

Outdoor Truths

By Gary Miller

At the beginning of deer season my senses are heightened. There's no doubt the main reason is because I have been absent from the tree stand for several months. This is one reason I appreciate how hunting seasons have beginnings and endings. One gives time to recoup and review and the other spawns possibility and excitement. Both

are needed. When I return to the woods after an extended time away, I am always more sensitive to everything around me. The colors seem more vivid, the air seems freshly filtered, and every member of nature is expanding its territory, making the woods fuller of the essence of life. And I get to watch it, afresh and anew, from my elevated

perch. Many times, early in the year, I catch myself forgetting about why I'm there and instead enjoying everything periphery to my purpose. I wish that same awareness stayed with me throughout the hunting season. Unfortunately, as the season progresses, I find myself losing my sense of joyful wonder and become more focused on the hard, cold, task at hand. And even though the prize is wonderful, I wonder if I'm missing part of it when I don't remember everything that came together to make it happen. It's no different than a good story. While we want to know the beginning and the end; what makes the story memorable is what happens between the two. It's the things that describe and modify it. It is in the adverbs and adjectives that give stories their place in our memory. It's not in the start or the finish but in the walk between the two. And the more adverbs and adjectives the walk

has, the greater the story becomes for us and for those who hear us tell it.

Life also has a beginning and an end. These are two things about existence that all of us share. What makes us different, however, are the things that describe and modify each of our

lives and the particular places these descriptions fit in. It is God's DNA code of unique living for each of us. It is the moments between the beginning and the end. It is what makes life meaningful, relevant, and full. What we must remember is a life is not made up of decades

or years, but of days. And while we may have a desired goal for each day, the real living and the real memories will not come from checking off that noun but from the adverbs and adjectives that will give that day something for us to remember.
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Conservation Corner

by James Cummins
Executive Director
of Wildlife Mississippi

Most people do not stop to think about the important role that forest products play in our everyday lives, especially in Mississippi. From clean air, paper, buildings, bridges, energy, chemicals and the jobs that support the production of all these things, our world depends on trees to provide for us.

National Forest Products Week will be observed October 15-21, 2017. This annual observance began on September 13, 1960, when Congress passed a joint resolution providing for the establishment of an annual National Forest Products Week to be held each year on the week beginning with the third Sunday in October. (Ironically, it was Representative E.L. "Tic" Forrester from Georgia who presented the proclamation in the House for approval.) President Eisenhower signed the first proclamation 2 days later while calling on the people of the United States to observe the week of October 16, 1960, "with activities and ceremonies designed to focus attention on the importance of our forests and forest products to the Nation's economy and welfare."

During this time we should recognize the research that has been conducted by the Forest Service and Mississippi State University for more than 100 years in support of its mission to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests. This research promotes the responsible use of this natural resource. New products and technologies developed through this research create jobs, especially in rural areas, and stimulate economic growth. Without these ongoing efforts to sustain our forests, we might not have anything to celebrate.

Perhaps the best thing about forest products is that they come from a renewable and sustainable resource. Not only are wood products recyclable, durable and energy efficient; healthy, growing forests play a key role in absorbing carbon dioxide, releasing oxygen and storing carbon over time.

So, during the week of October 15-21, take a look around, think about the many ways that our forests benefit you in your everyday life. National Forest Products Week is a time to recognize the many products that come from our forests, the people who work in and manage our forests, the people who make the products and how all of it contributes to our lives.

James L. Cummins is executive director of Wildlife Mississippi, a non-profit, conservation organization founded to conserve, restore and enhance

fish, wildlife and plant resources throughout Mississippi. Their web site is www.wildlifemiss.org.

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