

the regional forester in Atlanta. He is to be commended not only for his actions when faced with the quillwort, but for his many years of dedicated leadership for balanced forest management throughout the Southeast. The forests have thrived. Thank you, Bob.

The quillwort protection plan established a 165 foot buffer zone on either side of a streambed. Limiting timber harvesting within this zone maintained a heavy overhead canopy and filtered the light reaching the stream's surface. The cutting restriction also curtailed sedimentation and changes to drainage patterns. The quillwort seems to like small intermittent streams.

This protection plan created a real challenge for Don and Kim because, at that time, there were 25 active timber sales in 51 compartments of the DeSoto ranger district. Four even had loggers on site.

Due to the lack of factual knowledge about the quillwort's habitat—especially since it was now newly discovered in Mississippi—determining which drainage to survey proved difficult. The U.S. Forest Service stepped up to the plate and made the decision to survey all drainage within or immediately adjacent to cutting units. And, to err on the side of caution, the survey was 20 percent wider than the 165 foot buffer suggested in the recovery plan.

The DeSoto district established an incident command system team to organize and survey 137 miles of streams on all active timber sales and 88 miles of streams in sales planned for next fiscal year. Timber sales were prioritized for survey in the following order: those with loggers on site; sales with open payment units; sales which had not been opened; and finally next year's planned sales.

It took 34 days of slow slogging up and down streambeds—both sides.

More quillwort was found. Louisiana quillwort was found on four active timber sales, three of which required modification before being released for cutting. It was also found on seven sales planned for next year, two of which were modified before the sales were finalized. The rest of the Louisiana quillwort was located in existing set aside buffer zones.

Throughout the survey process, Ms. Kennedy maintained constant contact with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Jackson and Vicksburg. Her persistence ensured that the appropriate NEPA documents were amended and the timber sales were modified. Without this level of attention, the sales could easily have experienced bureaucratic disruptions.

Mr. President, this is clearly an environmental success story for all. An endangered plant was found. The habitat around identified populations was protected. Trees were still cut.

I believe a mutually successful coexistence occurred. The quillwort won. Perry County won. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service won. The U.S. Forest Service won. I applaud the U.S. Forest

Service for protecting the quillwort's habitat with a flexible rapid response. They did not take the easy route and stop all contracts.

I'd also like to note that this process has allowed the Forest Service to significantly expand the scientific knowledge about this quillwort species. With all these new and frequently large finds, it makes me wonder just how endangered this plant really is? I hope the agency charged with monitoring the livelihood of the quillwort will not ignore this information.

Mr. President, there is another question that cannot be overlooked when talking about the DeSoto National Forest. Why has the annual forest regeneration program dwindled down to less than 1 percent of the total acreage while over 33 percent of the forest has pine trees well beyond rotation age? And why is only 35 percent of the annual growth being harvested? This only causes these pine forests to get older.

Mississippi's largest cash crop is timber. Every Mississippian has been behind a log truck on its way to a mill at some point, and every Mississippian knows a little about silviculture. We know that pine forests should be rotated and harvested to maintain their health. We also recognize that old trees are vulnerable to the pine beetle which jeopardizes healthy sections of the forest. Good silviculture prevents a pine forest from getting too old. Good silviculture encourages selective tree harvesting. Good silviculture creates healthy forests. Good silviculture creates an economically thriving community in all sectors.

I want to challenge the U.S. Forest Service to give me a credible response to this question: Why are we only harvesting a small percentage of the annual growth? I do not want my inquiry to be dismissed with the weak excuse that we just did not have enough people to prepare a sale. The quillwort drew 48 Forest Service employees. How many Forest Service employees worked on timber sales during this timeframe? Recent claims that budget reductions have curtailed the timber sale program only go so far. In Mississippi, mature pine trees are ready to be cut. And the school district, county government, and timber farmers of Perry County who depend on these revenues are anxiously awaiting that day. The citizens of Perry County deserve no less. I urge a full, honest, and equal commitment to all of the U.S. Forest Service's missions.

It is a sad fact that the U.S. Forest Service does not even live up to its existing and approved forest management plans nationwide. It repeatedly disregards programmed sales, making it impossible for counties like Perry County to plan its school budgets. I view forest plans as a contract between the Forest Service and each county. I do not expect these contracts to be broken. When these contracts are broken, the schoolchildren are the big losers.

I would like to personally invite the new head of the U.S. Forest Service to

visit Mississippi's national forests to discuss his plans to honor his agency's commitments to Perry County and Mississippi.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I want to reiterate my appreciation for the extraordinary efforts of the regional forester in Atlanta and the district ranger and his employees in the DeSoto district. They reflect great credit upon the proud tradition of the U.S. Forest Service. A proper balance was struck—a plant was protected and the interests of the citizens it affected were equally protected. This proves a mutually beneficial coexistence can occur.

Mr. President, I request unanimous consent to list the names of the 48 DeSoto National Forest employees who walked the streambeds in search of quillworts. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing their extraordinary efforts:

Kent Ainsworth, Debbie Lindsay, Eddie Bagget, Gary Lott, Jim Barner, Ed Lumpkin, Anthony Bolton, Robert Lumpkin, Hildred Bolton, Dean McCardle, Anthony Bond, Richard McCardle, Charles Broome, Wayne McCardle, Ed Bratcher, Mike McGregor, Steve Cobb, Don Neal, Robert Cooper, Gordon Pearce, Keith Coursey, Lee Prine, Jefferson Davis, Robert Reams, Frank Grady, Tony Rivers, Charles Grice, Patricia Rogers, Alicia Gruver, Joe Schonewitz, Andy Hunter, Ray Shows, Harvest Jackson, Robert Smistik, Kim Kennedy, John Stewart, Rebecca Ladnier, Wayne Stone, Gail Lassalle, Diane Tyrone, Pete Lassalle, Larry Walters, Steve Lee, David Wallace, Lisa Lewis, Donald Williams, and Mike Lick. Bruce Wilson.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, April 9, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,380,948,025,320.90.—Five trillion, three hundred eighty billion, nine hundred forty-eight million, twenty-five thousand, three hundred twenty and ninety cents.

One year ago, April 9, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,130,578,000,000.—Five trillion, one hundred thirty billion, five hundred seventy-eight million.

Five years ago, April 9, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,894,405,000,000.—Three trillion, eight hundred ninety-four billion, four hundred five million.

Ten years ago, April 9, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,283,040,000,000.—Two trillion, two hundred eighty-three billion, forty million.

Fifteen years ago, April 9, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,061,116,000,000.—One trillion, sixty-one billion, one hundred sixteen million—which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,319,832,025,320.90.—Four trillion, three hundred nineteen billion, eight hundred thirty-two million, twenty-five thousand, three hundred twenty dollars and ninety cents—during the past 15 years.