

Needs and Impacts of a Regional Extension Forestry Program in the Southern United States

Bill Hubbard and Leslie Boby

Southern Regional Extension Forestry

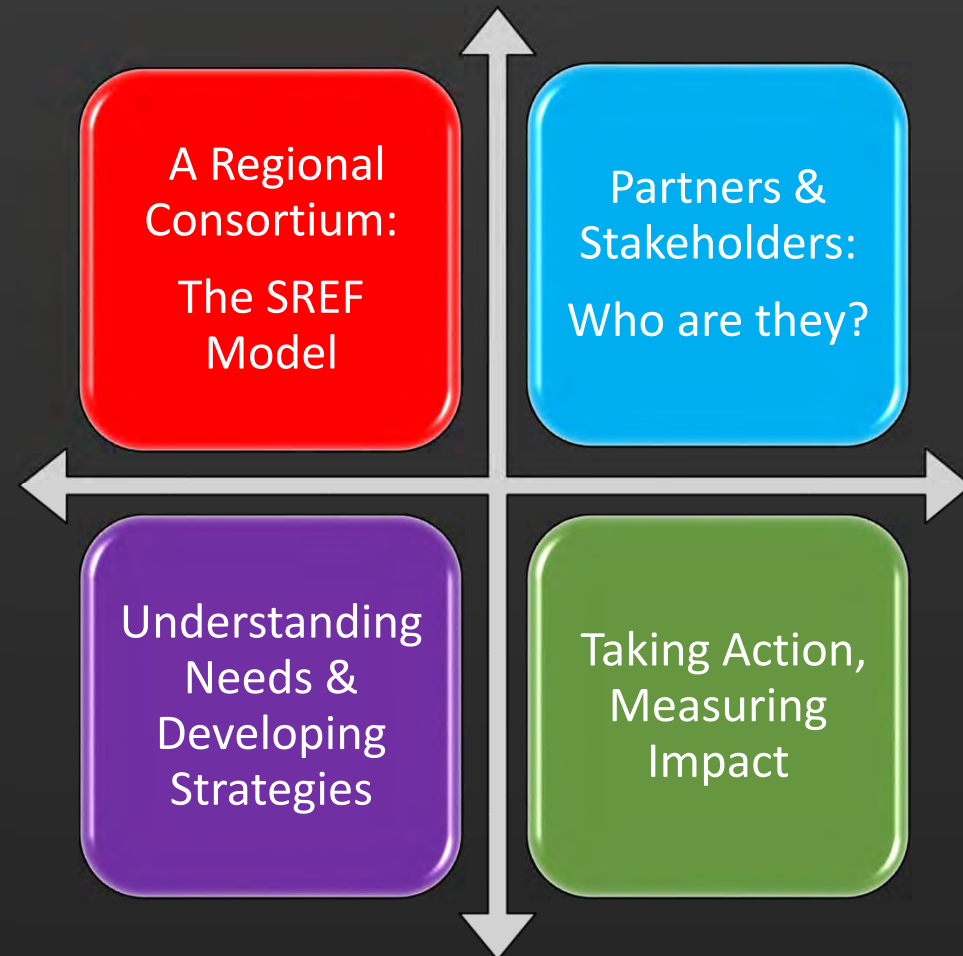
IUFRO EKE, September 2018, Christchurch, NZ



**Southern Regional
Extension Forestry**



Presentation:



A Vast & Diverse Region



Texas Hill Country



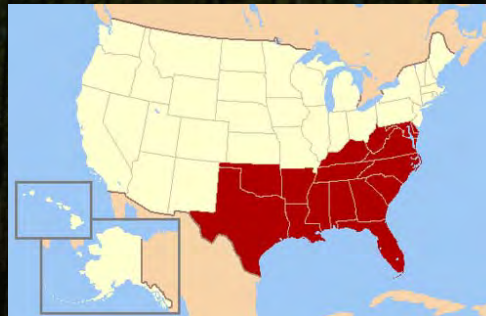
Mississippi Longleaf



Virginia Highlands



North Carolina Appalachian Mountains



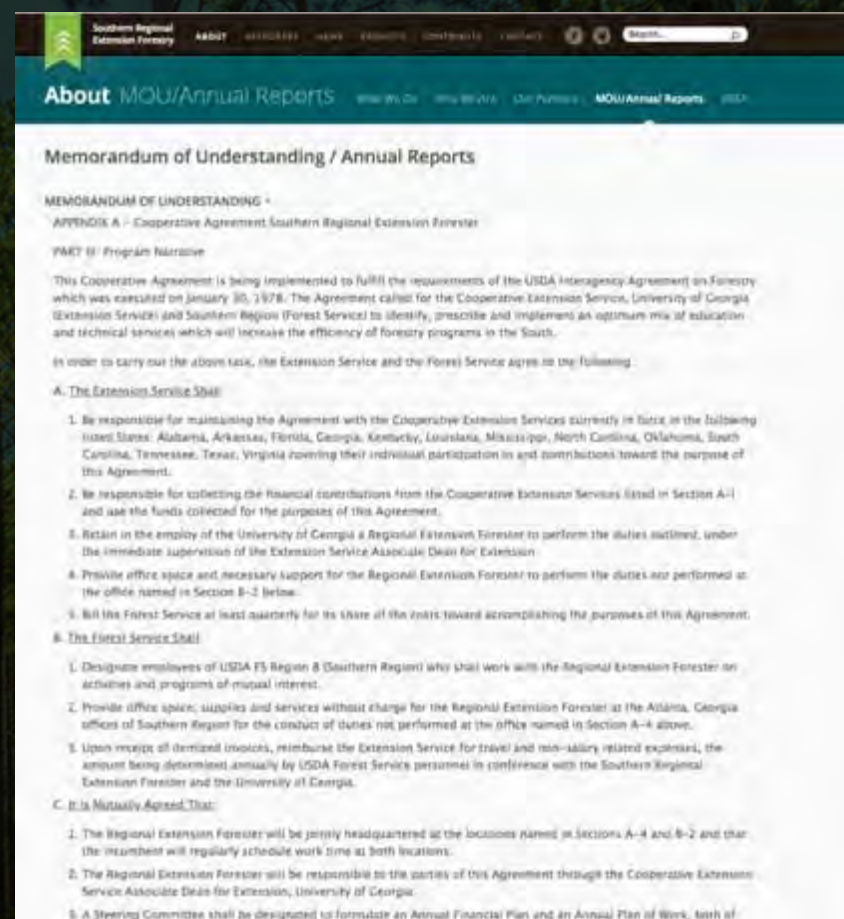
Louisiana Cypress Swamp

A Vast & Diverse People



Southern Regional Extension Forestry (SREF)

