

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

From the Chairman

L. Michael Kelly

Greetings! In my letter last year, I said that 2011, our 65th anniversary year, and beyond hold great promise for the Forest History Society. Now, after a full year as your chairman I am even more certain of this. Treasurer Henry Barclay's report shows that the Society's financial state is good and continually improving, and more people are using the Society's rich resources than ever before. With enthusiastic members, dedicated staff, able volunteers, and strategic leadership, we are accomplishing our mission—to preserve and help people use the documents of forest and conservation history—with zest.

The recent special issue of *Forest History Today* recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Weeks Act of 1911 is a fine example of the Society's work. This was the culmination of a year-long effort by the Society in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and other partners to increase understanding of one of the foremost conservation success stories of the 20th century. The FHS staff established www.WeeksAct.org to provide a central location for digitized materials, made various presentations on the act, and hosted a series of Weeks Act blog posts by Robert Healy, coauthor of *The Lands Nobody Wanted*. Bob also presented the Lynn W. Day Distinguished Lectureship, hosted by the Society with Duke University, in November.

The Society's journal, *Environmental History*, published jointly with the American Society for Environmental History through Oxford University Press, continues to excel under the leadership of editor Nancy Langston. FHS staff provides the "New Scholarship" section in the printed journal and the journal website, where you can also find the new "Featured Collections" section that focuses on selected archival collections.

A few initiatives that our staff has worked on in 2011 are about to come to fruition. Within the next few months, an Issues Series book on bioenergy will be published. This new resource will help foresters and many others communicate more effectively about an important issue. Another new project is a web portal for repeat



photography, or photopoints: pairs of images taken from the same point 100 years ago and today, sequences of land-use changes over time, and aerial photography at different points in time. I think you will agree that these may be some of the most instructional visual resources we have available. The staff has secured some seed funding to get started and hopes to have a version of the basic web pages available for testing in late 2012.

I am pleased to report that the board of directors has approved the Society's proposal to secure a tract of land in Durham for a new building. Space has become one of our most limiting factors, and we need to quadruple the size of our library, archival, and research spaces so that we will have ample room for years to come. The board does not undertake

this challenge lightly. It will require significant effort to obtain the necessary funding, but we are confident it can be done and are excited about the vision this new facility will represent to the forestry and conservation communities.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not mention how our social media efforts are taking information from the library and archives to new audiences. The heart of our social media effort remains our multi-award-winning blog, "Peeling Back the Bark," launched in 2008. Check it out at www.peelingbackthebark.org. We recently surpassed 1,100 Twitter followers; they frequently send our messages to their own contacts, significantly broadening our reach. The Society's Facebook following is also growing, and I encourage you to "like us" on Facebook. Both the YouTube channel and our Flickr site are resulting in new contacts as well.

I hope you are as proud to be a part of this valuable organization and the work it does as I am. Thank you again for your continued support, both conceptual and financial, as we move together into an exciting future. Please feel free to contact me at mkelly@forestinvest.com or President Steven Anderson at stevensa@duke.edu with your thoughts or suggestions. I wish you all a healthy and prosperous 2012. □