



Leaves OF *Change*



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In this Issue

- 1 *Introduction: Wildland-Urban Interface Professional Development*
- 1 *Training and Outreach: Changing Roles*
- 2 *Partnership Highlight: Texas Forest Service*
- 3 *Recommended Resources: Changing Roles on the Web, Forests at the Wildland-Urban Interface*
- 4 *Upcoming Events*

Contact

InterfaceSouth

Annie Hermansen-Báez,
Center Manager
PO Box 110806
Bldg 164, Mowry Rd.
Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 376-3271
(352) 376-4536 fax
www.interfacesouth.org

Urban Forestry South

Dudley Hartel,
Center Manager
320 Green Street
Athens, GA 30602
(706) 559-4236
(706) 559-4266 fax
www.urbanforestrysouth.org

Introduction

WUI Professional Development for the South

NATURAL RESOURCE agencies face numerous challenges in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and are searching for solutions. Communities are growing rapidly, landowners' management goals are varied and at times conflict, and residents may not understand the benefits of resource management. As a result, risks to environmental quality and human quality of life are becoming more apparent.

These changes call for natural resource professionals to learn new skills and techniques. Foresters and other resource professionals can no longer expect to just work alone in the woods. The ability to communicate effectively is an increasingly important part of a natural resource professional's job. Knowledge of how to develop partnerships to better manage natural resources in the interface and techniques for managing forests on smaller scales and for multiple objectives are also important in the fragmented interface forests.

Land use policy and planning decisions have an immense influence on natural resource issues in the WUI. Natural resource professionals need to learn more about how land-use policy affects natural resources and the role of natural resources in mitigating the unintended consequences of urbanization. Resource professionals need to understand the important role they can play in land use decisions and the opportunities that exist for them to get involved in the process.

This issue of *Leaves of Change* focuses on the *Changing Roles: WUI Professional Development Program* that was developed to address the critical need for professional development related to wildland-urban interface issues in the South.

Training and Outreach

Changing Roles

IN 1998, Florida wildfires demonstrated the complexities of managing natural resources in the wildland-urban interface. In response, the Southern Research Station and the Southern Region of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, in cooperation with the Southern Group of State Foresters, conducted an assessment to identify and better understand factors driving social and ecological changes within the wildland-urban interface, as well as the consequences of such changes. That report, "Human Influences on Forest Ecosystems: Southern Wildland-Urban Interface Assessment," contained a detailed list of research and educational needs. One of these identified needs was the development of a WUI professional development program.

Changing Roles: WUI Professional Development Program was developed through a partnership that includes the following groups: InterfaceSouth, the School of Forest Resources and Conservation of the University of Florida, the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The Southern Wildland-Urban Interface Council (SWUIC), a chartered council of the SGSF, guided the program's three-year development. This program provides state and federal natural resource

continued on page 2

Partnership Highlight

Texas Forest Service

THE TEXAS FOREST SERVICE

(TFS) has been using Changing Roles (CR) since 2006 and has facilitated six Changing Roles workshops addressing a variety of audiences, including the Texas Forest Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas AgriLife Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Army Corps of Engineers, consulting foresters, and other southern state forestry agencies. An estimated 350 people have been trained in Changing Roles in Texas.

The core TFS team consists of Tom Boggus, state forester; Angie Soldinger, conservation education coordinator; and Justice Jones, fire mitigation and prevention coordinator. Tom has allocated human and capital resources to ensure that Changing Roles trainings are conducted for his staff and those of partner agencies. He already has seen the positive changes that CR has made in the way his agency does business. Angie coordinates the CR workshops, focusing on engaging participants by inviting expert speakers, facilitating interactive exercises, and using real world examples. Justice brings a fire perspective to the team and works closely with Angie to plan workshops and facilitate training sessions.

One of the major outcomes of Changing Roles in Texas was the Texas Forest Expo. This annual three-day event is designed to teach landowners new and innovative ways to protect their families, properties, and communities from wildfire. The Expo aims to teach people how to sustain their forests, trees, and natural resources. The event includes exhibitor booths, classes, and activities for children. Another main outcome is the establishment of a memorandum of understanding between the TFS and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to coordinate the delivery of CR trainings and integration of CR concepts into practice.

For more information about Changing Roles in Texas, contact Angie Soldinger: **(979) 458-6649, acure@tfs.tamu.edu**.

Training and Outreach: Changing Roles

continued from page 1

agencies and other organizations with a set of flexible resources to conduct their own in-service trainings aimed toward building skills and tools to successfully tackle WUI issues.

Findings of the Southern Wildland-Urban Interface Assessment and initial discussions with agency leaders suggested that four topics are most important and basic for natural resource professionals working in the wildland-urban interface. The four module topics are (1) wildland-urban interface issues and connections, (2) managing interface forests, (3) land-use planning and policy, and (4) communicating with interface residents and leaders. Each module includes a trainer's guide, exercises, fact sheets, and presentations. Additional resources include case studies, a resource list, a DVD, the Changing Roles listserv and quarterly e-bulletin, and evaluation questions. The resources can be modified and used in a variety of combinations to create a two-hour, two-day, or two-week training program, and anything in between. All of the program resources can be found in the Changing Roles section of the InterfaceSouth website, highlighted in the *Recommended Resources* section of this bulletin.