- A regional 'Center' funded by a consortium of universities.
- Administered by a Regional Forester and staff.
- All funded through grants and contracts.
- General guidance through an MOU.



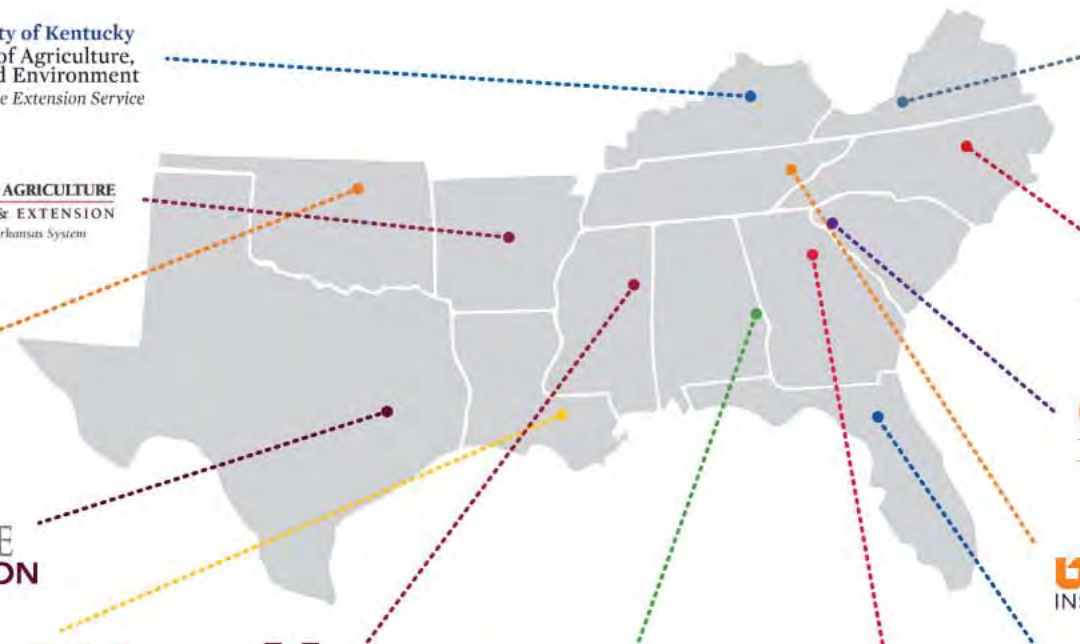
SREF Mission:

Our mission is to serve the southern Land Grant University System and the USDA Forest Service by collaborative development of forestry technologies and programs that improve the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of supporting institutions.



SREF Funding Partners

Partners:



SREF Objectives



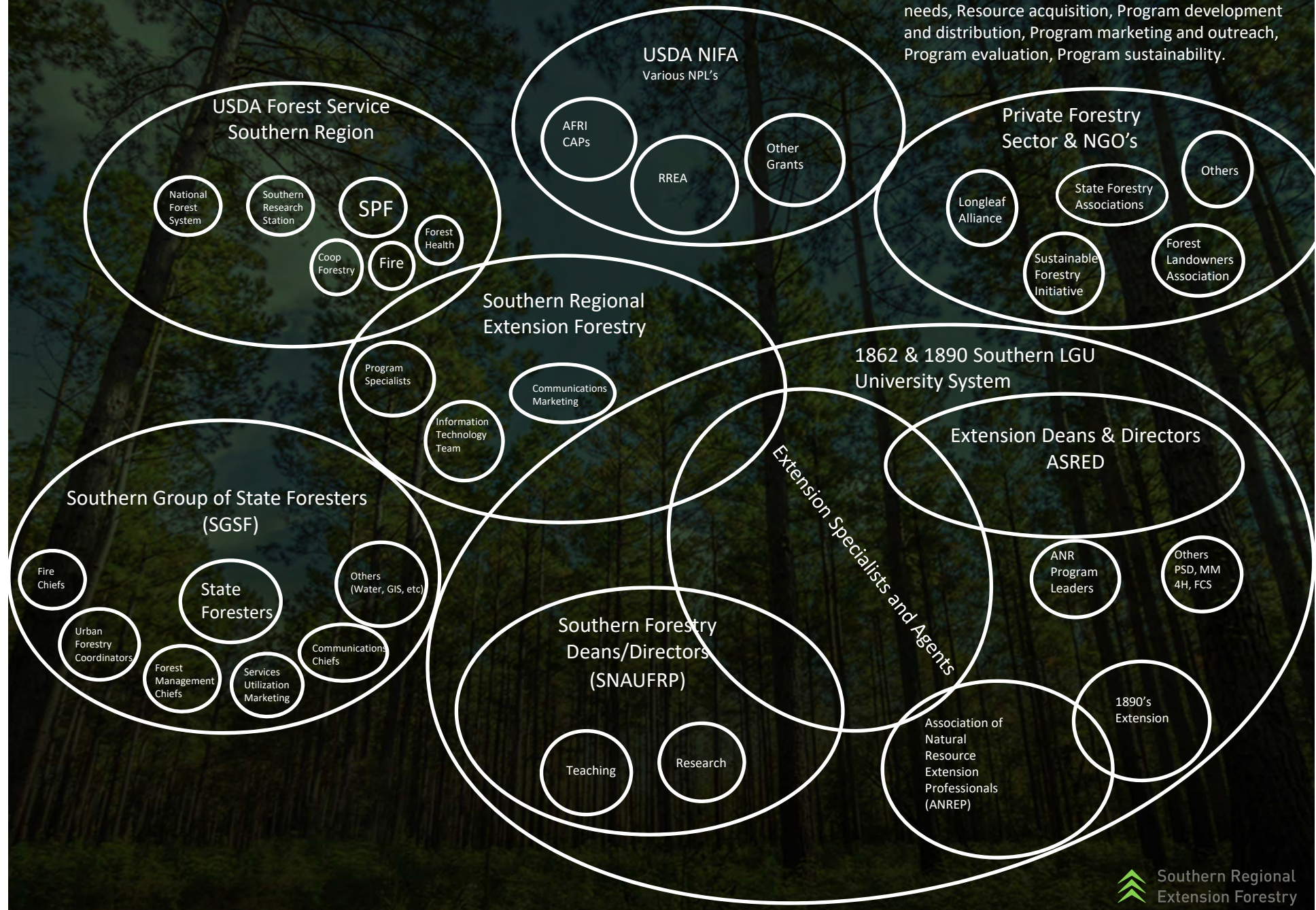
- Encourage, where possible, multi-state and regional cooperation, collaboration, and coordination of programs and activities;
- Initiate, plan, and participate in education and Extension activities in response to needs assessments;
- Facilitate the development of educational materials directed at regional audiences;
- Improve communication and cooperation between Extension and other organizations interested in the management of the region's forests;
- Oversee special projects relevant to the goals and objectives of the office; and
- Assist with acquisition of resources for regional programming.

