



**Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests**  
**U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
**Forest Service, Southern Region**  
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**US FOREST SERVICE CELEBRATES WEEKS ACT CENTENNIAL**  
*Revolutionary law led to 52 eastern national forests, century of conservation*

Huger, S.C. (Nov. 30, 2011) – U.S. Forest Service officials today commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Weeks Act, a law that enabled the purchase of private lands for public forests. To celebrate this revolutionary law, the Francis Marion Ranger District hosted an awards ceremony at the new office building to recognize local organizations and U.S. Forest Service employees who have made great strides in protecting water, restoring forests and reducing catastrophic wildfire, the three components of the Weeks Act.

“We have so many reasons to celebrate the Weeks Act centennial here in South Carolina,” said Forest Supervisor Paul Bradley who spoke at today’s ceremony and handed out awards. “With the stroke of a pen, President Taft launched a century of conservation in March 1911. Today, we celebrated the efforts of individuals and organizations across the state, as well as within the Forest Service, who continue to live the Weeks Act legacy more than one hundred years later.”

Francis Marion District Ranger Orlando Sutton also spoke at the Huger ceremony which honored several U.S. Forest Service employees and members of the Charleston County Greenbelt, Awendaw Fire Department, National Resources Conservation Service, S.C. Forestry Commission, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, National Wild Turkey Federation and the Citadel. Other Forest Service employees and retirees, as well as industry, academia, conservation groups and other partners joined in the celebration.

“This centennial also emphasizes our need for healthy forests that provide social and economic benefits not only here in the low-country, but also across the nation and around the world,” said Bradley. “I can’t emphasize enough the importance of conserving forests for future generations.”

No single law has been more important to the return of forested lands to the eastern U.S. than the Weeks Act. This act led to the creation and restoration of 52 national forests in 26 eastern states that Americans enjoy and benefit from today. Lands acquired through the Weeks Act continue to provide a sustainable supply of natural resources, including clean drinking water for one-fifth of the American people.

More information on the Weeks Act, as well as the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests, is available at <http://fs.usda.gov/scnfs>.

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*South Carolina’s National Forests*  
*Celebrating 75 Years of Restoring Forests, Protecting Water and Reducing Catastrophic Wildfires.*