



American Forest Foundation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Contact: Glenn Hughes: 601.794.0671  
Brigitte Johnson, APR: 202.463.5163

**Mississippi's Longleaf Pine Forests Recover After Hurricane Katrina**

**Who:** **Private Forest Landowner, Cecil Chambliss and his family**, in partnership with the American Forest Foundation's **Forested Flyways™ conservation program**, **Mississippi Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Mississippi State University Extension Service, Mississippi Forestry Commission, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.**

**What:** **Conservation Forestry Field Day for Family Forest Owners**  
The Field Day will highlight and recognize the longleaf pine habitat restoration and conservation accomplishments of the Chambliss family and discuss their forest recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina. With over 50 percent of their standing timber damaged by Katrina, the Chambliss family chose to reforest their property with longleaf pine, a species that withstood the impact of the hurricane better than slash or loblolly. Forest landowners from southern Mississippi will tour the Chambliss' property and learn about the wildlife and economic benefits of longleaf pine from resource professionals. Through their active forest management, the Chambliss family has created habitat for the federally threatened gopher tortoise and many other species such as turkeys and fox squirrels. Field day attendees will be encouraged to engage in similar conservation forestry efforts on their own lands.

**When:** Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007  
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

**Where:** Chambliss Family Forest  
near Purvis, MS  
(202) 550-2217  
Directions: Take Highway 49 South to the South Gate Entrance to Camp Shelby. Turn west (right) off of 49 onto Ollie Williams Road (opposite the S. Gate entrance) and proceed 2.2 miles. Turn left onto Elks Lake Road. This will turn into Dubose Road. Proceed 2.8 miles on Elks Lake/Dubose Road to intersection with Brown's Bridge Road. Look for field day signs at intersection.

**Why: To Encourage Family Forest Owners to Conserve and Restore Mississippi's Native Longleaf Forests**

Family forest owners hold almost 65 percent of Mississippi's 19.8 million acres of forestland. Their ownership of this forestland plays a major role in the quality of Mississippi's environment and natural resources; however, many family forest owners do not have the management information they need to conserve their land, maximize wildlife benefits, and protect the quality of Mississippi's fresh water supply. Additionally, forest owners must find ways to make their land economically viable in the face of taxes and urban sprawl, or their land will not remain forestland for long. Catastrophic events, like the 2005 hurricanes, which resulted in an estimated loss of 15 to 19 million board feet of timber, create additional challenges for family forest owners.

To address these concerns, Forested Flyways and its partners joined together in 2003 to provide family forest owners with information on the economic and ecological benefits of longleaf pine, which once covered almost 90 million acres throughout the southeast. Well-managed longleaf pine stands provide habitat for a variety of native bird and wildlife species such as the federally threatened gopher tortoise and the pine warbler. In addition, these stands produce higher quality poles and saw logs than loblolly or slash. Research also suggests that longleaf is more resistant to wind damage. However, forest conversion, fire suppression, and development have significantly reduced the extent of longleaf habitat and it now covers only 2.9 million acres.

Family forest owners may be hesitant to restore native longleaf habitat due to forest management and regulatory concerns over creating habitat for a federally threatened species. Educating landowners on both the ecological and economic benefits of longleaf and providing them with hands-on management demonstrations and information on regulatory assurances that address their concerns, such as Safe Harbor Agreements, can encourage more landowners to restore the unique longleaf habitat. When Mississippi forestlands remain forested, family forest owners, the general public and native wildlife, such as the gopher tortoise, all benefit.

**Contact:** Glenn Hughes, Mississippi State University Extension Service, 601.794.0671, Email: ghughes at ext.msstate.edu  
Brigitte Johnson, APR, Director of Communications, AFF, 202.463.5163,  
Email: bjohnson at affoundation.org, [www.conservationforestry.org](http://www.conservationforestry.org)  
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## **Free Catfish Fry Following Event**

*Forested Flyways,™ a conservation program of the American Forest Foundation, is aimed at improving wildlife habitat and forest health on independent, family- owned forests nationwide. The American Forest Foundation is a nonprofit organization working for*

*healthy forests, quality environmental education and helping people make informed decisions about our communities and our world.*