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Forest Owners Applaud Senate Leaders For Supporting Carbon Neutrality of Biomass in Energy Bill

The National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO), of which NWDA is a member, recently applauded Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Angus King (I-ME) for their leadership on unanimous passage of an amendment to the Senate energy bill affirming the carbon benefits of forest biomass as an important part of the U.S. energy solution.

“Forest owners deeply appreciate the leadership of Senators Collins, Klobuchar and King to emphasize the carbon benefits of biomass energy as part of our nation’s renewable energy solution,” said Dave Tenny, NAFO President and CEO. “This amendment reflects the bipartisan support of 46 senators who signed a June 2015 letter to the administration affirming the carbon neutrality of forest biomass. It will help drive a consistent federal policy across all departments and agencies based on well-established science and agency expertise.”

The Senate adopted by voice vote the forest biomass carbon neutrality amendment to the energy bill which was accepted by Energy Committee Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA). The amendment directs the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agriculture and Department of Energy to jointly establish clear and simple policies for the utilization of forest biomass, including:

- Reflecting the carbon neutrality of forest bioenergy;
- Recognizing biomass as a renewable energy source;
- Encouraging private investment throughout the biomass supply chain, including working forests, harvesting operations, forest improvement operations, bioenergy, wood products and paper manufacturing;
- Encouraging forest management to improve forest health; and
- Recognizing state initiatives to use biomass.

The amendment was cosponsored by a bipartisan group of senators including Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Al Franken (D-MN), Steve Daines (R-MT), Jim Risch (R-ID) and Mike Crapo (R-ID).

“A clear and simple policy on biomass carbon benefits will encourage private investment, promote forest health and empower states to utilize biomass to reach their renewable energy goals,” Tenny said. “By passing this amendment, the Senate has demonstrated it supports this approach. It also shows strong alignment between Congress and forest owners.”

Climate science consistently and clearly documents the carbon benefits of forest biomass energy. U.S. government data shows that the volume of trees growing in the U.S. has increased by 50 percent since 1953. Net growth in U.S. forests absorbs 13 percent of annual CO2 emissions.

The Senate is expected to vote on final passage of the energy bill shortly. The Senate and House will then seek to reconcile their respective bills.

Gretchen Schaefer, NAFO

Wildfire Funding Fix Proves Elusive But Carbon Capture Looks Promising

December ended on a depressing note in Washington, D.C., as Congress left town, again without passing a long-term fix to the wildfire funding issue that has plagued the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior for years. But while many were lamenting this inaction by Congress, other interesting progress was made on the international front that could have a real impact for America’s family-owned woodlands.

About three years ago, President Obama announced the Climate Action Plan, followed two years later with the Clean Power Plan—committed to reducing carbon emissions by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. In December, the president and other major U.S. leaders met on the world stage in Paris, to highlight this U.S. commitment and urge other countries to do the same.

Even if you disagree with the science of climate change or with President Obama’s approach to regulating emissions, there are very few who dispute that forests, including the forests that are cared for by the nation’s 22 million family woodland owners, provide the largest carbon capture and storage on the planet. The Paris agreement visibly highlighted this importance of forests and sustainable forest management.

While the signs show progress on an international front, it’s still unclear whether the U.S. will get our policy right on climate. But if we do, family woodland owners could see more opportunities and rewards for providing such crucial carbon benefits.

To help promote forests as a climate mitigation tool, please share the State Toolkit with leaders in your state. Download the Toolkit at [https://www.woodland.org/state-policy-recommendations-forest-carbon](https://www.woodland.org/state-policy-recommendations-forest-carbon).

Rita Hite, American Forest Foundation
What better way to introduce this annual Southern Forestry issue of National Woodlands than a review of a remarkable history book: “Forestry in the South,” just published by the Louisiana State University Press in cooperation with the Forest History Society (see p. 30). Well written by three authors who spent their careers building the story, the book is not an academic documentation of what and when of this era. Rather it is a story of the why and how and who.

Pines: In 1607 when Captain John Smith and the English colonists settled on the edge of the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia they found a seemingly endless large growth pine forest stretching out to the southeast. These forests covered 354 million acres, stretching south and west for more than a thousand miles. Included were the hardwood forests of the southern Appalachian Mountains, which were the headwaters of the rivers lined with thick swamps passing through the flat piedmont and coastal plains dominated by park-like pine forests. The colonists were mostly farmers and naturally attracted to the open pinelands for construction material, in turn clearing the way to cultivate crops in the newly exposed soil. It took more than two centuries for sawmills to cut out nature’s largess, leaving much of southern pinery as cut-over land by the Great Depression.

Pitch: The naval stores industry, which needed pine pitch to caulk the maritime sailing fleet, immediately appreciated the pine forest. The collection of pine tar gave North Carolina residents the nickname of “tar heels,” still in use today. The turpentine industry was an essential source of solvents in both World Wars, gradually yielding to cheaper solvents from oil. Today southern landowners proudly show “turpentine scars” still visible on older trees. Each had a bucket to catch the resin, much like the maple sap buckets once common in the northern hardwood forests.

Pigs: Many of the early lumbermen understood the importance of replanting pine trees but they were stymied by the free ranging hogs and pigs that also came south with the settlers. The pigs loved to feed on pine seedlings, especially the longleaf pine. Foresters tried fencing (expensive) and shooting. The latter proved a non-starter as the farmers placed high value on swine and retaliated by burning the pine plantations.

Paper: In the 1850s the paper industry was concentrated in New England, but the development of a new kraft process using high resin southern pines made the southern forests attractive.

The fact that shortleaf pine, a good pulp source, naturally replaced many longleaf sites (and were apparently not as tasty to pigs) brought the pulp and paper industry to the South with mills, jobs, forestry and markets. The industry promoted reforestation almost exclusively and family landowners with enough land found a new market to replace cotton and tobacco. The profitability of the forest industry in the South was evident in the success of the Third and Fourth Forests, with future rotations assured by the practice of sustainable forestry. The future was bright until taxes and market valuation of assets ushered in the wholesale divestiture of corporate timberlands in the 21st century.

Pellets: A new market for low value wood and short rotation species had emerged for wood ground and pressed into pellets for woody biomass to fuel electric power generation in Europe and throughout the U.S. While the new market is appealing to private landowners, its arrival is controversial. See Point & CounterPoint beginning on page 18.

Parcelization: The greatest era in Southern Forestry may lie ahead as large tracts of former industrial timberland are divided and sold in smaller tracts. The first larger divestitures were purchased by Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMOs). By definition they are an investment product, with a short-term life of 10 to 12 years. Some of the more productive timber tracts do become Real Estate Trusts (REITs) with longevity as forests guaranteed by the sale of conservation easements to agencies and land trusts. Over time state forestry agencies anticipate that after a few rotations of ownership to other TIMOs, much of the former industrial woodland holdings will be sold in smaller tracts to private landowners.

Many of these new landowners are first time buyers with a yearning to reconnect with the land for recreation, a second home, hunting and the “joy of woodlands." Through extension forestry training and experience, they can learn the significance of good markets for timber, non-predatory tax rates, and a family heritage, but they will need mentors like us. Working as community, with county and state landowner associations and assisted by national advocates like NWOA, forestry in the South can continue the prosperity it has provided for three centuries.

—KAA
argow@nwoa.net
Estate Planning for Forest Landowners: How to Transfer Your Assets to Your Heirs

by R. “Fitz” Fitzhenry*

You have title to land for one of several reasons—you purchased it, inherited it, or married someone who owned land. You have cared for your land and improved its productivity, or maybe you own several acres that simply provide a refuge for relaxation. Regardless of how much acreage you own or your purpose for owning it, you want to protect what is yours and pass it on to future generations.

Although you may have devoted time and resources to managing your land, you may have given little attention to the best way to transfer this land to your heirs. Transferring your land and other assets to others requires some work on your part to ensure that everything goes where you want. But careful planning can create an orderly process that will distribute your assets in the shortest amount of time and ensure that more of your assets go to those you choose rather than someone else.

Estate Planning

The estate planning process begins with thinking about what you have and where you want it to go. Talk with people to whom you want to transfer your assets to get an idea of their thoughts. “Developing an estate plan is important for establishing who gets your stuff when you die. Without a plan, probate procedures will determine where your stuff goes,” said former University of Vermont Extension Forest Resource Specialist Thom McEvoy.

Your estate covers all of your assets. In addition to land, other assets include insurance policies, annuities, stock portfolios, bank accounts, bonds, CDs, and collectibles to name just a few. The importance of establishing an estate plan increases as the value and complexity of your assets increases.

After thinking about how you want to distribute your posses-
go through probate and are available for public scrutiny. As part of the probate proceedings, the law requires that a notice of your death be published in newspapers. This means that anyone can read the notice and request to see the contents of the will. They can then make a claim by contesting the will, which can tie up the distribution of assets for years. In addition, a will does not have any method to alleviate the federal estate tax burden.

While the cost of setting up a will is reasonable, the costs of executing a will can be considerable. The process of probating a will can include court fees, attorney fees, and executor fees. The process can also take anywhere from nine months to two years to complete without litigation. During the probate period, no assets belong to your heirs. Your heirs may, however, have to file (and pay) income taxes for the estate in addition to estate taxes due during the probate period. Probate costs can be between five percent and seven percent of the value of an estate.

Trusts

A trust is a legal document that creates a mechanism for you to transfer your assets to one or more beneficiaries. You act as guardian, or trustee, of the trust. A trust does not expire when you die; a successor trustee is appointed who has the legal authority to sign over the contents of the trust to the designated beneficiary.

The common types of trusts are the revocable or living trust, and the marital or A-B trust. Trusts avoid time delays by transferring assets out of your name into the name of the trust. A trust is beneficial if a sizable portion of your estate consists of real estate. Trusts can reduce estate and gift taxes and efficiently distribute assets held within the trust without the cost, delay, and publicity of probate. Some trusts may also offer greater asset protection from creditors and lawsuits.

Trusts require more work to set up properly than wills and cost several thousand dollars to prepare. A trust is also a taxable entity, and income derived from assets in the trust are taxed at the highest rate. A trust is not recommended if you are in the process of applying for Medicaid or if there is a strong possibility due to age or financial conditions that you may need to apply for Medicaid in the next few years.

Maintaining Your Estate Plan

After you have developed an estate plan and have a will or trust drawn up, review it every year to make sure it is kept up to date. The will or trust should only require minor revisions unless you have major life changes or there is a shift in the tax code.

Additional Information

Gifting and additional life insurance are two other strategies you can use to transfer your estate’s assets or provide money to cover estate taxes. You can gift land to your heirs. Deeding your land in pieces to someone else each year is a straightforward, but relatively costly, way to do this. You will need a qualified attorney to annually walk you through this process. You can give up to $14,000 in tax-free gifts every year; it may take several years to gift all your land depending on its fair market value and the number of recipients. Using a trust to gift land is more complicated. Gifting is not a recommended strategy if it would put your financial security at risk.

Purchasing additional insurance provides extra cash for your heirs to pay estate taxes and other costs. If you use a trust, the trust owns the policy and is the beneficiary. If you are not using a trust, the additional insurance is not subject to probate and will go directly to beneficiaries listed on the insurance policy.

More in depth information can be found in Estate Planning Opportunities and Strategies for Private Forest Landowners. This publication is available online at the National Timber Tax Web site at http://www.timbertax.org/estate/estate.asp.

The information presented here deals with the basics of estate planning to provide wealth protection and efficiently distribute your wealth to your immediate heirs. There are other methods available that establish a lasting protection for your land for future generations, including establishing an S-corporation, limited liability company (LLC), and family forest partnership. These methods are beyond the scope of the material presented here, but are well worth researching.

USDA Publication is Here to Help

by Zoe Hoyle

Family forest owners may use consulting foresters or state extension foresters for advice on the technical details of land management, but many owners shy away from thinking about how best to pass their forest on to the next generation. Poor estate planning—or no planning at all—can result in a tax bill that requires selling timber or forestland, which in turn can lead to subdivision and development.

Estate Planning for Forest Landowners is a free publication developed by the U.S. Forest Service that provides a comprehensive guide to estate planning specifically designed for forest landowners.

“Over the past decade, demographic, social, and market trends have converged to increase the effects of the federal estate tax on rural landowners,” says John Greene, emeritus scientist with the agency’s Southern Research Station Forest Economics and Policy Unit based in Research Triangle Park, N.C. “Although the minimum estate value for paying tax may seem high, family forest owners, farmers, and ranchers remain many times more likely than the U.S. population in general to incur the estate tax.”

Greene and coauthors William Siegel and Harry Haney designed Estate Planning for Forest Landowners to provide specific guidelines and assistance on applying estate planning to forest properties. The guide is designed for use by both private landowners and advisers—legal, financial, insurance, and forestry professionals—who help them with estate planning. The guide presents a working knowledge of the federal estate and gift tax law as it relates to forest properties. To download a copy, visit: http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr_so097.pdf.
Recent surveys indicate the fate of much of the nation’s privately owned forests might hinge on something as basic as communication between millions of family forest owners and their adult heirs.

The stakes are huge, as roughly one sixth of America’s privately owned acres of forests are expected to change hands in the next five years.

“It concerns me that fewer and fewer families are able to keep their forest lands,” said USDA Forest Service Chief Gail Kimbell. Kimbell oversees national forests and conservation stewardship programs for private forest owners.

“Private forests provide significant public benefits and family forest owners are the key to maintaining these benefits for future generations. Clean water and clean air are just two of the ways we all benefit from forests. The almost 400 million acres of private forestland acres across the country should be of interest to all Americans, today and well into this century.”

“For environmental reasons, for social reasons, and for heritage and economic values, keeping family lands intact benefits us all,” added Kimbell.

About half of America’s roughly 800 million acres of forests are privately owned with the rest comprised of federal, state and tribal lands. Most of the privately owned forests lie within the eastern United States, while the publicly owned forests are more common in the West.

The nation’s 393 million acres of privately owned forests total an area about one fifth of the Lower 48 states and are divided not so equally among an estimated 10.5 million private owners. These land holdings are varied and diverse, with some people owning fewer than ten acres and others owning up to 5,000 or more. Many of these forests have ownership legacies dating back generations.

Privately owned forests provide a wide array of public benefits, including:

- Helping to clean drinking water by filtering impurities.
- Reducing air pollution by removing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.
- Protecting against flooding by absorbing excess moisture.
- Providing critical habitats for rare and endangered species.
- Serving as a sources of domestic timber and other forest products.
- And providing places of recreation and natural beauty.

About nine in ten forest landowners today are “non-joiners,” people who have no affiliation to any forest landowner groups. They are incommunicado and prefer it that way. What makes non-joiners significant, other than their sheer numbers, is that they are the most likely of all forest landowners to sell, develop or subdivide their lands. So the forests most at risk in terms of continuity are those owned by non-joiners. About 85 percent of non-joiner forest owners have children, most of whom are adults.

Current forest landowners as a group are aging. People age 70 or older own about a fifth of all privately owned forestlands. More than 60 percent of current forestland owners are age 55 or older and about half of them have already retired. Inevitably they will soon divest their forestland holdings to their heirs. As a result, baby boomers will determine the next course for the landscape.

The Forest Service and partner organizations periodically conduct studies to gauge current and predict future trends in forest ownership and attitudes. Forest Service Researcher Brett Butler, Ph.D., coordinates the National Woodland Owners Survey conducted each year.

“All too often we hear about family members who just aren’t talking to each other,” he said. Some of the latest research indicates the current owners are managing their forests, but they are not passing on their forest management skills or values to their heirs. As this generation passes on their lands to its heirs, we know the next generation will live farther away, have fewer emotional ties to the land and will...
be less prepared to manage them, said Butler.

What makes the impending transition of forestland such a nail-biting scenario is a lack of communication and stark differences in values between the two generations as recently measured.

“Their values, expectations and demographics will be very different from the current generation,” Butler notes. “This will translate into large-scale differences in the forest landscape. One thing we’re very worried about: at the point of inter-generational transfer is when most land use changes will occur.”

The outcome is often subdivision of large or contiguous forested tracts, which breaks up the landscape. This is known as parcelization. While trees remain, the social, environmental, and economic value as forestland declines.

The current generation of owners tends to value their forestland for its aesthetics: beauty, biodiversity, nature and a feeling of ownership. They often manage their lands independently. They rarely ask for outside help. Many of them have harvested timber in the last five to ten years to generate income or improve the overall health and biodiversity of their forests. Their heirs, on the other hand, tend to view the family-owned forests more as land investments.

“Without the same ties to the lands they will be more likely to sell or develop them,” said Butler.

One fellow researcher of Butler’s is Catherine Mater of the Pinchot Institute, a national conservation group. Mater led independent surveys funded by the Wood Education Research Center in recent years of the private forest owner offspring. One of the significant findings in her 2005 study, “The What Offspring of NIPFs Think: A National Perspective,” was that gender biases offspring values for owning the land and it serves to influence their behavior.

“For instance, women tend to view the forestland more as a family legacy, while men tend to view it more as a means of providing income. Women are also more likely to seek out assistance or join a group then men,” she said. “Some forest owner groups have started in beauty parlors, or through church groups or home health care networks.”

Two other differences between the current owners and their offspring involved taxes and medical costs. Though the current owners thought little of the issue of taxes as a driver for selling their land, their offspring felt otherwise. The upcoming generation responded that taxes were in fact a big issue for them. Also, unforeseen medical expenses could potentially force them to sell their forestland holdings.

“This marks the first tie between forest health and people health,” said Mater.

While there are no easy solutions, and few case studies describing model transfers of family forests, many agree a key is to look at one’s family in the way a forester looks at a forest. The forester sees 100 or more years into the future when thinking of the land. Families may find common ground by thinking on the same time line with the forest aspect of estate planning, even past their children or grandchildren.

The following are several tips for elder owners to pass on their values and knowledge of their forests along with the land:

• Talk with their children about why owning forestland is important.
• Invite them to visit and walk around their forest with them.
• Show them how they’ve improved the land and why.
• Share their forest management skills with them.
• Invite them to participate in the forest management decision making.
• Encourage them to join forest owner groups.

If all else fails, or if landowners feel uncomfortable talking with their children about these matters, owners might consider passing on their values in an ethical will for the forest. The ethical will describes the reasons for owning the land and how it should be conserved for future generations.

To help sustain America’s family-owned forests the Forest Service is establishing the Family Forest Research Center in Amherst, Massachusetts. The center will collect information on private forest landowner issues and trends.

Also, the Forest Stewardship Program is available to help forest landowners connect with the land. The program provides technical assistance, tips and guidance on a variety of forest management issues.

For more information visit:
src=’/stewardship/index.shtm’

People age 70 or older own about a fifth of all privately owned forestlands.

NATIONAL WOODLANDS WINTER 2016
Consider a Conservation Easement

by Jonathan Kays and Lon Britenbender*

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a nonprofit land trust or governmental entity that permanently limits the uses of the land in order to protect specified conservation values. It does this by restricting the amount of development and activities that can take place in the future.

Since the development value of the property cannot be realized, the market value of the property may be reduced to that of “open land,” i.e. the value of the land for agricultural or forest uses. In some areas, the resale value of property under conservation easement may or may not be negatively impacted due to high demand for large parcels containing limited development.

Not only do conservation easements protect open space values such as wildlife habitat, ecological diversity, and forest beauty, but they can also protect the economic and community benefits that arise out of the forest’s production of forest products, goods and services. Future owners are also bound to the easement’s terms and conditions. By donating a conservation easement, a landowner eliminates or limits the potential development on the property, and receives potentially significant benefits from income, estate and property taxes.

In areas with rapidly increasing property values due to development, a conservation easement can reduce the estate taxes that would have to be paid by heirs. This can prevent the familiar situation of the heirs having to sell the land or timber to pay federal estate taxes. A conservation easement donation that meets federal tax code requirements can qualify as a tax deductible charitable donation. This can result in significant reductions in income taxes.

In some states and counties, property tax credits are available to donors of qualifying conservation easements. Some of the benefits of conservation easements include:

• They leave the property in the ownership of the private landowner, who may continue to live on it, sell it or pass it on to heirs.
• They can significantly lower estate taxes, and provide landowners with income tax and/or property tax benefits.
• They are flexible, and can be written to meet the particular needs of the landowners while protecting the property’s resources.
• They are permanent, even when the land changes hands.
• They provide private landowners with a means to control the future use of their own private lands—indeed of government agencies and the local planning and zoning process.

Additional Conservation Easement Considerations

• Be sure to obtain counsel from qualified professionals, such as an attorney and an accountant who are familiar with the tax provisions that deal with conservation easements.
• Talk to an appraiser early on in the process so that you can make an educated financial decision when you donate a conservation easement.
• Take it upon yourself to learn about conservation easements and land trusts so that you can be informed about entering into an agreement like a conservation easement.

Other Estate Planning Tools

The conservation easement is just one of the ways to protect a valuable piece of land. The following list provides a brief overview of other options that are available to landowners. After thorough research, if you decide that a conservation easement is right for you a good financial advisor can help you run the numbers pertaining to the value of your property and various taxes and can help you decide the best strategy for you and your land.

• Donate the land or transfer the land to your heirs in order to reduce the value of your estate for tax purposes.
• Place the land into the hands of a partnership and have family members receive interests in the property over time in order to avoid the double tax associated with a corporation and to get the asset out of your estate.
• Place the land in a charitable remainder trust—may allow you to transfer the land out of your estate, while providing a sustainable income stream for heirs or other beneficiaries. This is particularly effective in the case of a working forest that will generate income over time through sustainable timber harvests.
• A wealth replacement plan—can help generate income through a life insurance plan that is paid for from the income generated by a Charitable Remainder Trust. The result is that heirs will receive a substantial financial benefit, land will be protected, and a charitable organization such as a land trust also benefits.