Who is our audience?

- Primary:
 - State Extension forestry and natural resources specialists (1862 and 1890)
 - USDA Forest Service - State & Private Forestry
 - State forestry agency staff
- Secondary:
 - Natural Resource Professionals
 - Family forest owners
 - General Public

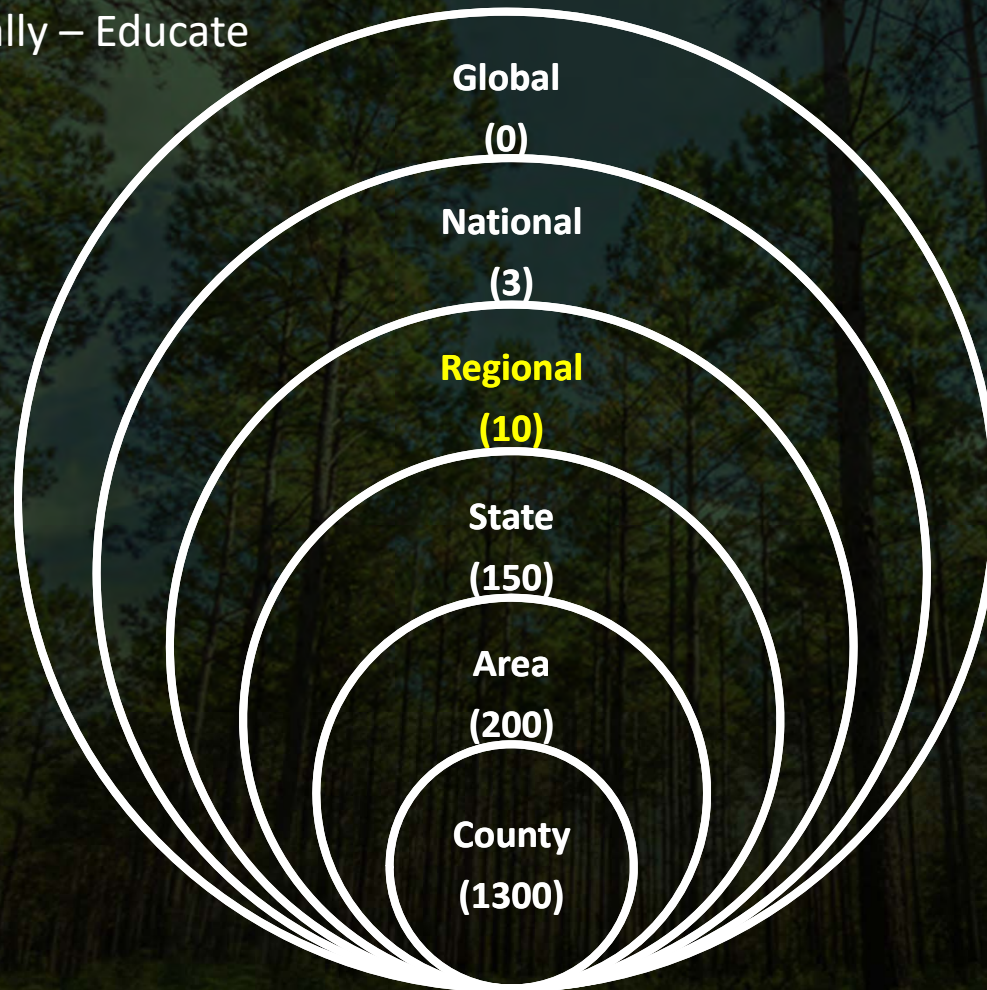
SREF Stakeholders & Partners

Issue identification & prioritization, LGU and partner identification, Audience identification, Resource needs, Resource acquisition, Program development and distribution, Program marketing and outreach, Program evaluation, Program sustainability.



