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# The Florida Forest Steward



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Volume 13, No. 2

Fall 2006

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## Call for Master Tree Farmers and/or Master Wildlifers to Host and Lead Stewardship Property Tours in 2006-2007 Season

July 1 marked the beginning of another year of Forest Stewardship Program activities and this year we plan on continuing the series of Stewardship Property Tours. Property tours are the most requested activity offered through the Program and benefit landowners and natural resource professionals by providing an opportunity to witness and discuss various management objectives and practices in the field and meet with other landowners and professionals. In the last five years we've held a total of 16 tours with over 600 landowners and professionals in attendance.

Many of you reading this newsletter have completed one or more of the Master Tree Farmer or Master Wildlifer shortcourses offered through the Southern Forest Resources Extension Team, UF-IFAS, Florida Division of Forestry, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Florida Forestry Association. The certificate you received after completing one or more of these



*Calling Master Tree Farmers / Wildlifers to lead Stewardship Tours.*



programs states that you have:

***“completed 21 hours of forestry and/or wildlife management training and hereby given the title Master Tree Farmer (or Master Tree Farmer 2 or Master Wildlifer) for volunteering to work to advance forestry and/or wildlife management in Florida.”***

This year we'd like to give Florida's Master Tree Farmers and Wildlifers an opportunity to volunteer by hosting and leading a landowner tour at their property. If you've been to some of our tours, you know the sky's the limit when it comes to topics but most fall under these categories:

- Timber management objectives and practices
- Wildlife management objectives and practices
- Agroforestry enterprises (such as cattle and pines)
- Soil and water conservation (such as planting along the contour)
- Recreation/aesthetics
- Best Management Practices
- Role of prescribed fire and/or other vegetation management techniques in meeting objectives
- Regulations affecting management or opportunities
- Historical resources and conservation
- Other alternative enterprises that have been featured include pine straw, hunting leases, shiitake mushrooms, ecotourism, eco-cemetery, etc...

An added feature of tours this year will include time at the beginning of each tour for landowners to briefly introduce themselves and share some objectives,

challenges or experiences. As in past tours, agency and/or private natural resource professionals will facilitate the discussions by providing additional information as needed. We will continue to solicit funding from sponsoring organizations to cover the meals provided at the end of each tour.

If you have completed the Master Tree Farmer and/or Master Wildlifer courses and wish to volunteer by hosting and leading a landowner tour at your property during the 2006-2007 tour season, please contact Chris Demers at 352-846-2375 or [cdemers@ufl.edu](mailto:cdemers@ufl.edu).

### **Highlights of Stewardship Workshop Series: Beyond Food Plots – Enhancing Wildlife Habitat on Your Forest Property**



Wildlife is a hot topic for many landowners, especially when it comes to game species and food plots. While food

plots can supplement wildlife habitat, they are no substitute for healthy, diverse forested landscapes in providing habitat for varied and abundant wildlife populations. Managing native vegetation in forests and permanent openings is usually less costly than establishing food plots and can be very effective. In addition to some basic information about food plot establishment, this program focused on management practices that can be used to improve or provide the essential components of productive wildlife habitat on forest properties.

The program was held in Jackson, Santa Rosa and Hamilton Counties. We used the same agenda for each program but, as is the case with all our workshops in a series,

each workshop was also unique and featured different presenters and field examples. Here are some highlights and take-home messages from the series:

### **Wildlife habitat components: know what you have and set realistic goals**

Arlo Kane and Chris Wynn set the stage with this introductory presentation. First things first: before you can decide what to do, you need to know where you are going with your management. Some important considerations:

- What species am I interested in?
- Do I have the right habitat type(s)?
- Can I create the right habitat or enhance what I have?
- Do I have the right equipment?
- Can I afford it?

Food: What plants does your target species eat? What are their nutritional needs and preferred foods?

Cover: Cover is needed for shelter, protection from predators, and nesting for birds.

Water: Some animals need it more than others but all require it.

Space: Depends on home range, body size, territoriality and mobility of target animals.

The arrangement of these components on your property and possibly the rest of the landscape around your property will be important.

