



RANDOM PLOTS



NEWSLETTER of the N. C. STATE BOARD OF REGISTRATION FOR FORESTERS

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Chairman's Corner

As the exam administrator since the summer of 2006, I have worried that exams may vary excessively over time. The Board's policy of consistency is always a major concern as the exams are written and graded.

Test results have been published in all the Random Plots Newsletters since the first exam in May 2000. The passing rate for the Level 2 exam (taken by graduates from 4-year SAF accredited programs) for the 5 exams that I have administered is 51.8% (44 passing out of 85). For the previous 5 exams, it was 55.7% (49 passing out of 88). For the first 7 exams, it was 79% (79 out of 100). Is this difference due to the exam differences over time, or due to the people taking the exam? It is undoubtedly due to both.

The Board does review previous exams, and we will continue and enhance this effort to ensure that exams are as consistent as possible.

We did delve deeper into the test data that were available back to 2004. Our interest was to determine the passing rate of **all the individuals** taking the Level 2 exam. Remember, the exam can be taken up to 3 times in a 6-year period. There have been 110 different people taking the exam for the first, second, or third time, and 80 of them passed it for a passing rate of 72.7%. Here is a summary of the passing rate depending on number of attempts at taking the exam:

<u># Attempts</u>	<u># Passing</u>	<u>% Passing</u>
1	57/74	77.0%
2	19/27	70.4%
3	10/15	66.7%
Overall	80/110	72.7%

The Board feels that the overall passing rate is acceptable, and we will continue our efforts to ensure consistency and fairness in the exams.

Certified Foresters in NC

During this past year, the Board received an inquiry about the use of the term "Certified Forester" [used by the Society of American Forester's Certified Forester Program], by individuals working in NC who are not registered as foresters under NC General Statute 89B. To properly address this issue, the Board requested an opinion from the North Carolina Attorney General's Office. The Board received a written response from Senior Deputy Attorney General James Gulick which stated, ". . . it would be a reasonable interpretation by the Board of Registration for Foresters to read N.C.G.S. 89B-1 as preventing a person from advertising as a "Certified Forester" when he has not been registered by the Board".

Based on this opinion from the Attorney General's Office, the Board had little choice but to take the position that the use of the term "Certified Forester" by anyone not registered under N.C.G.S. 89B is in violation of State Statute:

"No person shall use the designation 'forester', 'registered forester', or any other descriptive terms that include the words 'forester' or 'registered forester' and that directly convey that the person is a forester without first having been registered under this Chapter"

Acting on this information, the Board sent letters to those individuals and provided information to them on how they could become registered foresters in NC.

In addition, Michael Goergen, Jr., SAF Executive Vice President and CEO, and Louise Murgia, SAF Director of Field Services, met with the Board on December 4th to discuss this issue and how to best address it. The Board explained that with the wording of the law, there was no other course of action that the Board could take. Goergen and Murgia agreed to draft a letter from their office and address it to the certified foresters

in NC informing them of the law and encouraging them to become registered.

First in Forestry License Plate

In recognition of the importance of forestry in North Carolina, and the State's status as the birthplace of professional forestry in the United States, the N.C. General Assembly approved a special "First in Forestry" license plate. Dianne Beasley, Assistant Director of the NC Division of Forest Resources, has been leading this effort. She has recently turned in 315 license plate applications. The new plate will look the same as it does on the Division's web site at (<http://www.dfr.state.nc.us/>), although the State Highway Patrol [SHP] needs to give it their final approval. DMV stated that they plan to have the plates completed in 14 weeks once SHP approves the final product. So, Dianne expects individuals to have their new license plates mailed to them in about 4 months with details about turning in the old license plates.

After these plates are made, they will be available (and shown at each DMV ordering site) directly from DMV, just as other special plates are made available now. So, anyone that has not already purchased one of these unique plates will have an opportunity to purchase them there.

A portion of the proceeds from these plates, \$10, will go toward DFR and NCFA forestry education programs in the state. Dianne would like to thank everyone who supported this effort and purchased these special license plates.