The “Geography” of Extension in the Southern US

Issues and Programs:
Think globally – Educate
locally:



No formal infrastructure, but
options like IUFRO EKE exist

National Program Leaders
provide programmatic direction

The U.S. South is the only
region to have a Regional
Extension Forester

State Specialists in Natural
Resources

Some states have multi-county
or “area” specialized positions

Local Level Ag & Natural
Resource County Educators

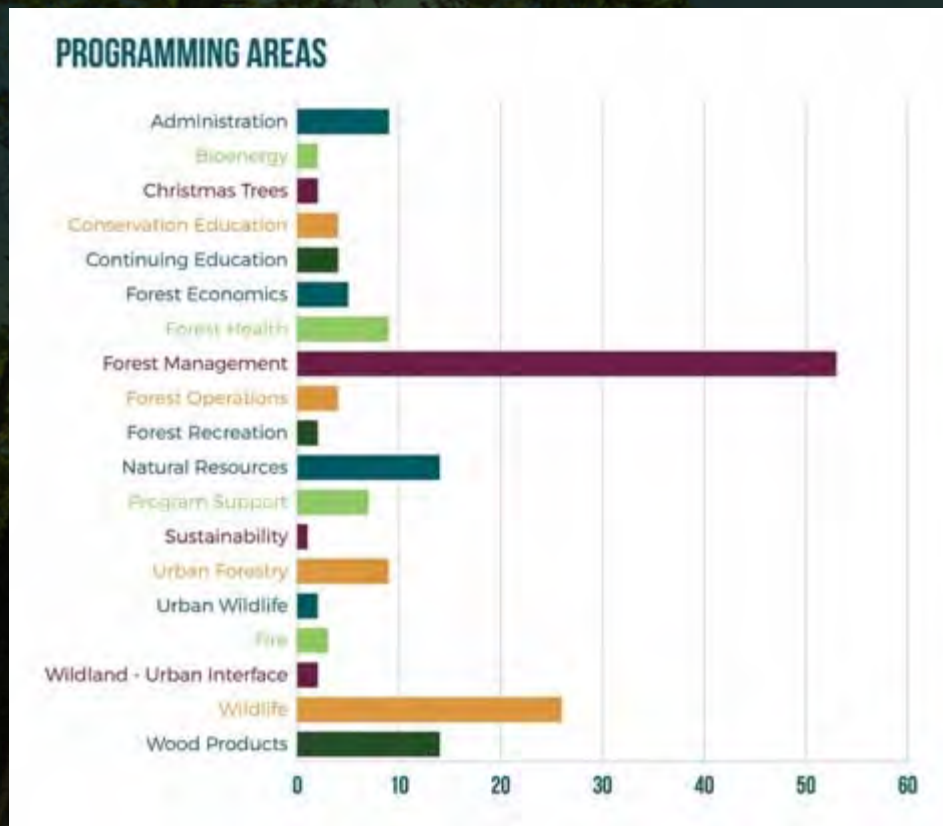
Extension FNR Capacity: Southern Region

FTE'S IN THE SOUTHERN REGION



168 total professionals in 13 states and the SREF (RO) office, 137.17 FTEs

“Primary” Programming Areas

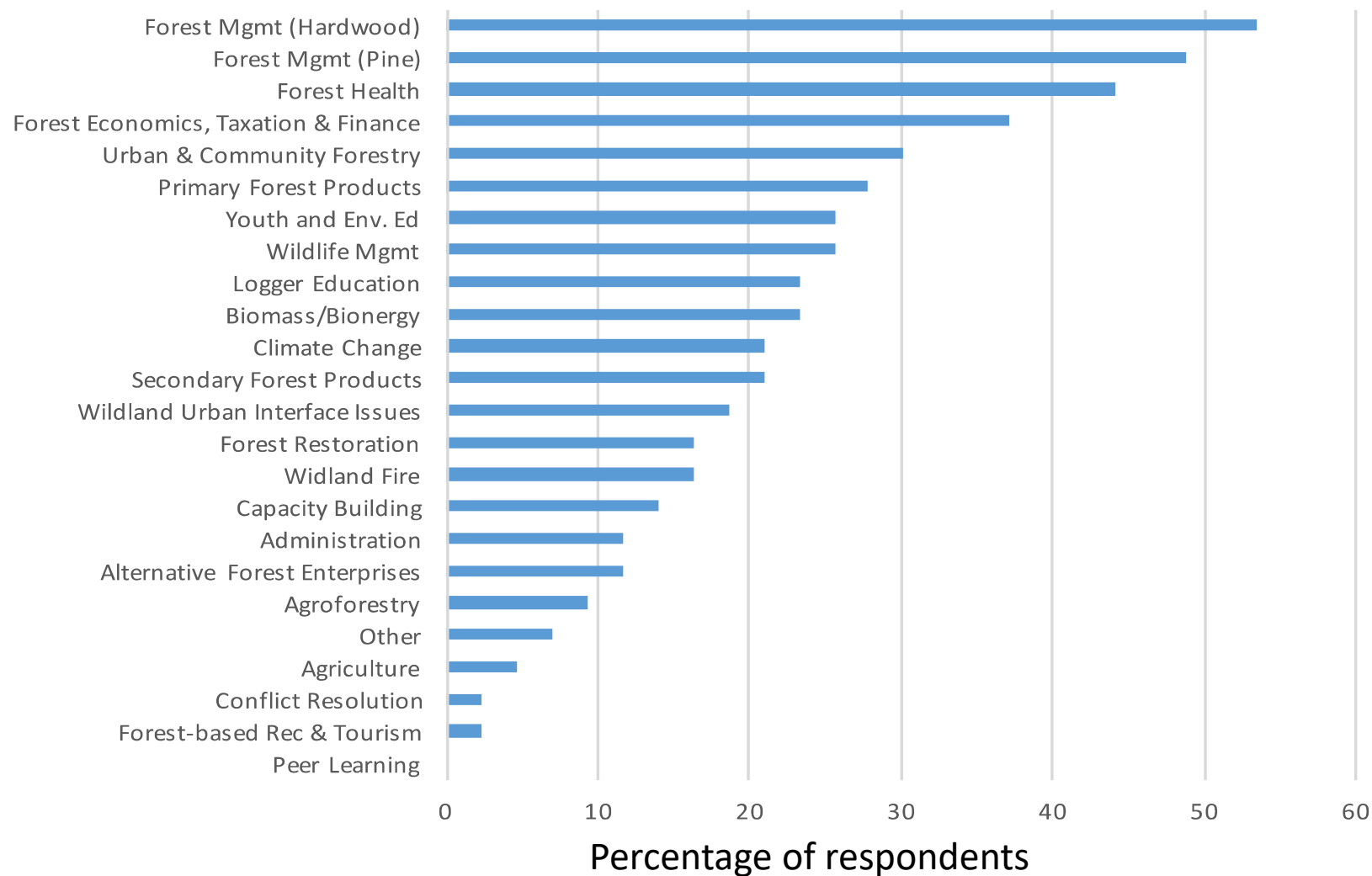


- “Major” Areas:
 - Forest Management – 53
 - Wildlife Management – 26
 - Wood Products – 14
 - Natural Resources - 13
 - Urban Forestry – 9
 - Forest Health – 9
 - Administration - 9

137.17 FTEs Total

What are your primary programming areas?

Please select all that apply



Source: Southern Regional Extension Forestry Needs Assessment Results, October, 2017.
<https://sref.info/resources/publications/2017-sref-needs-assessment-summary>

Regional Extension Forestry Landscape

- We have great diversity in our ranks
 - Gender, programming area, experience, scope of work, technical capabilities, etc.
- We have increasingly complex issues we are dealing with
 - Forest health, markets, urbanizing lands and changing landowner demographics, etc.
- We have increasing pressure to show impact and be more effective
- We have funding and capacity issues in many if not most states
- We have increased competition for decreased resources
- Many of our collaborators have formalized or institutionalized regional structures
 - (USDA FS, SGSF, FLA, SNAUFRP, ASRED, etc.)
- Our federal partners are demanding more cooperation across state lines

Benefits of a sustained regional response

- High quality and quantity of product development