The Changing Roles (CR) program was first introduced at a train-the-trainer workshop in 2006 attended by more than 60 participants from the 13 Southern States and Puerto Rico. Since 2006, trainers across the South have used CR



Nicole Wulff leads a session at the 2nd Train-the-Trainer workshop in Texas.

materials in a variety of creative ways to train colleagues and staff. Trainers have incorporated CR concepts and skills into trainings and other activities including breakout sessions during agency annual meetings, one to two day in-service trainings, Forest Stewardship and Sustainable Community Forestry Program trainings, a Natural Resource Leadership Institute, and a one-week course that combined

CR and Green Infrastructure concepts. Natural resource professionals who have been trained in CR concepts have used their new knowledge to foster partnerships and serve the public via educational events and programs for diverse audiences including landowners, service providers, and university students.

In 2007, the SGSF identified the expansion of Changing Roles as an action item of critical importance, recognizing the need for further program improvement and implementation. An InterfaceSouth proposal to fund a Changing Roles Training Coordinator for three years was submitted to and approved by the SGSF. Nicole Wulff was hired to work with InterfaceSouth in late November 2008. As the new training coordinator, her main responsibilities are to

- assist trainers with trainings;
- add to and modify existing materials; develop new modules as needed;
- develop partnerships with professional organizations and agencies;
- facilitate interaction between trainers in different States and potential partners; and
- develop new strategies, such as webinars, to train more people.

One of Nicole's first activities was to work in collaboration with Texas Forest Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff to coordinate

the 2nd Changing Roles Train-the-Trainer workshop. The workshop was held in Conroe, Texas, April 23 through 25, 2009. There were more than 50 participants representing state and federal agencies, universities, and cooperative extension from ten Southern States. The first day of the workshop offered the option of two tracks: the first track was aimed at trainers who will facilitate and coordinate training sessions and the second track was designed for individuals in leadership roles who can support the implementation of CR trainings by allocating funds and human resources.

Participants who evaluated the program indicated that the material presented was very relevant to the work of their agencies and that they are very likely to use the material to train their staff and colleagues. The enthusiasm and interest generated at this workshop has sparked the planning and implementation of state-level trainings across the Southern Region. For example, the Kentucky Division of Forestry conducted three, one-day interagency workshops in August and training planning is underway in Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Florida.

Additionally, efforts have been made to integrate CR concepts and skills into university-level courses. Changing Roles materials were used in an urban forestry lab class at the University of Florida. The focus of the class was to improve communication skills and increase understanding of interface landowners.

Future priorities for Changing Roles include the following:

1. A CR webinar series to reach a larger audience. This series is scheduled to begin in September 2009. More information about this series will be posted at forestrywebinar.net/ in August.
2. Additional fact sheets, case studies, exercises, and success stories to supplement the existing modules. Some topics of interest include Green Infrastructure, Building with Trees, biomass, value-added processing, and marketing materials for service providers.
3. A new module called "Emerging Opportunities," which will include a variety of topics such as ecosystem goods and services, emerging markets, ecological restoration, and partnership building.

For more information about the Changing Roles program contact Nicole Wulff, (352) 378-2451, nmwulff@fs.fed.us.

Recommended Resources

Changing Roles on the Web



The Changing Roles section of the InterfaceSouth website has undergone major restructuring over the past few months to improve user-friendliness and functionality. All of the CR training materials can be found on site. Additionally, we have added the Changing Roles listserve, and the Changing Roles Update (a quarterly e-bulletin). There are many new resources in the Trainers' Corner, which provides a space for trainers to share materials that they've developed for their

own trainings, offer suggestions, and describe their experiences using Changing Roles. More than 50 new resources have been recently added including sample agendas, PowerPoint® presentations, revised exercises, and planning materials. Check it out and submit your own! To access Changing Roles visit: www.interfacesouth.org/changingroles.

Viniece Jennings – The Student Career Experience Program



Viniece Jennings is a PhD student studying environmental science at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). Her project is looking at the

impact of urban ecosystem services upon human health. She is currently in the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) with the US Forest Service at the Southern Research Station, working in collaboration with SRS-4952* in Gainesville. This program is a recruitment source for the U.S. Forest Service as well as other federal agencies. SCEP students are provided with work experience that is directly related to their academic program. The program also gives them the opportunity to noncompetitively convert into a position after graduation.

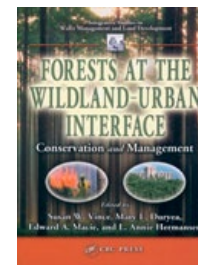
Some of the primary objectives of Viniece's SCEP internship with SRS-4952 are to gain exposure to Forest Service research and science delivery, develop the methodology for her research project, and enhance her academic training through practical research applications within the Forest Service and the University of Florida.

For more information about the SCEP program, visit: www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs/forestsERVICE/scep.html.

**See note on next page.*

Forests at the Wildland-Urban Interface: Conservation and Management

Susan W. Vince, Mary L. Duryea, Edward A. Macie, Annie Hermansen
CRC Press, 2004. Price: \$134.95



This book provides information, strategies, and tools to enhance natural resource management, planning, and policymaking at the wildland-urban interface. Available online from CRC Press at www.crcpress.com by searching for the book title.

Upcoming Events

Date	Description	Location	Contact
September 30– October 4, 2009	Society of American Foresters National Convention	Orlando, FL	http://www.safnet.org/natcon-09/index.cfm
November 9–11, 2009	Partners in Community Forestry National Conference	Portland, OR	http://www.arborday.org/shopping/conferences/brochures/pcf/2009/index.cfm
November 30– December 4, 2009	4th International Fire Ecology and Management Congress	Savannah, Georgia	http://www.fireecology.net/Congress09/Home.html

In the Next Issue

In our next issue, we will focus on wildfire risk and social vulnerability.

*Note: The Centers for Urban and Interface Forestry are the technology transfer component of the Southern Research Station work unit, SRS-4952: *Integrating Human and Natural Systems in Urban and Urbanizing Environments* (www.humanandnaturalsystems.org).