### **Non-game species and species of special concern**

Presenting on this topic were Mike Wilson, Ted Hoehn, Kevin Enge, Rick McCann and Leslie Adams. Habitat loss is a major factor leading to the status of imperiled species. One of Mike's slides showed the historical and current extent

of the longleaf pine ecosystem in the southeast and, after seeing that, it's easy to understand why species dependent on this habitat, like gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpecker, fox squirrels, indigo snakes and others, are in decline. About 3% of the original area covered by the longleaf ecosystem remains today. An important component of the longleaf ecosystem is fire. Today fire is either completely absent or more challenging to use as a management tool due to increased densities of people, roads and structures near forestlands and liability associated with smoke. Habitat can be improved for these species with growing season burns every 2-5 years to promote important food plants; thinning pine stands to 50 or 60 square feet of basal area/acre or less; and restoring native groundcover plants like wiregrass, broadleaved grasses, gopher apple, asters, legumes, vervain, goosefoot and spurge.

Wetlands, interspersed across Florida's landscape, are another critical habitat type. Maintaining or restoring the function of wetlands is critically important for many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

Freshwater streams are home to many fish and other unique creatures like mussels, many of which now have imperiled populations due to water quality issues and declining riparian habitat. Ted Hoehn with the Florida FWC pointed out that while Best Management Practices for forestry are effective at reducing erosion and siltation into streams, they may not be adequate for maintaining habitats for certain animals dependent on riparian habitats. Buffer widths recommended by FWC for many birds, reptiles and amphibians are at least 100 feet or more.

A fact sheet showing buffer widths recommended for different benefits is available at this link:

<http://www.fws.gov/panamacity/programs/pdf/bufferfact.PDF>.

### **Habitat management practices: putting equipment, fire and chemicals to use**

Those of you that have worked with them know that Wayne Harris and Scotland Talley have extensive knowledge and experience with the practical aspects of wildlife management. Their “Habitat Management 101” presentation provided a good overview of the practices and equipment that can be used to manage for wildlife. It’s interesting to note that the purpose of most of these practices is to bring the site back to an earlier successional stage and most of them are also used in timber production.

Mechanical treatments: Anyone involved with timber production is familiar with chopping, disking, thinning, scalping and raking. All these treatments can benefit wildlife by knocking down vegetation, moving vegetation from the site, scarifying the soil to promote growth of herbaceous food plants or preparing the site for planting food plants or trees.

Chemical treatments: Herbicides are a very useful tool for managing vegetation and, if successfully applied, can provide valuable wildlife habitat and much longer lasting control of unwanted vegetation than mechanical methods. This is especially important when preparing a site for planting pines and/or controlling unwanted woody vegetation or invasive plants to restore native groundcover.

Fire: Florida conservationists can never say enough about the importance of fire in managing upland habitats, or even wetland habitats in some cases. If you attend many workshops and tours you are probably tired of hearing about fire and want us to just make it easier to burn so you can start putting some fire on the ground, right? We all know fire is one of the best and cost-effective tools available to us for managing habitats but we live in a fast-growing state with more people, roads and structures added to the landscape each day. Prescribed fire is not as accepted and low-risk as it once was and following a few simple rules is essential. Have a burn plan and always contact your Division of Forestry (DOF) District Office to get a burn authorization before you burn. A summary of other pertinent rules is at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR055>. Find your District Office here: [http://www.fl-dof.com/field\\_operations/index.html](http://www.fl-dof.com/field_operations/index.html).

The key to successful implementation is knowing how, when and where to use these various applications as a single treatment or in combination to accomplish your objectives.

### **Wildlife management technical and cost-share assistance**

Jeremy Martin, Kim Mortimer and Mike Blondin handled this topic well. There are many Federal and state cost-share programs available to help landowners with managing natural resources on their property. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives, Landowner Incentives, Conservation Reserve, Environmental Quality Incentives, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Keeping Common Species Common, Wetland Reserve, and Grassland Reserve Programs all provide financial assistance to landowners

interested in managing natural resources on their properties. Information and contact information about most of these is in the Stewardship publication, “Improving, Restoring, and Managing Natural Resources on Rural Properties: Sources of Financial Assistance”, on the Web at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR156>. You can also apply for most of them at your local USDA Service Center.

