

An access road (and firebreak) was to be constructed from the north end of the property, gradually descending through the abandoned field along the boundary of the upland hardwood forest (Area #3) down to the swamp, and up the gradual slope along the pine flatwoods (Area #6) and looping back along the soil boundary separating areas #1A and #1B in the abandoned field. Road construction, soil stabilization and maintenance for land sloping up to 8 percent followed the BMPs with wing ditches at least every 120 feet and cross ditches or culverts every 200 feet. Firebreaks in addition to the road were to be constructed along the property line and around the pine flatwood area, taking care that none would terminate too close to Moore's Branch.

Establishment of pine plantations was recommended for stands 1,4,6, and 8, which comprise almost three-fourths of the property. This requires discing the abandoned crop fields, particularly where the gullies are most prevalent. The pine flatwoods area can be chopped and bedded parallel to Moore's Branch. Stand 7 provides an adequate Streamside Management Zone to minimize erosion. Loblolly pine was selected for the cropland and slash pine for the flatwoods, based on existing soil types. These activities will be performed over a four-year period to create diverse age classes and take full advantage of tax benefits.

Hardwood management requires different techniques. In Stand 7, group selection harvesting in patches up to five acres creates openings for natural regeneration of desirable mast-producing species such as oak, ash, and bay, as well as valuable timber species such as cypress and sweetgum. No harvesting is allowed within 35 feet of the channel bank. Desirable mast-producing hardwoods, shrubs, and ground cover are left undisturbed around the lake to protect water quality and maintain wildlife habitat.

The upland hardwoods in Stands 3 and 5 are to be managed in a slightly different manner. All merchantable timber is to be harvested in the spring, except for three to five large oaks per acre. A hot summer fire reduces logging slash and minimizes stump sprouting. In the winter, loblolly pines are hand-planted at a density of 750 trees per acre. The end result will be a mixed pine-hardwood stand with value for timber production and for wildlife.

Implementation of the plan to produce timber while protecting the soil and water resources and improving game wildlife habitat for recreation is now in progress. Inspection and evaluation of the program for stewardship certification and award will occur at the end of the second year, and again in five years for reevaluation of stewardship accreditation.