



## Press Release

American Forest Foundation

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For Immediate Release

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### **Drue DeBerry Graduates from Groundbreaking New Institute to Train the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders**

**Washington, D.C.** — Drue DeBerry, Senior Vice President of Conservation at the American Forest Foundation, graduated from the National Conservation Leadership Institute, an intensive, seven-month program designed to address one of the nation's most significant conservation challenges: preparing and retaining leaders. DeBerry is one of 36 chosen for the second class that culminated in April 2008.

In the next 10 years, nearly one-third of today's natural resource leaders will retire. According to research conducted in 2004, about 77 percent of state fish and wildlife agency senior leadership will retire by 2015, and more than half of federal conservation leaders will retire by the end of 2007.

“To be chosen from the community of conservation professionals to take part in the inaugural class of the Institute is a great honor,” said DeBerry. “The Institute is tackling a very important topic head on— anticipating that many of conservation's current leaders are about to retire, and the legacy they leave behind will need to continue.”

The National Conservation Leadership Institute was created to better equip tomorrow's conservation leaders with the latest leadership thinking and practice. Each Fellow learns from the nation's most influential conservation leaders and leadership experts, including Harvard's Kennedy School of Leadership professor Marty Linsky, co-author of the book, *Leadership on the Line*. Through the Institute, 22 state fish and wildlife employees, 6 federal conservation agency employees, 3 industry employees and 3 conservation non-profit employees worked together over seven months to address priority leadership challenges.

“This year, from all across the nation and from the potential hundreds of natural resource conservation organizations, 36 Fellows were selected through a competitive process to participate in this year's world class leadership experience,” says Steve Williams, Chairman of the Institute board and President of the Wildlife Management Institute. “Those selected represented a diverse mix of people and perspectives transcending organizational boundaries. We believe that the Institute will have powerful results.”

In Fall 2007, the 36 Fellows convened the Institute's intense 10-day residency at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. In late April, the Fellows

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reassembled at Big Cedar Lodge in Ridgedale, Missouri to present the results of their five-month leadership challenge to apply lessons learned to issues and objectives of their respective organizations.

Drue has been with the American Forest Foundation for eight years. “I have encouraged Drue’s growth as a leader at the Foundation and in the conservation community,” said AFF President Larry Wiseman, “He has served as a valued senior team member and continues to grow as a contributor to the conservation community at large.” Previously Drue worked as a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service in California and Montana. He also served in the U.S. Peace Corps for three years as an aquaculture and agroforestry agent in Cameroon. Drue holds a Master of Forest Science from the Yale School of Forestry.

Offered each year to a select group of approximately 36 individuals identified by their nominating organizations as “high potentials,” the Institute is by no measure only a training program. Each Fellow is selected for potential to build effective coalitions, lead organizational change, deliver results, and for his work experience and goals.

Executive Director of the Institute, Dr. Sally Guynn, explains, “Training alone is insufficient to develop the extraordinary leadership called for in our uncertain times. The Institute is a unique, comprehensive learning experience designed to challenge assumptions, teach skills, facilitate networking, and strengthen confidence. It is a remarkable experience to prepare extraordinary leadership capacity for the future.”

The National Conservation Leadership Institute is supported by the nation’s most passionate conservation interests. Sponsors include: The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, The Weatherby Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies among others.

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### ***AFF • Working Solutions for Conservation***

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) conservation and education organization that strives to ensure the sustainability of America’s family forests for present and future generations. Our vision is to create a future where North American forests are sustained by the public which understands and values the social, economic, and environmental benefits they provide to our communities, our nation, and our world.

The National Conservation Leadership Institute is a non-profit, multi-organizational effort with the single purpose of providing a world class experience for developing extraordinary leaders in natural resource conservation. The National Conservation Leadership Institute does not discriminate according to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, military status or any other category protected by applicable federal, state and local laws.