### **Field Trips**

Lily Pad Ranch and Hunt Club, Jackson County: Steve Smith, owner of the property, graciously allowed us to take a tour of Lily Pad Ranch, also known as Daniel Springs. Features of the tour included one of the 6 or 7 springs that originate on the property, crimson and ladino clover plantings, summer and winter food plots (oats, clovers, wheat, peas), cogongrass control demonstration with Cogon-X, demonstration of a Posi-trac with mulcher head, hack and squirt herbicide demonstration on chinaberry, modified hub-and-spoke food plot arrangement, timber sale considerations, and DOF prescribed fire services.

West Florida Research and Education Center at Jay, Santa Rosa County: Rick Williams led us around the property to see areas where they are controlling exotic plants, like Chinese tallow and cogongrass, with herbicide; a hack and squirt demonstration on Chinese tallow, food plots where data on nutritional outputs have been documented; and hardwood tree plantings for intermediate income from biomass fuel harvests.

Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan property, Hamilton County: The moral



of the story here: you can do a lot for wildlife on a highly disturbed site, even a phosphate mine. Features of this tour were fish management in the lakes created by the mining operations, prescribed fire for maintaining quail habitat on Bienville Plantation, thinning, wetland mitigation, quality deer management, and a drag-line operation in progress where a larger-than-one-can-imagine-without-seeing-it shovel can move over 50,000 tons of earth in a single swoop.

There are many folks to thank for conducting these programs: Leslie Adams, Tim Baxley, Mike Blondin, Charles Brasher, Brian Cobble, Dan Darby, Chris Demers, Daniel Dorosheff, Kevin Enge, John Hadden, Wayne Harris, Ted Hoehn, Arlo Kane, Tim King, Ed Jowers, Andrew Lee, Jeremy Martin, Rick McCann, Chuck McKelvy, Kim Mortimer, Barbara Pledger, Steve Rockwood, John Sabo, Steve Smith, Greg Staten, Scotland Talley, Allen Tyree, Robin Vickers, Sally Waxgiser, John Wester, Rick Williams, Beau Willsey, Mike Wilson, Robert Wolfe and Chris Wynn. Thanks everyone for all your time and effort!

## **Division of Forestry Announces a New Bridge Mat Loan Program**

The Florida Division of Forestry Hydrology Section is proud to announce a new outreach program aimed at loggers and forest landowners conducting logging activities. The program provides, at no cost to the borrower, logging bridge mats for use as temporary stream crossings. Each bridge mat is 24 feet long and 4 feet wide. Three mats are used for skidding logs over streams. Three sets of bridge mats were purchased using Forest Stewardship funds and will be located at Division of Forestry offices in Ocala, Lake City, and Bonifay. Bridge mats are loaned out on a first come first served basis. It will be the responsibility of the borrower to provide sufficient equipment for loading and transporting the bridge mats to and from the Division of Forestry office. Specific details about the program can be obtained by contacting your local Silviculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Forester.

Other outreach programs available from your Silviculture BMP Forester include BMP Workshops, BMP Notice of Intent submissions, general BMP advice, as well as onsite Courtesy Audits. The Courtesy Audit program is designed to provide landowners and resource professionals with feedback on how their silviculture operation (logging, site preparation, etc.) is complying with Division of Forestry's Silviculture Best Management Practices. If a BMP concern is identified, recommendations will be made on how to remedy the situation and mitigate any possible negative impacts to water quality. Silviculture BMPs are guidelines that apply to all ongoing silviculture

activities. When implemented, Silviculture BMPs will significantly reduce impacts to water quality and wetlands from nearby silviculture activities. More information on the Silviculture BMP program can be obtained by contacting your local BMP Forester.

