



UPDATE AUGUST 2, 2010

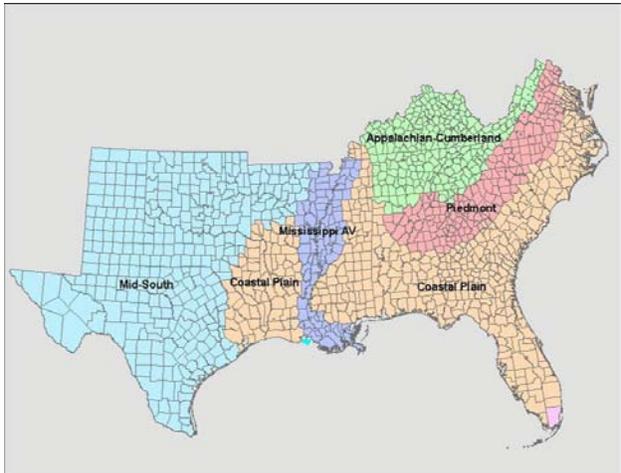
We've been having a very productive summer as we move the Southern Forest Futures Project toward completion. As analysis and writing concludes, we're looking forward to engaging the public in a discussion of our findings regarding the future of southern forests. A more detailed look at our progress follows:

### WHAT IS THE SOUTHERN FOREST FUTURES PROJECT?

The Southern Forest Futures Project (SFFP) provides a science-based "futuring" analysis for the forests of the southeastern United States. The effort was chartered by the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station and Southern Region and the Southern Group of State Foresters. The SFFP examines how a variety of possible futures could shape forests and their many ecosystem services and values using computer modeling and cutting edge scientific analysis. The ultimate goal is to translate this vast array of science and modeling results into useable information for management and policy making regarding the South's forests.

### HOW DOES THE SFFP EVALUATE THE FUTURE?

The SFFP uses a scenario approach to anticipating the future. No single forecast of future conditions is likely to be correct—the future involves many trends and variables and all are uncertain. Instead of focusing on one forecast we've used public input and expert opinion to derive a range of alternative futures to analyze. These are based on many factors, including climate change, economic growth, and shifts in forest products and bioenergy markets.



The SFFP uses a set of forecasting models to forecast land use changes, shifts in forest composition and structure, carbon stocks, and harvesting. Other analysis tools and models are used to infer the implications of possible futures for several meta-issues surrounding southern forests such as water, wildlife, fire, invasive plants, and several socially important ecosystem services.

### HOW DOES THE SFFP DERIVE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS?

Because of the South's immense ecological and social diversity, we have divided the region into five subregions for exploring management implications for all forest ownerships. Forecasts and issue analyses described above are being translated in each of these subregions by a team headed by a scientist and a forest manager familiar with their respective subregion.

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## WHAT WILL THE SFFP PRODUCE?

The results of the SFFP will be contained in three reports to be released in two phases. In the first phase we will release a **Forecast and Meta-Issue Report** that will provide the detailed analysis of alternative futures and their implications for the meta-issues. At the same time, we will produce a **Summary Report** that summarizes the key findings and sets out the most important implications and findings for the South. In the second phase, we will release **Subregional Management Implications Reports** to draw out the key findings for each of the five subregions.

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## HOW MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE?

The SFFP has matured through several stages:

1. Fifteen public meetings and a careful analysis of public issues was completed and results were published.
2. Alternative futures were constructed using public input and an expert panel.
3. The forecasting team has completed forecasts of land use, forest conditions, and forest uses for the futures.
4. Teams are completing reports on each of eleven specific meta-issues.
5. Draft reports are being developed and edited.
6. Subregional teams are beginning to “downscale” the results.



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## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE PROJECT?

1. Completion and peer reviews of the Forecast and Meta-Issue Report and Summary Report (Fall 2010)
2. Release of the public review draft of the Forecast and Meta- Issue Report and Summary Report. (Winter 2010)
3. Completion, review and release of the Subregional Management Implications Reports. (Spring 2011)

More than thirty scientists and analysts are involved in bringing the Southern Forest Futures Project to its completion. The SFFP should be viewed as the latest installment in a long and important conversation about sustaining the South’s forests. We look forward to continuing the dialogue.

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## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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### WEBSITE:

<http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/futures>

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