* At the time of this writing, Jonathan Kays was Regional Extension Specialist-Natural Resources, Maryland Cooperative Extension: www.naturalresources.umd.edu/. Lori Britenbender, was Faculty Extension Assistant, Maryland Cooperative Extension. Derived from a publication of Maryland Cooperative Extension.
The Case for Uneven-Aged Management of Southern Pine by Small Forest Landowners

by Don M. Handley and Joshua C. Dickinson*

Uneven-aged management of southern pine is an option that is not well understood or practiced by family forest owners in the Southeast. While they own nearly 60 percent of the region’s forests, the great majority of these forest landowners practice no management. Only three percent have a management plan, and fewer than 20 percent seek professional management advice. Many don’t like plantation management. However, the small group of forest owners who are managing their forests typically practice even-aged, plantation management of pine. Few in either group are aware of a viable alternative that provides frequent income, maintains a forest structure of a mature forest, preserves ecosystem functions, creates recreation opportunities and is aesthetically pleasing.

The message for family forest owners is that.....there is an alternative! We believe uneven-aged management of southern pine is a viable option for many family forest owners, particularly those with smaller holdings.

A majority of family forest landowners own a block of unmanaged successional forest with varying proportions of pine and low-value hardwoods. Current owners, many in their 50s, are often not certain what their heirs are likely to do with the land. Few practice active management and their offspring are only marginally aware of the value of the family’s forest.

Other, more traditional southern landowners see their forest stands as an untouched reserve, to be logged only in a dire emergency or to help fund their retirement. These people only have a vague idea of the worth of their timber when they sell it, often to timber buyers who post “We buy timber” signs along rural roads. The unscrupulous buyer removes the merchantable stems, leaving considerable debris in the stand. For too many, income from the forest translates into a once-in-a-lifetime liquidation of the forest cover. Without experience in forest management, these owners may opt to sell their land rather than make the considerable investment required for site preparation and replanting.

Uneven-aged management of pine as described in this article is based directly on Don Handley’s experience in northeastern South Carolina. As a young man, he worked in Arkansas with Les Pomeroy, who introduced uneven-aged management to Arkansas, based on a German model from the 1920s. The U.S. Forest Service has maintained stands of pine under uneven-aged management in Crossett, Arkansas since 1937.

What is uneven-aged management? In the Southeast, loblolly and shortleaf pine regenerate naturally on a variety of soil types. The common situation is an unmanaged stand of pine and low-value hardwoods that regenerated naturally following earlier logging or abandonment of agricultural land. Often, the pine regeneration is nil due to hardwood competition. If pine density is too low, the forester may recommend total or partial clearing, site preparation and planting of pine seedlings. However, if the forester determines that enough pines are distributed throughout the stand, then conversion to uneven-aged management can begin.

Hardwoods are first harvested as pulpwood or chipped for biomass fuel. The owner may choose to leave some

*Don M. Handley is a consulting forester from Florence, South Carolina. Joshua C. Dickinson is executive director of The Forest Management Trust in Bozeman, Montana.
hardwoods for wildlife habitat or aesthetics. Properly timed hardwood removal—and if possible, prescribed fire—encourages pine regeneration. Once the seedlings are established, a herbicide application is generally needed to reduce hardwood competition. Additional herbicide applications may be required following two or more harvests to maximize pine seedling survival at approximately a 20-year interval.

An inventory determines the stocking per acre and growth projection which, coupled with the size of the stand, is used by the forester to establish the allowable cut and frequency of harvest. The goal is to establish a stand with at least three age (size) classes that allows for a selective harvest every five to seven years. At harvest the stand is thinned from a stocking of approximately 80 to 60 square feet of basal area. The purpose is to maintain a stand density that will yield radial growth averages of five growth rings per inch.

Within this framework the stand would carry 6,000 to 8,000 board feet of timber per acre, with a projected annual growth of 500 board feet per year of quality timber. This goal is the same when converting a plantation to uneven-aged management. The process is best initiated at the time of the second thinning when the trees are 16-18 years old and have naturally self-pruned to a height of 30 to 35 feet. The selected trees will thus produce two clear, 16-foot logs at harvest.

Logging an uneven-aged stand involves establishing skid trails at 50 foot intervals that permit the harvester to drop each tree harvested in the trail, while minimizing damage to surrounding trees. Ideally, the logger will have at least a week’s worth of work, resulting in a better return to the forest owner. In the past, a contract for 100,000 board feet of timber was considered adequate, but now loggers look for double that volume. This can be a problem for owners with smaller holdings. Forest owners with less forestland who are practicing uneven-aged management have two potential advantages in this situation, however. First, their high quality sawtimber should have a higher value per acre. Secondly, logging costs are lower because trees being harvested are fewer and bigger.

Here is a summary of the pros and cons of uneven-aged management. Note that some of disadvantages listed are not intrinsic to uneven-aged management itself, but rather are the result of policies and business climate that are amenable to change.

Advantages of uneven-aged management include:

- Stands are maintained at near full stocking, with the potential for a harvest every five to seven years that provides the owner with frequent income.
- The owner’s multiple desires for recreation, aesthetics, diverse wildlife habitat are met, as well as income, including the flexibility to leave trees of other species for habitat improvement.
- Avoids costly investment in site preparation and planting.
- Carbon sequestration is possible in a continuous cover forest under long rotation management. This offers continued sequestration in long-lasting construction wood-based materials which can replace carbon-intensive products such as concrete, aluminum and steel.
- Natural regeneration avoids the significant carbon release associated with site preparation and replanting.
- The production of quality lumber, veneer, and poles with potentially high economic value in domestic and world markets.
- Better adaptation to fragile sites vulnerable to landslides, soil erosion, and nutrient leaching.

Disadvantages of uneven-aged management include:

- The potential for tree improvement is possible only by selective thinning, rather than the planting of genetically superior seedlings, unless a plantation of improved trees is converted to uneven-aged management.
- Optimum production requires frequent and more costly input from a highly skilled forester trained and experienced in uneven-age management, few of whom are available today.
- Increasingly larger logging operations tend to seek larger volumes of wood, making it more difficult for owners practicing uneven-aged management of smaller stands to attract a buyer.
- The current reality that financial benefit to forest owners producing quality sawtimber has been largely erased by the lowering of quality standards by the Southern Pine Inspection Bureau, coupled with the lack of competition for logs among the few remaining large mills with near-monopoly control over local markets.

There are many reasons for individuals to own forested land, including income, recreation, resource conservation and aesthetics. For the many forest owners who practice no management, the only option they are aware of for generating income is clearcutting their forest. This results in the degradation of the other values they have for their land. Many of these owners perceive clearcutting their timber as a once in a lifetime income event, given the costly site preparation and planting of seedlings followed by a generation’s wait
Many small forest owners see a timber harvest (clearcut) as a once-in-a-lifetime event. We believe that uneven-aged management of pine can provide attractive income, in terms of frequency of returns and overall amount, while retaining most of the recreation, conservation, and aesthetic values, as well of a near fully stocked forest.

The following example, based on actual and projected costs and benefits, allows the comparison of uneven-aged management with the option of a clearcut followed by the establishment of a plantation. The 85-acre property in Florence County, South Carolina is broadly representative of the great majority of family forests in the southeastern coastal plain and lower piedmont. In 1988 the 85-acre unmanaged successional stand had a mixture of loblolly and longleaf pine and low-value hardwoods with hardwoods dominating the understory and little or no pine regeneration. With the initiation of uneven-aged management in 1989, timber valued at $23,543 was cut (Table 1), leaving almost two thirds of the pine volume as seed trees to produce the seedlings that would constitute the next age class. Between the years 2000 and 2022, a total of five additional harvests were made or projected, generating a net income of $288,287. The residual value of the standing forest was estimated at $167,600.

For comparison, Table 2 represents the typical costs and returns to be expected from even-age management, had the owner chosen that option. Following common practice, the forester would have supervised a clearcut and sale in 1988, yielding $70,950. The first and second thinning would come in about 16 and 23 years with a 2020 clearcut followed by site preparation and replanting. The net income to the forest owner would be $288,858. The residual value of the timber would be zero.

One notes immediately that the income from the two management approaches at the end of the projected time period was essentially the same. The differences that we believe favor the uneven-aged management option were:

a) the frequency of income events,

b) the avoidance of site preparation and replanting costs, and

c) the value of the standing timber.

The standing timber is a veritable savings deposit that will yield a major return every five to seven years. The South Carolina example illustrates the initiation of uneven-aged management beginning with an unmanaged stand. Over time the stand under management will approach the optimum age group stocking, resulting in larger harvests of high-quality timber.

Table 1 — 85-Acre Unmanaged Pine/Hardwood Forest Converted to Uneven-Aged Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>COST($)</th>
<th>GROSS INCOME($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Cruise</td>
<td>255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Prescribed Burn</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>23,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Pole Sale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Clear Hardwood</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Herbicide application for pine release</td>
<td>4,845</td>
<td>88,530</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Timber sale</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Timber sale</td>
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<td>55,251</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>No sale because of weak market values that follow are projected</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Timber sale</td>
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<td>68,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Timber sale</td>
<td></td>
<td>48,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Herbicide application for next generation release</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Timber sale</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,659</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fees, management plan, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total cost and gross income in 2022</td>
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<td>48,312</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Net Income 2022: 288,287
Marketable Timber Present in 2022 inventory: 167,600

Table 2 — 85-Acre Pine/Hardwood Forest Converted to Even-Aged Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>COST($)</th>
<th>GROSS INCOME($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Clear Cut</td>
<td></td>
<td>70,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Site Prep and Planting</td>
<td>14,900</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>First Thinning</td>
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<td>27,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Second Thinning</td>
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<td>37,128</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Clear Cut</td>
<td></td>
<td>215,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Site Prep and Planting</td>
<td>14,900</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fees, Mgt plan, etc.</td>
<td>31,670</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total cost and gross income in 2022</td>
<td>62,470</td>
<td>350,328</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Net Income 2022: 288,858
Marketable Timber Present in 2022 inventory: 0
What Markets Look Better in 2016 For Small Woodland Owners in the South?

by Dr. Shaun M. Tanger and Dr. James E. Henderson

“Wall Street indices predicted nine out of the last five recessions!”


“I am describing the outlook that I see as most likely, but based on many years of making economic projections, I can assure you that any specific projection I write down will turn out to be wrong, perhaps markedly so.”

Janet Yellen, Speech at the Providence Chamber of Commerce, Providence, Rhode Island, May 22, 2015

Introduction

The above quotes are a quick reminder to all of that making predictions can range from tough to impossible. As economic predictions go, forestry can be on the higher end of that scale. Not only do you have to predict what the economy will do, you have to factor in the weather as well.

Given the two quotes and that sobering proviso, we’d like to try and give the reader insight into the forest markets in the coming year. As is always the case, take these predictions with the proverbial grain of salt.

Housing and Lumber Outlook

More of the same in 2016 for lumber markets. In the coming year, a number of conditions will conspire against lumber prices. However, there are strong indications of positive economic conditions in the years to come. Demographics trends in the U.S. and Canada will benefit timber markets in the U.S. South. However, there were a lot of production expansions and reopening of mills over the last two years in Canada and in U.S. South and West which has driven up output, while housing starts in 2015 have been below forecasts.

It’s a good news/bad news on housing, with multifamily dwellings having rebounded but single family starts continue to lag behind. Many potential new home buyers continue to prefer to rent as wages are still stagnant and economic uncertainty continues to exist. This obviously benefits multifamily starts, which unfortunately use less wood than single family starts. Softwood lumber prices will remain mostly flat. Factors such as the U.S. currency being strong against our typical trading partners, slow domestic consumption, weak exports to China and the expiring Softwood Lumber Agreement between the U.S. and Canada will all work to keep price forecasts modest for lumber products and timber.

However, according to Forest Economic Advisors (FEA), lumber prices are thought to be at a bottom. Russia has limited ability to supply China, mills in British Columbia are facing supply limitations in the wake of the Mountain Pine Beetle timber epidemic, and annual allowable cuts are dropping in Eastern Canada. Despite these supply concerns, U.S. consumption is expected to remain on a slow (but steady) growth track.

The real driver in the longer term is simply people. By 2020, the largest two age groups in the U.S. will be the 25-29 and 30-34 years-olds, generating stronger longer-term demand for housing. In addition, the aging U.S. owner-occupied housing stock—now at a median of 37 years—will push home improvement spending back up to pre-recession levels by 2020. However, the composition is still thought to be weighted heavily in multifamily dwellings.

Shaun Tanger is Extension Forest Economist with Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. James Henderson is Associate Extension Professor at Mississippi State University in Mississippi State, Mississippi.
Economic conditions in the years to come. Demographics as it comes year, a number of conditions will conspire against lumber with the proverbial grain of salt. As is always the case, take these predictions to try and give the reader insight into the forest markets in the

Introduction

Not only do you have to predict what the economy will do, predictions go, forestry can be on the higher end of that scale.

Outlook for 2016:

- **Outlook for 2016**: 1.175 to 1.225 million new housing starts and average lumber prices to improve 1-2 percent from this time to next January. However, it will be a bumpy ride as companies struggle with how much unused capacity to bring online given financial volatility in world markets.

Oriented Stand Board (OSB)

According to Pete Stewart at Forest2Market, demand for pine fiber will increase caused in part by growth in (OSB) production and pulp and paper production. Unlike in lumber markets, OSB’s market share is much more concentrated, with the top five producers controlling roughly 80 percent of the market share. So there is a very high price premium predicted in those markets, according to Moody’s.

On the supply side, the reduction in sawtimber harvests due to the slow housing recovery has reduced the amount of pulpwood available to the market as replanting efforts have been subdued over the past eight years. That should be some small solace to those who did harvest sawtimber and replanted since the 2007-2009 recession as they will be ideally placed to reap benefits of having pulpwood class products ready in the very near future. However, with Brazil’s recent economic woes, it is likely we will see more Brazilian pulp and wood chips in the U.S., though this effect may be blunted a bit by increased demand from other Latin American countries.

- **Outlook for 2016**: A combination of these demand and supply pressures will keep OSB prices elevated throughout 2016, along with the ability of OSB producers to better control capacity nationally. This may lead to a double digit surge in OSB prices, making it the big winner this year in terms of price appreciation. OSB and engineered wood products will improve as U.S. housing starts continue to move towards trend levels, albeit slowly. This may benefit timber producers in these product markets, depending upon the timber supply in those markets.

Pulp

Most of the growth in demand for pulp and paper products will come from the non-Western world. Demand in both North America and Europe will be flat to lower, while Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East will all see upticks.

Brazil and China have quite a bit of monetary and fiscal housekeeping to undertake to help stabilize the global economy. Their current slippage has severe impacts for U.S. timber markets. First and foremost, western softwood will not go overseas in as great a quantity. While western sawtimber mills are adjusting capacity accordingly it will take some time to rebalance supply and demand conditions, so those products will seek markets with U.S. housing being the most likely alternative given proximity and currency imbalances.

U.S. South pulpwod markets are under siege as well. Despite the tightness in supply in the South for pulpwod products as explained above, pulp exports from Brazil will continue to seek a home in U.S. and European markets as their economic collapse makes their exports attractive. This may also lead to increased movement of pellets to Europe. Thankfully, other Latin American countries continue to grow and contribute to the rising demand for pulp and paper products so this should offset some of that downward price pressure.

North American market pulp prices across most grades (hardwood, softwood, dissolving pulp) will remain flat or decrease as capacity increases and supply from foreign markets are strong. As additional pulp capacity comes on-line, inventory management across the fragmented global pulp industry will remain critical to balancing supply and demand. Latin American market pulp producers will continue to enjoy structural cost advantages over North American and Western European producers due to their shorter tree-harvesting cycles and financial positions.

- **Outlook for 2016**: Higher quality pulp (both softwood and hardwood) is projected to see drops of 2-3 percent, while low end pulp is expected to be flat in the coming year. Pulpwood prices will remain modest in spot areas until local supply reflects the past several years of lower planting and lower timber harvesting following the recession.

Timberland

Timberland exemplifies real asset investment characteristics. Analysis shows that the asset class can provide a hedge against inflation, has low correlation with other assets, and has better risk-adjusted returns compared to other assets. While returns over time have dropped, they are still attractive relative to other investment vehicles at this time, particularly stands in the U.S. South.

The year 2014 saw some resurgence in transactions; approximately $2.7 billion in turnover covering just short of one million hectares. However, most transactions were small and only seven sales were larger than 20,000 hectares. The expectation is that over the next three or four years timberland sales will remain robust, as some major investments made in the 2000-2007 period begin to roll over.

Of the 875,000 acres of U.S. timberland transactions year-to-date, about 200,000 were in the South. The average price per acre nation-wide was $1,135 per acre year-to-date, and the south-wide average was $1,425.

- **Outlook for 2016**: This really depends on the inflation rates expected over the next several years. Real assets do well in inflationary environments. Increases of 1.5- 2 percent is what the projections say, with 2017 being a bit higher. However, while timberland values in the Northwest will drop, the belief is that the U.S. South will bump 2-3 percent.
If inflation were to tick upward more quickly, timberland owners would see increased interest from potential buyers looking for safer investment vehicles.

Weather

NASA says this year’s El Nino “shows no signs of waning,” and its new impact on the U.S. hit early in the New Year. This disrupted small landowners’ ability to replant after harvest operations as well as much-needed management activities. NASA projections suggest the current El Nino is on track to rival or even surpass the biggest one ever recorded, in the winter of 1997-98. The satellite images show similar, unusually high sea surface heights along the equator in the Pacific Ocean, an indication of warmer waters—the signature of a big and powerful El Nino,” NASA said in the latest update posted online. The warmer ocean waters pump heat and moisture high into the atmosphere, altering the jet stream and affecting storm tracks all over the world. This can make it tough on logging operations to get their work done, which is never a good thing in a workforce already stretched thin from the recession. Profitability is key here and if your stand is not optimal, it may be hard to attract logging opportunities as they scramble to make up for lost work days.

• **Outlook 2016:** Wet weather will certainly benefit those forest landowners with well-drained and accessible properties. This may or may not raise prices across the entire U.S. South, but certainly in spot markets it will restrict some of the supply that is out there from getting to the mills in a timely manner. This will push prices up, all other things equal.

**Timber Inventory**

As mentioned earlier, the typical response to lower sawtimber prices is to delay harvest. As more landowners delay harvest and as timber continues to grow out of pulpwood and chip-n-saw product classes into sawtimber classes, the standing sawtimber inventory in the U.S. South has increased substantially. Effectively this results in an outward shift of the supply curve for sawtimmer, meaning that lower prices are being realized as timber harvest volumes increase, which would not have been the case before the recession of 2007-09. To demonstrate the inventory growth since the recession, consider estimates of standing timber volume produced by the USDA Forest Service’s Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) in Table 1. The net volume of growing-stock trees shows an increase from 2007 to 2013 of 13 percent for pine sawtimber in the U.S. South. Over the same period oak sawtimber has increased by ten percent. Demand and prices for hardwood sawtimmer recovered much more quickly following the recession of 2007-09 where pine sawtimmer’s recovery has only started to show over the past couple of years.

While the implications of increased pine sawtimmer inventory is downward pressure on pine sawtimmer prices even as demand continues to gradually increase over the next several years, there is still a silver lining here. The ample inventory in the U.S. South combined with declining inventories in the western U.S. and Canada resulting from Mountain Pine Beetle losses, has resulted in increased investment in the U.S. South by both western U.S. and Canadian forest product companies. So in the not so distant future the U.S. South will have more markets and greater demand for timber products, which will ultimately result in improved prices for products such as sawtimmer.

Turning our attention to Table 2, forecasts for demand for the major products in the U.S. South are slightly positive with pine sawtimmer expected to increase by 2.5 percent, with the largest growth in Arkansas and Louisiana. Hardwood sawtimmer is expected to increase by 3.5 percent, with the largest increases in Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina all above 5 percent.

With respect to pine pulpwood markets, the southwide projections in demand increases around 3.5 percent with Texas, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee all seeing increases of 5 percent or more. Hardwood pulpwood markets will tick up by 2.5 percent, with Tennessee and Alabama carrying that average and most of that in the first quarter of 2016.

The reader will note that with respect to prices, several more years of increased timber harvesting will be needed, if housing starts maintain their slight uptick, in order to see real upward movement in sawtimmer prices. Pulpwood prices should continue to trend upward as result of sawtimmer overhang, but how much depends on capacity of mills in the local market and access conditions to property. Look for pulpwood prices along the East Coast to reap the benefits of having the tightest demand/supply conditions, which is likely why the increases for pulpwood demand are coming the more western states within the southeast regions in the coming year.

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**Table 1: Inventories in Southern States, Volume in million cubic feet.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pine PW</td>
<td>23,44</td>
<td>23,90</td>
<td>23,64</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td>20,26</td>
<td>21,06</td>
<td>21,84</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pine ST</td>
<td>21,03</td>
<td>21,91</td>
<td>22,16</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>18,59</td>
<td>19,68</td>
<td>20,52</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak PW</td>
<td>11,97</td>
<td>12,46</td>
<td>12,80</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>10,30</td>
<td>10,45</td>
<td>10,60</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak ST</td>
<td>9,28</td>
<td>9,45</td>
<td>9,50</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>7,90</td>
<td>8,08</td>
<td>8,20</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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**Table 2: Southwide Wood Demand by Product x 1,000 Forecast for 2016**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pine PW</td>
<td>20,90</td>
<td>23,65</td>
<td>23,90</td>
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<td>21,84</td>
<td>20,52</td>
<td>18,59</td>
<td>19,68</td>
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<td>Pine ST</td>
<td>19,06</td>
<td>20,81</td>
<td>21,81</td>
<td>20,68</td>
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<td>21,02</td>
<td>21,02</td>
<td>18,59</td>
<td>19,68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak PW</td>
<td>7,67</td>
<td>7,92</td>
<td>7,90</td>
<td>7,26</td>
<td>7,40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak ST</td>
<td>5,62</td>
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**Additional Information**

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The National Woodland Owners Association: Who We Are And What We Do

Organized in 1983, the National Woodland Owners Association is a nationwide organization of family woodland owners. Funded through landowner dues and donations, the group is entirely independent of government agencies and the forest industry, but works with both to promote effective legislation and open markets for a lasting Family Forest Legacy.

