

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013

## From the Chair

Hayes Brown

I would like to express my appreciation to the FHS board of directors for electing me to serve as its chair. I trained as a forester but have practiced law in Birmingham, Alabama, for 28 years. During my career as an attorney, I have been privileged to handle some of the most important issues that my clients face, and I will bring the same sense of responsibility to my term as chair. I approach my term aware of the great opportunities that lay before us, honored to lead the board as we deal with many challenges.

Many years ago, I was introduced to the Forest History Society through Doug MacCleery's book *American Forests: A History of Resiliency and Recovery*, part of our Issues Series. It put into words what I thought I knew but couldn't articulate at the time. Now full of annotations, underlining, and notes, I've kept it nearby on a shelf in my office ever since. Reading it was when I first knew that FHS had something special to offer. What I have learned about the Society since then has confirmed that initial impression and only served to convince me further that the Society plays a vital role in preserving the story of human interaction with the environment.

In my first year as a board member, during a tour of the Alvin J. Huss Archives, FHS librarian Cheryl Oakes showed me a lantern slide of a scene depicting logging practices in the 1800s. Next to that was a floppy disk. Next to that was a magnetic tape recording. Next to that was a handwritten letter. Next to that was a black-and-white photograph.

Today the explosion of new media threatens to overwhelm the resources of companies, agencies, and individuals, each faced with the responsibility to house their records. Yet the challenges are the same as the day the Society was established in 1946: These records will one day be the only account of their organization's imprint on the forest and the environment. Who will bear the responsibility to maintain these records in a professional manner?



Will these records be available to be reviewed by scholars and others interested in accurately telling the story of forest and environmental history? After nearly 70 years, the answer is still the same. The Forest History Society is who the forest and conservation community turns to for protecting these materials and has a long track record of making them available for visiting scholars, researchers, and other interested parties. If the Society did not fulfill this vital role, many of these valuable records would be lost forever.

Critical to fulfilling that role is making sure our physical plant will be able to serve the needs of the forest and conservation community and researchers who study it for many years to come.

But our current facility cannot meet our future space requirements. So, in order to be prepared for the responsibilities that lay before us, the board of directors has voted to proceed with plans to secure a new facility to meet the needs of the Society. I hope we can count on you to join us in making this ambitious goal a reality.

To our good fortune, outgoing board chair Michael Kelly has agreed to remain involved by filling the vital role as chair of the Campaign Planning Committee, a role that will utilize his many talents. All of us owe a great debt of gratitude to Michael for his able leadership from 2010 to 2013. By approaching every matter with conscientiousness, Michael brought a sense of professionalism and active involvement that brought out the best in everyone. This will serve him well in his new role, and it is a standard I hope to maintain.

Please consider how your life has been enriched by an understanding of forest history. Then, resolve to help further the goals of the Society by helping us financially and in other ways. Your support is essential to fulfilling the need to preserve forest history. Please feel free to contact me at [hbrown@hayesbrown.com](mailto:hbrown@hayesbrown.com) with any of your thoughts and suggestions. □