- Less duplication of effort & more innovation
- More recognition at the regional and national level
- Team approach to address increasingly complex programming
- Regional responses to regional requests



Benefits of a sustained regional response

- More representation of Extension and the LGU at regional and national level
- Increased funding at the state and regional level
- Supporting infrastructure for extending the life of grant products and tools
- Mentoring opportunities from more experienced to less experienced.
- 'Reverse' mentoring from newer, tech savvy, recently educated professional



SREF Staff



Regional Forester:

Bill Hubbard

Business Manager:

Kendra Hull

Extension Associates:

Dan Geller

David Coyle

Holly Campbell

Leslie Boby

IT Professionals:

Daniel Drummond

Darryl Outlaw

Steven Weaver

Marketing & Communications:

Brent Peterson

Laura Costa

Ronni Hastings



Student Workers and Interns Too!

Programming Tools and Techniques



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Conferences and
Workshops
Learning Networks
E-Learning Modules
Webinars



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

E-Learning Modules
Guidebooks
Peer-Reviewed Extension
Publications/Fact Sheets
Videos
Workshops



APPLIED RESEARCH

Needs & Audience
Assessments
Program Reviews &
Impact Assessments
Social Network
Analysis



TECH TOOLS & DEVELOPMENT

Decision Support
Tools
Mapping GIS Tools
Mobile Apps
Website
Development

Strategic Directions



- 2017 survey and retreat summary
- 2018 outputs and impacts to date
- 2019 and beyond (input from program leaders & Directors)

Needs Assessment

- Find out what our University stakeholders need
- Investigate whether SREF 'services' are beneficial to stakeholders
- Develop a baseline to move forward with strategic planning
- Sent to state specialists, forestry deans & directors and Extension administrators

