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# The Florida Forest Steward

*A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals*

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## Forest Stewardship Program Update

Fiscal year 2001-2002 brought a renewed statewide focus on Florida's Forest Stewardship Program. The increase in Program promotion led to a significant increase in the number of new Stewardship plans prepared by county foresters, consultants, and the Stewardship biologists. Between July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2002, 214 new management plans were completed, a record number since the Program was initiated in 1990. This translates to 51,268 new acres enrolled in the program. In addition to new plans, twenty-eight properties were certified this year as Stewardship Forests, distinguishing the owners of those properties as individuals and families who are actively managing their land for long-term, multiple benefits. Two of these owners hosted Stewardship tours last winter and spring, where their Stewardship Forest signs and plaques were presented. As of August 2, 1,670 landowners and a total of 506,663 acres are enrolled in Florida's Forest Stewardship Program. Many thanks to all the foresters, biologists and landowners involved in making this an outstanding year!



2002 Farm Bill: Forestry and Natural Resource Provisions

President Bush signed into law the 2002 Farm Bill on May 13. Although the details of these programs are still being worked out, here is a preview of some of the conservation provisions featured in the new Bill. Included in the Forestry Title are the Forest Land Enhancement Program, Community and Private Land Fire Assistance Program and The Sustainable Forestry Outreach Initiative. The Conservation Title expands the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to include private, non-industrial forestlands and funds these programs through 2007: Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Security Program, Private Grazing Land Conservation Assistance, and Farmland Protection Program.

## **Forestry Title Programs**

Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP): The Forestry Incentives and Stewardship Incentives Programs (FIP and SIP) have been repealed and replaced by FLEP, which combines the elements of FIP and SIP to encourage the long-term sustainability of private non-industrial forestlands. Each state forestry agency, in consultation with the state Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, is required to develop a State Priority Plan that defines the Program's guidelines within the state.

The USDA Forest Service has set the general program parameters to help guide the states. To be eligible for FLEP, forestland owners must have a management plan that provides for the treatment of no more than 1,000 acres. This upper limit may be increased to no more than 5,000 acres if significant public benefits will result. Minimum acreage limits will be set by each state. Up to 75% cost-share assistance will be available for approved activities. FLEP will be funded at a total amount of \$100 million through September 2007 (exact dates to be determined by the agencies). Remaining FIP and SIP funds appropriated for fiscal year 2002 will be used until depleted.

Community and Private Land Fire Assistance Program: This program is aimed at promoting firefighting efficiency at all levels on Federal and non-Federal lands and at protecting communities from wildfires. The Forest Service will administer and implement the program through State Foresters or other State officials. Funding for Fire Assistance is authorized at \$35 million annually through 2007.

The Sustainable Forestry Outreach Initiative: Authorized at \$30 million annually through 2007, this initiative will educate landowners about the value and benefits of practicing sustainable forestry, the importance of professional forestry assistance, and the array of public and private resources available to assist them.

## **Conservation Title Programs**

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): This program will provide funding for activities that enhance agricultural production while optimizing environmental benefits. The new version of EQIP will expand the categories of lands eligible for cost-shares to include private, non-industrial forestland and it will be funded at \$1.3 billion annually through 2007.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Payments will be provided, on a contractual basis, to owners

of eligible lands for conserving and improving soil, water and wildlife resources. Eligible land will include marginal pastureland to be devoted to appropriate vegetation, including trees, for enhancing water quality and wildlife habitat. As in the previous version of this program, trees planted on land under CRP contract cannot be harvested or commercially sold unless expressly permitted in the contract. Likewise, no contract shall prohibit activities consistent with "customary forestry practices" such as pruning, thinning, or stand improvement. The new Farm Bill directs the USDA to allow prescribed burns and other measures "intended to enhance forage." According to a summary by the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, entering into a CRP contract will be contingent on participation in the Forest Stewardship Program

Conservation Security Program: This program will assist agricultural producers in promoting conservation and enhancing the quality of soil, air, water, energy, and plant and animal life. Payments will be made to landowners who have devised conservation security plans and entered into conservation security contracts with the government, and can be used to cover the costs of land management. Forest land that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation will be eligible for enrollment.

Private Grazing Land Conservation Assistance: Technical and educational assistance will be provided to enhance private grazing land resources. "Private grazing land" means private, State-owned, tribally owned, and other non-Federally owned rangeland, pastureland, grazed forestland, and hay land.

