

Continuing Education Program for Mississippi's Professional Loggers

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Background

The Mississippi Logger Education Council (MLEC) drafted a proposed curriculum to meet the needs of the Mississippi logging community as well as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) goals of AF&PA member companies in 1996. The State Implementation Committee (SIC), which is responsible for SFI compliance within Mississippi, accepted this curriculum. Mississippi State University Extension Service agreed to coordinate the training of loggers, with the cooperation of MLEC and the participating forest products companies'.

The basic curriculum is composed of four different classes or modules. The first, *Introduction to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative* (Intro), outlines the SFI program developed by the AF&PA. The second, *Best Management Practices* (BMPs), provides an overview of Mississippi's efforts to address non-point source pollution resulting from forestry practices. The third, *Logging and Transportation Safety* (Safety), provides information on Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidelines for logging. Finally, *Business Management* outlines several different strategies that a logging business can implement to make the business more efficient, profitable, and legal.

Completion of the basic curriculum illustrates the good faith effort of Mississippi's logging contractors to adhere to the Sustainable Forestry principles set forth by the AF&PA and its member companies. More importantly, Mississippi's loggers were under-served in terms of outreach and educational opportunities in the past. Expanding the current program to include a continuing education effort offers an opportunity to provide both outreach and educational opportunities on a continuing basis, thereby ensuring that Mississippi's professional loggers will continue to strive for environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Continuing Education

The purpose of any Continuing Education effort is to meet the educational needs of the audience. This is true for logging professionals and other professionals involved in natural resource management.

The focus of the Mississippi Continuing Education Program for Professional Loggers is to provide educational opportunities for Mississippi's loggers. The program will provide useful and timely information to support the advancement and professionalism of Mississippi's loggers, while augmenting educational programs for others involved in the wood supply system.

The program could also be used as a framework to assist loggers in meeting SFI logger education requirements of the AF&PA member companies and licensees.

Continuing Education within the SFI Framework

The existing program will be expanded beyond the four basic classes to maintain relevance and momentum gained during the past few years. The rapid changes facing those involved in the wood

supply system (loggers, forest industry, landowners, wood dealers and consultants) will require the availability of educational programs to assist program participants to meet these challenges.

The program is loosely modeled on continuing education programs currently used by several other professions, including real estate, forestry, law, etc. Loggers (and others needing to document educational activities) will complete 12 hours of continuing education every two years to maintain their “trained” status. There are two categories of education credits. Six hours must be earned in Category I activities while the remainder may be earned in Category II. To prevent confusion, all questions concerning Continuing Education Credits should be directed to the Logger Education Program Coordinator at Mississippi State University.

Category I-- Minimum of 6 hours

These are formal educational opportunities directly related to logging and forest operations, forestry, business, and safety. Each contact hour of course work will earn one hour of continuing education credit. Examples of classes are (but are not limited to):

- MSU Logger Education programs
- Continuing Logger Education (CLE) programs offered in other states
- MSU Extension Forestry programs
- Any course or program with Continuing Forestry Education (CFE) hours*
- Forestry educational programs offered by public or private entities*
- Other formal safety, environmental, or professional training programs*
- Adult Education programs offered by Community Colleges, Universities or other educational institutions*
- Technical Presentations or Published Technical Articles*
- Attending presentations at a Mississippi Loggers Association (MLA), Mississippi Forestry Association (MFA), County Forestry Association (CFA), Forest Resources Association (FRA), or similar meetings†

Category II

These credits are earned for participation in professional organizations, self-improvement and community awareness. One credit is earned for every two hours of participation. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Participation in MLA, MFA, CFA business meetings (without a formal presentation)
- Non-Category I classes taken in pursuit of a degree (i.e. GED, BS, MS, and Ph.D.)*
- Attendance at professional events (i.e. logging shows, forestry field days, Log-a-Load for Kids)
- Leadership roles in professional or community service organizations at the local, state, or national level*
- 1 credit for MLA membership
- 1 credit for MFA/CFA membership

* To be submitted to Mississippi Logger Education Committee Coordinator for credit determination. Credit hours will be assigned for each event/position based on the above guidelines for Category I and Category II.

† Some of these organizations charge a registration fee for meetings, others do not. Please see the last page for information about these organizations.

Record keeping

Each participant should maintain a record of the continuing education programs that they have attended. Documentation can include certificates of participation, program outlines or syllabus and some form of attendance documentation such as the CLE credit form that is attached.

In addition, a Continuing Education log form is also available. Each program participant should complete and return this form to ensure that continuing education credits have been awarded appropriately. Approximately 5 % of these forms will be audited to ensure that participants are following the intent of the continuing education program as set forth by the SFI Implementation Committee.

The database currently maintained at MSU (tracking participation in the core program) will be expanded to include Continuing Education hours. The on-line version will be modified to include the current number of continuing education hours for each participant.

Determining Credit

Participants in programs with CFE credit already assigned will be given the same number of credits for the purposes of Continuing Education for Loggers. CFE or CLE Credits assigned by another state will be honored. Participants can also receive credit for retaking any of the existing Logger Education program modules if they have not taken the program module during the past two years.

Programs that do not have Continuing credits assigned should be sent to the Logger Education Program Coordinator for evaluation. Credits will be assigned based on the above guidelines for Category I and Category II

Frequently Asked Questions

The company I deliver to wants me to attend a training program they are conducting. Can I receive credit?

Yes, but it is best if the company contacts the Logger Ed office ahead of time so you know exactly how many credits the program will be worth. Chances are you are not the only person who needs credit!

Do I have to have 6 Category I credits and 6 Category II credits?

No. You can have all 12 credits in Category I and meet the intent of the policy.

Can I get credit for attending an MSU Baseball game?

Unfortunately, no. Since no wooden bats are used in college ball, I can't give credit.

Where can I find out about Continuing Education Programs?

The listing of core logger ed programs can be found at:

<http://www.wssg.cfr.msstate.edu/>

As we become aware of events and programs of interest to loggers, we will post them.

Contact Information for Logging and Forestry organizations:

The following contact information is provided for informational purposes only.

Mississippi Loggers Association
Louise Fulmer
PO Drawer 659
Quitman, MS 39355
(800)305-6023

Mississippi Forestry Association
620 N. State Street
Suite 201
Jackson, MS 39202
(601)354-4936

County Forestry Association
Contact your local County Extension director for membership information
Or Tom Monaghan

Forest Resources Association
Jason Cutshall
South Central Technical Division
1898 Pointe Drive
Starkville, MS 39759
Phone/Fax 662.323.1744
jcutshall@woodcom.com