

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Florida Land Steward Partnership Receives USDA Two-Chief Award

Started in 2012 to better coordinate outreach and land management planning efforts for Florida's private landowners, the Florida Land Steward Partnership recently received the USDA Joint Forestry Team's Two-Chief Award. Receiving the award are Chris Demers, Michael Andreu, and Bill Giuliano, University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation and Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation; Anthony Grossman, Florida Forest Service; Joe Prenger, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; and Michael Bush, Natural Resources Conservation Service Florida State Office. This coalition created a first-of-its-kind, one-stop private landowner center to enhance natural resource management capabilities.

The center utilizes multiple communication tools to deliver information and technical assistance to landowners, including a website, email listserv, Facebook page, and blog, to distribute land stewardship information and publicize upcoming events. Outreach programs organized and coordinated by Florida Land Steward partners are attended by diverse audiences. The partners also created multi-agency teams to develop whole-property management plans and provide technical assistance to landowners. The Partnership's resources serve as a timely, centralized source of information on forestry, agriculture, and natural resource management. Outreach efforts allow

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Florida Land Steward Partners: Michael Bush, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Tony Grossman, Florida Forest Service; Joe Prenger, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; and Chris Demers, UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation

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attendees to receive information and services in a unified package, which helps prevent duplication of effort, contradictory messages, or missed opportunities. Partners' outreach efforts resulted in over 54,000 website hits in 2014, email updates sent to over 1,700 landowners and professionals, and over 7,000 calendars distributed annually.

The USDA Joint Forestry Team is a national partnership of the USDA Forest Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Association of State Foresters representing state forestry agency executives, and the National Association of Conservation Districts. The Team's purpose is to make recommendations that result in coordinated interagency delivery

of forestry and conservation assistance for working forests, farms, and ranches. Team participants seek to improve the sustainability of the nation's forests in order to provide optimum levels of public benefits and ecosystem services. More info about these and other awardees is at <http://jointforestryteam.org/success-stories>

A Look at North Florida Timber Resources and Markets

By Brian Cobble, Florida Forest Service

History shows that, after excellent market conditions and extensive timber stand establishment in the 1980s and into the 1990s, 1998 was one of the peak tree planting years in Florida. A tremendous pine inventory was established on forest lands in North Florida during this time frame. Tree planting efforts focused largely on establishing slash pine stands on many private lands. This was accomplished through cooperative efforts involving USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency cost-share programs and assistance from Florida Forest Service County Foresters. The "old acronym soup" cost-share assistance programs included F.I.P (Forestry Incentive Program), S.I.P (Stewardship Incentive Program), and others that were beneficial for private landowners in the North Florida wood basket (no longer available). Not only were trees planted during the peak year of 1998, but the years surrounding this peak were also some of the best years in recent history for tree-planting landowners in the region. The pines established in 1998 and surrounding years have created an inventory of wood that is clearly visible on the "world-wide, forestry radar screen", and wood utilizing companies from around the globe have sharply focused their attention

on the wood resources growing in our region.

Now, in the second decade of the new millennium, the forest products industry in North Florida is growing rapidly. New mill start-ups and expansion of local existing mills is on the rise. Technological advancements in the wood energy market have led to the construction of a 100 megawatt woody biomass-fueled power plant in Alachua County, which became operational in December 2013. The Packaging Corporation of America pulp mill near Lake Park, Georgia upgraded their boiler system to generate 48 megawatts burning a wood byproduct, called black liquor, to produce the energy used by the facility. The Georgia Pacific Cellulose mill in Perry, FL also upgraded to a 48 Megawatt boiler system that uses wood residues to produce electricity for the mill. Each of the "wood to energy" systems above has the capacity to place energy onto the public power grid. A new sawmill in Suwannee County, Klausner Lumber One, which is operational since February 2015, may become the largest mill of its kind in the Southeastern U.S. The Suwannee Lumber Bark Processing facility, adjacent to and using bark from the Klausner mill, is now producing pine bark mulch. The

announcement of two additional pellet mills along the Suwannee River corridor could take advantage of the local wood basket, and plans are to export the pellets internationally.

