

# SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

## UNDERSTANDS NEED FOR PROPER FOREST MANAGEMENT

By Kristen McIntosh

One of Tiffany Byers' early memories is of trips with her dad, who has worked as a logger for a number of years in Groveton, Texas, to his job sites to pick out scrap hardwood for the family's use for winter firewood. Byers said she has long known that she wanted to work outdoors when she grew up, and she is well on her way to living her dream.

The Railway Tie Association (RTA) chose Byers as recipient of the 2003 John Mabry Forestry Scholarship.

Byers, a junior at Stephen F. Foster State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, will earn a bachelor of science degree in forest wildlife management in December 2004. Although she is hoping to attend graduate school and perhaps seek a doc-

torate, she eventually wants to work as a forester with the U.S. Forest Service.

Currently, Byers is participating in an internship studying the effects of herbicides and fertilizers on controlling yaupon on pine plantations. "This is only the third year of an eight-year study," Byers said, explaining the effects of yaupon on southern pine. "Yaupon is a native species in the South that is invasive and can take over in pine plantations. Fire was once used to control its growth, but now companies are looking for other ways to do this. Yaupon is thick and tends to suck



Tiffany Byers said she believes forests must be properly managed to ensure future viability.

the nutrients out of the soil. If yaupon is using a high percentage of the resources in a pine plantation, the pine trees are smaller, and not as much income can be earned from the land." Byers added that several plots in Warren, Silsbe, Groveton and Zavalla, Texas, are being used for this critical research. At the end of her internship,

Byers will make a presentation and write a paper on her work.

When asked for her philosophy on the importance of fostering healthy forests, she said, "I believe that you can't just seek to preserve the forests without proper management and expect to get out of them today what our ancestors got out of them in the past. Forests must be properly managed to their benefit and to everyone's benefit. For example, if we didn't properly manage for the Southern pine beetle, it could devastate an entire forest in the South in a short time. The public has trouble understanding why we have to take out timber to maintain healthy forests, but it is absolutely essential."

Byers expressed her appreciation to RTA for the scholarship and also to her family for their unconditional love and support.

RTA Education Committee Chairman Marshall Allen said applicants are rated in five categories: academics, involvement, leadership, industrial and need. "Tiffany ranked high in all categories," he said. "She is an active member of several forestry associations and societies and takes an active role in recruiting other students. Tiffany is dedicated to the forest industry and to her education, and she works summer jobs to foster her interests and educational goals. Based on her resume and application, the committee felt that Tiffany was the most deserving applicant this year." §

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