Respondents



33%

Response Rate



.75

Average Extension
Appointment



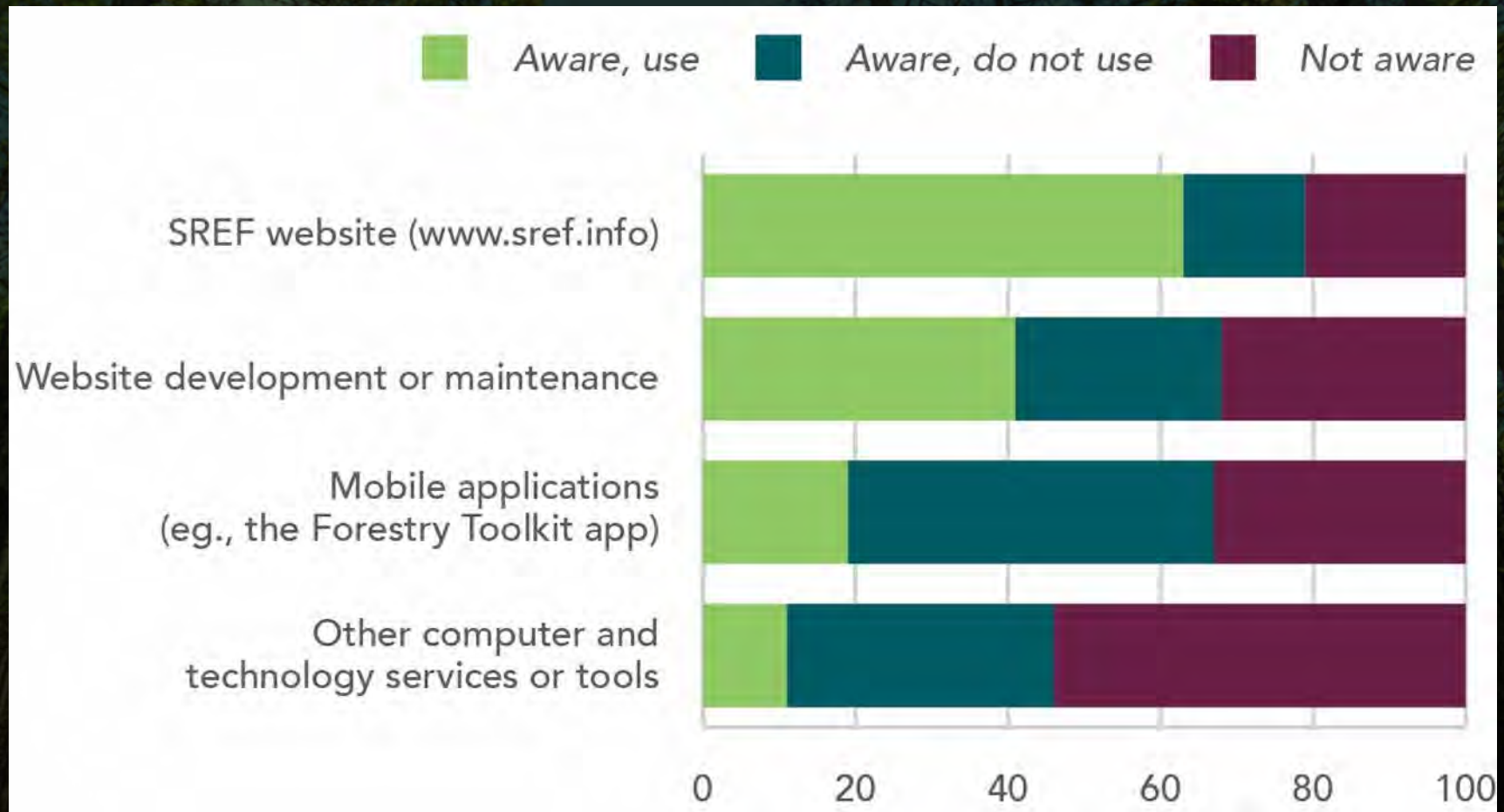
82%

Statewide
Responsibilities

8%

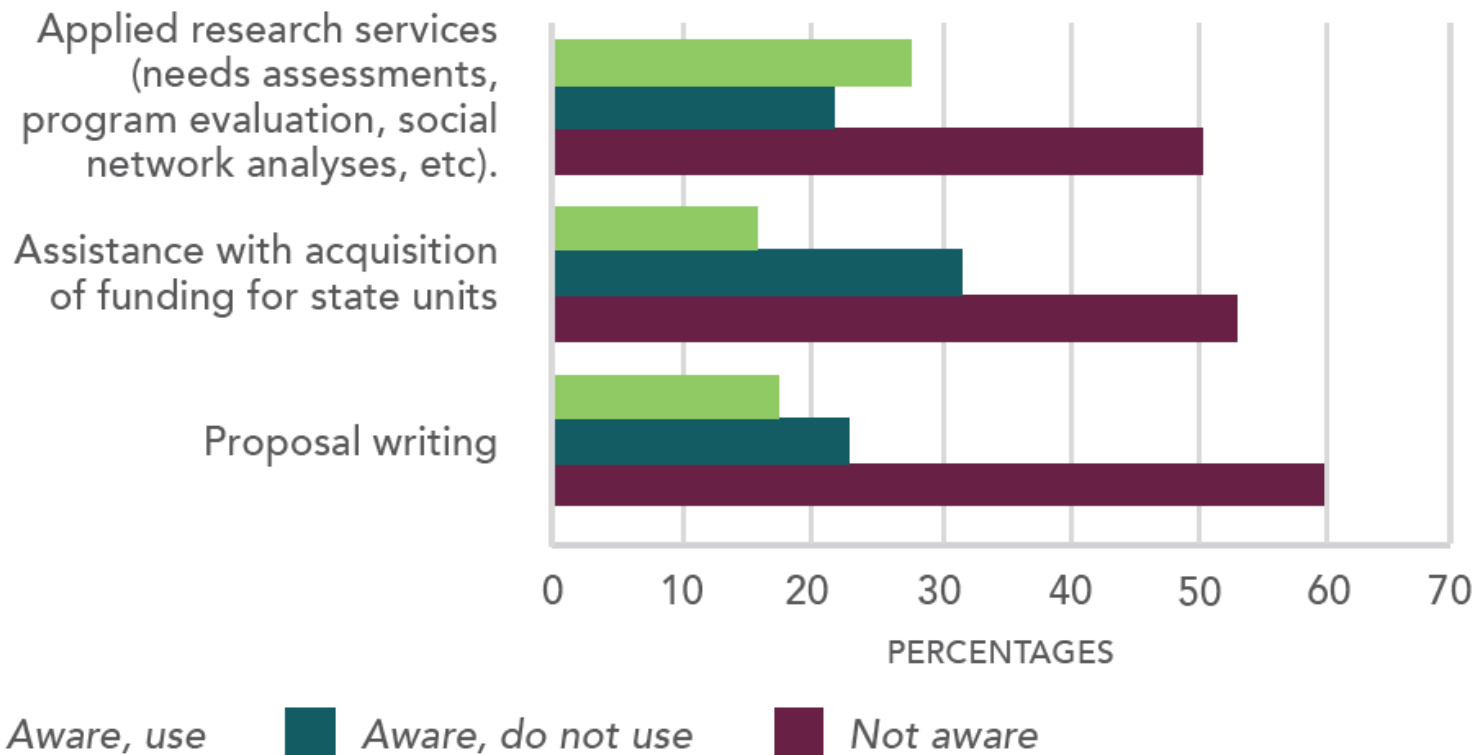
Regional/District
Responsibilities

Knowledge and Use of Technology Services

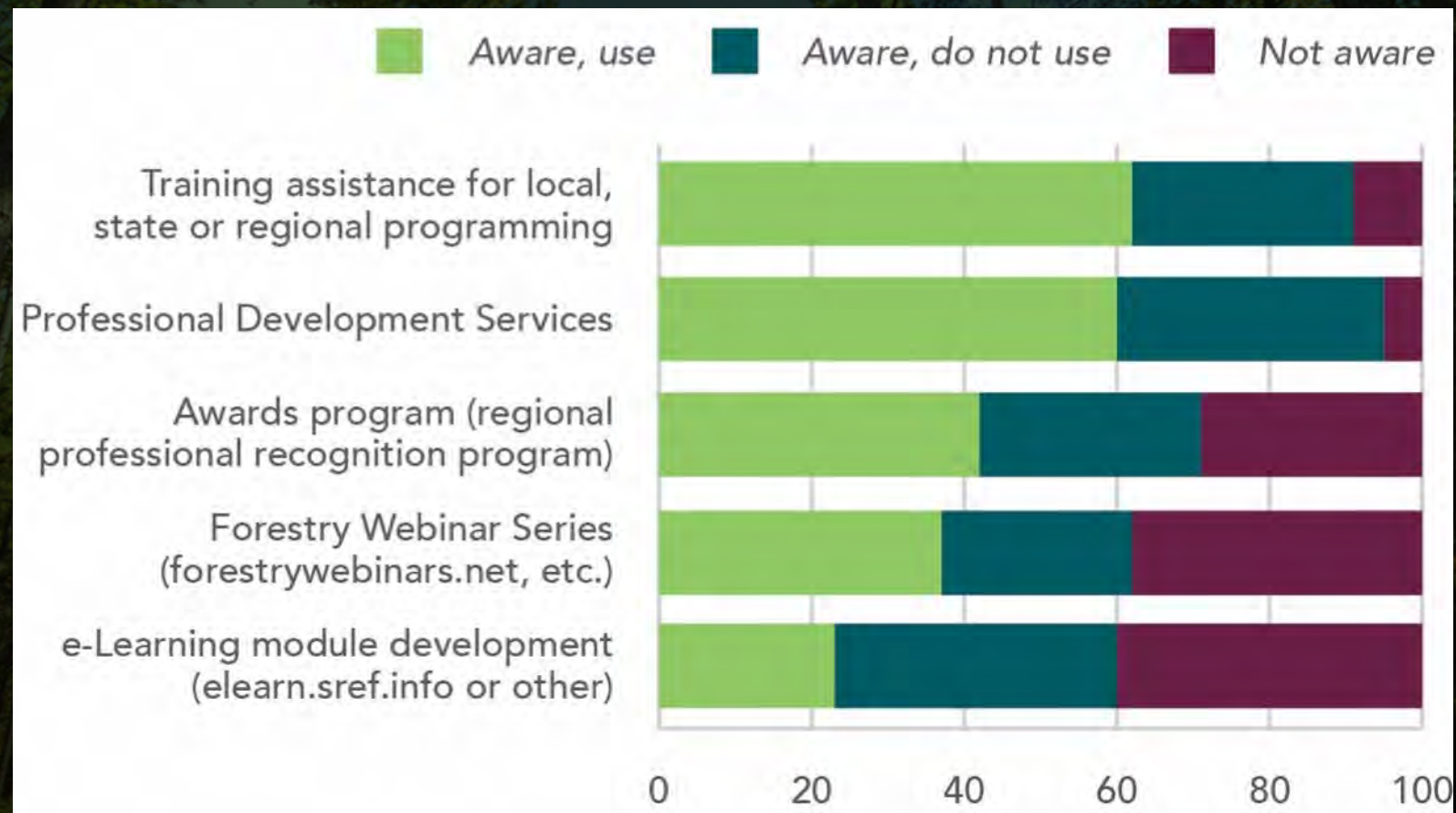