Demand and Supply

The onslaught of demand for trees planted in 1998 began last year as those trees reached 16 years of age. On extremely dry sites, some of those stands were harvested even earlier at ages 13, 14 and 15 when wet weather prevailed in the region. Mill competition for pulpwood-size trees has become fierce, with record prices paid for pine pulpwood in the North Florida region surrounding wet weather in spring of 2014. As new mills come online, and more are anticipated being built, competition for this wood has led many landowners to ask the simple question: "Is there enough wood?"

The amount of wood harvested in 2014 is presently unknown, as forest inventory efforts for that year are currently being completed, but clearcut harvests have clearly been common in the region. The estimate of acreage harvested in a single year in North Florida is a popular topic of discussion, as well as the transition

Continued on next page

of these sites to other land uses. Intensive agriculture has been a common land use transition, and the vast Florida aquifer has attracted global investors for another valuable resource in this region: water. New center pivot irrigation systems or new fence and recent forage plantings for livestock now sit where pine stands grew until very recently. From available data it is estimated that about 25,000 acres of Suwannee County forest land was harvested in 2014, with approximately one half of that acreage returning to forestry. A quarter of that land has transitioned to other agricultural uses such as those described above, and the remaining quarter is idle. It is suspected that idle property is in that condition because landowners may be having a hard time making decisions about

what direction to go with the land next.

Abundant Landowner Assistance

During fiscal year 2014 the Suwannee County Forest Service Office provided assistance on about 9,000 acres of reforestation and forest management projects. Financial assistance requests through six different cost-share programs exceeded \$1 million, and served 231 Suwannee County landowners. Forestry programs (both state and federal) with which the County Forester provided assistance included the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Longleaf Pine Initiative, Gulf of Mexico Initiative, Southern Pine Beetle Assistance Program, and Longleaf Pine Landowner Incentive Program.

Landowner assistance included project identification through field visits, practice delineation, mapping, forest management plan preparation, planning, and then follow-up visits with each landowner during completions of various tasks of each approved contract. It was one of the busiest years I can remember, and Suwannee County has always been an actively engaged forestry area. Approximately 4,000 acres received approval through the above mentioned programs, and many landowners moved forward with their forest management practices either with or without the assistance they applied for. So 2015 is shaping up to be another extremely busy year, which is a good thing for landowners and the forest resources of this region.

Invasive Species Feature: Caesar weed

By Alicia Campanella

Caesar Weed (*Urena lobata*) is aggressively and rapidly colonizing wild lands in Florida. While sources disagree about Caesar weed's continent of origin, it is thought to have been introduced to Florida as an ornamental plant as early as the late 1800s. Currently it grows worldwide and is considered invasive and problematic in many countries. It has a history of cultivation for uses such as soil stabilization, as a fiber crop, in soap making, and as a folk medicine for several diseases, including malaria. As of 2015, its current distribution in the United States is limited to Florida, Louisiana and the Hawaiian islands, but its rate of spread is notable and it can be expected to invade other states.

Recognizing an Invader

Contributing to its incredible adaptability, Caesar weed can display either an annual or a



Photo by Ann Murray

perennial growth habit. It is easily recognized by its leaves, which are a bright green hue and have 3 to 5 pointed lobes on their upper margins. Another distinguishing feature of this plant are the flowers, which are small and typically pink to purple in color, resembling a scaled-down

version of a hibiscus. It can grow up to 10 feet and tends to have a bush-like appearance as it grows. It also has fine hairs along its stems. This small but conspicuous plant produces plentiful seeds which are covered with burs. These seeds disperse easily in the wind and water. Many who are familiar with the plant refer to its seeds as "hitchhikers" because they easily adhere to animal fur, clothing, and shoes, as well as agricultural tools and equipment. This means that it is highly mobile and is able to spread far from its source plant. Like other invasive species, Caesar weed grows in a variety of habitats. Shady areas tend to slow its spread, as it has a preference for open, sunny areas, where it thrives and proliferates quickly. It is often seen invading forest boundaries, in agricultural areas, and other disturbed sites.

