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## **WORKING FORESTS WORK FOR FLORIDA**

In recognition of the importance of working forests to the state, the week of October 16-22, 2016, is being celebrated across Florida as “Working Forests Week.”

The proclamation recognizes the importance of Florida’s forests and forest-related industries to our state’s environment and economy.

According to the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), forestry and forest products are ranked as the state’s 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 almost 78,000 people.

Working forests also play a critical role in the state’s environment.

“Florida’s forestlands have a tremendous positive environmental impact,” said Florida Forestry Association Executive Vice President Alan Shelby. “As such, they can and should be an integral part of the solution to our state’s looming water quality and quantity issues.”

Shelby noted that forests also remain an important tool for carbon sequestration. And in a state experiencing constant development, they offer much-needed green spaces that are beautiful and offer habitat to an amazing diversity of wildlife.

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 homes, print newspapers, landscape yards and manufacture furniture. Forests products are also found in the screens on cell phones, televisions and computers; in shampoos and other cosmetics; and in medicines, sports equipment, food and much more.

For more information about Working Forests Week and our state’s working forests, visit <http://www.FloridaForest.org>.

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