There are two classes of membership: 1) National Members are eligible for all the benefits of membership (see p. 47), including all four issues of National Woodlands magazine. 2) Affiliate Members belong to one of the 42 State Landowner Associations that are State Affiliates of NWOA. The state associations use NWOA as a Washington DC contact and as a partnership to exchange information and ideas. Members of the state affiliates receive an annual issue of National Woodlands as a benefit of belonging to their state association.

The leaders of the affiliated state associations perform two important roles in the national association: 1) Elect half of the NWOA Board of Directors (by regions). 2) Select and rank the Top Ten Family Forestry Issues. NWOA is the only national association to use annual voting of this scale to guide forest policy advocacy in Washington D.C. • Access to Forest Markets • Timber and Land Taxes • Right-to-Practice Forestry • Forestry Extension Education have consistently been issues of greatest concern.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP
• Four quarterly issues of National Woodlands, America’s largest circulation forestry magazine. See p. 47 for 20 good reasons to subscribe.
• Optional top rated $1 million Woodland Liability Insurance, only $150 for up to 500 acres. Hunt Club liability insurance also available.
• Effective advocacy of the Top Ten Family Forestry Issues in Washington, D.C. and in 48 state capitals though affiliated state landowner associations.
• Free subscription to Wednesday Woodland Word, a weekly email with landowner advice and news.
• Optional subscription to American Forests magazine for $10/year.

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Wood Pellet Markets Assist Landowners In Sustaining Southern Forests

by Tim Foley*

Most woodland owners in the South are now aware of the expanding wood pellet industry in the region. Driven largely by renewable energy goals in the European Union, dozens of pellet production facilities have come online in the past decade to meet a growing demand. These facilities have appeared on the landscape from coastal Virginia to the Mississippi River, many in towns where paper mills have shut down and the forest industry has lagged in recent years, such as Franklin, Virginia and Bastrop, Louisiana.

The appearance of these new mills has also brought increasing concern about forest sustainability. woodland owners, environmental Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and policy makers have begun asking questions about whether this new development changes the face of forest markets and forest sustainability across the South. While the public interest in southern forests is a good sign, the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) seeks to ensure that any discussion on forest sustainability is based on science and experience. Working at the nexus of the social, economic, and ecological disciplines of forestry, SGSF promotes solutions that produce sustainable outcomes for forest landscapes, forest markets, and forest landowners.

At the core of any discussion on forest sustainability in the South needs to be the recognition that the greatest threat to southern forests in the coming decades will be from conversion, fragmentation and parcelization. Developmental pressures from a burgeoning population threaten not only our forests, but the societal benefits we derive from them, such as clean air and water; hunting, fishing and other recreation opportunities; and quality wildlife habitat. It is also widely recognized that strong forest products markets serve as one of the best incentives for landowners to keep their forests standing in the face of development pressure. Whether it be for lumber, paper, pellets or a myriad of other products, history tells us that strong markets mean people grow more trees.

In spite of the benefits of a healthy, sustainably managed pellet market, recent claims by activist groups squarely opposed to the emerging pellet industry would have you believe the opposite: that markets don’t stem the threat to forests, they are the threat. Anyone paying attention to the pellet discussion has heard the taglines from an aggressive anti-pellet marketing campaign warning of imminent deforestation, biodiversity loss, carbon pollution and other ills that will befall the southern landscape. This has been the anti-logging rhetoric for decades, with today’s campaign slogans reading strikingly similar to the sound bites from the 1990s chip mill controversy. Thankfully, any forest owner who has managed a woodlot passed down through the generations knows this to be patently untrue. Without strong wood products markets, the opportunity for a return on forestry investment is gone, meaning woodlots must create an income flow in order for economic and ecological sustainability to occur.

Beyond the natural instinct borne from generations of sustainable forest management, foresters can also point to data gleaned through effective modeling and monitoring to counter misleading claims made by activists on the sustainability of forest markets in the South (including pellet markets filling their niche).

Landscape-level regional modeling shows us how southern forests are likely to respond to economic and environmental stressors. The Southern Forest Futures Report, a visionary collaborative work by state and federal researchers released in 2012, assesses the most likely trajectories for southern forests in the midst of a variety of economic and ecological drivers. The report finds that development pressure will reduce the forest inventory in the South in the coming decades, but that reduction is lessened by high timber prices and strong markets. This work has been supplemented by more recent analysis showing that pellet markets specifically are likely to increase the forest inventory and not decrease it, due to a positive afforestation incentive.

There is also recent analysis on the magnitude of the pellet market in relation to the standing forest inventory in the South and its relation to other wood products markets. A report released last November by Forest2Market shows that at reasonable projections of pellet demand on southern forests, removals would account for only 0.3 percent of total forest inventory, and only a small proportion of overall removals for wood products. The message: Pellet facilities are a beneficial added market for landowners, but certainly not a game-changer economically or environmentally.

Forest Inventory and Analysis

The South also relies heavily on robust systems in place to monitor forest sustainability and see if modeling projections play out in reality. The foremost tool in this monitoring is the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program, a federal program delivered in partnership with the southern states. First established in the 1930s, FIA consists of a nationwide network of plots which are revisited on a regular basis to assess changes on the landscape. These plots occur across all ownerships, so if a plot falls on your land you may have had the opportunity to meet a friendly state forestry employee asking for access to do this critical forest monitoring.

*Policy Analyst for the Southern Group of State Foresters

NATIONAL WOODLANDS WINTER 2016
Currently, FIA data clearly show that significantly more trees are growing in southern forests than are being harvested. Across the area where pellet mills have opened, forests are growing 60 percent more volume than is being removed through all causes including harvest, insects & disease, and wildfire. This figure is even higher when looking at only hardwoods. The same trends remain when examined at smaller scales, with individual states showing between 40 and 100 percent more growth than removal. Simply put, there is an abundance of wood on the landscape.

State forestry agencies also administer silvicultural Best Management Practices (BMP) programs to gauge environmental sustainability from individual logging operations. These BMP programs address water quality outcomes from silvicultural activities, and the most recent regional synthesis of implementation data shows them to be extremely effective—a 92 percent implementation rate across the southern region. Active BMP monitoring, coupled with highly effective logger training programs within the wood procurement arena, create a strong positive incentive to strive for forest and environmental sustainability.

Finally, while the southern forest landscape is made up of primarily private landowners (86 percent of forests are privately owned, with 66 percent of this in the hands of families or individuals) this does not mean it is wholly unregulated. As forest landowners are well aware, the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, and other regulations are in place to guide sustainable outcomes on private forest landscapes.

What does all this robust modeling and monitoring data tell us about southern forests and pellet markets? It confirms that at the landscape-level, pellet markets simply don’t represent a threat to forest sustainability. Southern forests are standing strong, and the addition of new markets for forest thinnings and logging slash off private lands is a good thing, not a bad thing, for retaining forestland. State forestry agencies have been supporting the South’s millions of private forest owners for years by tracking sustainability outcomes for all forestry activities through FIA data gathering, BMP monitoring, wildlife species monitoring and more. There has yet to be any compelling evidence to suggest pellet markets will put any markedly different pressures on the monitoring system currently in place than any other wood product.

The greatest assurance for the sustainability of southern forests rests squarely in the forest owners themselves. It stands to reason that forest owners will continue to make decisions that are in their long-term economic and environmental interest. The pellet detractors may continue to shout that forests will be decimated in a rush to provide low value wood to European energy markets, but history tells us that forest owners in the South are smarter than that. Forest owners will continue to make the best decisions for the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of southern forests. The emergence of pellet markets is one more economic tool to support forest landowners in making the decision to retain forestland and not convert it to development.

**COUNTERPOINT**

Our Forests Aren’t Fuel

by Adam Macon*

The vast forests of the Southern United States are some of the most biodiverse and important ecosystems in the world. Our southern forests have the highest concentration of tree species diversity in North America and the highest concentration of aquatic diversity in the continental U.S., including the richest temperate freshwater ecosystem in the world. The precious remaining coastal wetlands and bottomland hardwood regions that span from coastal Virginia to Mississippi and Louisiana contain rare forest types and unique carnivorous plants like the Venus flytrap and pitcher plants. Additionally, our forests provide crucial ecosystem services, such as flood and erosion control and water filtration. They also provide local communities with areas to recreate and experience the natural world.

Yet despite the numerous environmental and economic benefits standing forests provide, these critical forest habitats are increasingly being harvested, processed into wood pellets, and shipped to Europe to be burned for electricity. The demand for wood as a fuel source in Europe is driving the expansion of wood pellet manufacturing and export in the southern U.S. With 20 existing wood pellet facilities and more than 30 proposed, the threat is something that individuals and communities across the U.S. South cannot ignore.

The expanding wood pellet industry is built on the false notion that burning our forests actually reduces the amount of carbon in our atmosphere and is good for our climate. This unfortunate and faulty conclusion has resulted in massive subsidies to the woody biomass industry from well-intentioned U.S. and Europe renewable energy policies, and the incentivization of increased clear-cuts, particularly in the U.S. South. The large-scale burning of wood pellets is not a solution to climate change or feasible alternative to coal.

Since launching the Our Forests Aren’t Fuel campaign last year, we here at the Dogwood Alliance have been scratching our heads in disbelief over the contradiction that exists when it comes to global forest climate policies. In recent years, there has been a suite of initiatives aimed at reducing carbon emissions and supporting forest conservation efforts. But as long as we continue to allow our forests to be destroyed and harvested at an unprecedented rate, these initiatives will fall short of their potential to protect our climate.

*Campaign Director, Our Forests Aren’t Fuel, Dogwood Alliance.
emissions from forest loss and degradation, which admittedly accounts for 20 percent of global carbon emissions. As part of the recent New York Declaration on Forests, three European nations: UK, Norway and Germany, announced increased global funding for reducing deforestation and increasing forest conservation.

Unfortunately, their current energy policies treat the logging and burning of forests to generate electricity as a climate friendly alternative to fossil fuels despite the amount of carbon it releases into the atmosphere. Mounting scientific research shows that burning wood pellets manufactured from trees will actually increase near-term carbon emission and accelerate climate change. Further, the Europeans are making these carbon claims without compensating any of the private forest landowners in the U.S. who they claim are providing the carbon sequestration.

This past July the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) released its long-awaited Biomass Emissions and Counterfactual Model Calculator and an accompanying report Lifecycle Impacts of Biomass in 2020. The findings from the tool and associated report confirm what U.S. and European ENGOs have been claiming for the last few years: that burning forests for electricity is bad for our climate. The report clearly shows that whether it is whole trees or so-called leftover “residuals” from logging operations, wood pellets, when burned, release too much carbon to be considered a viable solution to climate change.

Major wood-pellet producers like Enviva claim that the burning of our forests is carbon beneficial on a “lifecycle basis.” The belief is that since trees grow back, over time the carbon emitted from the logging, processing, shipping, and eventually burning of the current forest ecosystems will be sequestered. While yes, trees grow back and sequester carbon, there are obvious major concerns with this analysis. As we all know, it takes a mature hardwood forest a long time (anywhere from 50-100 years and sometimes longer) to grow back. In using wood. Each converted unit requires pellets made from five million tons of wood. And it’s not just European subsidies that are driving the industry. In Virginia, despite public opposition, Enviva received hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars from the Governor’s Opportunity Fund and a Community Development Block Grant to build a pellet manufacturing facility. In North Carolina, the wood pellet industry has taken many local communities by surprise as state and local governments extend large tax breaks and subsidies to wood pellet facilities in their towns.

The good news is that there is a rapidly growing movement in the South and around the world to stop the biomass industry and change the ways we view and value forests. This past November, 50,000 U.S. Citizens sent SOS (Save Our Southern Forests) messages to decision-makers in Europe, demanding that this madness stop. Every day, local groups, environmental organizations, businesses, and landowners are joining together in a growing coalition, strategically working for true forest protection. Citizens in Wilmington, North Carolina have even passed a community resolution that raised serious concerns about the impacts of a wood pellet export facility on their quality of life. Southerners will not sit back as our forests, communities, and economies are being destroyed for the profit of a few.

The way forward is clear: Current renewable energy policies must change in Europe and the U.S. We have to invest in true forms of renewable energy like wind, solar, and geothermal, and not subsidize energy sources that are actually moving us backwards. We must start measuring the real value of our forests and the benefits they provide to our planet, communities, and economies. Our forests aren’t fuel. They are critical habitat for plants and animals. They are water purification systems, flood walls, carbon sequestration machines, and places of solace. They are our heritage and our future. Our forests aren’t fuel. They are forests.
Forest Tree Improvement

by Craig McKinley*

Not long ago our local evening news reported the development of a wheat variety that was purported to be better than currently existing varieties. Toward the end of the story the reporter mentioned that this new variety had been genetically engineered to help overcome some of the problems due to low rainfall plaguing the region. When the words “genetically engineered” were mentioned, there was little doubt that the report would provoke significant response.

r to genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and the process protocol has become a lightning rod for passionate arguments both for and against the use of gene modification/insertion. The next evening following that initial report, the newscaster offered a rather extensive correction indicating that the new wheat variety was not genetically engineered but rather was the result of breeding and genetic testing and did not involve genetically modified organisms.

In today’s world, it is not surprising that words such as genetic improvement, selective breeding, genetic modification and genetic engineering cause confusion. These terms and many others are related to the development of improved crops, but are often not fully defined as to background or purpose. While similar in many respects, the methods, procedures, and goals of these techniques are often quite different.

Crop improvement, both for plants and animals dates back thousands of years. Historical records indicate that some 9,000-11,000 years ago, farmers were selecting high-yielding agricultural plants from which the next crop would be derived. Through the years, humans have applied this idea of selection in both animal and plant crops, with the basic philosophy of utilizing the best individuals as parents of the next generation. It is often not explicitly stated, but the reason such selection is possible is simply because variation occurs in plant and animal populations. Without variation, there could be neither opportunities to select the best individuals nor the option to utilize those individuals in breeding programs. Scientists often use the term phenotype to describe an individual’s appearance or abilities. Conversely, the term genotype is used to refer to the individual’s genetic makeup (genetic capabilities). The individual’s phenotype is thus the result of the genotype and the environment to which that genotype is exposed. An old professor used to explain it as, “What you look like depends upon what your parents look like plus what you eat.” That analogy is a good as any, and the argument of “nature or nurture” becomes rather immaterial.

Tree Improvement Techniques

There are several techniques available to the tree breeder that allows him/her to utilize the variation that occurs within tree crops. One often mentioned but seldom used technique is that of mutation breeding. We’ve all seen the movies or read tales of such things as an ordinary beetle mutating into some sort of monster that attacks large American cities. Mutations don’t work that way. Mutations are simply small changes in the genetic makeup of an organism. Quite often these changes affect only one small part of the chemical composition of DNA, although changes affecting larger structures (e.g., chromosomes) are possible. Most naturally-
occurring mutations are overcome by the organism itself and are never noticed. To be utilized in improvement programs, mutations must be either identified in natural populations or induced by radiation, chemical or other treatment. Mutations, being a part of the individual’s genotype, can then be passed from generation to generation.

The procedure of artificially inducing mutations is simple enough, but difficulty lies in the fact that most mutations are harmful. This result is due to generations of natural selection against genetic changes that reduce an individual’s fitness. The term fitness is used to denote the ability to reproduce, not necessarily as a measure of strength, speed, etc. Individuals with “bad” (mutated) genes have low fitness and often do not reproduce. Thus, only “good” genes are passed from generation to generation within a given species. As foresters, we have all seen an occasional nursery seedling that is a mutant albino that is white due to a lack of chlorophyll production. No chlorophyll, no photosynthesis. As soon as the seed’s food reserves are depleted the seedling dies (with no offspring). When mutations occur, either naturally or induced, there is no guarantee that target genes will be affected. Mutations may result, but they may not be what is desired. This somewhat hit or miss approach is generally too time consuming and too costly to use on a regular basis.

The use of exotics is another way of using variation in tree crops. Exotics are generally defined as individuals not native to the area under consideration. We often think of exotics as being at the species level. However, the definition allows for a great deal of flexibility. For example, Fraser fir is native to the Appalachian Mountains, but a number of Christmas tree growers outside of the mountains have attempted to use this species for their crop. At such lower elevations, Fraser fir should be considered as an exotic. The most popular exotic used in the U.S. is Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris). While not native to the western hemisphere, it has been widely planted in the northern U.S. and Canada with great success.

The use of exotics should not be discounted, as these and other success stories would indicate. However, exotics are often found to be susceptible to environmental conditions that were unknown in their native ranges. Droughts, freezes, insects, and diseases may prove to be detrimental to exotics, while native species tolerate local maladies quite easily. Testing of exotics for extended periods is usually necessary to ascertain long-term suitability for the new region. An old adage is, “If a plant does not grow there naturally, there must be a reason.” Sounds like good advice until proven otherwise.

The use of hybrids in tree improvement has often been attempted as a means to combine the genetic material of dissimilar individuals with each other. As with exotics, we often think of hybrids as being on the species level. Such classification is not necessarily correct, but species by species hybrids are certainly the most common.

The philosophy behind hybrids is that the good of both species can ultimately be combined into one species and then propagated. One of the earlier forest geneticists in the U.S. (Dr. Ernst Schreiner) developed a number of successful hybrid poplars in collaboration with the Oxford Paper Company in Oxford, Maine beginning in 1924. There has also been success in the use of a loblolly pine (Pinus taeda) by pitch pine (Pinus rigida) hybrid. The growth rate of loblolly has been augmented by the cold tolerance of the pitch pine to produce a desirable forest tree for colder climates. Hybrids have also been used in the American chestnut breeding program to develop chestnut...
blight-resistance trees. Chestnut species are relatively easy to cross, and through selection of resistant individuals and backcrossing to the native species, significant success has been gained in the overall chestnut improvement program.

One disadvantage of hybridization is that the results are often unpredictable. There is a story of crossing radish and cabbage species in hope of obtaining a plant with the head of the cabbage and the root of the radish. Unfortunately, the result produced the root of the cabbage and the head of the radish. Oops! Another drawback to large-scale use of hybrids is that the offspring of the original cross are often sterile. Thus, crosses must be remade to obtain the desired material. One need only to think of the mule as an animal example of a sterile offspring. As with exotics, hybrids also require extensive testing prior to widespread distribution.

The fourth method of improvement is that of selection. Selection should actually be considered more of widely-used technique, as opposed to a specific improvement method. Regardless of the approach employed, selection is utilized in some form in almost all crop and animal improvement programs. The best individuals are chosen (selected) as the parents. These parents are mated, offspring are evaluated, and selections from within the offspring are used as parents for the next generation. The cycle is continued through succeeding generations. In forest tree improvement, we often use species as the first selection criteria. The goal is to select the right species for the site to be regenerated. Obviously, decisions regarding the use of exotics, hybrids, or mutations can also be made at this step of the process. Given the appropriate species is selected, the next step is to select the proper seed source. As trees can’t move around (a real benefit over animals!) natural variation also occurs among geographic locations. Thus, choosing parents from the proper geographic location (seed source) is also critical.

Depending upon the species, there may also be stand-to-stand variation that must be considered, with selections made on that basis as well. Finally, tree-to-tree variation is evaluated. Individuals are then selected for desired characteristics on the basis of their phenotype in hope that their phenotypic superiority is indicative of genetic superiority. Unfortunately, phenotypes are not inherited!

To allow for selected phenotypes to cross with each other determined.

To meet this goal, tests are established by using seedlings or in some cases cuttings from selected parents to determine the genetic worth of those parents. Poor genetic producers are discarded and the next cycle of breeding among selects and testing is initiated. In addition, genetic tests are also established for other specific objectives, in part to assure that the best material is available as quickly as possible and inbreeding does not become a concern.

Seedlings purchased from most commercial, industrial, or government-operated nurseries are produced using the above approach. Thus, the label “genetically improved” describes material that is the result of generations of selection and breeding to develop the best genetic quality available. It should be noted that while numerous species are vegetatively propagated in order to produce clonal lines, vegetative propagation is not a true improvement method, but rather is a method to increase numbers of specific genotypes. Selection and breeding are keys to genetic improvement while grafting, rooted cuttings, etc. simply replicate genetic material.
Genetic Engineering

Genetic engineering leading to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is a relatively new technique in tree improvement. The goal of genetic engineering is usually to insert known genes into the DNA of target individuals. Other goals may include modification or deletion of specific DNA sequences. Insertion techniques generally follow one of two protocols. The first protocol is placing the foreign DNA onto the recipient’s DNA with a syringe or by literally blasting the genetic component of an organism with pieces of DNA attached to a metal carrier (commonly tungsten or gold) in anticipation of that DNA being incorporated into the target organism’s DNA. The other technique is through the use of a bacteria or virus, which inserts the desired DNA into the recipients DNA. In either case the recipient organism’s cells are in a highly undifferentiated state, leading to individuals that receive the implanted DNA being further propagated and replicated though tissue culture techniques. Obviously, the entire process is rather involved, but has been proven successful. DNA sequences (genes) that are derived from a plant that is sexually compatible (will cross) with the recipient are called cisgenes. While genes from plants not sexually compatible are called transgenes. It is the transgene process that has caused the greatest debate, simply due to the fact that genes can now be moved across highly unrelated species.