Collaboration & Innovation

SREF COLLABORATION & INNOVATION SERVICES

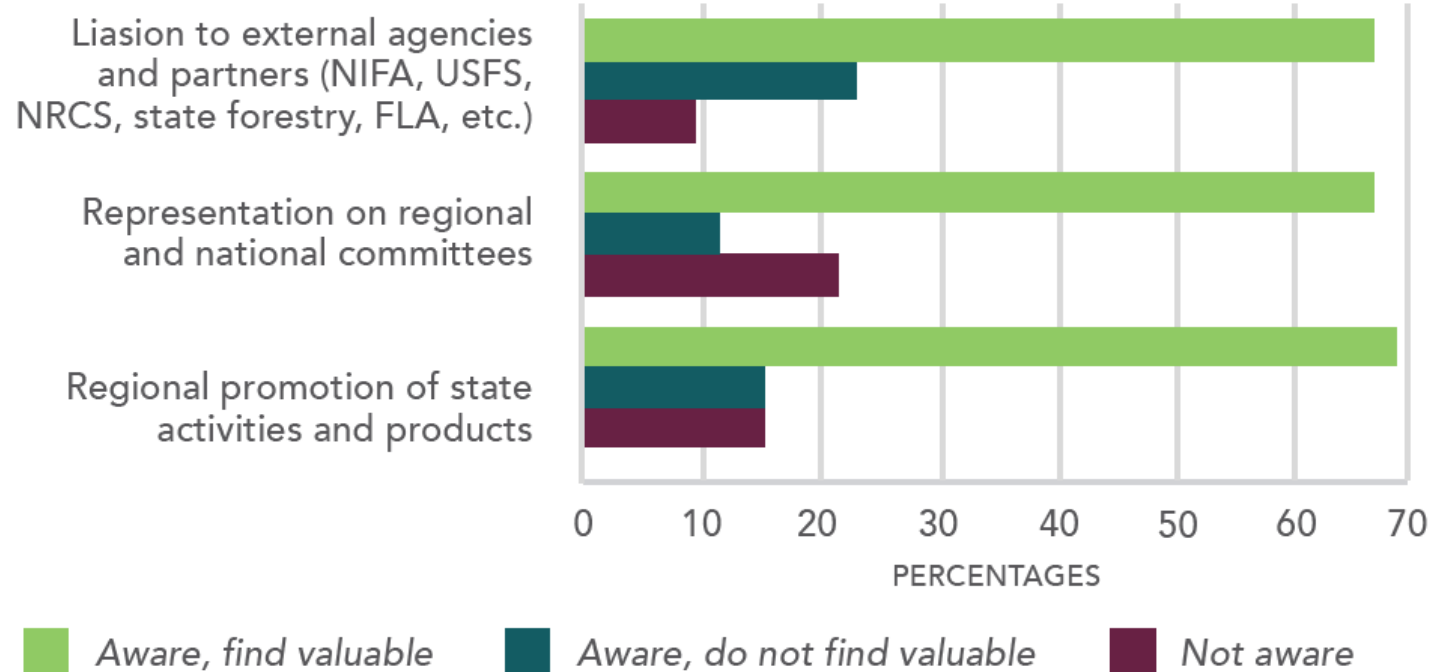


Knowledge and Use of Professional Developmental Services



Liaison & Committee Representation

SREF LIAISON & COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION SERVICES