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Update on the Tree Farm Program in Florida

By Jon H. Gould, co-editor, Florida Tree Farm Committee Member, and Tree Farmer

Several years ago I wrote an article entitled "What Is the Tree Farm Program?" that was published in this newsletter. Since that time a lot of changes have occurred in the Tree Farm Program, as well as wood markets, including a growing requirement for certified wood in North America and overseas markets. The Tree Farm Committee asked me to update my previous article and discuss some of the upcoming changes.

American Tree Farm Program

The American Tree Farm System® was founded in 1941 to promote sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to family forest landowners. The American Forest Foundation, which has managed the American Tree Farm System since 1993, sets the standards for the program and runs the national office in Washington, D.C. State Tree Farm Committees operate and administer the program at the local level. Qualified inspecting foresters provide assistance to Tree Farmers and conduct initial and periodic inspections to obtain and maintain certification under the program. Tree Farmers, once certified, manage their forestland under the program guidelines. A minimum of 10 acres of forestland is required to participate.

Tree Farmers are good stewards of the forestland, committed to protecting watersheds and wildlife habitat and conserving soil. They manage their forestland for various reasons, including timber production, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, education/outreach, and special sites. Tree Farmers receive many benefits, including the following:

- Representation on local, state, and federal issues affecting forestland owners.



- Exposure to a network of forestry professionals and landowners committed to sustainable forestry.
- Access to seminars, field days, and workshops to help manage their Tree Farm even better.
- Certification that meets both national and international standards of sustainable forest management.
- Participation in local, state, regional, and national Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year awards and recognition.

In addition to the above benefits, Tree Farm certification has taken on more significance over the last few years as many big box wood products retailers are demanding certified wood. So far most landowners haven't received any direct financial benefits, such as price increases for their wood from being certified. However, a number of raw wood buyers and mills are now requiring wood from certified forestland. This is only expected to increase as the market for wood products is growing overseas, especially in Europe and China. Many companies in overseas countries, especially Europe, are requiring third party certified wood products (lumber, wood pellets, furniture, paper, etc.), as well as raw materials such as saw logs and pulpwood.

Florida's Tree Farm Program

The Tree Farm program began in Florida in 1946 with the first Tree Farm certified in June of that year. The program is administered by the Florida Forestry Association through the Tree Farm Committee which includes private, industry, and government foresters and private forest landowners, as well as a staff member of the Florida Forestry Association. Presently, Florida has 1,141 certified Tree Farms with over 969,000 acres of certified forestland in the program.

Changes in the Wind

A major recent development is that states are being given the option for Tree Farms to be either certified or just recognized. Products from certified Tree Farms are a part of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Program's chain of custody and are ultimately retailed with a SFI Certified label. Products from recognized Tree Farms would not be a part of this chain of custody. After carefully considering the options and feedback from Florida Tree Farmers, the Florida Tree Farm Committee has decided to follow the certified pathway because they strongly believe that the demand for certified wood is going to become even greater in the future. Even though the certified pathway has more demanding requirements for Tree Farmers, qualified inspecting foresters will be assisting Tree Farmers in preparing and maintaining up-to-date management plans and in meeting their management goals.

The committee plans to have greater, and more frequent, communication with Tree Farmers through designated contact members in each county. Communication will be through periodic individual personal

Continued on next page

contacts; local and regional meetings of Tree Farmers, foresters, and other interested parties; and correspondence by email or Postal mail. There are other changes in the works in the state program, but most of these will not affect individual Tree Farmers, just the state committee. Some of the changes may take a few years to finalize, so Tree Farmers may not see a lot of changes right away. However, better communication with Tree Farmers is at the top of the list. Even though some states have chosen to start charging Tree Farmers for their membership, the Florida Tree Farm Committee has made the decision to not charge for membership. The committee is taking steps to fund the program through other means.