The Laws & Rules for Registered Foresters

The Board must operate within the wording of State Law (GS 89B) and the Administrative Rules related to this law. The Board has been aware of efforts to revise the current law and has been provided with copies of proposed changes. The Board has also been advised that there may be efforts to revise the current law when the General Assembly convenes in January 2009. Because the Board is the instrument of administering the law and the rules, it will not take a position on any proposal.

At its meeting on December 4th, the Board approved a resolution stating it will take no

position on proposed law changes and will follow whatever laws and rules are in affect. Members of the Board may have personal opinions about possible law changes, but if they express their opinion, they do so as individuals and not as Board members.

Also at the last meeting, the Board was able to meet with Assistant Attorney General Ward Zimmerman. Mr. Zimmerman works in the Environmental Division of the AG's Office and is the new legal counsel for the Board.

New Registrants

Since May 2008, 8 new Registered Foresters have been added to the roster. They are:

- James V. Dodson, Jr. RF# 1647
- Jonathan R. Gibbs RF# 1648
- Timothy Hegler RF# 1649
- Neil Justin Owen RF# 1650
- Byron L. Rivenbark RF# 1651
- Hendry S. RobinsonRF# 1652
- Brian A. Swanson RF# 1653
- Brian Dangler RF# 1654

Forester Examinations

The most recent examination for registration was given on August 25, 2008 in Morganton. Twelve applicants took the examination: three individuals took the Level I exam for non-graduates, while nine individuals took the Level II exam. The results are provided below:

	<u>Pass</u>	<u>Fail</u>
Pre-Qualifying (Level I)	1	2
Qualifying (Level II)	9	0

This was a surprising 100% passing rate for the Level II exam, and the "average" passing grade was 78%.

To become registered, all graduates with a forestry degree from a SAF-accredited school must pass the comprehensive Qualifying examination.

Individuals without a forestry degree must pass both the Pre-Qualifying (Level I) and Qualifying (Level II) examinations. The Pre-Qualifying examination is a closed book exam designed to

test the knowledge approximating that obtained through graduation from a four-year curriculum in forestry.

The Board offers both examinations twice a year. The next examination will be offered Thursday, January 29, 2009 at the Pitt County Agricultural Center in Greenville, NC. The summer exam will be Monday, August 24, 2009, Burke County Ag. Building, Morganton, NC

Registered Forester Exam Preparation Course Offered by FEOP

For the 3rd time, the Forestry and Environmental Outreach Program (FEOP) at NC State University will offer exam review sessions for the NCBRF exam. The sessions will be in Jordan Hall Addition on January 8-9, 2009. Details are at: www.ncsu.edu/feop/NCRF/examprep.html, and the following is from the FEOP website:

“These review and exam prep sessions were developed by North Carolina State University's Forestry and Environmental Outreach Program in cooperation with the NC Division of Forest Resources, NC State University Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources, and NCSU Cooperative Extension Forestry. Limited guidance for the sessions was provided by the North Carolina Board of Registration for Foresters (NCBRF).

The required, formal Registration Exam that leads to the NC Registered Forester credential is meant to be a rigorous measure of the applicant's practical and theoretical knowledge of professional, applied forestry. The review and exam prep sessions cannot, and will not, attempt to "teach" forestry. Rather, they review the critical areas of mensuration, management, silviculture, dendrology, silvics/physiology, genetics, soils, economics, entomology, pathology, fire, and aerial photography which will be present on the Registration Exam.

The format for the sessions will be relaxed, but focused. Each day will cover a different set of topics (see agendas below). The information will be shared through a combination of lecture, discussion,

classroom exercises and self-study assignments. Each day's session is limited to 30 participants. In the case of a waiting list, first consideration will be given to those who have applied to take the upcoming NCRF Qualifying Exam.”

Please help spread the word about these sessions and future prep courses offered by FEOP.

Registration By the Numbers

The number of Registered Foresters now totals 960 (16 less than in 2007-2008). Of these Foresters, 918 are active and 42 are retired. The number of Consulting Foresters decreased slightly: 290 RFs filed affidavits with the Board to qualify as Consulting Foresters. There are 702 RFs residing in North Carolina while 258 live in other states. There are 451 RFs who are also members of the SAF, of which 86 are SAF Certified Foresters.

