

Center for Paper Business and Industry Studies (CPBIS)

Research Seminar

William Boyd, Ph.D.

AAAS Science Policy Fellow

U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

**New South, New Nature:
Regional Industrialization and Environmental Change in the
Post-New Deal American South**

**Thursday, April 15
4:00 PM**

**Georgia Institute of Technology
D.M. Smith building, Room 303**
(across from the library)

<http://gtalumni.org/campusmap/bldngmodel.html?id=24>

Abstract: During the post-World War II period, the American South emerged as the dominant region, nationally and globally, for the production of pulp and paper based on intensive cultivation of timber. This talk explores this process of regional industrialization by focusing on the construction of new organizational forms and strategies necessary to deal with the various institutional and biophysical challenges specific to the region. Departing from traditional views of post-World War II industrialization and theories of regional comparative advantage, the story told here is organized around a series of problems that confronted efforts to construct a competitive industrial system in the region. Put most succinctly, these consisted of the making of a highly-productive “industrial forest” in the South; the social organization of logging and wood procurement; the management of race and class in the context of mill labor and the distinctive capital requirements in the industry; and the appropriation of environmental systems to assimilate the massive pollution loads associated with pulp and paper production. Because each of these problems embodied a distinctive aspect of regionalism, attempts to solve them required deep engagement with both the biophysical and the social landscape of the postbellum South. In the process, the history and geography of the region came to be intimately bound up with the construction and organization of a new industrial system that dramatically reshaped both the competitive landscape of the industry and the industrial and environmental landscape of the region.