Staying Engaged in the Issues

Forestry and forestland owners in Florida are facing, and will continue to face, serious challenges and the Tree Farm program is engaged in the issues affecting private forestry. As rural America continues to transform

from working forests and farms to home sites and suburbs, the social dimension of the landscape will continue to change. New residents may not understand the role of some forest practices like prescribed fire and harvesting, and may perceive the immediate effects of these practices in a negative light. This could have policy implications for forest practices. With expanding services needed by a growing population it may become more challenging for landowners to qualify for greenbelt appraisal for property taxes. At the national level, changes in the way the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and other existing legislation is interpreted and enforced will likely be continuous challenges for private forest landowners. New legislative and regulatory challenges will certainly come about as well. The Florida Forestry Association also works as a partner with Florida Tree Farm in public outreach to teachers and youth to try to mitigate these challenges.

If you would like more information about the Florida Tree Farm Program, contact the Chair of your Tree Farm District.

Landowners west of the Apalachicola River, needing more information on the Tree Farm program, please contact: **District I Chair-Shawn Cooper** (American Forest Management) @ 850-526-5110 (ext-14), shawn.cooper@amforem.biz.

Landowners that are east of the Apalachicola River, but west of the Suwannee River, please contact, **District II Chair-Roy Lima** (Fl. Forest Service) @ 850-681-5942, Roy.Lima@freshfromflorida.com.

Landowners that are east of the Suwannee River and west of the St. John's river including all of Duval, Putnam, Marion and Levy counties, contact, **District III Chair-Greg Marshall** (FL. Forest Service) @ 352-233-8342, Gregory.Marshall@FreshFromFlorida.com.

For St. John's, Flagler, Volusia and all counties south of Marion and Levy, please contact, **District IV Chair-Stephen Lloyd** (FL. Forest Service) @ 386-226-0445, Stephen.Lloyd@freshfromflorida.com.

Control Methods

Early removal of plants before they produce seeds is critical. Take caution when using equipment near the plant or walking through an area where it is present, to prevent unintentional seed dispersal. Mulching can also help stop seedlings from establishing. Currently there are no biological controls used in the United States, however the plant seems to display a natural vulnerability to the herbicides and the insect pests



Photo by Ann Murray

that would typically damage the cotton plant. Recommended herbicide treatment is a solution of up to 2% triclopyr mixed with .25% surfactant and apply to foliage. Take care not

to allow herbicide to come into contact with desirable plant species. As always, ensure that you use proper personal protective equipment when using herbicides and follow all instructions on product labels.

For more information about this plant, other invasive exotic species, funding, and regional efforts to prevent and control infestations see the Florida Invasive Species Partnership web site at <http://www.floridainvasives.org/>

Get Email Updates!

Don't miss out on upcoming events and news! Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the Stewardship listserv. Updates are sent every week or two.