Most genetic engineering has focused on food crops. However, there has been some success in forest species. In China, genetic engineering has been used in poplar trees to enhance insect resistance. Scientists at Oregon State University have announced that genetically modified poplars are capable of growing faster, have resistance to insects and are able to express inserted genes up to 14 years. Newspaper reports indicate that efforts are underway in Canada to produce trees easier to pulp, and in the southern U.S., genetically engineered eucalyptus (Eucalyptus spp.) is being evaluated. The American Chestnut Foundation has also announced that a gene from wheat has been successfully placed into chestnut trees. And, in August 2014 the USDA approved the use of genetically engineered loblolly pine with increased wood density.

No doubt, the debate over whether genetically modified trees is a step forward or a move toward total disaster is only going to get more heated. Proponents note that the transformed trees must meet a series of stringent control measures to assure that GMOs can be restricted to designated areas. Likewise, the potential to increase production efficiencies is a worthwhile benefit of new genetic combinations. Opponents of genetic engineering point to the number of relatively unknowns, particularly regarding the future of native stands should transformed genes become established into native populations. There is also concern of the potential risks that may be encountered in generations to come. A mistake now could be the step that brings us to disaster 100 years from now.

Both sides of the argument have something to consider. However, there is little doubt that genetic engineering is now and will continue to be a tree improvement technique that may offer a great number of new options for tree breeders.

Important Terms

Clone – a vegetatively propagated organism or a group of such organisms.

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) - a double-stranded self-replicating acid of large molecular weight that is the genetically active portion of the chromosome.

Exotic - a plant or species introduced from another country or geographic region outside its natural range.

Forest genetics - the study of heredity in trees.

Forest tree breeding – the application knowledge of genetics to developing improved trees.

Forest tree improvement - the practice of tree breeding in combination with cultural practices.

Gamete – A male or female reproductive cell.

Gene – The smallest transmissible unit of genetic material (basic unit of heredity) consistently associated with a single primary genetic effect.

Genetic engineering - the directed genetic modification of an individual organism to have a new heritable trait by splicing a specific gene into the individual’s genomic DNA sequence.

Genetics - the basic science dealing with causes of resemblances and differences among organisms related by descent.

Genome – A complete haploid set of chromosomes as found in a gamete.

Genotype - and individual’s hereditary (genetic) constitution – note: the genotype interacts with the environment to produce the phenotype.

Hybrid – the progeny of genetically different parents – note: the term is applied to the progeny from matings within species (intraspecific) or to those between species (interspecific).

Mutation – a heritable change in the genetic constitution often recognized as a sudden deviation from the ancestral phenotype – note: a changed individual or part is also known as a mutation or mutant.

Phenotype – The observed state, description, or degree of expression of a character or trait.

Selection – the nonrandom differential production of different genotypes. In artificial selection, the breeder chooses individuals for propagation from a larger population.

Somatic cell – the cell of a body tissue, as distinct from a reproductive cell.

Tissue Culture – an aseptic cell, tissue, organ, or protoplast culture.

Shortleaf pine forests once covered a vast portion of the continent. From the piney woods of east Texas to Florida’s hilly uplands and up the eastern seaboard to New Jersey, shortleaf pine occurs in a 22-state range. Shortleaf pine has been valued as a high-quality timber product since European settlement of the region when it is thought to have covered between 70-80 million acres of forest. Hardy and plentiful, it quickly became the dominant material used in residential and commercial construction. It also gained economic value as a profitable export to Great Britain and the West Indies. Since that time, the acreage of shortleaf pine has been greatly reduced. According to Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data, shortleaf pine has decreased from 12.6 million acres in 1980 to 6.1 million acres in 2012.

This sharp decline of 51 percent can be attributed to several factors: extensive harvesting, pine beetle outbreaks, disease, and emphasis on other species of pine such as loblolly and longleaf. But perhaps the most significant cause of decline is the suppression of fire in the shortleaf pine range. Prior to the implementation of fence laws, landscape-scale fires of varying size, intensity and frequency often occurred, and these fires were good for shortleaf pine regeneration.

Historically, shortleaf pine ecosystems were subject to frequent fire intervals of two to 20 years. These frequent fires eliminated pine and hardwood leaf litter from the forest floor and resulted in an open woodland structure, a habitat that is quickly disappearing from North America. Open woodlands are characterized by a sparse canopy that allows a lot of sunlight to reach the ground, resulting in an herbaceous understory of native grasses and plants. Several species of wildlife depend on this type of habitat, including the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, northern bobwhite, and Bachman’s sparrow, one of the most rapidly declining bird species in North America. All three species, along with many others, have responded positively to the reintroduction of prescribed fire.

Fire has always played a critical role in landscape establishment, maintenance and composition. Fire exposes mineral soil and controls the competition of other seedlings vying for space and sunlight, things shortleaf pine rely on for regeneration. It has several unique traits that make it fire-resistant. Unlike other pines, shortleaf pine seedlings have a basal crook at the root collar that contains axillary buds that survive fire and re-sprout if the upper-stem is killed. Older trees have a thick, platy bark and a low resin content that protect them from fire.

In addition to its fire-resistance, shortleaf pine has other traits that make it suitable for a variety of growing conditions. It is highly adaptive and can be planted in lower-quality, well-drained sites not used for more temperamental hardwood. It tolerates a wide range of temperatures and is the most cold-tolerant of the southern pines. Its water use efficiency allows it to survive droughts. Even in a changing climate, it has the characteristics necessary to withstand the predicted conditions.

Unfortunately, shortleaf pines are decreasing at an alarming rate of 22 acres per hour. While most conservation efforts are focused on public land management, 62 percent

*Mike Black is Director of the Shortleaf Pine Initiative based at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.
of shortleaf pine occurs on private land. Landowners are becoming increasingly interested in wildlife, recreation, and legacy of ownership. Shortleaf pine is well-suited to these objectives, creating excellent restoration opportunities for landowners. When managed properly, the open structure of shortleaf pine ecosystems is an excellent habitat for game and non-game wildlife, and many rare and endangered species can be found there. The future of shortleaf and the associated species relies heavily on the actions of landowners.

The rewards of land ownership go hand in hand with the responsibilities. It is imperative to develop a long-term land management plan based on the desires of the landowner and the distinctions of the land. Whether your goals are to increase wildlife populations, improve water quality, prevent erosion, or restore profitable native timber, shortleaf pine is an excellent option to consider.*

In September 2010, a concerned group of foresters and biologists convened to discuss the dwindling numbers of shortleaf pine at a meeting hosted by the Southern Regional Extension Forestry (SREF). Many stayed after the meeting and formed the Shortleaf Working Group. These professionals continued to meet and promote shortleaf, alerting others to the decline of this resource. In October 2011, the first Shortleaf Pine Conference was held in Huntsville, Alabama with more than 100 of the region’s resource managers in attendance. The need for range-wide restoration was realized, and the Shortleaf Pine Initiative (SPI) was formalized in 2013.

A Planning Team was formed and a series of four stakeholder workshops were held to gather input for a range-wide Shortleaf Pine Restoration Plan. Workshops were held in Knoxville, Tennessee (June 2013), Roanoke, Virginia (October 2013), Ft. Smith, Arkansas (December 2013) and Waretown, New Jersey (June 2014). The first draft of the Shortleaf Pine Restoration Plan was completed in September 2014 and has since gone through an extensive review process. It is in the final draft stage and is scheduled to be completed in January 2016.

The SPI represents a broad range of public and private organizations, as well as key state and federal agencies currently working in the shortleaf pine ecosystem. SPI’s Advisory Committee members include representatives from USDA Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Southern Regional Extension Forestry, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Association of Conservation Districts, University of Tennessee, American Forest Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, National Wild Turkey Federation, The Nature Conservancy, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For more information, visit www.shortleafpine.net.
Decline in Shortleaf Pine Acres on FIA Forest Plots 1980-2012

Oswalt 2015

We plant more trees than we harvest. We invest millions to protect the environment. And we've led the charge to offer Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified products. At Domtar, we're serious about sustainability.
From the rich cove forests of western North Carolina to the rugged Central Appalachians of West Virginia, from Clinch River to the Tennessee River, the southern and central Appalachian Mountains are among North America’s most diverse and valuable natural systems. The hardwood forests of the region—home to some of the most diverse collections of plants and animals in the world—are a national treasure. From the migratory songbirds to the hellbender salamander, the biodiversity of the region is truly amazing. These forests also provide clean air and water, supply lumber and pulpwood, and serve as a hub for outdoor recreation for locals and millions of visitors.

About 60 percent of these valuable forests are privately owned, whether in small parcels by individual landowners or by small companies. While many private woodland owners across the region have an excellent record of forest stewardship, significant opportunities remain for widespread implementation of more sustainable forest management practices. For example, in some areas in the region, a legacy of heavy clearcutting at the turn of the 20th century and repeated cycles of selective harvesting of only the best trees has left behind a degraded forest.

To expand best practices in these valuable forests, Rainforest Alliance and leading forest products companies including Avery Dennison, Staples, Columbia Forest Products, Domtar, and Kimberly-Clark have formed the Southern Woodlands Alliance. The Southern Woodlands Alliance (SWA) works with diverse stakeholders to develop new resources and increase the participation of forest owners in scientific, sustainable forest management in the southern and central Appalachians. Announced in July 2015, the SWA has planned a three-year, $1.4 million initiative to reach individual forest owners. The SWA aims to demonstrate the economic, social, and environmental value of sustainable forest management to private forestland owners; streamline the availability of technical services for landowners; and create new market linkages to buyers interested in sustainable products in order to meet demand and support the landowners’ investment. All partners involved in the project share a deep commitment to advancing sustainable management of the region’s forests, backed up by significant efforts to procure responsibly managed timber.

“Over the years, we have relied on the private woodlands owners of the South to provide responsibly produced wood and fiber to make many of the products that we sell, and have considered them partners in good forest stewardship,” says Mark Buckley, VP for Environmental Affairs of the office products company Staples, Inc. “Most of the paper products on our shelves are produced in the Southeast region, with wood coming from these privately owned forests. With this project, we hope to provide new resources and tools for woodland owners to be even better stewards of their woodlands, and to continue this important partnership.”

The SWA’s on-the-ground technical support will be designed to help landowners enhance a wide range of forest resources, including soil and water quality, high-value timber, and sensitive wildlife habitat. The forests of this region are incredibly resilient, and the partners of the SWA believe that with careful and far-sighted management, this is an incredible opportunity to enrich the economic productivity and ecological health of these forests far into the future.

The SWA will initially focus on working in the procurement zones of three large paper and plywood mills of two project partners. These zones surround Domtar’s integrated pulp and paper mill in Kingsport, Tennessee, and Columbia Forest Products’ two plywood mills in Old Fort, North Carolina and Craigsville, West Virginia. These three facilities are all longstanding fixtures in the regional forest products economy, providing local jobs and sending high-quality forest products
into the national marketplace and beyond. Together these mills purchase millions of dollars of timber annually and provide more than a billion dollars of economic impact across the region.

Forest management certifications like the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) have become important tools for sustainable forest management and signals of responsible practices for the marketplace, large brands, and consumers. With ever-growing interest in sustainability from corporations around the world, landowners can benefit from showcasing their good stewardship when bringing their wood to market. But too often certification does not “work” for woodland owners. This is particularly true of southeastern forests, which are carved up into relatively small parcel sizes, and where naturally regenerating hardwood forests mature over several generations, leaving most landowners only one opportunity for a financially rewarding logging job. The SWA is committed to understanding those obstacles and kick the tires on ways to be more efficient, provide more value to landowners, and deliver sustainable forest management outcomes. Both the FSC and the ATFS have expressed interest in partnering in these efforts to bring added value to landowners in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

“Today only a small percentage of landowners have a forest management plan, and even fewer are certified to one of the forest management certification systems available. We know that there are many more landowners who are responsible stewards of their woodlands, and this project will develop new tools to help tell that story of sustainable forest management to the marketplace,” said Roland Simon, VP of the Global Procurement Materials Group of Avery Dennison.

“We hope that adding our weight to the project will help bring new landowners to sustainable forest management and forest management certification, so we can meet our commitment to a sustainable supply chain and continue to offer our customer the best and most sustainable products we can,” Simon added.

With its “Sustainable Paper Company” tagline, Domtar has a long history of working to advance sustainable forest management through partnerships. “The SWA is a way for us to support landowners who wish to be better stewards of their woodlands near our mill in Kingsport, Tennessee,” said Paige Goff, Domtar’s VP of Sustainability and Business Communications. “Domtar is pleased to work with Rainforest Alliance and the other partners to do our part to make sure the diverse and truly amazing forests of the central and southern Appalachians continue to provide so many benefits for the region.”

Programmatic activities will kick off later this year with a series of landowner meetings across the project area, designed to connect our partners with woodland owners and present the SWA value proposition. Already, efforts are underway to engage landowners to advance sustainable forest management. The SWA will work with these efforts to deliver forest management planning support by assisting with the identification and protection of high conservation value areas, restoration of previously “high graded” forests, maintenance of critical habitat, invasive species control, and protection of water quality and watershed values.

“I am gratified to see the forest products companies continuing to play a key role in advancing sustainable forest management in the region,” says Andrew Goldberg, project manager of the SWA. “The project will connect woodland owners with strong market demand for forest products from sustainably managed, naturally regenerating hardwoods of the southern and central Appalachians from project partners and help expand markets for their wood.”

Key objectives of the project include:

- Increasing understanding and appreciation of the inherent benefits of sustainable forest management practices among woodland owners;
- Demonstrating the compatibility and interdependence of sustainable forest management practices with the social and economic wellbeing of local communities, healthy forest ecosystems, and values held by woodland owners;
- Increasing the number of woodland owners actively engaged in sustainable forest management, and therefore increase availability of sustainably-produced forest products;
- Promoting and maintaining biodiversity and healthy ecosystems;
- Measuring and communicating project results.

The Rainforest Alliance has been working in the U.S. South for many years, providing auditing services for sustainable forest management certification. Along with certification work, the organization has a history of advancing sustainable forest management in the area, working to link biodiversity conservation with sustainable forestry practices by enhancing the economic competitiveness of community-based small and medium forestry enterprises, as well as significant direct engagement with critical supply chain players in the region. For more information about the project, or to get involved, please contact Andrew Goldberg, agoldberg@ra.org.
Book Review


It is not often that a book on any subject comes along that is this well written and researched. When it concerns the story of forestry in the southern U.S., this one is unlikely to be surpassed. The three well known and qualified authors witnessed most of this history, or heard about it first hand. All three were directly involved in the historic events as they evolved.

That lead may sound as though it was written by a Madison Avenue advertising copy writer, but it comes from a reviewer who has been a student and bit player in forest policy for nearly 60 years, much of that in the Southeast. As the publisher of National Woodlands for nearly 30 years, I have had the privilege of reviewing many forestry books, but none attempted to target a subject this large, tie it all together, and still keep it relevant. As noted in its preface, this book is not an academic documentation of what and when of this era. It is a story of the why, and how and who.

The book is large, literally. It is in an 8x10-inch format, with 31 pages of small print, plus 68 pages of appendices and index. There are no splashy color pictures and few graphs and sidebars, but this still water does run deep. The story line flows quickly, using details sparingly, and does not bog down. The text is cleverly integrated both horizontally and vertically, and works. Here is what I mean.

The vertical structure is a time line divided into three parts:
1.) The Dawn of a New Era, 2.) The Golden Age of Industrial Forestry, and 3.) Southern Forestry at the Turn of the Century

Each part has sub-titles that recount historical events including the events, the state of economy, and the people involved, using the horizontal themes. The Dawn of a New Era is the long lost vignette that President Roosevelt vetoed a change in the tax code to treat timber as capital gains or regular income. Taxation is a factual recount of the long-term debate over whether the sale of timber should be taxed as capital gains or regular income. Books and dissertations have been written on the subject, or regular income whether the sale of timber should be taxed as capital gains or regular income. This book is the closest highlighted subject. On page 75 “A Milestone in Forest History” says: “In 1943, Congress passed the Federal Aid to Education Act, which included a provision that the state of Georgia and the neighboring Carolinas would become the first to receive Federal assistance. This provision was an important step in the development of federal forest policy, and it paved the way for the establishment of the Forest Service in 1905.”

Perhaps the best way to absorb and understand the history of Southern Forestry is to open any page and go to the subject: “The Golden Age of Industrial Forestry (Part 1) covers: Origins of Forestry in the South; Expansion of Forestry, Public and Private; Forest Research, Education and Technology; and the Depression, Recovery, and Expansion of Forestry in the Environmental Era (Part 1).”

Likewise the Golden Age of Industrial Forestry (Part 2) and Controversy up to 1945. “Despite the prosperity of the 1920s and 1930s, the South faced a number of challenges that would affect its forest industry. These included the Great Depression, which led to a decline in the demand for timber, and the expansion of conservation efforts, which led to the establishment of national forests and the creation of the Forest Service.”

Forests, and Southern Forestry in the Environmental Era. “The book is large, literally. It is in an 8x10-inch format, with 31 pages of small print, plus 68 pages of appendices and index. There are no splashy color pictures and few graphs and sidebars, but this still water does run deep. The story line flows quickly, using details sparingly, and does not bog down. The text is cleverly integrated both horizontally and vertically, and works. Here is what I mean.

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Although the book is a bit expensive, as first run issues often are, foresters and landowners alike are urged to check it out of the library. My guess is that many, if not most, will want their own copy.

“This book is a must-read for anyone interested in how the South created a $100-billion-dollar business in a sustainable way: the development and use of our southern private forests.”

MIKE CLUTTER
Forest Investment Associates

“HOW TO” SERIES

Here’s what we shared in the Fall Quarter of 2015:
- Nov. 25   Importance of Forests in Climate Change
- Nov. 18   Oregon Increases No-Cut Streamside Buffers
- Dec. 16   Trail Marker Trees: A Native American Legacy
- Dec. 23   How to Manage Mistletoe on Woodlands
- Dec. 23 Obama Signs Bi-partisan Omnibus Bill Important
- Dec. 16 Softwood Prices in Second Quarter, 2015
- Dec. 23 How to Manage for Monarch Butterflies
- Dec. 16 How to Manage for Cavity Nesting Birds
- Dec. 2 Marketing Timber: 10 Do’s and 3 Don’ts
- Dec. 2 Mapping and Other Tools for Landowners
- Nov. 25   How to Manage Woodlands for Turkey Habitat
- Oct. 2   Leucostoma Canker in Peach and Cherry Trees
- Oct. 2 How to Clean the Forest Canopy
- Oct. 7 How to Thin Blue Oak Woodlands
- Oct. 2 How to Thin Blue Oak Woodlands
- Oct. 2 Sudden Oak Death and Ramorum Blight
- Nov. 25   How to Manage for Monarch Butterflies
- Nov. 25   Once a Friend of Forests, Fire Now a Destroyer
- Nov. 25   “More Than a Woodlot” Book Review
Era (Part 1) covers: Origins of Forestry in the South; Expansion of Forestry, Public and Private; Forest Research, Education and Technology; and the Depression, Recovery, and Controversy up to 1945.

Likewise the Golden Age of Industrial Forestry (Part 2) includes: Postwar Expansion, the Planted Forest, Research Cooperatives, Corporate Forestry, Non-industrial Private Forests, and Southern Forestry in the Environmental Era.

Part 3) describes Southern Forestry in the 21st century with a description of the oncoming fourth and fifth Southern Forest, how the new century is bringing massive changes to Southern forestry, and a vision of the road ahead.

Perhaps the best way to absorb and understand the history of Southern Forestry is to open any page and go to the closest highlighted subject. On page 75 “A Milestone in Forest Taxation” is a factual recount of the long-term debate over whether the sale of timber should be taxed as capital gains or regular income.

Books and dissertations have been written on the subject, but the authors cover it quite well in two pages. Included is the long lost vignette that President Roosevelt vetoed a 1943 change in the tax code to treat timber as capital gains as “providing relief not for the needy but for the greedy.” In a rare veto override vote at the height of World War II, the House overrode the president 299 to 95 and the Senate concurred 72 to 24. This is another example of a “horizontal theme” that continues to this day as Congress goes about a favored task: the periodic revision of the U.S. Tax Code.

The advent and nuances of “Forest Certification: The New Environmental and Social Forest Context” (p. 301) are described as “another force shaping the future of forestry in the South.” While the authors note that many books and reports have been written on the evolution of forest certification, they skillfully manage a most readable digest of what has happened and is happening in just five pages. Certification is likely here to stay, and landowners and industry are making it a reality.

Although the book is a bit expensive, as first run issues often are, foresters and landowners alike are urged to check it out of the library. My guess is that many, if not most, will want their own copy.

Keith A. Argow
Washington, D.C.
Federal Agency Got it Right On Long-Eared Bat and Working Forests

In January the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) took a constructive step forward by recognizing the positive benefits of private working forests to the long-term conservation of the northern long-eared bat.

While correctly determining that white nose syndrome—a contagion destroying bat populations—threatens the existence of the bat, the FWS acknowledged the benefits of forestry as part of the conservation solution. This sets an important precedent building on similar conclusions made by the agency for other species, including the black pine snake in the southern U.S.

Environmental Group to Sue FWS Over Bat Listing Decision

Within weeks following the decision of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to loosen the “take” restrictions on the northern long-eared bat, the Center for Biological Diversity announced it will file a legal challenge. Unless, or until a judge files an injunction, the rule will stand.

Congress Approves Tax Incentives For Land Conservation

The first session of the divisive 114th Congress came to a close on a positive note in mid-December, by passing the 2015 Omnibus Appropriations and Tax Act with strong bipartisan support. The House vote was 318-109 and 65-33 in the Senate.