Farmland Protection Program: Funding will be used to purchase conservation easements for the purposes of protecting topsoil by limiting nonagricultural uses of the land. Eligible land includes forestland that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

More details on these and other programs will be included in a Stewardship publication to be written this year. For more information on the current provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill, see these Web sites:

[-www.usda.gov/farmbill/](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill/)

[-www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/)

[-pinchot.org/pic/farmbill/index.html](http://pinchot.org/pic/farmbill/index.html)



Southern Pine Beetle Update

By the Florida Division of Forestry Forest Health Section

As of late July, there were 515 Southern pine beetle (SPB) spots reported State-wide, affecting a total of 1,114 acres. Clay, Gadsden, Hamilton, Lake, Putnam, and Volusia counties report the most activity so far this year. However, only two of these counties are currently at outbreak status: Clay County, with 166 spots and 159 acres infected; and Lake County, with 93 spots and 303 acres infected.



Fortunately there is little to report this summer regarding SPB. Summer precipitation has been closer to normal throughout most of the State and beetle activity should remain low as the precipitation continues. Another factor that may be playing a role in this year's decline in SPB activity are increased predator populations. Several counties have reported increased occurrence of insects, such as the clerid beetle, that prey on SPB.

Despite some positive news, landowners and managers should frequently review their timber stands for bark beetle activity. This will allow for early detection of active infestations when they are still small and can be controlled with cut and leave methods of removal. The strategy is to halt infestations and escalating populations before serious problems develop. This may help to avoid large losses that have little or no salvage value, while at the same time retaining more living trees/stands for the future. Also, in areas of known or projected SPB problems, avoid intermediate or partial cuts (e.g., thinnings), or other damaging disturbances (e.g., burning), at least temporarily until the threat or actual problem dissipates. Such disturbances have been documented to help create, exacerbate and/or prolong beetle problems.

Where SPB populations are low and trees are not drought stressed, some preventive practices can be conducted to reduce the risk of SPB infestation in the future. Thinning overstocked and stagnant stands, and harvesting overmature, diseased and/or damaged areas of timber, particularly loblolly pine, can help to decrease the risk of SPB activity in your stands.

For the tables and maps associated with the SPB trapping survey and latest reports, see the on-line version at: [www.fl-dof.com/Conservation/forest\\_health/SPB2002/index.html](http://www.fl-dof.com/Conservation/forest_health/SPB2002/index.html)



Chromated Copper Arsenate to Be Phased Out By 2004

The application of chromated copper arsenate (CCA) to pressure-treat wood used in play structures, patios, decks, benches, picnic tables, landscaping, fencing and boardwalks is slowly being phased out and will be replaced by alternative wood preservatives by 2004. This phase-out is the result of a re-evaluation by government agencies of environmental and health concerns associated with arsenic containing wood preservatives. The Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Council concluded that people who come in contact with CCA pressure-treated wood are not likely to experience short- or long-term health effects. Despite this conclusion, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a voluntary decision by the wood-treatment industry to gradually phase out the use of CCA to pressure-treat wood by December 31, 2003. The phase-out does not apply to industrial uses such as utility poles.

Interestingly, the Florida Physicians Arsenic Workgroup just released their findings that treated wood has never been linked to skin diseases or cancer in children exposed during recreational use. The panel of six doctors, including the chief epidemiologist for the Florida Department of Health, concluded that “children can safely play on items made with the wood.”

Wood treated with CCA before December 31, 2003 may be sold from wholesale and retail inventories anytime thereafter. The Home Depot simultaneously announced a CCA phase-out but the exact timing of that will depend on when the industry is completely switched to the new alternative products. EPA is not recommending that consumers remove or replace CCA-treated structures, but studies suggest that applying certain penetrating coatings on a regular basis may reduce the migration of wood preservative chemicals from the wood.



### Wildlife Plant Feature: milk pea (*Galactia volubilis*)

This issue's wildlife plant is milk pea, a native legume that grows like a vine in a variety of forest and open habitats from Florida to Texas, north to Indiana and Kansas, and east to New York. This is a favorite of the bobwhite quail.

**Form:** twining perennial vine from a woody base.





**Leaves:** alternate, oval to lance-shaped leaves; .5 to 2 inches long, .3-1 inch wide; with round bases and a finely pointed tip.

