

MSU's Bulldog Forest Benefits Donors, Students

By Bob Ratliff

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Owning land provides individuals and families with roots, continuity and stability. Landownership also carries a responsibility to wisely manage and pass the land on to future generations.

A program at Mississippi State University—the Bulldog Forest—allows landowners to meet that responsibility while creating a lasting heritage by giving land to the College of Forest Resources.

“I was getting older and it was hard for me to manage the land,” said land donor and MSU alumnus Tom Harris. “The land was handed down to me from my father, and I wanted to give it to the College of Forest Resources for scholarships.”

Forest management professionals at MSU do a careful assessment of each donated property. The Bulldog Forest properties are used as living laboratories where forest management practices provide teaching, research and demonstration opportunities for students of all ages.

“Students learn best from hands-on experiences,” said George Hopper, dean of the College of Forest Resources. “The Bulldog Forest provides outdoor classrooms, scholarships and new technology for classrooms, as well as helping our faculty with continuing education and professional development.”

The college uses the most feasible methods for growth and

harvest of timber on donated land, all with consideration of the responsibility to protect the environment.

“These sound management practices are, in turn, taught to MSU students in our forestry, forest products and wildlife and fisheries programs,” Hopper said.

A carefully planned gift of forestland can have financial benefits for the donor, including a lifetime income, a shield from capital gains and estate taxes, and income tax deductions, among others.

“I gave my land to Mississippi State for estate planning, looking to the future for me and my family,” said donor retired Col. K.D. Johnson. “I gave it now for the tax advantages instead of giving at my death when I would get no tax advantages.”

Gifts to the Bulldog Forest also are an investment in the future of students.

“My education and career were made possible because someone joined the Bulldog Forest program and gave me an opportunity to pursue my passion,” said Austin Carroll, wildlife manager for International Paper and a Mississippi State alumnus.

The College of Forest Resources and the MSU Foundation works with landowners and their professional financial planners to arrange the terms of gifts to suit individual needs.

Additional information on the Bulldog Forest is available on the Web at www.cfr.msstate.edu/bulldogforest/.



Dean George Hopper, left, and K.D. Johnson visit land Johnson has donated to MSU's Bulldog Forest. (Photo by Karen Brasher)