Significantly, both House and Senate leaders kept special interest riders off the must-pass spending bill, which kept the debate more civil. This is a hopeful indication that both parties can conduct the people’s business responsibly when they have to.

The bill reinstated and made permanent the federal conservation tax deduction for permanent conservation easements. This has been a priority of the Land Trust Alliance and NWOA for years.

Lawmakers raised the deduction for donating a permanent easement from 30 percent of taxable income in any year to 50 percent. Qualifying farmers, ranchers and many woodland owners can now deduct up to 100 percent of their annual income. In addition, the carry-forward period to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement is raised from 5 to 15 years.

Additional Funding for Timber

NWOA has long supported additional funding for national forest timber sales, particularly in the West where lack of logs has caused many mills to either close down or go out of business permanently. The result is that family landowners have fewer buyers for their trees, there is less competition, and log hauling costs are increased.

Appropriators increased funding for timber sales by $12 million, bringing the line item up to $350 million. Both the House and Senate Committees included language that they expected timber sales to be handled in a more efficient manner.

Forest Inventory Analysis (U.S. Forest Service) received a well-justified increase of $5 million. Maintaining a reliable, ongoing survey of tree growth nationwide with reliable data is essential for industry and mill owners in making high cost and long term investments.

No Permanent Fix for Wildfire Funding

In spite of strong efforts by a nationwide committee lead by the Nature Conservancy and including NWOA, a permanent fix for funding wildfire was not included in the budget. The bill did provide $4.2 billion for wildfire control. This is a $670 million increase over 2015 levels.
Kentucky Woodland Owners Identify Five Issues and Plan Initiatives

Leaders of the Kentucky Woodland Owners Ass’n (NWOA affil.) have taken a page from NWOA. Using a procedure similar to the annual ranking of the Top Ten Family Forestry Issues, KWOA identified five issues that need to be addressed. All are clearly local issues, which confirms the NWOA slogan above: “All Forestry is Local.”

#1: Forest Health: Invasive insects, diseases and unwanted plants are changing their woodlands. Initiative: Legislatively establish a Forest Health Task Force headed by the state entomologist attached to the Kentucky Division of Forestry.


#3: Competitive Disadvantage: Kentucky lacks appropriate incentives for private woodland owners to help them keep their woods in woodlands. Industry lacks sources of high quality certified timber to maintain market share. Initiative: Establish an incentive program using Indiana’s Classified Forest System as a model.

#4: Wildfire: A continuing threat to woodlands resulting in significant reduction in timber values. Initiative: Establish a Law Enforcement Unit in Division of Forestry and adopt recommendations of the Governor’s Task Force on Wildfire and Arson (2006).

#5: Limited Markets for Low Grade Trees: Kentucky’s forests are currently worth one quarter of their potential due to historical mistreatment. Initiative: New markets for biomass and low quality trees to improve forest stand quality.

Washington DNR Convenes New Wildland Fires Advisory Committee

Responding to a request by the State Legislature, the Washington DNR formed a new Wildland Fire Advisory Committee in December as part of a strategy to improve the response to the devastating wildfires that have ravaged the state. Tony Craven, a member of Washington Farm Forestry Ass’n. (NWOA affil.), was appointed to represent small forest landowners.

Wisconsin Legislature Poised To Overhaul Forest Management

On January 14, the Senate Forestry Committee approved the bill 3-2, clearing the way for a full vote on the Senate floor. One issue in contention is a change that would allow woodland owners to lease hunting rights on enrolled in the timber tax program while still qualifying for the tax break. That limit is currently 160 acres, and additional land must be open to free public hunting. The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Ass’n. (NWOA affil.) has been active in the revision process. Also at issue is funding for DNR forestry programs.

New Hampshire & Mass. Affiliates Host Northeast Regional Meeting

The New Hampshire Timberland Owners Ass’n. and the Massachusetts Forest Alliance (both NWOA affiliates) hosted a gathering in Greenfield MA of leaders of 18 organizations representing landowners, forest industry, loggers, foresters, extension forestry, and forest industry trade associations. NWOA affiliates included ME, NH, VT, NY and MA. The objective was to describe program goals and support long-standing shared interests.
Oklahoma

craig.mckinley1@aol.com

An effort to strengthen the connection between the two major landowner/forestry organizations in Oklahoma has been completed. The Oklahoma Forestry Association (OFA) and the Oklahoma Woodlands Owners Association (OWOA) have finalized an agreement that will allow the two groups to function as one.

Members of OWOA are accepted as OFA members with information and activities sponsored by OFA available to those involved with both groups. In December, the OFA voted in several new directors, including Craig McKinley of OWOA. In addition, OWOA member Miles Schulze of Dallas, Texas was appointed to the Board by OFA President, Corey Bouffleur.

As part of the agreement, OFA will continue to hold its annual activities such as harvesting and safety workshops, Log-a-Load benefits, and the annual banquet. Likewise, two workshops for forest landowners will be held each year, sponsored by OFA but coordinated by the OWOA representatives.

The organizations will be served by an Executive Director, who functions as a program coordinator and legislative liaison. The Oklahoma Forestry Association-Oklahoma Woodland Owners Association was also recently recognized as an affiliate of the National Woodland Owners Association, which provides significant support to the advancement of forest management in the state.

Craig McKinley

Arkansas

Contact: rbell@sjuddenlink.net

The Ozark Woodland Owners Association is an independent, incorporated 501(c)(3) association of forest landowners, forestry professionals, and others. The association was formed in 1994 to educate forest landowners and the public in the practices of sound forest management.

OWOA is governed by a board of officers and director volunteers elected annually at the fall membership meeting. The association is an independent state affiliate of the National Woodland Owners Association.

Our mission statement is: “To provide the educational tools and community for landowners to practice sound forest management in relation to ecosystem maintenance and economics.”

Education is an important part of the association’s mission. Therefore we implement several programs including:

1.) Landowner workshops and field days;
2.) Biennial North Arkansas Forest Landowner Training Conference;
3.) Provide technical assistance to fellow forest landowners providing a support base for fellow landowners and professionals, OWOA benefits its members in the following ways:

1.) Quarterly OWOA newsletters;
2.) Quarterly NWOA magazines;
3.) Invitations to local and regional forestry workshops and field days;
4.) Periodic OWOA flash mail messages on important, time-sensitive forestry news;
5.) Free technical assistance/advice from other forest landowners.

Anyone who is a forest landowner, forestry professional or who has interest in practicing sound forestry as well as providing the community necessary to pass on information in regards to management should join.

Alabama

Contact: roates@alfafarmers.org

The Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Awards, initiated in 1978, annually recognize the most outstanding TREASURE Forests in Alabama, especially with respect to their educational value and use.

The awards are sponsored by the Alabama Natural Resources Council and the W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Awards Program, which is administered by Auburn University. The award is based on how well a landowner displays low forest landowners providing a support base for fellow landowners and professionals, OWOA benefits its member in the following ways:

1.) Quarterly OWOA newsletters;
2.) Quarterly NWOA magazines;
3.) Invitations to local and regional forestry workshops and field days;
4.) Periodic OWOA flash mail messages on important, time-sensitive forestry news;
5.) Free technical assistance/advice from other forest landowners.
the TREASURE Forest philosophy of
good stewardship.

This philosophy is reflected by the
forest management accomplishments
as well as the landowner’s commitment
and support of educational activities on
the property that promote good forest
stewardship to others.

GEORGIA
Federation of
Forest Owners

Georgia
Contact: Lee201@bellsouth.net

The Greene-Morgan Forest Landown-
ers’ Association (GMFLA), a member of the Georgia Federation of Forest Owners, assists forest landowners in the management of their land to the highest standards of good stewardship, the reward of which will be healthier forests, cleaner water, better habitat for wildlife, and increased recreational opportunities.

The association also aims to pro-
mote the growing of renewable forest
resources while protecting environ-
mental benefits and to increase the
understanding of all benefits of pro-
ductive forestry while raising the level
of knowledge about natural resource
issues related to forest management.

Greene—Morgan Forest Landown-
ers Association was founded in 1988
by James Johnson, a Georgia Forestry
Commission ranger at the Morgan
County Unit. At that time the original
board members were: Julian E. Beas-
ley, Jr., James K Johnson, III, Lowry W.
Hunt, Jr., Charles E. Williams, David H.
Heffner, and Dr. Lawrence K. Lewis.

Since its establishment, the associa-
tion’s mission has been to encourage
and educate forest landowners in the
management of their land to the high-
est standards of good stewardship,
the reward of which will be healthier
forests, cleaner water, better habitat
for wildlife and increased recreational
opportunities.

The GMFLA promotes the growing
of renewable forest resources while
protecting environmental benefits and
increased understanding of all benefits
of productive forestry and to raise
the level of knowledge about natural
resource issues as related to forest
management.

NC Woodland Owners
Association

North Carolina
Contact: saw921@bellsouth.net

NCWoodlands is an independent
grassroots not-for-profit organization
that provides its members with a voice
on national, state, and local issues af-
flecting North Carolina’s private wood-
lands. We are affiliated with the National
Woodland Owners Association and our
mission is to advance the interests of
North Carolina’s woodland owners and
to encourage responsible stewardship
of their property.

We also seek to inform all North
Carolinos of the benefits of forestry
which include wealth creation, more
wildlife, cleaner water, fewer wildfires,
and healthier, more productive forests.

NCW supports the practice of forestry
in North Carolina:
• To increase awareness of the impor-
tance North Carolina’s forestland to
the overall economic and environ-
mental health of the state;
• To encourage North Carolina’s wood-
land owners to develop and imple-
ment sound forest management plans for their woodland property;
To advance the interests of North Carolina’s woodland owners in cooperation with compatible entities including appropriate state agencies, universities, and other conservation groups.

Kentucky
Contact: marla@hl-treefarm.com
Kentucky’s Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) has passed a resolution with recommendations to address timber theft. Shortly after the EQC meeting, the Interim Joint Committee on Natural Resources heard related testimony from the Kentucky Division of Forestry, Kentucky Forest Industries Association and Kentucky Resources Council on this important matter.

The theft of timber is a crime that has been difficult to prosecute in Kentucky. There were attempts last session to establish a Timber Theft Reduction task force through HCR 56, which passed the House but did not pass the Senate during the short session.

In other Kentucky news, applications are still being accepted for the Invasive Species Removal Program which is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to Kentucky landowners fighting invasive species adjacent or within 0.5 mile of public lands that have conservation and/or restoration values.

The goal of the program is to limit the spread of invasive plant species from private property to ecologically important public lands.

The financial assistance is awarded through contracts between private landowners and University of Kentucky Forestry Extension which will pay for 100 percent of the estimated cost (up to $10,000) of controlling invasive plants on eligible private property.

The invasive species control practices are expected to be completed between July 2015 and April 2016. Payments to program participants will be paid after verification of practice implementation.

For more information visit www.ukforestry.org or contact Christopher Reeves at 859-257-0174 or christopher.reeves@uky.edu.

Texas
Contact: gmeyers@windstream.net
The Texas Forest Landowners Council serves to improve the cooperation and communications among county landowner associations in East Texas whose members are interested in managing their forests for wood products, as well as wildlife and environmental reasons.

The Council’s goals are to share information, provide training, and improve the image of forest ownership. They meet every other month to share local information and form ideas to help Texas Forestry Association carry out its goals and objectives.

Members participate in the many communications efforts of Texas Forestry Association, including working the TFA booth at the State Fair of Texas. Members also raise funds for a scholarship to benefit the winner of the State Woodland Clinic Contest.

Mississippi
Contact: Mississippi@nwoa.net
Local affiliates of the Mississippi Forestry Association are active in most of Mississippi’s counties, especially counties where timber is one of the leading crops. The members of these local organizations include landowners, businessespeople, forestry consultants, forest industry representatives, and anyone else interested in forestry.

Each county association plans meet-
**The Readers Respond……**

**Keith:**
Congratulations on another excellent issue of National Woodlands. with the Autumn 2015 issue.

Also, thank you for including the article on the Baltic-American Freedom Foundation forestry dialogue exchange. Unfortunately, there were two errors: Your table of contents and article headline read Balkan-American!

According to “Webster” (2001): “Baltic States Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania, countries on the Baltic Sea.” “Balkan States countries of the Balkan Peninsula (Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, and the European part of Turkey) & Romania.”

Sorry for my geography lesson, but I think it is important for the sake of international forestry relations to get it right.

  **Kirk David**
  Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

**Hello Keith:**
I Enjoy National Woodlands magazine and the articles, however I did want to bring to your attention what to me seems like a major incorrect depiction in the Autumn issue of the current range of the gray wolf in the United States.

I say this since I live in Washington State, where 16 active packs currently live, with additional packs extending into neighboring Oregon, as you probably are aware. Information from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Thanks again for a fine publication.

  **Charles J. Gibilisco**
  Quilcene, Washington

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**Virginia**

**Contact:** Virginia@nwoa.net

The Virginia Woodlands Association was founded as a joint venture with Verbatim Publishing (producer of Appalachian Woodlands Newsletter) and NWOA with the goal of involving both county and regional landowner associations in state family forestry advocacy. The start-up was successful, and the group resulted in a small but loyal membership.

Although still functioning as a statewide advocate for family forestry, the membership was offered the opportunity to join the National Woodland Owners Assoc. as a national member (which most did) and subscribe to Appalachian Woodlands newsletter which continues with peppy and candid opinions by Charlie Finley, a well-known semi-retired lobbyist in Richmond.

Virginia Woodlands continues to offer professional forester referrals, support for state forestry and land conservation appropriations.

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**Tennessee Woodland Owners Association**

**Tennessee**

**Contact:** tennessee@nwoa.net

A decade ago the Tennessee Forestry Association hosted the formation of the Tennessee Woodland Owners Association at a statewide meeting in Nashville.

It became the landowner association affiliate in Tennessee (as a forest industry trade association TFA is not eligible to be NWOA’s state affiliate).

The TWOA was launched with officers and an interim board of directors. Following the untimely death of the president, group gradually declined but not before providing important testimony opposing as proposed county ordinance and would have hogtied landowners property rights.

Local responses do make a difference!

At this time, inquiries from Tennessee members and other landowners are being handled the NWOA office, until the organization can find leadership, reaffirming their nickname as the “volunteer state.”

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Opportunities for Southern Forests

by Wib Owen

From the oaks and hickories of Appalachian Virginia to the piney woods of eastern Texas, the southern United States is host to incredibly diverse and productive forests. In some states like Alabama and Georgia, they cover two thirds or more of the state’s land area.

Southern forests shelter a wide variety of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, many of them adapted to life in forests that have long been managed by human hands. Many southern forest ecosystems are also shaped by fire. Periodic wildfires and prescribed burns clear the ground cover and allow native understory species to flourish.

In addition to vast ecological diversity, southern forests are essential for the region’s economy, helping meet the world’s demand for wood products. Over half of all timber products from the nation come from southern forests, making it the “wood basket of the world.”

In Georgia, the forest industry brings in $28.7 billion to the state and supports more than 129,000 jobs. Across the South, wood products pump more than $230 billion combined back into the region’s economy, a figure that excludes the added ecosystem services that healthy forests provide as carbon sinks and as biomass for wood pellets. (For an in-depth look at biomass and wood pellets, see Tim Foley’s column in this issue’s southern forest section on page 18).

All of this incredible work is sustained and advanced mostly by private forest owners. Seventy percent of southern forests are owned by individuals or families, with much of the land passed down from generation to generation.

As diverse as southern forests are, they face an equally broad number of challenges. The South is one of the fastest growing regions in the country, and many states have seen tree cover fragment or decline as more land is converted into suburbs and cities. Not only does this splintering affect the benefits of intact forests, new neighbors can often impact a forest owner’s ability to safely conduct a prescribed burn. In addition, many landowners struggle to find markets for their wood products.

Southern forest owners must also contend with pests like the emerald ash borer and diseases like sudden oak death, along with more invasive foes like kudzu. Spreading pathogens, like thousand cankers disease, have recently been spotted for the first time in the South as well.

All of these are issues that I’ve heard about from southern landowners and have been reflected in the Top 10 Family Forestry Issues published annually by NWOA. As Executive Director of the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF), I believe these problems are best tackled when we have strong partnerships in forestry. After all, even if you perform your due diligence preparing your land for wildfires or a returning pest, all that hard work could be undone by an unengaged neighbor.

Much of effective landowner engagement is a one-to-one affair. For example, Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) personnel worked directly with each landowner on the nearly 5,500 timber harvest sites they inspected in 2014. At a time when many states are cutting back on funding, inspection time is a chance for the VDOF to speak with landowners about the benefits of Best Management Practices. It was also a chance to inform landowners about Virginia’s 25 percent tax credit on the value of timber retained, which is offered to landowners who reserve buffer strips during harvest.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
FOUNDED 1929

NATIONAL WOODLANDS WINTER 2016
In spite of efforts from the VDOF and many other state agencies, management advice is still only reaching about 36 percent of family forest acres in the South. At two workshops conducted in early 2015, attendees brainstormed some of the ways we might broaden the number of engaged landowners.

The ideas that bubbled to the top were bringing stakeholders together to develop comprehensive landowner engagement plans for each state. The result would be better collaboration among organizations working to engage family forest owners and the development of goals and targets which the group could work toward.

We are also looking to engage landowners beyond just one-to-one meetings, as new information has to be distributed as quickly as possible. While one-on-one remains essential, especially for many Farm Bill programs, diminished state capacity will require innovative solutions to meet future state needs.

These landowner engagement plans could also help identify efficiencies, either by themselves or as part of a broader regional forum. Many federal, state, and private programs have overlapping objectives and the collaborative development of engagement plans can help ensure that all available resources are serving the greatest good.

Engagement takes time to grow, and forest landowners and stakeholders have successfully come together on other issues. Early efforts at longleaf pine restoration have grown into the Longleaf Alliance and America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative, which have created models for strong, successful restoration programs.

While developing these plans and securing funding is a first step, we believe the long-term benefits will be rewarding. With more comprehensive plans tailor-made to the families in each state we can build our engagement and trust with landowners across the South. The result will be an increase in well-managed acreage, leading to improved forest health and management of forest resources, fewer catastrophic wildfires and a better understanding of the value of family forests.

You can learn more about state forestry agency issues by visiting www.stateforesters.org and www.southernforests.org. We also invite you to attend a state forestry conference this year where landowner engagement will most certainly be addressed.

The Southern Group of State Foresters’ annual meeting will take place in Mobile, Alabama, June 13-16. The National Association of State Foresters’ annual meeting will be held in Savannah, Georgia in September. These annual business and networking events will include opportunities for dialogue about the top high impact issues facing America’s forests.

We hope to see you there!

Wib Owen is executive director of the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF)
Woodland owners often worry about what will happen to their treasured forest property after they depart this earth. It can represent a lifetime investment of both capital and personal effort. Many forest owners work to ensure their forest will endure as a legacy and sustainable resource for generations to come. Responsible forest management involves estate planning to address these generational issues.

Traditionally forest estates are passed on to children or other relatives who are interested in continuing to manage the forestland. When no such heirs exist, other options include various types of land trusts and governmental forest legacy programs. One of the newer options is the timberland legacy program, where some universities across the U.S. offer to protect and manage donated forests across generations. Income tax advantages for the donor also drives enrollment in a university legacy program.

Here we describe a case study of a property currently in the process of entering a university timberland legacy program. The university welcomes a gift from a former alumnus to be managed for revenue to benefit students and university goals. The landowner gains protection of the property from non-forest uses, provided sufficient revenue is produced to pay for maintenance of the forest and provides educational and research programs that interest the donor. Additionally, these properties may serve as demonstration sites for innovative forest management practices for local woodland owners.

The University as Custodian of Family Forestland
The fundamental emotion that triggers the donation of timberland, at least in this case study, is thinking about the "university as family"—as the perpetual custodian of family forestland. This seems to be a motive that drives many forest owners and something that legacy programs stress. Examples of universities with these programs (with information on their websites) are Auburn, Clemson, Mississippi State, N.C. State, Oregon State, Penn State, Stephen F. Austin, and West Virginia University. The intent is often for the timber and other revenue to benefit practical research and student fieldwork opportunities associated with the university. The community benefits originate from accessible demonstrations of best management practices for enhancing the environment and its natural beauty, the health of its wildlife, and the quality of water streaming to the community. The forest also serves as community-focused educational/demonstration for local schools, landowners, and public to demonstrate particular forest, wildlife, and conservation practices.

We highlight the Clemson University Timberland Legacy Program. It operates as a non-profit affiliate of the Clemson University Foundation, with ten statewide industry professionals who assist in making timberland legacy decisions. Timberland legacy gifts’ acceptance criteria are based on the property being managed sustainably while producing an income to support the property infrastructure maintenance, forest consultant and administrative fees, and—most importantly—to support the donor’s intentions.

The Johnson Experimental Forest
The case study highlights the 227-acre Johnson Experimental Forest (JEF), located in Chesterfield County, South Carolina, as a planned gift to the Clemson University Timberland Legacy Program. The name reflects the passion of the donor, Dr. Knowlton Johnson, to ensure the future of the property, forest research, and demonstration for community landowners in honor of his parents. The property is currently in the process of being donated. He is working to create a maintainable road system, fire breaks for future prescribed burns, and signage throughout the forest. His goal is a timberland legacy with a variety of demonstrations of innovative forest management and silviculture, wildlife management, recreation involving hunting and fishing, and conservation including water quality, wetland protection, and soil erosion within the Upper Pee Dee River watershed of South and North Carolina. He also sees the forest serving as a laboratory for training future forest and wildlife resource professionals.