### **Northwest FL, Greg Staten**

Bonifay: 850-547-7008

### **Northeast FL, Neal Mitchell**

Lake City: 386-758-5706

### **Central & South FL, Robin Holland**

Ocala: 352-732-1273

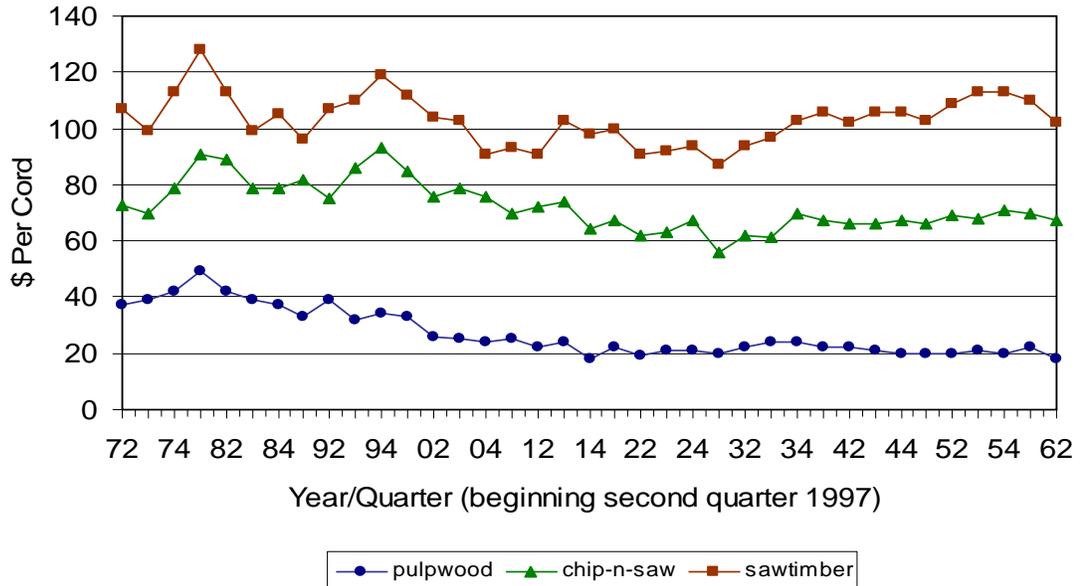
## **Timber Price Update**

The timber pricing information below is useful for observing trends over time, but does not necessarily reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale are advised to solicit the services of a consulting forester to obtain current local market conditions. Note that price ranges per ton for each product are included in parentheses after the price per cord.

Stumpage price ranges reported across Florida in the **2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2006** Timber Mart-South (TMS) report were:

- Pine pulpwood: \$11 - \$23/cord (\$4 - \$9/ton), ↓ from 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2006
- Pine C-N-S: \$63 - \$78/cord (\$21 - \$29/ton), ↓
- Pine sawtimber: \$98 - \$112/cord (\$33 - \$42/ton), ↓
- Pine plylogs: \$99 - \$129/cord (\$37 - \$48/ton), ↓
- Pine power poles: \$113 - \$169/cord (\$42 - \$63/ton) ↓
- Hardwood pulpwood: \$9 - \$23/cord (\$3 - \$8/ton), ↓

### Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida 2nd Qtr 1997 through 2nd Qtr 2006



#### Trend Report

Average stumpage prices for all products were down from last quarter in Florida and across the Southeast due to widespread drought conditions, high mill inventories and strict quotas. This follows a 4-year trend of lower second quarter average stumpage prices compared to those of the first quarter.

#### Many Thanks to these Landowners for Hosting Stewardship Tours in 2005-2006:

- Jerry Davis and Ferrell Robinson,  
Lost Pond Plantation, Madison County.*
- Bruce Huffmaster and his Staff,  
Alford Arm Greenway, Leon County*
- Ron and Jennifer Fisher,  
Windy Hill Ranch, Walton County*
- Charles Dingmon and the family,  
Putnam County*
- George Owens,  
Washington County*

#### Thanks 2005-2006 Forest Stewardship Program Sponsors for a Great Year:

- American Forest Management, Inc.*
- BASF, Inc.*
- Blanton's Longleaf Container Nursery*
- DRMP, Inc.*
- DuPont Forestry Products, Inc.*
- Environmental Services, Inc.*
- Farm Credit of North Florida*
- Farm Credit of Northwest Florida*
- Florida Farm Bureau Federation*
- Florida Forestry Association*
- Georgia Pacific Forest MAP*
- International Forest Company*
- Marden Industries, Inc.*
- Meek's Farm / Nursery Inc.*
- Red River Specialties, Inc.*
- Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.*

Forestry / natural resource businesses: If you are interested in sponsoring the 2006-2007 Forest Stewardship Program activities, call Chris at 352-846-2375.