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## **PINELLAS COUNTY UTILITIES RECOGNIZED BY AUDUBON OF FLORIDA**

TALLAHASSEE-- Reid Hughes, Board member of Audubon of Florida has presented this year's Audubon Sustainable Forestry Award to Pinellas County Utilities Department for their management of the Cross Bar/Al Bar Ranches. For the first time in the award's history, the award was presented to a government agency instead of a single person. Dave Slonena accepted the award for Pineallas County Utilities at the Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup> in St. Augustine.

In presenting the award, Reid Hughes said "Audubon of Florida places particular emphasis on the preservation of Florida's landscape for the benefit of wildlife and people. For this reason, it recognizes one deserving sustainable forestry operation each year for its contributions to wildlife conservation."

"Pinellas County Utilities Department utilizes a land management philosophy that allows for multiple-uses: wood production, cattle grazing, wildlife protection and education, as well as being the location of well fields that supply water to Pinellas and its neighbors, Hughes said. "Audubon encourages land managers across the state to follow this philosophy and embrace the goals of multiple-use management," he concluded.

"The 12,500 acre Cross Bar/Al Bar Ranch clearly demonstrates that public lands can be managed for timber, wildlife enhancement, public education, and other uses while producing significant revenues and many environmental benefits," said Jeff Doran, Executive Vice President, Florida Forestry Association. "This is a model wise-use conservation story with a practical theme for all land management agencies across the state -- public lands can be very productive economically while maintaining a very high level of environmental protection," Doran said.

The Florida Forestry Association is the oldest state-wide, forestry trade organization to represent the interests of forest landowners, wood producers, foresters and the wood-using industry in Florida.

For more information visit [www.floridaforest.org](http://www.floridaforest.org).

**PHOTO CAPTION:** Dave Sloenena, Pinellas County Utilities, receives the Sustainable Forestry Award from Audubon of Florida board member Reid Hughes.