This was family property, a former farm (cotton, tobacco, soybeans, pasture, and chickens), plus two small federal Conservation Reserve Program-sponsored loblolly pine plantations. Dr. Johnson inherited and acquired part from a sibling and began in 2009 to convert it into mostly forestland. In 2013 the property...
began as part of the third party forest certification American Tree Farm System. The transformation of JEF includes a variety of demonstrations and student activities that can be grouped into five categories: (1) forest management and silviculture, (2) wildlife enhancement, (3) conservation, (4) recreation, and (5) teaching and research activities.

**Forest Management and Silviculture Demonstrations**

**Longleaf Pine.** Restoration of longleaf pine to some of its original range is a conservation thrust in the Southeast and on the JEF. One demonstration is longleaf pine planted in a 20-acre cutover loblolly pine stand and one-acre former agriculture field. A second longleaf pine demonstration focuses on converting a 13-acre loblolly pine stand (age 25) to an uneven-aged longleaf stand by planting longleaf pine in every former third row. The intent is to serve as a demonstration for landowners who are interested in increasing longleaf acreage in their loblolly forest without damaging the habit that is important to wildlife. Further, this forest management strategy potentially may be able to provide revenue in shorter intervals with more frequent thinning without clearcutting.

**Loblolly Pine.** The focus of two loblolly pine demonstrations is shortened rotations and improved wood quality through the use of genetic improvements by inter-planting rows of genetically improved trees with less expensive trees to be harvested in the first thinning for pulp or biomass. In the first demonstration, ArborGen Mass Control Pollinated (MCP), a Varietal clone, and an elite open-pollinated loblolly pine were adapted to different silvicultural systems to evaluate results and measure economic return. Also established were MCP and Varietal vs. Elite OP pine treatment blocks using a FlexStand silviculture system. Already there have been challenges and lessons learned in establishing this silvicultural demonstration, including issues with seedlings from the nursery; chemical treatment operators; aggressive weed, brier, and hardwood control; and stand maintenance. Nevertheless, demonstrations established under less than ideal conditions which mirror those that forest landowners face on a regular basis can produce a realistic picture of genetic performance in the real world.

Another demonstration in a 100-acre natural stand is the establishment of an “all aged MCP loblolly pine stand” that converts the natural stand to five MCP flex stand blocks over a 20-year time period. This practice does not completely eliminate the stand’s value to wildlife, especially bobwhite quail, turkey, and deer; and it creates a more frequent revenue flow over time.

**Wildlife Enhancement Demonstrations**

Demonstrations of wildlife management practices are important for forest owners and managers. The JEF has several demonstrations that take wildlife into consideration along with timber management. One demonstration involves creating an environment that encourages bobwhite quail to return to the property (using a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service cost-share grant). The decline of this species is a problem over the entire Sandhills regions of the Southeast. Summer grasses are planted in utility right-of-ways and logging decks and rye grass has been planted in the new system of primary and secondary roads. Additionally, blueberry bushes and shade tolerant grasses are currently being planted in three bird sanctuaries in the forest. Finally, quail nesting areas have been established in proximity to existing logging decks and freshly turned soil areas for wallowing are planned for later this year.

In addition, wildlife plots for deer, quail, and turkey have been established in the 100-acre natural loblolly stand (planned MCP conversion). Five, one-acre plots were established to provide additional wildlife food, realizing that turkey normally requires larger feeding plots. It is important to note that an agreement with a hunting club as a working partner ensures planting and maintenance of these plots with the landowner providing the seeds. Also, two pollinator gardens are being established to demonstrate methods to promote native pollinators.

**Conservation**

Two demonstrations center on water quality and reduced soil erosion. First, beaver control is being implemented in streams to increase water quality and to allow beavers to exist without affecting water quality. This involves removing an existing beaver dam and building and installing a Clemson beaver pond leveler with the assistance of USDA Wildlife Services and Clemson University faculty and students (www.Clemson.edu/paspublishing/PAGES/AFW/AFW1.PDF). This device allows water in a stream to flow without beavers prohibiting the flow through their building of habitats. Second, water bars across new roads as a best practice are also being established to reduce soil erosion.

Lead author Dr. Knowlton W. Johnson (right) and co-author Corey Flowers by the North tract property sign.
Some see a forest. We see a future.

From the fertile forest of the Clemson Timberlands Legacy Program grows innovative thinkers, explorers, researchers and next-generation scientists. It grows the Clemson students and programs that will preserve future timberlands.

Your gift of harvestable timberland to Clemson benefits the University financially while providing a living classroom for undergraduate and graduate students in programs such as forest resource management, environmental and natural resources, and wildlife and fisheries biology.

Consider ensuring your legacy of land and learning through the Clemson Timberlands Legacy Program.

Find out more about what your timberland can yield for the future. Contact Kim Arp at kimarp@clemson.edu or 864-656-3824.

Recreation

The JEF allows hunting and fishing through a hunting lease to a hunting club and limited fishing rights to a few neighbors. A unique feature of the JEF hunting lease is that it does not allow any baiting for feral hogs, deer, and turkey hunting, although baiting is legal on private property in S.C. This baiting policy may have been responsible for a reduction in the JEF feral hog population in 2013 and 2014, which yielded no hog kills during 2014. The property has a white-tailed deer population with an above average buck to doe ratio as established by an observation study by Clemson University wildlife professionals. Fishing has been enhanced with the assistance of Clemson’s Cooperative Extension in establishing a healthy three-acre pond that is stocked with bluegill bream and largemouth bass. A community park with paths to a north and south bird sanctuary picnic tables, and drinking water access also exists. The park is an important component of establishing a community legacy.

Teaching and Research Activities

The JEF provides opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to receive on-site training and research in forest and wildlife management. In the past four years, groups of up to 14 Clemson forestry students (per class) from the Upper Pee Dee area have used JEF as property for their senior forest management projects. In addition, one Clemson undergraduate student conducted a wildlife research project in the forest, and one graduate student used one of the JEF demonstrations as part of his master’s thesis. In the future, other students will utilize this property for additional educational purposes.

A Legacy that Will Outlast the Johnsons

Many readers may be considering a university based timberlands legacy program. An old farm becoming a university research forest to demonstrate innovative and best forest management practices, wildlife management, conservation, and recreation practices for forest
One year old longleaf pine in a mature loblolly plantation being converted to an uneven longleaf stand over 12 years.

owners is not likely what most readers envisioned as a legacy. However, we’ve shown innovative thinking can lead to just that. This legacy can also provide a forestry and wildlife training environment for students who are preparing to become professionals in local universities. If added protection to whatever the university commitment might include is of interest, the woodlands owner can establish a conservation easement, which is what the JEF landowner has done. An easement provides additional protection that a forest land gift will be preserved even though the university might decide to sell the property after their death. The property can always be a tree farm in its entirety. With or without a conservation easement, the “university as family” strategy can demonstrate an alternative sustainable path for family forestry properties endowed to a university, showcasing sustainable management to provide revenue for maintenance costs and specified academic programs.

**Columbia Forest Products believes helping timberland owners properly manage their forest is important. For this reason, we’re proud of our commitment to forest certification. As FSC-certified resource managers through SmartWood, we support forest certification by promoting and rewarding responsible forest management for generations to come. To find out more, call us today at 888-737-0514. Or visit us at www.columbiaforestproducts.com.**
Federal income tax laws can influence a private woodland owner’s financial decisions about land management. Yet, special favorable tax provisions on timber that are intended to encourage private forest management and stewardship are commonly unknown. To help woodland owners in filing their 2015 tax returns, this publication explains the federal income tax laws on timber. The information is not legal or accounting advice. It is current as of January 2016.

**Timber Property Classifications**

For tax purposes, a woodland property may be classified as an investment, business or personal-use property. Tax deductions and losses that are allowed for investment or business properties may be limited or denied for personal-use property. So the classification is important in that the tax treatment on each type of property differs widely. If your primary purpose of owning land is for personal enjoyment (such as fishing and family retreat), your property may be taxed as personal-use property. In contrast, if your primary purpose of land ownership is for making a profit from growing timber, your timber may be taxed as an investment property or a business when such profit-seeking timber activities are more regular, active and continuous than an investment. Which status applies depends on the specifics of each case. The IRS presumes a profit motive if profit is realized in at least three of the past five years. Such profit, however, includes expectation of future profit from the appreciation of the asset.

**Example 1:** Mr. Smith sold timber for $20,000 profits in 2015. He replanted the land with loblolly pines. He treats his woodland property as an investment.

**Basis and Depletion Deduction**

Timber basis. Basis is the cost of the timber to the owner. You may deduct it from timber sales, which reduces the tax due on the sales. To establish the timber basis, find out how the property was acquired. For purchased property, the timber basis is the amount you paid for it. For inherited property, the basis of timber is its fair market value (FMV) on the decedent’s date of death. If you receive the timber as a gift, the timber basis is the lower of its FMV or the donor’s basis.

**Example 2:** Mrs. Anderson inherited forest land a year ago but didn’t establish the timber basis. A consulting forester provided a retroactive professional appraisal on her timber value on the date of the decedent’s death, which established her timber basis.

Depletion. Depletion is a deduction against timber sale.

**Example 3:** Mrs. Anderson sold 600 cords of pulpwood. She took depletion deduction of $6,000 ($10,000 of total timber basis ÷ 1,000 cords of total volume x 600 cords of timber sold).

**Timber Sales**

Sale of standing timber. Sales of standing timber held as an investment for more than one year qualify for long-term capital gain, which is taxed at advantageous lower tax rates than ordinary income. Sale of inherited timber is considered long-term. Report the sale of standing timber held as an investment on Form 8949 and Schedule D.

Both outright sales and pay-as-cut sales of standing timber by a business qualify for long-term capital gain (Sec. 1231 gain) after the timber has been held for more than one year. Report the sale of standing timber held for business use on Form 4797 and Schedule D. If you sell timber outright in a business, you also are required to file Form T unless you only have an occasional timber sale (see “Filing Form T” on the facing page).

**Example 4:** Your consulting forester advised an improvement cutting and estimated that there were 800 cords that should be sold. The highest bid was $30/cord. You signed the contract for sale of standing timber owned as an investment. You report a capital-gain on Schedule D and Form 8949.

Sale of products cut from timber held for use in a business. If you cut your own timber or have it cut by a contractor working at your direction, either for sale or for use in your business, the gains are ordinary income unless you elect to use sec. 631(a) on Form T, Part II.

**Example 5:** You paid a contractor $2,000 to cut standing timber held for business use for over one year into logs and you sold the cut logs to a mill for $30,000. The FMV of the standing timber was $23,000 on Jan. 1 and your basis in it was $1,000. If you elect to use sec. 631(a) on Form T, report a $22,000 long-term capital gain ($23,000 FMV – $1,000 basis) on Form 4797 and Schedule D, and $5,000 of ordinary income ($30,000 sale price – $23,000 FMV – $2,000 contractor fee) on Schedule C. If you fail to make the election, all $27,000 profit is ordinary income.

**Net Investment Income Tax**

For taxpayers meeting income threshold, investment timber sales and passive business timber sales are subject to a 3.8 percent net investment income tax, effective January 1, 2013. This 3.8 percent tax, enacted as part of the 2010 healthcare reform law, applies only to single taxpayers with
adjusted gross income ("AGI") over $200,000 or couples with over $250,000 AGI. "Material participants" in timber business are not subject to this tax.

Example 6: Husband and wife’s adjusted gross income is $260,000, including a $50,000 capital gain from their investment timber sale. The timber gains of $10,000 (the lesser of their excess of adjusted income of $260,000 over the $250,000 threshold or the capital gains of $50,000) are subject to the 3.8 percent tax ($380 tax), in addition to the capital gain tax on the sale.

Installment Sales
An installment sale involves receiving one or more payments after the year of sale, allowing you to defer tax by spreading your gain over two or more years. Interest is charged on deferred payments.

Example 7: You sold timber for $10,000 ($8,000 after deducting timber depletion and sale expenses) in 2015. Your gross profit percentage is 80 percent ($8,000 ÷ $10,000). The buyer paid you $5,000 in 2015 and will pay the remaining $5,000, plus interest, in 2016. Report a $4,000 gain ($5,000 × 80%) for 2015, using Form 6252.

Timber Management Expenses
Timber management expenses may include fees to a consulting forester; cost for competition control; the expense for insects, disease and fire control; pre-commercial thinning or firebreak maintenance. Investment timber owners may deduct expenses on Schedule A, but they are subject to a two percent of adjusted gross income reduction. Business timber owners who are "materially participants" deduct them in full on Schedule C. Property taxes are deductible.

Reforestation Costs
Taxpayers (except trusts) may deduct up to $10,000 ($5,000 for married couples filing separately) per year of reforestation costs per qualified timber property (QTP). Any amount over $10,000 per year per QTP may be deducted over 84 months (amortized). Trusts are eligible for amortization deduction. Qualifying costs include the direct costs to plant or replant a stand including natural regeneration.

Example 8: You spent $17,000 to reforest after a harvest. Deduct $10,000, plus 1/14th of the remaining $7,000 ($500) on your 2015 tax return. Deduct 1/7th of the $7,000 ($1,000) on your returns for 2016–2021 and the last 1/14th ($500) on your 2022 return. If you qualify as an investor, take the $10,000 deduction as an adjustment to gross income on the front of Form 1040; if you hold your forest land for business use, take it on Schedule C. Elect to amortize and take amortization deductions on Form 4562, Part VI.

Depreciation and Sec. 179 Expensing
Depreciation is a tax deduction that is based on the cost (basis) of assets used, such as those for machinery, computers, cars, vans, logging equipment, bridges, culverts, fences, temporary roads or the surfaces of permanent roads. For example, light-duty trucks and logging equipment are depreciated over five years. Also, business taxpayers may deduct up to $500,000 in the year qualifying property in 2015, subject to a $2,000,000 phase-out and business taxable income limitation (sec. 179 expensing). You also may take bonus depreciation equal to 50 percent of the cost of qualifying new property placed in service in 2015. Land is not depreciable.

Cost-share Payments
If you receive a cost-share payment from a qualified government program, you may exclude part or all of the payment from your income if the cost share is used in capital expenditure. Otherwise, it is ordinary income. Qualified federal programs include the Forest Health Protection Program (for southern pine beetle and mountain pine beetle), Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and Wetlands Reserve Program (discontinued Feb. 7, 2014). Several state programs also qualify for exclusion. The excludable amount is the present value of the greater of $2.50 per acre or ten percent of the average annual income from the affected acres over the last three years.

Example 9: You received a $3,900 cost-share payment from the Conservation Reserve Program and used it as capital expenditure for your 100-acre woodland. If you had no income from the property in the last three years, you could exclude up to $4,798 (($2.50 x 100 acres) ÷ 5.21%). The interest rate is from the Farm Credit System Bank. If you had $6,600 of income from the property, you could exclude the entire payment: (10% x ($6,600 ÷ 3)) + 5.21% = $4,222 > $3,900. Attach a statement to your tax return describing the program and your calculations.

Timber Casualty and Theft Losses
Loss of timber from a casualty—a sudden, unexpected and unusual event such as a fire or severe storm—may be deductible from your taxes. The deduction is the lesser of the decrease in FMV caused by the casualty or your basis in the timber block (the area you use to keep track of your basis). Similarly, a theft loss deduction is limited to the lesser of the decrease in FMV or your basis in the stolen timber. A competent appraisal usually is required.

Filing Form T (Timber)
You must file Form T (Timber), Forest Activities Schedule, if you claim a timber depletion deduction, sell cut products in a business (under sec. 631(a)), or sell outright timber held for business use. However, there is an exception for owners who only have an occasional timber sale, defined as one or two sales every three or four years.

Conservation Easement
You may take a deduction on qualified donation of a conservation easement in 2015. The deduction is up to 50 percent (or 100 percent for qualified farmers and ranchers including forest landowners) of the taxpayer’s AGI in a year. Any excess donation over the 50 or 100 percent limit may be carried forward to the next 15 years.

Linda Wang is the U.S. Forest Service national timber tax specialist, author and coauthor of numerous articles. For more information, visit the National Timber Tax website, www.timbertax.org.
Igniting the Spark: Encouraging Kids to Spend Time in the Forest

by Tiffany Fegel

“We have such a brief opportunity to pass on to our children our love for this Earth, and to tell our stories. These are the moments when the world is made whole. In my children’s memories, the adventures we’ve had together in nature will always exist.”

Richard Louv
Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

So many of the landowners I work with are eager for their grandchildren to visit their forest properties. They want so badly for future generations to love their property the same way they do. In a world where trees are competing with the Kardashians, Halo, Facetime, Angry Birds, constant texting, Facebook, YouTube, and on, and on, and on, it’s not hard to decipher why kids are not stimulated by the forest. It’s just not as exciting as all the things that they have been exposed to all their lives. The brunt of it is that nature is “boring” (to make a generalization directed towards the majority of children).

I have always firmly believed that inspiring excitement is about “lighting a spark” in people, especially children. If we can do something that gets them excited about being in the woods, just one time, maybe they will want to come back again. And again. And again. Maybe they will fall in love with the trees like many of us have.

I also believe that this ignition point must be intentional. It is most likely not going to happen by simply taking kids out into the forest. There is a need for a “hook” to get kids out for the first couple times. Get them excited. I have seen landowners add a pond with a rope swing for their grandkids to swim in during the summertime, or build a relatively simple zip line through the trees. But now I would like to feature a Women Owning Woodlands member from Oregon, and her husband, who have gone above and beyond to encourage their kids and grandkids to come play in the woods.

Nancy Jacobson and her husband Harlow own a little over five acres amid many other forested parcels in Northwest Oregon. In their woods, near their home, they have constructed a complex tree house, deck, and tree boat. All of which are connected by a suspension bridge.

“We built the tree house complex mainly for our grandkids, as a way to interest them in coming here, and it was a fun project for us as well. They had their first “camp-outs” here, in the tree house, on its deck, and also in our tent," Nancy explains. “They helped us construct a fire pit, learned how to build camp fires, and have roasted many hot dogs and s’mores with us.”

“They were introduced to many new plants, animal tracks, snakes, salamanders, tiny fish in our stream, our local deer, etc. and they had time for free, creative play in a beautiful environment. They have much more appreciation of Mother Nature now, and of caring for, protecting, and preserving our environment... Our grandkids love to explore and play in our woods.”

The Jacobsons also encourage friends and neighbors to bring over their children and grandchildren to explore the woods, the creek, and the tree house complex.

“It is such a great learning opportunity for kids (and adults) who often spend more time with electronic devices and don’t have a good connection with nature. Whenever we have folks visit us, we encourage them to explore the woods with us," says Nancy.

Nancy and her husband also enjoy recreating in their woodland themselves. They love to hike their trails with their puppy. “For me, being close to nature is so important," says Nancy. “Just walking through the forest gives me a sense of peace and serenity. Seeing a family of owls or a coyote or a deer, listening to the rush of the water in the stream and the calling of the birds and the rustling of the leaves, watching the sway of the large trees in the wind, they all give me such indescribable joy.”

“We feel so blessed to be surrounded by such a paradise and want to encourage others of all ages to discover, or rediscover, the joys of our natural surroundings.”

Mission Statement

The Women Owning Woodlands web project strives to bring topical, accessible, and current forestry information to woodland owners and forest practitioners through news articles, blogs, events, resources, and personal stories. We support women in forest leadership, women who manage their own woodlands, and all who facilitate the stewardship of forests. The web address is: www.womenowningwoodlands.net
It is most likely not going to happen by simply taking kids. I also believe that this ignition point must be intentional. Love with the trees like many of us have. Back again. And again. And again. Maybe they will fall in the woods, just one time, maybe they will want to come in...we can do something that gets them excited about being. Is about “lighting a spark” in people, especially children. If I have always firmly believed that inspiring excitement is not as exciting as all the things that they have been exposed to all their lives. The brunt of it is that nature is just not as exciting as all the things that they have been to decipher why kids are not stimulated by the forest. It’s not hard way they do. In a world where trees are competing with the Kardashians, Halo, Facetime, Angry Birds, constant texting, etc. and they had time for free, creative play in a beautiful woodland themselves. They love to hike their trails with their parents or a deer, listening to the rush of the water in the stream or a puppy. “For me, being close to nature is so important,” says Nancy Jacobson and her husband also enjoy recreating in their woodland. They love to hike their trails with their kids and grandkids to explore the woods, the creek, and the tree house complex. The Jacobsons also encourage friends and neighbors to bring over their children and grandchildren to explore the woods, the creek, and the tree house complex. They help us construct a fire pit, learned how to build camp fires, and have roasted many hot dogs and s’mores with us.” They also have constructed a complex tree house, deck, and tree boat. All of which are connected by a suspension bridge. Nancy Jacobson and her husband own a little land amid many other forested parcels in North...of five acres amid many other forested parcels in North...Nancy Jacobson and her husband, who have gone above and beyond to encourage their kids and grandkids to come play in the woods. Women Owning Woodlands member from Oregon, and her friends and neighbors have also added a pond with a rope swing for their grandkids to swim in during the summertime, or build a relatively simple zip line through the trees. But now I would like to feature a woman who is connected to her woods, the creek, and the tree house complex. Women who manage their own woodlands, and women who facilitate the stewardship of forests. The women who manage their own woodlands, and...In my children’s memories, the adventures we’ve had together in nature will always exist.”....
Why the Forestry Profession Should Harshly Criticize High-Grading

by Dan Pubanz*

In the Autumn 2015 issue of National Woodlands, there was an article discussing why landowners high-grade their forests. While the explanations of these causes are clear, the concluding paragraph stated that “[t]he forestry profession should be careful about harshly criticizing these short-term actions until we can provide long-term movement toward sustained yields while meeting short term economic and ecological needs.”

If the forestry profession truly considers itself a reputable profession, it should vigorously disagree with this statement.

