The book has been distributed to libraries, Extension and Forest Service offices, and individuals. Finally, Extension supplied several video segments for "Great American Woodlots" - a 13 week, 30 minute magazine style program being shown on public television. The series was developed by Maine Public Broadcasting System and Maine Cooperative Extension and discusses the benefits of forest management across the nation.

Microcomputer software and a handbook on "Quality Control in Southern Pine Mills" formed the centerpiece of a program designed to increase production efficiency and profitability at sawmills. Over 50 mills are using the materials with annual savings estimated conservatively at \$2 million. Videotape training is also being used to support the forest industry. Over 200 copies of a 2 hour videotape "Techniques of Lumber Yield Improvement" have been sold to the furniture industry, and 60 companies have subscribed to a quarterly "Technology Update" videotape series being developed for the sawmill industry. These projects are in cooperation with Nick-Weidhaas, Department of Wood and Paper Science.

Landowner interest in alternative income producers from forestry has escalated in the last couple of years. Extension programs are partly responsible for the doubling from \$5 to \$10 million in

landowner income from pine straw sales. The economic feasibility of Shiitake mushroom production is being evaluated at several farm demonstrations in western North Carolina. Also guidelines are being developed on liability issues and income from wildlife management.

The 1986 Farm Bill targeted 40 million acres of highly erodible cropland nationally for retirement from agricultural production. Extension participated in training programs for agents and other agency personnel, developed a Woodland Owner Note and flyer on "Planting Trees under the CRP," developed media releases, and participated in several county meetings. In the first year of the program, 36,000 acres have been converted to trees in North Carolina. Another important educational program developed to reduce soil erosion was on logging and water quality. A videotape on techniques to reduce erosion during timber harvesting and road construction has been used at a series of evening meetings for loggers and timber buyers in the Piedmont and Mountains. Approximately 1,000 people attended the meetings sponsored by Extension, N. C. Forestry Association and TVA.

This report summarizes some of the year's major program accomplishments. Other efforts included increasing Christmas tree quality and markets - in 1986 grower income reached \$42 million from the sale of 3.5 million trees, pesticide education, improved wildlife and forest management, market expansion for wood products, outdoor recreation, and wood products protection. Teaching tools included workshops, tours, demonstrations, publications, video and slide tapes,

and microcomputer software. Specialists organized or taught at:

- 15 training sessions for 290 Extension agents
- 55 workshops attended by 2700 professionals in various areas of forest management and wood utilization, and
- 133 meetings for 4600 forest landowners, Christmas tree growers, homeowners, and other interested lay people.

VII. Recommendations and Concerns for the Future

The mission of Extension Forest Resources is to improve the management and utilization of our forest resources for multiple purposes. This can increase income to forest landowners and wood processors, improve the quality of life and our environment, and help assure continued availability of forest resources. Extension can play a major role in increasing forestry's already important economic and environmental contributions to the state. To achieve this, the size of the specialist's staff should be maintained and the number of forestry professionals at the county and area levels increased.