



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

*Good for you. Good for our forests.®*

[www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)

SFI-00001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2012

Contact: Rick Cantrell  
SFI Vice President and COO  
864-653-7224

### **Award-winning Tree Farmer Skeet Burris Joins SFI Board**

**WASHINGTON** – Award-winning tree farmer Dr. Skeet (A.G.) Burris of South Carolina has been elected to the independent Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc.® (SFI®) [Board of Directors](#).

Burris and his family turned an abandoned farm in Hampton County, SC, into a 2,700-acre (1,092-hectare) model tree farm certified to the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), winning many national, state and regional conservation and forestry awards, including Private Conservationist of the Year, Forest Landowner of the Year and National Outstanding Tree Farmer.

“I’m proud to have been part of the SFI program since it began because it represents the kind of values my family and I honor every day at Cypress Bay Plantation,” Burris said today. “SFI stands behind the good work of tree farmers, opening up markets for our products and helping us practise sustainable forestry. It is an honor to represent family forest owners on the SFI board.”

“At SFI, we know how important tree farmers like Skeet Burris are to rural communities across North America, and our standard requirements reflect this,” said SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow. “Dr. Burris is a welcome addition to our board; he will bring a fresh perspective so we can continue to address the needs of all North Americans fairly and responsibly.”

About 10 million family forest owners account for more than 60 percent of private forest lands in the United States. Through its unique fiber sourcing objectives, the SFI program requires that all program participants – both those who manage forest lands and those who buy raw materials – must show they are sourcing fiber from responsible sources and sharing management and stewardship knowledge. SFI Inc. collaborates with the American Tree Farm System to increase certification on family forest lands, and accepts fiber from lands certified to Tree Farm standards as certified content for the SFI on-product label.

The three-chamber SFI board represents environmental, economic and social interests equally, and [members](#) include representatives of environmental, professional and academic groups, independent loggers, family forest landowners, public officials, labor and the forest products sector. Burris replaces Mary Motlow of Tennessee as the representative for family forest owners in the social chamber.

-30-

**About SFI Inc.** ([www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org))

SFI Inc. is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. Across North America, more than 195 million acres/79 million hectares are certified to the SFI forest management standard, making it the largest single forest standard in the world.



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

*Good for you. Good for our forests.®*

[www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)

SFI-00001

## **BACKGROUND: Dr. A.G. (Skeet) Burris**

Dr. Skeet (A.G) Burris is an orthodontist in South Carolina whose family owns 2,700-acre (1,092-hectare) Cypress Bay Plantation in Hampton County.

Burris and his wife Gail bought an abandoned farm in 1986, and turned it into a model for tree farmers, adding more lands over time as well as leasing 700 acres (283 hectares) and managing them for wildlife such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey and common bobwhite.

In addition to producing timber, Cypress Bay Plantation is a popular hunting location. The Burris family planted close to 1 million trees, including valuable timber species such as longleaf and loblolly pine, and five species of oak and ornamental trees as mast crops. They also planted grasses, forbs, shrubs, grains, corn, and sunflowers to feed game and non-game species.

Burris has worked with organizations such as Quail Unlimited, the Quality Deer Management Association, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the South Carolina Waterfowl Association, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Clemson University's Extension Service to improve wildlife habitat.

Cypress Bay Plantation has been the site of many field days and tours aimed at raising awareness of the value of sustainable forest management among private forest owners. In 1999, it was the first tree farm in the United States selected as a site for Forested Flyways, a project involving American Tree Farm System, Ducks Unlimited, and International Paper that improved waterfowl habitat and promoted sustainable forest management.

Burris has won many national, state and regional conservation and forestry awards. National awards included Private Conservationist of the Year (2001), Forest Landowner of the Year (2001), National Outstanding Tree Farmer (2000), Outstanding Achievement in Sustainable Forestry Award (1999), Rural Sportsman's Stewardship Farm of the Year for Big Game Management (1999). State awards included the Environmental Awareness Award (2003), Master Tree Farmer of the Year (2000), and South Carolina Tree Farmer of the Year (1995).

Burris served as member of the Sustainable Forestry Board (predecessor of the SFI Board of Directors) from 2000 to 2003, and is currently Commissioner for the South Carolina Forestry Commission. He also served on a number of forestry, business and professional associations including National Tree Farm, the South Carolina Forestry Association and Forest Landowners. He was founder of the Hampton County Forest Landowners and Wildlife Management Association. Recently Burris has become active in land preservation through the use of conservation easements, including placing conservation easements on his tree farm.