A look back over the past eight years shows some interesting changes. Although you may expect to see a gradual increase in the number of RFs and CFs over time, there are some annual fluctuations. And, there are essentially the same number of RFs now as there were in FY 01-02 but more CFs now than there were in FY 01-02. Note that CFs refers to "consulting foresters":

<u>Year</u>	<u>#RFs</u>	<u>#CFs</u>	<u>Out of State CFs</u>
01/02	957	266	244
02/03	967	253	244
03/04	959	255	245
04/05	954	261	239
05/06	968	269	251
06/07	975	266	256
07/08	976	289	261
08/09	960	290	257

Complaints

The Board handles about two to three complaints per quarter, and many of them are from registered foresters. The processing of some of these is delayed because the complaint is not handled properly. As a reminder about the procedure for filing a complaint with the Board, if you wish to file a complaint about a Registered

Forester or someone representing themselves as a Registered Forester you will need to send a letter to the Board's address which fully documents the complaint. **The letter must be signed and it must be notarized.** This procedure is posted on the Board's website at (<http://www.ncbrf.org/complaint.htm>).

In an effort to maintain a clear and consistent policy when reviewing complaints, the Board has outlined the various levels of action that it may take with respect to complaints filed against a Registered Forester:

Pre-Disciplinary Action:

1. Letter of Concern: A letter expressing the Board's concern over an individual's conduct. The letter enables the Board to communicate a potential problem and hopefully prevent more serious incidents from occurring. It is to be used in an educational manner. Action will not be listed in newsletter.
2. Warning Letter: A letter to an individual identifying actions, or lack thereof by the individual. The intent is to get the attention of the individual and have him/her to take corrective action. It may also be used if a person registering a complaint withdraws the complaint, yet the Board deems the individual has acted inappropriately. This action will not be listed in newsletter. Circumstances of incident may be used as foundation for a newsletter article.

Such action or communication will not be transmitted to other agencies or boards (i.e., it will not be listed as "disciplinary action" when applying for reciprocity).

Disciplinary Action:

In cases where the Board feels there is sufficient cause, it will conduct a disciplinary hearing in accordance with Administrative Rules and applicable General Statutes to determine the appropriate action. Such action could constitute any of the following:

1. Probation
2. Suspension of Registration
3. Revocation of Registration

The Registered Forester who is the subject of the complaint can waive his/her right to a formal hearing and voluntarily accept the decision of the Board.

All disciplinary action by the Board will be published in the newsletter.

CFE Audit Results

The Board completed its fourth audit of continuing education classes attended by Registered Foresters. The Board selected five CFE courses for audit and cross-referenced the attendance records provided by the course sponsors with the CFE credit reports submitted by RFs at the time of renewal. Once again, there was 100% compliance.

The Board will continue to monitor compliance with CFE credit reporting in an effort to maintain the integrity of the CFE requirement.

Continuing education courses play an important role in helping RFs remain current in forestry training and technology. A wide variety of courses, schedules, and price ranges are currently available to meet the CFE requirement. With a little prudent scheduling, everyone should be able to take relevant courses, and not courses taken at the last minute just to meet the renewal deadline. Remember, these requirements benefit all Registered Foresters and the people we serve. Take it seriously and don't risk disciplinary action by the Board by trying to circumvent the system.

Continuing Education Reminder

The Board would like to remind all Registered Foresters of the Continuing Forestry Education (CFE) requirements necessary to maintain their current registration.

Current rules require that every non-retired Registered Forester earn at least 10 hours of CFE per year (6 SAF category 1, and 4 SAF categories 1, 2, 3, or 4), between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. All retired Foresters wishing to remain on registered status must earn at least 3 credit hours per year. RFs will be required to certify their CFEs when they renew their application. Any CFEs earned prior to July 1,

2008, cannot be used to satisfy the June 30, 2009 requirements.

