

NEWS RELEASE

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FROM: SOUTH CAROLINA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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2005 Southern Regional Forester's Award

A team of Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service employees and SC Native Plant Society has been awarded the **2005 Regional Forester's Award for Excellence in Technology Transfer**.

Dennis Law, Bill Hansen and Steve Dix, USFS Soil Scientist, Hydrologist and Seed Orchard Manager, respectively, **Donald Surrency**, NRCS Plant Materials Center at Americus, and **Bill Stringer**, SC Native Plant Society and Clemson University, received the award at ceremonies at The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Atlanta on November 16.

These individuals and their colleagues are responsible for a ground-breaking five-year program that has allowed US Forest Service in South Carolina to replace exotic (some invasive) species with **local source native** grass and wildflower seeds in their restoration of disturbed land in the National Forests.

The SC Native Plant Society provided native grass expertise and over 800 volunteer-hours to collect native seeds from roadsides and other rights-of-way around Upstate South Carolina. NRCS at Americus Plant Materials Center processed and tested these seeds for USFS. USFS implemented a procedure for rapidly establishing native plant seedling plugs at the USFS Seed Orchard at Witherbee. This enabled them to generate thousands of seedling plugs of native plants from the vicinity of the Forest Districts for use in establishing seed production sites in the Forests. SC Native Plant Society volunteers have assisted in several of the out-plantings of seedlings. USFS has initiated seed harvesting from some of these production sites, as well as direct seeding of native species seeds in the Forests.

This program has been adopted as a model for state agencies and USFS in several southern states in the development of similar programs for their programs. The major accomplishment of this group effort is that a Federal land management agency has been able to change their re-vegetation program on agency lands from heavy dependence on exotic invasive species to locally adapted, local native plants. This program will have strong positive impact on land management over the foreseeable future. The South Carolina Native Plant Society can be justly proud of the pivotal role that the Society played in this program.



From left rear: Steve Dix, manager of the USFS Seed Orchard; Bill Stringer, SC Native Plant Society and Clemson University; and Bill Hansen, USFS hydrologist. Left front: Ken Arney, Associate Regional Forester, presented the award; Dennis Law, USFS soil scientist; and Don Surrency, USDA Plant Materials Center at Americus GA.