

A Special Issue of the *Journal of Forestry*—Proceedings of the 2013 National Silviculture Workshop

James M. Guldin and Marilyn A. Buford

This special issue of the *Journal of Forestry* presents the Proceedings of the 2013 National Silviculture Workshop (NSW), which was held as one of the concurrent sessions of the 2013 national convention of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and sponsored by the D-2 Silviculture Working Group. This marks the first time the NSW has been held in conjunction with the national convention—and, as with most changes, some explanation is needed to describe how this came to pass.

The NSW is the premier workshop for field silviculturists and research foresters in the USDA Forest Service. Held biennially, participants and presenters include silviculturists from the National Forest System (NFS), Research and Development (R&D), and from other parts of the agency. In recent years, it has expanded to include colleagues in academia engaged in silvicultural research on federal lands. It is designed as a forum where practicing field foresters can present their latest success stories, where research scientists can share the latest scientific advances that merit application in the field, and where everyone can put “boots on the ground,” either figuratively through illustrated presentations or literally during a field tour, to see and discuss state-of-the-art silvicultural systems being implemented to meet agency goals.

The NSW has been held 23 times in 16 states. The first workshop was in 1973 in Marquette, Michigan, and focused on management of northern hardwood forests. Five more meetings were held through 1979, but starting with the 1979 meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, the biennial meeting pattern became the norm. Each region of the National Forest System has hosted the NSW at least twice. The workshop is organized by the Washington Office, under the Forest Management Staff of NFS and the Forest Management Research staff of R&D. The planning committee for the individual meetings typically includes the National Program Leaders for Silviculture in NFS and R&D as well as the regional silviculturist and an R&D scientist from the sponsoring region and station, respectively.

The NSW also offers a venue for recognizing significant accomplishments in silviculture and silvicultural research within the agency. In 1989, the Washington Office initiated the National Silviculture Award to honor outstanding contributions in the field of silviculture by silviculturists within the NFS and by research scien-

tists in R&D. To date, 43 NFS silviculturists and 32 R&D scientists have received this honor.

A major objective for the NSW is to allow researchers and practitioners to interact with one another in both formal and informal settings. In addition, the workshop provides an opportunity for participants to fulfill agency continuing education requirements for silvicultural certification. To achieve these objectives, the NSW has typically been held as a stand-alone meeting in the sponsoring region, typically in close proximity to a nearby R&D experimental forest or national forest that has an array of interesting projects being implemented in the field. Typical meetings draw on the order of 20–30 presenters and 100–150 attendees. Each of the last 19 NSW meetings has produced an informally peer-reviewed proceedings, typically published by the sponsoring R&D research station as a station proceedings or general technical report. Interested readers can find these on the Treearch website,¹ the agency repository for online publications prepared by Forest Service authors; the first was published for the 1976 NSW in Eugene, Oregon (USDA Forest Service 1976), and the most recent was produced after the 2009 NSW held in Boise, Idaho (Jain et al. 2010).

This, then, was the planning model used for the 2011 NSW, which was scheduled to convene in May 2011 in Tallahassee, Florida, hosted by Region 8 and the Southern Research Station. The program included 5 plenary session papers, 25 offered presentations, a dozen posters, and a day-long field tour of the superb longleaf pine restoration and management program on the Apalachicola National Forest. However, in March 2011, a new travel management policy adopted by the USDA Forest Service led to decisions by agency employees in all deputy areas to curtail travel to meetings and training. Within 2 weeks of that announcement, more than a dozen speakers withdrew their presentations, and meeting registration fell far short of that required to justify holding the meeting. As a result, the 2011 NSW was cancelled, and prospects appeared bleak for holding a meeting in 2013.

Then, a miracle happened—or at the very least, a unique confluence of people and events led to an outstanding opportunity. In essence, SAF came to the rescue! Bob Seymour and Jim Guldin were serving as program co-chairs for the 2013 National SAF convention in Charleston, South Carolina, and the convention planning committee was working with SAF national office staff around the theme, “Silviculture Matters.” During those discussions, Guldin (who had been the Southern Research Station representative on the planning committee of the cancelled 2011 NSW) and SAF’s Carol Redelsheimer came up with the idea to offer the 2013 NSW as one of the concurrent tracks of the national convention. The D-2 Silviculture Working Group instantly agreed to sponsor that track, the

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Affiliations: James M. Guldin (jguldin@fs.fed.us), USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Hot Springs, AR. Marilyn A. Buford (mbuford@fs.fed.us), USDA Forest Service, Research and Development, Washington, DC.

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Washington Office of the USDA Forest Service endorsed the idea, and from that point onward the problem was solved.

This was an ideal solution in a number of ways. The collaboration between the SAF staff and the USDA Forest Service NSW program planning team proceeded flawlessly. The SAF convention program planning software worked seamlessly, such that a 2-day NSW concurrent session filled 26 slots in the program, abstracts for presentation were reviewed by the NSW planning team, and the program for the NSW was built very smoothly as one of a dozen concurrent tracks offered at the convention. The 2013 National Silviculture Award recipients were honored as well; they included Blaine Cook, forest silviculturist on the Black Hills National Forest in Custer, South Dakota; Dave Powell, forest silviculturist on the Umatilla National Forest in Pendleton, Oregon; Jim Thinnes, regional silviculturist for the Rocky Mountain Region in Golden, Colorado; Bob Deal, research forester for

the Pacific Northwest Research Station in Portland, Oregon; and Andy Youngblood, research forester (retired) with the Pacific Northwest Research Station in LaGrande, Oregon. In addition, the NSW Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Russ Graham with the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Moscow, Idaho.

To cap off this ideal solution, Matt Walls and the new *Journal of Forestry* Editor, Don Bragg, agreed to offer this Special Issue of the *Journal of Forestry* to publish the Proceedings of the NSW. Marilyn Buford, the R&D National Program Leader for Silviculture in Washington, was the ideal choice to serve as Guest Editor, given both her involvement in organizing the NSW and her past experience as Editor of the *Southern Journal of Applied Forestry* in the 1990s.

We thank the SAF for making the 2013 NSW a reality. The SAF membership at large should fully appreciate the time commitment, energy, and passion that our na-

tional SAF staff invests in organizing and executing the annual convention. Kudos to Carol Redelsheimer, Louise Murgia, Matt Walls, and all the rest who work so hard on behalf of SAF members across the nation!

Endnote

1. For more information, see www.treearch.fs.fed.us/.

Literature Cited

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