Take Away Points

- Not everyone knows who we are and what we do!
- Not everyone who does know us, values our services at the level we would like.
- But....there is a critical mass that sees value and the need for the regional programming and service.
- The challenge is to move the needle on all of these indicators.

Regional Programming Priorities

Other programming priorities that were suggested by respondents as being areas of high priority:

- Estate planning or intergenerational transfer
- Wood industry or other forest products
- Small acreage owners
- Taxation
- Forest ecosystem services and water
- Land development and urbanization

Strategic Directions

CHEAHA SOUTHERN REGION EXTENSION NATURAL RESOURCES RETREAT

October 10-12, 2017 * Cheaha State Park * Delta, AL



Strategic Directions

- Participants participated in group breakouts to identify issues and regional opportunities for collaboration, funding, etc:
 - Forest & Wood Products
 - Economics, Management & Taxation
 - Urban & Community Forestry
 - Wildland Fire
 - Forest Health
 - Wildlife Management
 - Engaging Landowners



Regional “Initiatives”

- Forest health training program
- Urban forestry webinar series
- Wildland & prescribed fire – several efforts!
- Wood products national conference
- Family forest engagement– “Know Your Woods” effort for Spring of 2019

From around the region:

“ Regional programming brought Extension peers together to share knowledge and experience in the field and promotes potential collaborations among us.”

“The programming provides a platform for researchers to meet and reach consensus on synchronized approaches for economic impact analysis of the forest sector. This largely improves comparability of impact analysis study results across states.

“I’m able to collaborate with the forest health specialist at SREF to organize landowner educational events in GA. The experience has helped us win Extension grants and will help us attract more funds and expand to a larger scale (other states)”

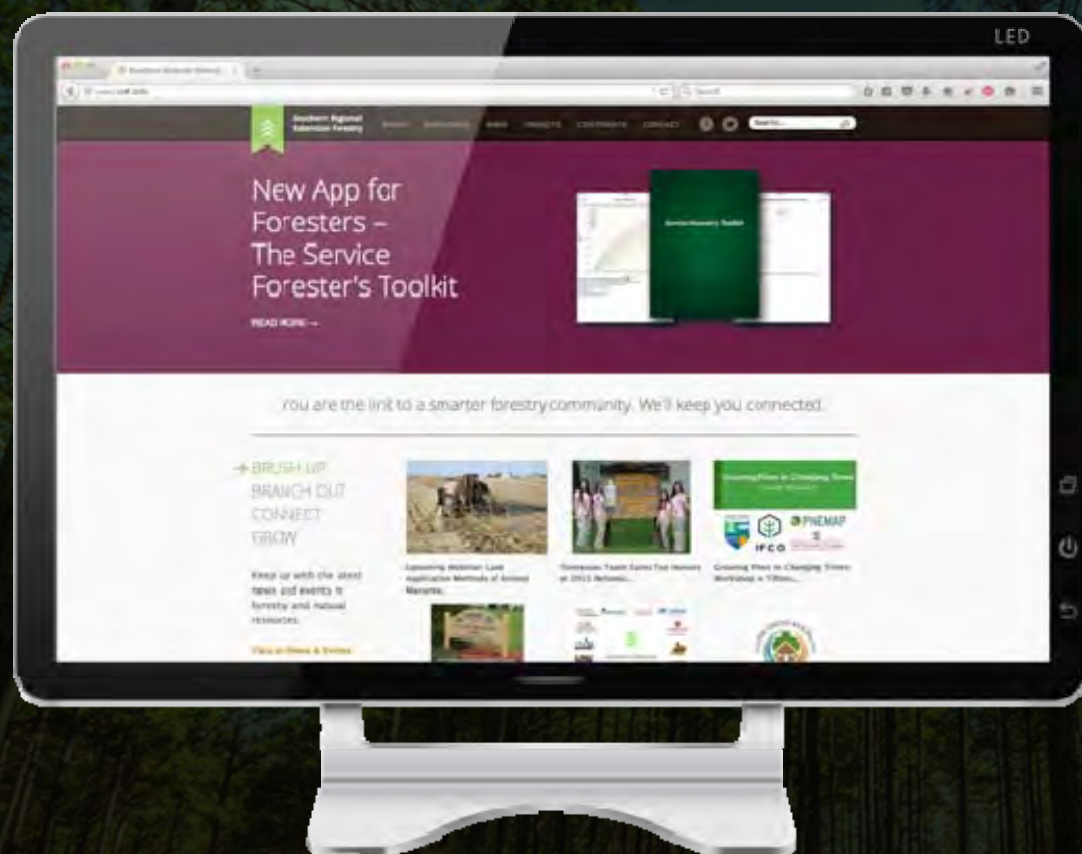
“ I’m able to take advantage of the technology/design experts at SREF to promote our Extension materials.”

“I hope we can continue our collaboration in the future. This will greatly improve visibility of my program and enhance the efficiency of my work”

Challenges, pitfalls and discussion

- Credit and branding
- It's a two-way street
 - 'You get out of it what you put into it'
- Marketing
- Available resources (time, money)
- Regional leadership
- Sustainability
- "Turf" and competition
- Amount and complexity of the issues
- Others

Visit our Website: www.sref.info



➤ Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: [@soforext](https://twitter.com/soforext)