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Friday, October 3, 2008

E.O. WILSON KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT LONGLEAF ALLIANCE & FOREST GUILD MEETING

Destin, Fla. – World renowned biologist and Pulitzer Prize winner Edward O. Wilson is the keynote speaker for the Longleaf Alliance and Forest Guild 2008 Joint Meeting with more than 300 participants, October 28 through November 1. Dr. Wilson will speak Wednesday, October 29 at 9:30 a.m.

“We are honored to have one of the world’s greatest living scientists as our keynote speaker,” says Rhett Johnson, co-director of the Longleaf Alliance.

A Harvard professor for four decades, Dr. Wilson has authored 25 books and is the recipient of more than 100 international medals and awards. Dr. Wilson is often called “the father of biodiversity.” He is currently University Research Professor Emeritus at Harvard, and Honorary Curator in Entomology of the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

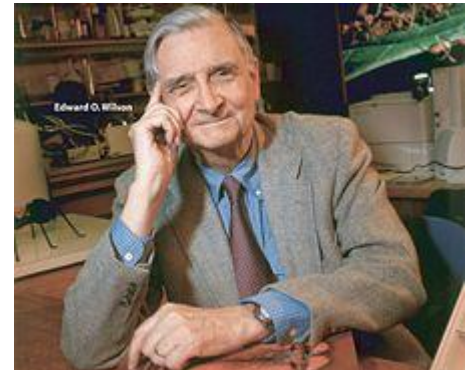


Photo courtesy of Jim Harrison, Harvard.

Entitled “Forestry in a Changing World: New Challenges and Opportunities,” this meeting represents a joining of forces by the Forest Guild and the Longleaf Alliance to co-host their 2008 membership meetings.

“Our two organizations have a lot in common, both being advocates for forest restoration and sustainable management, and also a lot to learn from one another. We look forward to a rich meeting,” says Howard Gross, Forest Guild executive director.

Meeting attendees will enjoy presentations and field tours with some of the country’s driving forces behind longleaf forest management, ecosystem restoration and ecological forestry. A slate of excellent speakers, including Edward O. Wilson and Reed Noss, will address diverse topics including the following:

- The silvics of carbon sequestration and managing forests in the face of uncertainty.
- The role of climate change in species migration and forest pest populations.
- The role of prescribed fire in forest management.
- The shift to forest biomass for energy and its implications on the forest.
- The unveiling of the first draft of the Range-Wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine.
- Restoring the longleaf pine ecosystem.
- Understanding and addressing issues facing migrant forestry workers.
- The role of partnerships to preserve landscape values.
- An update on the search for the ivory-billed woodpecker.

This meeting comes at a critical time for forestry. Global climate change is affecting our ecosystems. Regulation and market forces are changing the sources used to meet energy needs. Industrial divestiture, intergenerational estate transfers, and the land trust movement are changing the face of forest ownership.

These changes also present opportunities. An increasing awareness that forests provide a multitude of ecosystem values beyond their extractive values is changing how managers approach forest management. New markets are poised to expand goods and services from the forest and fund new management options. For the first time in a generation, restoration efforts have increased longleaf pine acreage across its range and strategies to continue this trend and restore ecosystem function are still being developed.



But with these exciting opportunities come challenges. How will new markets for forests products affect ecosystem functions? Will carbon sequestration and biomass production be a boon to native forest restoration or another extractive pressure?

“This will be the seventh Longleaf Alliance Regional Conference and these conferences have served as a most important means for landowners, foresters and biologists to network and receive the latest information on longleaf forest management and restoration,” says Dean Gjerstad, co-director of the Longleaf Alliance.

This year’s conference will be held at the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, located in northwest Florida between Pensacola and Panama City. The conference center is in walking distance to both the beach and the Intercoastal Waterway. The conference is in close proximity to some of the largest remaining tracts of longleaf in the area. Field tours will include nearby Eglin Air Force Base’s longleaf stands and a visit to the 48,000 acre Nokuse Plantation and the future site of the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center.

The Forest Guild, headquartered in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is a national organization of more than 600 foresters, allied professionals, and supporters who manage forestlands in the United States and Canada and advocate for ecologically sound forest practices. The mission of the Forest Guild is to practice and promote ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry—“excellent forestry”— as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Guild maintains staff in New Mexico, Massachusetts, California, and Tennessee, and has volunteer coordinators in nine other states.

The Longleaf Alliance was established in 1995 with the express purpose of coordinating a partnership between private landowners, forest industries, state and federal agencies, conservation groups, researchers, and other enthusiasts interested in managing and restoring longleaf pine forests for their ecological and economic benefits. The Alliance works within the nine states of the historic range of longleaf pine.

Registration fees range from \$85 to \$535. To register visit www.forestguild.org/meeting.html or call 919-515-6883.

INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

www.forestguild.org
www.longleafalliance.org
www.sandestin.com

Contact:

MARSHALL PLAN

Jennifer Marshall
505-231-1776
jennifer@jmarshallplan.com
www.jmarshallplan.com