While a lack of landowner understanding can often be a cause of high-grading, in many cases, high-grading is actually implemented by formally trained foresters. In the most egregious situations, it is knowingly imposed by the forester on an unknowledgeable landowner. Even more insidious are the more subtle degrades that take just the highest-quality trees from a forest and camouflage it by also taking a few other lower-grade trees. Foresters have long lamented the public’s poor perception of the practice of forestry and the forestry profession. Every high-graded woodlot only reinforces that perception and we are kidding ourselves if we think it doesn’t. Landowners are free to do with their land as they see fit and landowner-instigated high-grading will continue. However, a forester should never be involved in that process.

The problem of high-grading lies, fundamentally, with a lack of ethics. In forestry, this takes the form of condoning short-term greed that produces long-term detrimental impacts, both to the land and to the community. While other professions have standards that are supposed to curtail short-term greed (at least in theory), in forestry we accept this greed with a shrug. High-grading a forest is not justifiable even if driven by financial need. It would be far better for a cash-strapped landowner, before degrading the forest’s productivity, to sell the forest to someone who has the ethics to manage for long-term sustainability.

High-graded acreage is a primary driver impeding movement toward sustained yield. Once a woodlot is high-graded, poor quality timber will occupy the site for generations before another harvest producing high-quality products can occur. In many cases, we are managing lands today that were high-graded decades ago. These lands are still far below their productive capacity and decades from being capable of sustainably producing sawlogs. We harvest the low-grade cordwood in an effort to improve their degraded condition and to supply markets with some fiber. Arguments that we should continue to accept unsustainable high-grading until we reach long-term sustainability are mystifying, at best.

Since at least 2005, the Society of American Foresters’ position has been that an SAF forester’s obligation to the SAF Code of Ethics is met as long as the forester explains the negative consequences of high-grading to the landowner. In short, the message is that as long as we explain the negatives, we are absolved of any responsibility for the adverse consequences. It is unlikely that the American Medical Association would accept such an approach. A better approach is found in the Forest Stewards Guild Principles, which state, in part: “When the management directives of clients or supervisors conflict with the Mission and Principles of the Guild [which preclude high-grading], and cannot be modified through dialogue and education, a forester or natural resource professional should disassociate.” The public will never regard forestry as a true profession until the “profession” takes a firm stand against any and all high-grading, and eliminates forester involvement with the practice.

High-grading is never defensible and should always be harshly criticized by the forestry profession.

*Dan Pubanz is a consultant forester who manages Wolf River Forestry LLC in Shawano, Wisconsin.
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**WHY?** Because it is the right thing to do!
Drought, Fire and Forests
New assessment provides critical information for managing U.S. forests in the future

by Zoë Hoyle, SRS Science Delivery

The 2015 wildfire season was the costliest on record, with about $1.71 billion spent by the Forest Service on firefighting. During one particular week in the summer of 2015, fire-fighting cost $1.6 million per hour. Most of the fires of 2015 hit western states like drought-stricken California, where fire risk remains high due to four years of drought that’s resulted in the deaths of millions of trees.

As temperatures rise and precipitation patterns change under climate change, it’s likely that drought— and associated disturbances such as insect outbreaks and wildfires—will only get worse across many areas of the U.S. Large stand-level changes in forests are already underway in many parts of the West, but all U.S. forests can be impacted by drought.

In the South, the 2011 drought set off timber fires in both Georgia and Texas. In 2007, more than a third of the region was classified in “exceptional” drought and the city of Atlanta declared a water emergency. That same year, Georgia experienced its largest wildfire on record when the Georgia Bay Complex burned 441,705 acres of forest.

How can forest managers address the impacts of short- and long-term drought conditions and manage their lands for a hotter and drier future? A newly published report by the U.S. Forest Service provides a national assessment of the impacts of drought on the nation’s forests and rangelands and gives the scientific foundation required to develop strategies that managers can use to increase the resiliency of their forests.

“Management actions can either mitigate or exacerbate the effects of drought,” said Jim Vose, the Forest Service Southern Research Station (SRS) scientist who served as one of the lead editors of the report. “This synthesis establishes the scientific foundation needed to manage forests for drought resiliency and adaptation.”

Forested land alone comprises nearly one-third of the total land area of the U.S.—the single largest classification of land cover in the country. Although the assessment is national in scope, it identifies and discusses key regional concerns such as large-scale insect outbreaks and increased wildfire risk in the western U.S.

“This is not to say that drought doesn’t affect forest resources of the East,” says Vose, project leader of the SRS Center for Integrated Forest Science. “The key difference between the western and eastern U.S. is the scale, frequency, and pace of change. The less obvious impacts in the East could have equal or greater consequences because of the large human populations living near forests and relying on them for many key purposes, including clean water.” For example, forested watersheds are critical for the water supplies of many cities, including New York City and Atlanta.

Major findings from the report include:

- Drought projections suggest that some regions will become drier and that most will have extreme variations in precipitation.
- Even if current drought patterns remained unchanged, warmer temperatures will amplify drought effects.
- Drought and warmer temperatures will increase risks of large-scale insect outbreaks and larger wildfires, especially in the western U.S.
- Drought and warmer temperatures will accelerate tree and shrub death, changing habitats and ecosystems...
Forests and Rangelands “provides critical information for the recently re-authorized National Integrated Drought Information System and meets the National Climate Assessment need for scientific information on drought. More than 70 scientific experts from the Forest Service, other federal agencies, research institutions, and universities across the U.S. participated in the synthesis. The key issues addressed in the synthesis were identified from a series of virtual workshops with scientists and stakeholders.

For more information, email Jim Vose at jvose@fs.fed.us.

Forests Provide Clean Drinking Water for the South

Report provides new level of detail about water from National Forest System lands

For more than 19 million people in the South—roughly the population of Florida—clean water begins in the region’s national forests. That’s according to a report by the U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station published in late 2014. The report provides information at a level not previously available on the amount of surface drinking water national forest lands provide to communities in the South, and features an appendix of maps that show in detail the water flowing from national forests in the South in relation to surface water intakes for nearby cities and towns.

The Forest Service Southern Region and Southern Research Station (SRS) worked together to produce the report’s analysis, tables, and the maps, which not only include detailed data on public water system intakes, but also the number of customers served and percent of water originating on National Forest System lands for each of the 33 national forests managed by the Southern Region. The Southern Region manages more than 13 million acres of forest land in the South, some six percent of total forest land in a region where most forests are privately owned.

“We identified specific communities and populations that depend on water originating from National Forest System lands and provided data quantifying the extent of that dependence,” said Peter Caldwell, research hydrologist at the SRS Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory. “In all, National Forest System lands in the South contribute eight trillion gallons per year to the total water supply of these communities.”

The report illustrates the extent to which people in the South depend on forested lands to provide them with clean reliable sources of drinking water. A combination of federal, state, and private forests cover over 30 percent of the region’s total land area and provide 36 percent of total water yield. More than 2,100 individual communities rely directly on national forest land for drinking water, including large population areas such as Houston, Atlanta, Knoxville, and Birmingham.

Maintaining forest cover is an important way to protect water quality and regulate water flow. Most of the forest lands in the South are privately owned and are vulnerable to conversion to urban and other uses that result in costly tradeoffs including increased water treatment costs, increased frequency and severity of flood events, and degraded aquatic ecosystems.

The detailed maps in the report appendix can aid the partnerships needed to ensure the future availability of quality drinking water from forested lands in a region already experiencing water stress in some areas. Partnerships among state, federal, and non-governmental organizations are essential to ensure clean and dependable water supply in the future by keeping forest land in forests.

For more information, email Pete Caldwell at pcaldwell02@fs.fed.us.
National Historic Lookout Register

FIRE LOOKOUTS = EARLY DETECTION = SMALLER FIRES

Check www.nhlr.net for a complete listing of the more than 1000 fire lookouts in the United States and around the world that are listed on the NHLR. There are pictures, descriptions, a map on how to get there and even the current weather at the site! If the lookout appears to need some maintenance, check www.ffla.org to see how you can help!

Keep Them Standing

Fire towers and lookouts are the most recognizable symbol of forestry and the importance of forests to all Americans, rural or urban. Keep them standing!

This quarter’s listing include a wide variety, representing four states.

US# 1033, VA# 13
The Mendota Fire Tower is located on Clinch Mountain in southwest Virginia north of Abingdon. The 100’ tower with 7’x7’ cab is a prominent landmark and a destination for hikers and birdwatchers. Built by the VA Dept. of Forestry, it is now privately owned.

US# 1034, VA# 14
Built by the National Park Service in 1937 as a feature on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Groundhog Mountain Tower is a log structure designed to blend with a pioneer farmstead. It is still used for emergency fire detection.

US# 1035, VA# 15
Built in the late 1930s by the VA Dept. of Forestry, Crafton Gate Fire Tower is an imposing 120’ Aermotor in south central Virginia. It is listed in the Charlotte County historical records.

US# 1036, VA# 16
The 120’ Blackstone (Nottoway) Fire Tower is a CCC structure dating from the 1930s. Once part of the VA Dept. of Forestry system, it is now privately owned.

US# 1037, VA# 17
One of the most visible in Virginia, Bedford Fire Tower is in direct view from US 460 both from the east and the west. The 80’ Aermotor is now privately owned.

US# 1038, VA #18
Located north of the North Carolina state line in southside Virginia near Cluster Springs, Alton Fire Tower is 80’ tall with uncommon metal visors on the 7-x7’ cab windows.

US# 1039, WY# 14
Located on the Bridger-Teton National Forest on the north end of the Wyoming mountain range with views of the Gros Ventre mountains, Monument Ridge Lookout has unusual stacked log walls with a 14’x14’ wooden cab. Lightly maintained as a hiker shelter, it has a newer roof but the logs are rotting and need prompt attention.

US# 1040, SD# 5
Located on the high point of Wind Cave National Park, Rankin Ridge Lookout was constructed in 1956. It is a 14’x14’ CL 100 series metal tower on top of a 40’ International Derrick tower and still used for fire detection.

US# 1041, CA #99
Armstrong Hill Lookout is in the Sierra foothills adjacent to Eldorado National Forest. It is a 40’ CalFire tower with 7’x7’ cab maintained for emergency use.
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Verso Corp. Forced into Chapter 11

Verso Corp., the financially troubled owner of eight paper mills scattered across states in the Northeast and Lake States, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on November 25 in an effort to shed $2.4 billion of debt. Verso issued a statement saying it expected the bankruptcy would “have virtually no impact on the day-to-day operations of the company,” although a news report in Wisconsin said that Verso had notified local timber suppliers it could no longer pay them.

Multiple factors contributed to the company’s request for bankruptcy protection, including declined demand for its products and significant competition from foreign paper imports to the United States, according to David Paterson, Verso’s president and chief executive officer. “Verso chose to take this proactive step with the firm belief that our company will emerge from the Chapter 11 process as a stronger company that is positioned to compete and win, even as challenges in the overall economic environment continue,” Paterson said in the statement.

The action had been anticipated by press reporting, and comes after the company disclosed it was considering bankruptcy in November, when it reported a net loss of $111 million for the third quarter of 2015. Online court records show 27 companies affiliated with Verso filed for bankruptcy in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware.

The Memphis, Tennessee company has been trying to work out a restructuring of its overloaded balance sheet. Verso said it expects to reach an agreement with “certain creditors” and obtain a bankruptcy-financing package of up to $600 million to support continued day-to-day operations. Once the reorganization terms are finalized, Verso said, debtholders will swap their claims for equity in a reorganized company. “At least a majority in principal amount of most classes of funded debt of Verso and its subsidiaries,” are expected to be on board with the agreement, according to the news release.

CCC-Planted Trees Being Analyzed for Strength

According to the Maine Forest Products Council, scientists at the University of Maine are testing the strength of wood from trees planted by the Civilian Conservation Corp. during the Great Depression. The University of Maine’s Advanced Structures and Composites Center’s students and staff are evaluating the bending and tension of about 1,200 pieces of lumber milled from Norway spruce that grew in Maine, Vermont, New York and Wisconsin.

Workers planted the trees in the 1930s and 1940s as part of a program that put unemployed men to work. The Norway spruce is not native to the United States. Composites center associate director Stephen Shaler says the center is testing the spruce to determine if it meets industry standards. He says preliminary results look promising.

Michigan to Help Landowners Detect Invasive Species

The Michigan Eyes on the Forest program encourages landowners to be proactive in checking the trees on their property and in their neighborhood for signs of three potentially devastating invasive pests including the Asian longhorn beetle, hemlock woolly adelgid and thousand cankers of black walnut. The goal of the program is early detection and rapid response, meaning that evidence of these and other invasive pests will be detected and reported soon after arriving in an area. Eliciting a rapid response to confirm a new arrival will help eliminate any new invasive pests more quickly.

The Michigan Eyes on the Forest program is funded by the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program; a portion of the funds received has been dedicated to supporting the travel of FAP foresters to investigate possible sighting of invasive pests in forested settings and to educate forested landowners about what to look for in relation to each of the target and other invasive pests.

If you own forested land in a county covered by an FAP forester, it is well worth the time to schedule a site visit with the local forester. The foresters can teach you about the best management options for your forested land, invasive forest pests, and help diagnose and manage forest health issues. Visit the map of FAP foresters to find a forester local to your area.

If you have questions about the Michigan Eyes on the Forest or the Sentinel Tree Program contact the Program Outreach Coordinator, Russ Kidd at kiddr@msu.edu or the MSU Extension Natural Resources educator, at 989-275-7179 or at crickjul@anr.msu.edu.

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Wisconsin’s Fire Lookouts
To Be Retired this Year
A Wisconsin forestry era is coming to an end. The state’s fire lookout towers, built to spot smoke and fire since the 1930s, will be taken out of service in 2016. The WI DNR says that all 72 towers will be removed from service. The agency assessed their condition and determined they are no longer safe and would be too expensive to replace. In the early 1930s, the state operated 119 fire towers.

Last year, 60 fire lookouts were staffed with part-time employees who used binoculars to spot fires and radio in locations.

“They were a critically important part of fire protection,” said Trent Marty, director of the bureau of forest protection at the WI DNR. “They served their mission well, but it’s time to move forward.”

The towers, averaging about 100 feet tall, have been operated with personnel working an average of 17 days a year during periods of heightened fire danger, usually in the spring before trees leaf out.

Like so much else in modern society, the towers and the people inside them are being replaced by technology.

Marty said that the $100,000 saved from ending the program will be redeployed for more aerial surveillance.

The need for fire towers diminished as the prevalence of cellphones has grown. Another factor is that more people live in areas that were once sparsely populated, according to Marty.

Ohio Deer Take for 2015-16 Exceeds 188,000
Hunters checked 188,335 white-tailed deer throughout Ohio’s 2015-2106 deer season, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Last year, 175,745 deer were checked during the 2014-2015 season.

To help stabilize deer populations, bag limits were reduced, and antlerless permit use was eliminated in most counties. This increase can be attributed to the poor mast crop throughout much of the state, particularly the eastern half where many species of wildlife, including deer, rely heavily on acorns as an important source of food. Other reasons for the increase include the more favorable weather for hunters compared to last year and the earlier harvest of agricultural crops.

The ODNR Division of Wildlife remains committed to properly managing Ohio’s deer populations. The goal of Ohio’s Deer Management Program is to provide a deer population that maximizes recreational opportunities, while minimizing conflicts with landowners and motorists.

Until recently, deer populations in nearly all of Ohio’s counties were well above goal. In the last few years, through increased antlerless harvests, most counties are now at or near goal.

No Changes in Indiana Logging Plans on State Land
The Indiana Department of Natural Resources’ newly-revised strategic forestry plan doesn’t include any significant changes to the amount of timber cut by the Indiana agency. timber cutting on state lands affects the value of standing timber on other lands as well and in various ways.

Indiana DNR Forestry Division Director John Seifert calls the strategic plan a “living document” that’s revised even while its original iteration is in effect. While it doesn’t contain binding resolutions or legislation, the plan maps out the DNR’s direction and priorities for its 13 state forests through 2019.

Seifert says other than logging, one of the most popular requests the DNR fielded was for more recreational opportunities in forests.

“They want bike trails, they want more hiking trails, they want these things and we have to figure out how to have all these constituent groups be happy with the forest management in place,” Seifert says.

The revised plan floats the idea of extending trail systems in half a dozen state forests. It also considered selectively opening caves, many of which have been closed because of the deaths of thousands of Indiana bats due to the spread of White-Nose Syndrome.

“It just depends. Some people are telling us we should be harvesting more making more openings and some people are telling us we should cut less,” Seifert says.

Meanwhile, two bills intended to regulate state timber sales died before reaching the floor this session.

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Pennsylvania State Forestland “Well Managed” According to Review

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn recently released results of an independent review team’s annual study of state forestlands, noting its findings continue to affirm Bureau of Forestry efforts to conserve these resources through sound management.

“Once again our state forests were deemed ‘well-managed’ in an official certification reflecting the pride we take in overseeing our state forest system for many values and uses, while maintaining its long-term health and viability,” Dunn said. “Auditors were very pleased with our management and dedication of staff, and I extend thanks to districts involved in this year’s audit for another job well done.”

For the 17th consecutive year, since 1998 when a team of scientists first began reviewing management of the 2.2 million acres of state forestlands, researchers applauded Pennsylvania’s commitment to its forests, and exemplary practices and innovation in managing forest resources.

“Forest management faces many threats and challenges, including fragmentation and disturbance, invasive plants, destructive exotic insects and challenges with regeneration,” noted Dunn. “The certification process shows we are doing everything we can to improve our management plans and practices. More importantly, it helps us identify areas we can improve to ensure our forests are well-managed and in line with public expectations.”

Southern Pine Beetle Threatens New Jersey Forests

The southern pine beetle (SPB), one of the most destructive forest insects in the southeastern United States, quickly devastates pine dominated forests during outbreaks. This native bark beetle, which is smaller than a grain of rice, feeds on the living tissue under the tree’s bark and introduces blue stain fungi.

As pine dominant forests cover an estimated 440,000 acres in southern New Jersey, this beetle poses a considerable threat to the state’s forest resource. Since its re-entry into the state in 2001, SPB impacted approximately 26,600 total acres, and more than half that total occurred in 2010 alone.

Since 2001, SPB populations in New Jersey have been on the rise, destroying 1,000 new acres of pine forests each year on average, but infestations remained largely confined to the southern sections of the state.

Then, in 2008, SPB crossed the Egg Harbor River for the first time and entered the pine forests of Atlantic County, and continues to move north and west. In 2010, New Jersey experienced the warmest growing season on record (average temperature 68.3°F) and below-average precipitation. These conditions quickly advanced SPB’s range and damage levels. SPB entered the southeastern United States, quickly
the heart of the New Jersey Pinelands—designated as the nation’s first National Reserve by Congress in 1978, and a Biosphere Reserve in 1983 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

According to USDA Forest Service estimates, 80 percent of New Jersey’s pine forest could be impacted by SPB within the next ten years if no action is taken.

**Maryland Adds 3,500 Acres To Chesapeake Forest Lands**

In one of the largest acquisitions of its kind, the Board of Public Works recently approved funding to secure 3,486 acres of prime forest land on Maryland’s Lower Eastern Shore for economic, environmental and recreational purposes. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources will manage the property as part of its Chesapeake Forest Lands, helping to preserve the state’s sustainable forest products industry.

“This acquisition will help the state solidify its significant progress toward meeting our Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals by safeguarding important natural resources, including land and water within the watershed,” Natural Resources Secretary Mark Belton said. “Even more, Maryland’s natural resource-based economies and industries, like paper and timber will see benefits, as the new tracts will provide for a sustainable timber harvest and increased hunting and recreation opportunities.”

Purchased at a discount for $6.53 million with funding from Program Open Space, the property is comprised of forested tracts spanning three counties: 623 acres in Somerset, 972 in Wicomico and 1,890 in Worcester. With this acquisition, the Chesapeake Forest Lands will increase to 71,208 acres.

**Virginia Budget Forestry Friendly**

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) reports that Gov. Terry McAuliffe’s budget proposal, the largest ever for agriculture and forestry, includes funding to address forest sustainability and critical public safety needs at the Virginia Department of Forestry during the next biennium.

The governor proposed allocating $2 million to fund sustainability efforts to ensure that forestry remains a robust economic driver that is environmentally sound. McAuliffe also proposed spending $3 million to purchase critical wildland firefighting equipment to replace existing vehicles that have exceeded their useful life and effectiveness.

Forestry is the third largest industry in Virginia. It contributes more than $17.5 billion annually to the state’s economy and employs more than 103,000 Virginians.

Saying he hopes to ensure that forestry remains a vibrant and robust economic engine, the governor proposed $2 million over two years to support VDOF’s sustainability initiative. This funding would provide incentives to landowners to grow new forests through the Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) program and assure forest industry that there will be

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a reliable supply of timber for years to come. Funding for the RT program comes from a self-imposed tax paid by forest industry and a match by the Commonwealth’s General Fund. The governor’s proposal fully funds the General Fund match for the first time since 1997.

“Full funding of the RT has been the top government relations priority for VFA this year and will remain so as the state legislature scrutinizes the governor’s budget,” according to VFA Executive Director, Paul Howe. “We need to make sure the full state match for RT is embraced by our senators and delegates during the General Assembly.”

“The Governor’s proposal represents a significant level of funding for us,” said State Forester Bettina Ring. “It is desperately needed because past economic conditions forced us to extend the useful life of our fire plows from 20 to 25-30 years. In order to protect lives and property, our first responders need to have reliable firefighting vehicles that can stand up to the rigors and dangers associated with battling more than 1,000 wildfires annually.”

