

For Release October 16-22, 2016

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## **WORKING FORESTS WORK FOR FLORIDA**

In recognition of the importance of working forests to our state, Florida is celebrating the week of October 16-22, 2016, as "Working Forests Week."

It is well-deserved recognition. In a state traditionally associated with beaches, palm trees and Mickey Mouse, many will be surprised to learn the widespread impacts of Florida's working forests on our economy, our environment and our everyday life.

Working forests are important to our economy. According to the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), forestry and forest products are the top agricultural commodity and the leading agricultural export. The Florida Forest Service (FFS) reports that forestry has a \$16.1 billion impact on the state's economy. Statewide, the forest industry provides jobs for more than 77,000 of our family, friends and neighbors.

Working forests also play a key role for our environment. They provide a natural solution to the issues of water quality and quantity that Florida now faces. They remain an important tool for carbon sequestration. In a state experiencing constant development, they offer much-needed green spaces that are not only beautiful but that also offer habitat to an amazing diversity of wildlife.

Working forests are part of almost everything we do. At last count, more than 5,000 items contained forest products. The assortment of "Goods from the Woods" is very diverse and continues to grow. For example, the materials working forests provide are used to build our homes, print our newspapers, landscape our yards and manufacture our furniture. Forest products are also found in the screens on our cell phones, televisions and computers; in our shampoos and other cosmetics; and in medicines, sports equipment, food and much more!

This week, I encourage you to pay more attention to the ways that working forests impact you and your community. Show your support by using forest products to keep the market for trees strong. Share this information with others: Forestry has a great story, and we need you to help us tell it!

Working forests work!

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