**Flowers:** June-September; small, pea-type pink to purple flowers.

**Fruit:** July-December; small legume pod.

**Wildlife value:** seeds are important food for bobwhite quail, songbirds and small mammals; occasionally browsed by deer.

## Reference

Miller, J.H. and K.V. Miller. 1999. Forest Plants of the Southeast and their Wildlife Uses. Southern Weed Science Society. Champaign, Ill. 454 pp.

For more information on wildlife food plants see the reference above or the University of Florida's 4-H Companion Plant page at: [www.sfrc.ufl.edu/4h/Trees\\_Plants/trees\\_plants.html](http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/4h/Trees_Plants/trees_plants.html)



## Thanks to Stewards for Hosting Tours

Another great tour season has come and gone. Many thanks to the landowners that hosted tours this year, all of you who helped organize the tours, and to all who attended one or more tours. This was a fantastic opportunity for fellowship with landowners and natural resource professionals and to share experiences. Our gracious hosts were



*Harvey Sweeney, Gadsden County  
Lloyd and Dara Dobson, Walton County  
Dr. David and Virginia Rozier, Madison County*

We will have another round of tours starting in the fall and will try to cover different areas, particularly south of the Gainesville area. If you are a certified Forest Steward, or have managed your land according to the stewardship ethic and would like to host a tour, contact Chris Demers at 352-846-2375 or [cdemers@mail.ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:cdemers@mail.ifas.ufl.edu)



## Timber Price Update

This information is useful for observing trends over time, but does not necessarily reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale would be wise to let a consulting forester help them obtain the best current prices.



Stumpage price ranges reported across Florida in the 2nd quarter 2002 Timber Mart-South (TMS) report were: \$15-\$24/cord for pine pulpwood, \$49-\$71/cord for pine C-N-S, \$74-\$103/cord for pine sawtimber, and \$98-\$111/cord for pine plylogs. On average, prices were down for all products except for plylogs, which were up slightly compared to 1st quarter 2002 prices. Hardwood pulpwood prices ranged from \$8-\$18/cord, which was about the same as those from the previous quarter. A more complete summary of 2nd quarter 2002 stumpage prices is available at your County Extension office.

### **Trend Report**

We have updated and improved our timber price trend graph to reflect average prices for the entire state. It now charts average quarterly Timber Mart-South stumpage prices for three major pine log classes for all of north Florida since the beginning of 1996. Numbers on the horizontal axis indicate the year (first digit) and quarter (second digit), so 61 indicates the first quarter of 1996.

Click on the link to see the [graph](#) - use the "Back" function to return here.

On average, south-wide stumpage prices decreased for all major products except pine sawtimber. Contrary to earlier trends, some states have higher average pulpwood prices for hardwood than pine. In real economic terms, the south-wide average pine pulpwood stumpage price is the lowest since 1976, down 7% from last quarter. The average pine sawtimber stumpage price remains relatively stable, at 6% over that of the 1st quarter. Building construction remains strong across the nation, with housing starts at a rate 8% higher than that of last year. In the south, housing starts are 15% higher than a year ago.

### **Canadian Softwood Trade Update: WTO Rules that Duties on Canadian Lumber Unjustified**

According to a recent report by the Florida Forestry Association, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has ruled against arguments used to justify permanent antidumping and countervailing duties on Canadian Softwood. The long-standing claim that Canadian provinces are subsidizing their timber industry due to cheap fees for logging on public lands was rejected by the WTO. Officials said the U.S. cannot apply its own fee schedule to Canada in order to determine a need for duties on Canadian lumber. A final ruling is not expected until late fall on this case and Washington is certain to appeal before the year's end. We'll keep you posted on the latest developments.



### **Stewardship Mailing List Emergency - We Need Your Help**

Post offices in some parts of the state are no longer delivering to route-box addresses (example: RR 1 Box 234). They will only deliver to 911 addresses, which is a house number followed by a road, street, drive, lane, circle, place, etc. (example: 123 Hound Dog Rd). PO Box addresses are good too. If you have a route-box address and know your 911 address, please take a moment and send your 911 address to the [editor](#) of The Florida Forest Steward. If you don't know your 911 address, ask your local post office. If your 911 address is not yet available, simply send it to us when it is. Thanks very much in advance for your help!