### Controlled Burning Critical To Florida Forests

Nearly three dozen fire experts, nine fire engines, six bulldozers and a single helicopter were required to operate a prescribed burn through 3,600 acres of Florida recently, according to the Tampa Bay Times. With a spark ignited from a helicopter, the Withlacoochee Forestry Center carefully blazed over 3,000 acres in the Withlacoochee Forest on the border between Pasco and Hernando counties.

In an average year, the Florida Forest Service issues about 120,000 authorizations allowing agencies and landowners to burn more than two million acres, the newspaper said. These planned, controlled fires happen in county and state parks, conservation land, private and public property, sugarcane and citrus fields and pastures.

Prescribed fire is one of the most effective tools for clearing out hazardous fuel buildups, said Keith Mousel, Withlacoochee center manager. Over time, excess brush, foliage and growth accumulates in forests, which creates a risk of wildfire and destroys the habitat for animals. “Fire becomes... the way of cleaning the forest of the debris that has fallen over the year,” Mousel said. “It’s important because this is what Mother Nature would have done years ago in our absence.”

Mousel noted that prescribed burns don’t eliminate the risk of a wildfire because “fuel”—brush, trees, etc.—is always building up. But if a fire does start in an area where there has been a prescribed burn, the intensity drops drastically.

Cristina Esposito, land manager for Pasco County, said her department has planned for three prescribed burns this year—two wilderness parks and one preserve area covering about 70 acres. To make a burn happen, they work with Pasco County fire department and the state forest service.

“We burn for a couple of primary reasons,” Esposito said. “We want to make sure fuel loads are down, of course, but our main goal is to restore and maintain the habitat of the area.”

In March 2013, a prescribed burn of 220 acres in the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area near Brooksville scorched about 775 acres of land, including part of a nearby subdivision. Two months after the fire, a Florida Fish and Wildlife investigation concluded that changing wind shifted the blaze toward the neighborhood.

No one was injured, and while no houses were lost, residents said they were left with thousands of dollars in property damage like broken sprinkler systems, ruined lawns and destroyed shrubs.

### Georgia Forest Industry Records Continued Growth

Employees working in forestry earned more in wages and salaries in 2014 than people in any other Georgia manufacturing industry. According to a new report issued by the Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia’s forest industry ranked first in the state for compensation, with workers earning $3.03 billion, an increase of 3.1 percent from the previous year. The forestry industry supported 48,740 jobs, ranking third among manufacturing sectors behind...
the food processing and textile industries. That’s a 1.2 percent increase from 2013, with the pulp and paper industry continuing to dominate all sectors within the industry. It was the fourth consecutive year of positive job growth.

“This annual report continues to reflect important gains for the forestry industry,” said Robert Farris, director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. “Across the board we’re seeing steady growth in many categories, and that’s good news for forestry and for the state of Georgia.”

Figures cited in 2014 Economic Benefits of the Forestry Industry in Georgia show the total fiscal impact of the forest industry rose to nearly $28.7 billion, a 2.4 percent increase from 2013. The forest industry provided the state with $721 million in tax revenues for 2014, with net state revenues generated by the industry rising by $11 million, or 3.2 percent. That figure is approximately double the 2011 revenue total.

A detailed analysis of the report by Risher Willard, Utilization Chief for the Georgia Forestry Commission, shows both urban and rural economies in the state rely heavily on forestry. “Georgia’s forestry industry is one of the key sources of funds flowing into many local economies,” Willard said. “Of Georgia’s 12 regional commissions, the top three with the largest employment in the forestry industry are the Atlanta Regional Commission, Southern Georgia and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha, respectively. Atlanta Regional has close to 11,000 with the remainder of the top three showing more than 4,500 jobs each.”

For a fact sheet about the report, a complete copy of 2014 Economic Benefits of the Forestry Industry in Georgia, and information about services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit GaTrees.org.

Alabama Invasives Research Grant

The Alabama Invasive Plant Council is soliciting grant proposals for non-native invasive plant projects in the state of Alabama. The intent of this grant is to provide funding to organizations or individuals who wish to educate the public about non-native invasive plants and their effects on the environment and/or to conduct small-scale activities for controlling noxious weeds. Proposals will be accepted from individuals, public or private nonprofit organizations and academic institutions.

The proposal is provided when the application form is completed. The application form may be found on the Alabama Invasive Plant Council website (www.seeppc.org/alabama). This grant can be used to fund educational materials, outreach activities and control work pertaining to non-native invasive plants. The items that may be purchased and the activities that are accepted under this grant include, but are not necessarily limited to: brochures, pamphlets, signage, tours, workshops, seminars, herbicides, loppers and sprayers. Requests for funding should not exceed $1,500 and all funds awarded are to be used within one year of receipt. If full funding is not available, partial funding may be awarded.

Recipient(s) must provide a brief written summary of results to the Alabama Invasive Plant Council Board.

Oklahoma Firefighters Participate in Smoke Study

Oklahoma Forestry Services (OFS) firefighters are doing their part to help make wildland firefighters breathe easier in the future.

OFS firefighters recently volunteered to participate in a smoke exposure study that is based out of the U.S. Forest Service’s Technology and Development Center in Missoula, Montana. A team from the center visited Oklahoma Forestry Services’ East Central office in Wilburton and collected data from 11 firefighters while they conducted prescribed burns in surrounding areas. Prescribed burns are planned, controlled burns that utilize low-intensity fire to manage land, and provide an excellent environment for studying firefighters.

“Smoke inhalation is obviously a big issue for wildland firefighters and the more we learn about its effect, the safer we can make the job,” said Oklahoma State Forester George Geissler. “We’re pleased to have had the team from Missoula here and for our firefighters to have volunteered for such important research.”

The five-year study is looking at the air inhaled by firefighters in relation to their activity during a work shift. Volunteers wear sensors and air filters that measure temperature and the amount of carbon monoxide and particulate matter being inhaled. The researchers shadow participants while they work to document their physical activities while they perform their duties.

Particulate matter collected in the participant’s air filter is sent to a lab for processing, while all of the other data is downloaded onto a hard drive at the end of the day. Pulse oximetry is also used to obtain oxygen and carbon monoxide levels in the blood at various times throughout the day. This information is being collected from wildland firefighters across the nation in an attempt to better understand the impact of smoke on them and to develop practical recommendations to minimize the smoke effect. Oklahoma is the first southern state to participate.

One unexpected result has already come from the study. Smoke exposure tends to be worse, not in the intense wildfire perimeter, but in the cooler "mop up" or clean-up stage when firefighters are digging up smoldering stumps and soaking hot spots. Oklahoma Forestry Services and wildland firefighters across the nation look forward to learning more.

Invasive Beetle Found in Arkansas

Redbay ambrosia beetle (RAB), a small dark brown-to-black, cylinder-shaped invasive beetle, and Laurel wilt disease (LWD), a fungus that blocks movement of water and nutrients within a tree, have been discovered in Arkansas sassafras trees.

Arkansas joins eight other southern states with RAB/LWD findings, including: North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and Louisiana.

RAB (Xyleborus glabratus) was first detected in Georgia in 2002. It is a native beetle to India, Japan, Myanmar and Taiwan. Symptoms of LWD include wilted stems and leaves and dark streaking in the wood. LWD can spread two different ways: 1) via the beetle’s natural short rage dispersal; and 2) through the sale and transport of beetle-infested wood.

Research shows that usual tree hosts of the RAB and Laurel Wilt pathogen are redbay, silk bay, swampbay, sassafras, and avocado trees. Arkansas is concerned with the dispersal of this disease in sassafras trees. Sassafras trees are common in the Ozarks of central and northwest Arkansas.
Charcoal Production Returns to Nevada

Early Nevada miners historically used charcoal as a fuel source to smelt less valuable ore to extract silver and gold. Located near mining districts throughout the state, charcoal ovens were utilized to optimize the charcoal conversion process.

The Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) is now making charcoal, but for a very different purpose. NDF has helped to resurrect this historic production process in order to amend poor Nevada soils. When charcoal is used as a soil amendment, it is called biochar.

Biochar has been shown to increase soil moisture and nutrient retention capacity, improve habitat for soil microbes and even reduce the effects of soil pollutants. When low-grade wood is converted to long lasting biochar, much of the carbon otherwise lost by the cut and scatter methods is preserved in the soil. As such, biochar production reduces atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, a significant contributor to climate change.

While NDF began experimenting on a small scale with biochar production in the Western region with one working kiln about four years ago, the agency has recently and dramatically increased its ability to make biochar throughout the state. With funding from the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition and the USDA Forest Service, NDF now has ten kilns dedicated to biochar production.

To help increase moisture on burned areas, replace expensive potting mix ingredients in the NDF tree nurseries and improve survival of restoration plant material and urban trees, NDF is now making biochar on an unprecedented scale.

Each of the NDF kilns converts about 1,200 pounds of wood to about 600 pounds of biochar in a three day operation. The first day, crews load and ignite the wood inside the kilns. Kilns burn for one to two hours and then most of the vents are closed and sealed with dirt.

The cooking process takes about 24 hours. After 24 hours, all the vents are closed, the fire is extinguished and a cool down phase takes another 24 hours. Then, the fresh biochar is harvested and processed for use.

Late last year, Ely camp crews made about 70 yards of biochar for urban and rural use. Making biochar gives land managers working on lowgrade removal an option other than the usual cut and scatter.

California Tree Removal Permits Extended Due to Tree Mortality

As California’s severe drought and bark beetle epidemic has left millions of trees dead, the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection voted late last year to extend a drought mortality exemption to the state’s tree removal permitting process.

“With massive tree mortality across California, this exemption streamlines the process for landowners who are working to reduce their wildfire risk and safety hazards from falling trees by removing their dead trees,” said Helge Eng, CALFIRE’s deputy director of resource management.

On June 17, 2015, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection initially adopted emergency regulations allowing specified forest management activities, including the cutting or removal of trees that are dead or dying as a result of the drought conditions across California. The original action was set to expire on January 12, 2016; however, the extension provides an additional 90 days for property owners to utilize the exemption when removing dead trees due to the drought.

The latest aerial survey estimated that over 29 million trees have died as a result of the drought and the effects of bark beetle infestation, up from 3.3 million in 2014. These dead and dying trees create an environment more readily susceptible to dangerous and destructive wildfires.

“Even with recent rains it will likely take years to slow down the massive tree mortality and bark beetle infestation, said Eng. “Dead trees near homes, roads and public infrastructure create a fire hazard and public safety concern, so it’s critical that residents remove their dead trees and reduce their wildfire risk.”

The winter months typically provide a good time for landowners to remove

Colorado Bark Beetle Infestation Grows for Fourth Consecutive Year

The pine beetle infestation that ran across Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota has affected an area roughly the size of Massachusetts. The devastation caused by spruce beetles across Colorado forests accelerated for a fourth consecutive year, according to a new survey, while the once widespread infestation of mountain pine beetles has largely subsided.

The spruce beetle was found to have newly infected 182,000 acres of previously unaffected forests, bringing the number of acres currently impacted to 409,000 across the state, according to the annual aerial survey conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and the Colorado State Forest Service.

The bug has caused varying degrees of tree mortality to nearly 1.6 million acres across the state since 1996, though still far less than the mountain pine beetle.

Two other defoliators of conifers—the western spruce budworm and the Douglas-fir tussock moth—also expanded their reach last year, touching nearly 340,000 acres of forests.

Damage by the mountain pine beetle, which has ravaged more than 3.3 million acres of Colorado forests since 1996, has dwindled to about 5,000 new impacted acres, and the epidemic has ended in some areas as mature pine trees have been depleted, the survey notes.

“The lesson we can take away from the extensive insect and disease damage we’ve seen in Colorado over the past two decades is the need for proactively taking care of our forests,” State Forester Mike Lester, said in a news release. “The best time to take actions to address long-term forest health is before a major outbreak starts, and not after.”

The Forest Service continues to treat thousands of acres through thinning and prescribed burns as part of its wildfire mitigation and forest

NATIONAL WOODLANDS WINTER 2016
management efforts.

Much of the reason for the spruce beetle problem continues to be blown-down trees, drought stress, warmer temperatures, an extensive number of older trees and a high density level, the Forest Service said.

**Kansas Conservation Grant For Water Quality Through Forestry**

The long-awaited $13 million Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant, for Water Quality Improvement through the Implementation of Forestry Practices is set to hit the street January 2016.

Landowners in high-priority watersheds may have up to 90 percent of their costs covered when they plant trees adjacent to streams and rivers, and they improve their woodland health through forest stand improvement practices. Funding is offered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) with additional potential cost-share support through local Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) groups. Contact your local district forester or the state office for more information about the program.

In related news, The Kansas Forest Action Plan is the road map for the Kansas Forest Service and identifies seven of the most important issues facing the woodlands and windbreaks of Kansas. Recently updated, the plan now includes examples of strategies that have been implemented and geospatial maps of high-priority areas where the state continues to focus resources and energy. Interested parties are invited to review and provide comment on the update located at www.kansasforests.org/kansas_forest_services/.

Logging Restrictions Enacted in Oregon

The Oregon Board of Forestry voted 4-3 late last year to add logging restrictions along streams in the western part of the state.

After a failed vote of 3-4 on a less restrictive proposal, the board elected to more than double the stream-side shade requirements under the Forest Practices Act to protect cold water for fish. The rules bring Oregon closer in line with logging policies meant to keep streams cool in the neighboring state of Washington.

The new rules increase the size of the restricted areas along small and medium fish-bearing streams. They’re estimated to affect between 15,000 and 30,000 acres of forestland altogether.

On small streams they require a 60-foot buffer on both sides of small streams where logging is either not allowed at all or is restricted. That buffer is 80 feet on both sides of medium streams.

Many Oregon streams have been found to be too warm to comply with the cold water standard under the Clean Water Act, which limits how much human activity is allowed to raise the temperature of the water in streams.

Board member Cindy Williams, who has worked as a fish biologist, choked back tears while discussing fish population declines and urged the board to take stronger action to improve fish habitat.

“What we’ve been doing hasn’t been working,” she said. “It’s been a long, slow bleed and we’re continuing to bleed despite the fact that we have improved forest practices. Now is the time to not be timid or we’re not likely to retain much more than a zoo population of salmon and steelhead.”

Forest landowners said the decision would reduce their income while conservationists said they were hoping for more restrictions.

Dick Courter owns forestland in Columbia County that’s been in his wife’s family since the 1940s. He said he was stunned to hear the board’s final decision, which was more restrictive than one of the options board members had been considering.

“It’s going to affect me fairly severely,” he said. “This land has been an early retirement account for me and my wife and I don’t know how to tell her when I get back that part of it’s been taken away from us.”
American Tree Farm System Celebrates 75 Years

The American Forest Foundation celebrates a milestone for its signature program with a pledge to increase its impact on clean water, wildlife habitat and wood supply.

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) recently kicked off its celebration of the 75th anniversary of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), the largest and oldest sustainable forestry program for family forest owners. In celebration, AFF's governance, Tree Farmers, volunteers and partners have pledged to measurably increase their impact on the clean water, wildlife habitat and wood supply that comes from family-owned forests.

"Our woodlands are facing incredible challenges today—a changing climate, catastrophic wildfires, insect epidemics, development pressures, and much more," said Tom Martin, President and CEO of AFF. "Yet we continue to need the clean water, wildlife habitat and wood supply we depend on from our forests. Tree Farmers exhibit the most exceptional forest stewardship that helps protect and enhance these benefits."

ATFS originated in 1941 with the dedication of the first Tree Farm in Washington state. The program was created, by the then known American Lumber Manufacturers Association, as a way to engage and support landowners in order to ensure the health and safety of the forests and wood supply that came from them.

"ATFS was founded on the concept that recognizing landowners who practiced good forest stewardship, would encourage their neighbors to do the same," said Salem Saloom, a Tree Farmer from Brewton, Alabama. "But what really happened was a social movement that many describe as the greatest voluntary forest conservation movement in this country's history."

ATFS leaders made critical shifts in the program over time, evolving the mission to stress that good stewardship is more than growing trees for wood fiber, but also to provide clean water, home for wildlife and space for recreation, all of which are exemplified on the ATFS sign. Today, the program is internationally recognized and endorsed by the global Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), with more than 80,000 Tree Farmers sustainably managing more than 21 million acres of forest.

As part of the 75th celebration, kicking off at the ATFS annual leadership conference, this year held in Seattle, AFF and ATFS leaders have committed to growing the impact of the program on some of the most critical issues facing society: providing clean water and addressing the wildfire threats especially in the West, enhancing wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and ensuring sustainable wood supplies for the forest products we consume every day.

"Family forest owners own the largest share of forests in the U.S.," said Kathryn Fernholz, Chair of the AFF Woodlands Operating Committee and Executive Director of Dovetail Partners, a Minnesota-based environmental think tank. "ATFS has been successful at engaging many of these families and individuals across the country but we can do more to grow the impact of the work we do on the ground, by engaging and supporting more landowners."

AFF, taking a regional approach, conducted a series of assessments, and surveyed partners and ATFS leaders to identify opportunities where family forest owners could have an increased impact.

In the West, 78 percent said wildfire, and its impact on the water supply, was the most critical issue, where family forest owners could play a role. In the Northeast, 70 percent identified wildlife habitat as the top opportunity, where forest owners could make a difference, noting the majority of wildlife habitat in the region falls on family and individual properties. In the South, 80 percent agreed engaging more forest owners in forest management to meet the growing wood supply needs while conserving habitat was the top priority.

AFF in the coming weeks will publish measurable goals around its commitment, pending the completion of assessments and Board of Trustees approval.

Contact: Elizabeth Greener; egreener@forestfoundation.org; (202) 751-2442 or (202) 253-1096
Half of NWOA Members Have Woodland Liability Insurance

What do They Know that You Don’t? Premiums Can be Paid with the Same Check as NWOA Membership

The decision whether or not to buy additional woodland liability insurance is a personal choice. Many landowners have not given it much thought, believing that any liability that may occur on their woodlands is already covered by their homeowners or other insurance. You should think about this.

Check to be sure you are in fact covered. Get it in writing if you can. With the low cost ($150/year for up to 535 acres) with no deductible, many agents recommend this group policy as well.

WHAT DOES THE NWOA WOODLAND LIABILITY INSURANCE COVER?

We cover the liability of the landowner(s) in whose name the land is listed for any acts of negligence for which you are found to be legally responsible, whether you knew it or not.

- NWOA is not in the insurance sales business, but we do have a national Woodland Liability insurance policy as an optional benefit. The risks covered are spread across a nationwide base, which is much cheaper than individual policies. This makes possible the low group rate.
- NWOA researched and approved this master policy because of the excellent service record of Outdoor Underwriters, Inc. and the depth of their experience in the London Insurance Market.
- Participating NWOA members receive a one year Certificate of Insurance within three weeks.
- Lawsuits for damages, real or imagined, are becoming more frequent.
- If you are sued and have this insurance, Outdoor Underwriters contracts with claim adjusters and attorneys with years of experience specific to woodland liability issues.

TWO INSURANCE OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE:

Woodland Liability Insurance—our most popular (includes incidental hunting—trespassers or guests)

Hunt Lease Liability Insurance—the necessary option if you lease your property. Includes falling out of a tree or harm caused to other hunters or other people, even on adjacent land. A “Best Buy” at only 16 cents/acre.

Or the two policies can be combined. See Woodland-owners.org and click “Woodland Insurance.”

WOODLAND LIABILITY INSURANCE

INSURANCE APPLICATION: FOR LANDOWNERS ONLY

Woodland Liability Coverage provides legal liability coverage for woodland owners. This coverage is designed to provide general liability protection for owners of woodland who do not lease their land to a hunting club.

Owners, Landlord & Tenant - Liability Limit to $1,000,000 per occurrence

Special Master policy rating basis. A certificate will be issued to each landowner

Liability coverage for the Landowner does not provide protection for owned timber.

Coverage does not apply to commercial hunting operations including for-profit guided and/or fee hunting.

Did you find us through a state affiliate promotion? (If so, please staple your ad coupon to your application to ensure credit to your association.)

Landowner Name __________________________ Telephone __________________________

Address __________________________ Telephone __________________________ Next to (next to) __________________________

City __________________________ State ______ Zip ______ email __________________________

Woodland Location (County, city and State) __________________________

Please answer the following questions.

Are locations fenced or posted? □ Any lakes or ponds? □ Any dams/spillways/bridges? □

Any leased hunting or commercial hunting? □ Any property ever used for mining? □

If yes, are Certificates of Insurance required? □ Any of the property leased for farming? □

Any watecraft or dock? □ If yes, do you ask for a Certificate of Insurance? □

What is the property used for?

Signature of Landowner __________________________

Premium Calculation - Woodland Liability Insurance

Number of acres to be covered _______ x .28 cents per acre = _________

$150 minimum

Subtotal: __________________________

For your convenience, you may add your NWOA membership

(535/year $45/year sustaining)

Total Payment Due: __________________________

Please Specify Effective Dates:

□ January 1, 2016 to January 1, 2017

□ April 1, 2016 to April 1, 2017

□ July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017

□ October 1, 2015 to October 1, 2016

Return this form completed and signed along with your check to:

National Woodland Owners Association

374 Maple Ave E, Suite 310; Vienna, VA 22180

(For your convenience, you may add your NWOA membership

(535/year $45/year sustaining)
Outdoor Insurance SIMPLIFIED.

National Woodland Owners
Coverage For Your Woodlands

Woodland Liability Insurance
$1,000,000 Per Occurrence  •  $2,000,000 Aggregate

Available Coverages:
- Hunt Lease Liability Insurance
- Guides and Outfitters Coverage
- Tractors, ATVs & Implements
- and much more...

NWOA.net/insurance
(703) 255-2700
info@nwoa.net

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"Independent by Nature"

Underwritten by Outdoor Underwriters, Inc.