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**Reaching foresters and other practitioners through a national webinar series:
Successes, challenges, implications for the future**

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Abstract: Administrative demands and legislative edicts for cost containment and cost accountability are pressuring extension to move beyond the traditional means of technology transfer for continuing education. These pressures have resulted in a collaborative arrangement between NC Cooperative Extension, Southern Region Extension Forestry, and Texas Agrilife Extension to explore a new way to deliver continuing education programs to forestry and natural resources professionals. Through this collaboration the development and implementation of the Forestry and Natural Resources Webinar Series, a seminar series targeting the continuing education needs of forestry and natural resource professionals was developed. The series is broadcast via the internet using a synchronized learning management system. With this software, educators can create and hold continuing education activities that are collaborative and interactive, allowing full participation between the audience and the presenter.

Post evaluation of the 2010 series indicates that 2467 registrants participated in 17 webinars. Participants were from across the United States, Canada, and South America. Program evaluations indicated an average of 33% increase in knowledge level following participation in a webinar, approximately 96% of the participants have aspirations to follow up on the materials presented, and the average, perceived, economic value of the webinar per participant is \$2,276. The total, perceived, economic value for the webinar series in 2010 was \$5,614,892

Within the scope of this presentation, the authors will address what is a webinar and how to develop one, the challenges faced in developing and delivering the webinar, and how webinars may increase the effectiveness and efficiency of technology transfer and diffusion of information. Although webinars are relatively new, the authors have found them to be a powerful tool for meeting the demands of continuing education for natural resource professionals. Results of post-webinar evaluations and reactions will be discussed as well.

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