Failure to obtain the necessary credit hours will result in the Board's refusal to renew the RF's registration until the required hours are "made up", at the rate of 10 CE's per year missed. A late fee of \$2.50/month will also be assessed for renewal. There is no time limit on this obligation. However, the RF will have the option to become "Re-registered" by submitting a new application for registration, and passing the Forester's exam(s).

The Board posts CFE opportunities on the CFE page of its web site. Some examples of CFE opportunities include NCSU's Forestry and Environmental Outreach Program [FEOP] teleconference series which typically provide 3 hours each of Category 1 credits. There are also opportunities through SAF chapter meetings as well as the upcoming APSAF winter meeting in Newport News, VA, January 21-23, 2009 which provides 11.5 Category 1 credits. These are just a few options available with half of the fiscal year remaining. Don't wait until June to start looking for CFEs!

CFE Changes for FY 08-09

[This is an important repeat from the June 08 issue]

As most of you know, SAF has made changes in their CFE standards and guidelines. The SAF Council asked the Certification Review Board (CRB) to oversee this process. The CRB finalized and approved a new CFE Handbook on January 2, 2008. A copy of this can be obtained from SAF.

SAF's newspaper, "The Forestry Source" has had two recent articles about this topic. In the February '08 edition, on page 9, Louise Murgia provides a summary of the changes and indicated that the CRB hopes to have these changes implemented by December 31, 2008. The April '08 edition of "The Forestry Source", on page 11, outlined information on the new CFE standards that "providers" of continuing education programs should follow.

The biggest change in the CFE standards is the revision of CFE "categories". The old standard included categories 1 through 6. The new

standard only has categories 1 through 3. This is explained in the February article noted above. To learn more about these new standards read the articles mentioned above or contact Louise Murgia, SAF Director of Field Services, at murgial@safnet.org. Also, you can get a copy of SAF's CFE Standards & Guidelines on line at http://www.safnet.org/education/cfe_credit.cfm

Since these CFE changes will not be fully implemented by SAF until December 2008, which is half way through the '08-'09 fiscal year, the Board will implement the CFE changes effective July 1, 2009. Some administrative rule changes will be needed, since the new CFE Category 3 includes the old Category 6, which is not acceptable under the existing administrative rules. When these rule changes are drafted you will be notified.

Expired Registrations **(Effective January 1, 2009)**

Listed below are the names of 26 individuals whose registrations expired June 30, 2008. Some of these individuals have retired, while others have changed careers, or moved. Some have allowed their registrations to lapse for failing to meet the CFE requirements. These individuals can no longer legally represent themselves as foresters or consulting foresters in North Carolina.

Gary Allred 796
Billy Barnette Jr. 876
James Bass Jr. 438
Jody Brady 1340
Christopher Cobb 1020
Ruth Cole 1478
Ronald Dickson, Jr. 1547
Douglas Fredrick 680
Charles Gaura 915
Douglas Gupton 146
Michael Hart 1343
Laurens Larson 682
Larry Maloney 984
Daniel McInnis 640
Nelson Nixon 1287
Stephen Owen 762
Bernard Parresol 1348
John Pearson III 521
Allyson Peeler 847
John Shepherd 51

Michael Spring 805
Karl Steinbeck 1538
Sally Tucker 1565
William Vaughan 1609
Donald Weiller 11
Matthew Whiltey 1447

Electronic Mailings

The Board wants to strongly encourage all Registered Foresters to receive this Newsletter and all other information via e-mail rather postal mailings. By providing the Board with your current e-mail address, the Board can save postage and printing expenses. If you receive a printed version of this newsletter, it means the Board does not have a current e-mail address for you. Please consider providing the Board with your e-mail address and be sure to let us know when your e-mail address changes. Your assistance will help the Board reduce its expenses. The dollar we save is yours!

Board Web Page

The web site of the State Board of Registration for Foresters provides RFs with instant access to various forms, current roster, registration information, past newsletters, Board member information, exam information, and continuing education opportunities.

<http://www.ncbfr.org>

E-mail address info@ncbfr.org

We invite all RFs to take advantage of the information and forms available on the website.

We want to encourage all Registered Foresters to be advocates for a strong forestry profession.

If the Board or its members can be of assistance, please contact them directly or through the Board office.