TIMBER PRICE UPDATE

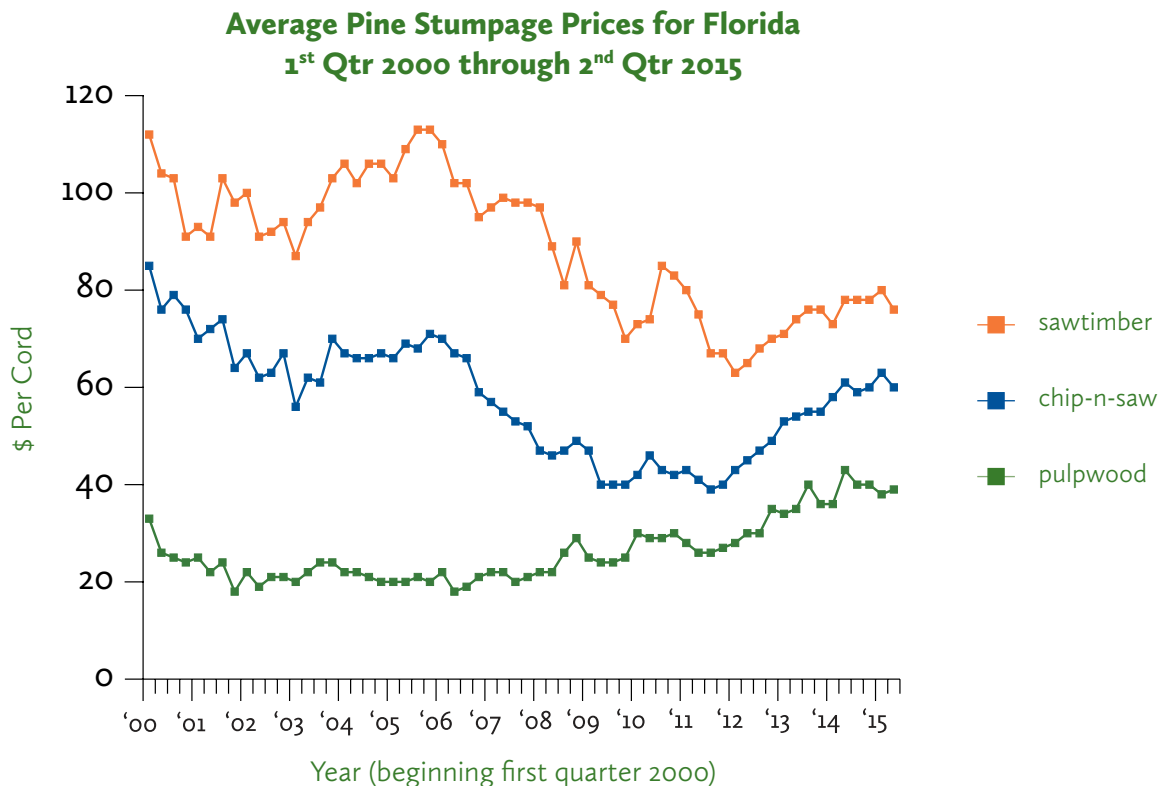
The timber pricing information below is useful for observing trends over time, but does not reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale are advised to solicit the services of a consulting forester to obtain current local market conditions.

Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the 2nd Quarter 2015 Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$39/cord (\$14/ton), same as 1 st Qtr 2015
Pine C-N-S:	\$60/cord (\$22/ton), ↓
Pine sawtimber:	\$76/cord (\$29/ton), ↓

Trend Report

Average stumpage prices of most products in the region dropped slightly in the second quarter but market conditions were stable overall. Wood products and paper producers all reported growth. Restructuring is the big news in the industry, with Rock-Tenn merging with MeadWestvaco to become WestRock. WestRock will consist of 26 paper and packaging facilities in North America. Persistent summer rains in many areas are likely helping stumpage prices for timber on dry ground.



Timber Mart-South is compiled and produced at the Center for Forest Business, Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, under contract with the Frank W. Norris Foundation, a non-profit corporation serving the forest products industry. See <http://www.tmart-south.com/> for information on subscriptions.

CONGRATULATIONS CERTIFIED FOREST STEWARDS AND TREE FARMERS

For more information about becoming a Certified Forest Steward or Tree Farmer, contact your Florida Forest Service County Forester, consultant or learn about it at:

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/For-Landowners/Programs/>

or

<http://www.floridaforest.org>

These landowners have a current Forest Stewardship and/or Tree Farm management plan for their property and have demonstrated excellent stewardship of their land resources.



Florida International University Nature Preserve: Edy Cicilio (L) and Ryan Vogel with Mark Torok (R), Miami-Dade County



Debra Misch (R) with Corey Walk, Polk County



Larry Mueller with Cathy Hardin, Escambia County



Betty Sullivan, Suwannee County



Rudolph & Lorine Koprovic Homestead, Okaloosa County



Steve Reddy, Forest Steward, Polk County



Sue Garner and son, Russel with Barry Stafford, Jackson County



Syretha Ward (c) with Daughter Daphne Grier with Barry Stafford, Jackson County



Kenneth Carman, Volusia County

Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Aug. 20	Forest Stewardship/Lake County CISMA Workshop: Invasive Exotic Species and Management , 9 am to 3 pm ET, UF/IFAS Extension Lake County Auditorium, 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares, FL 32778. FDACS CEUs and SAF CFEs approved. \$15 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>Registration at https://fsp-workshop082015.eventbrite.com/ or call UF/IFAS Extension Lake County Auditorium (352) 343-4101 ext. 2.</i>
Aug. 27	Invasive Plant ID Workshop , 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, UF/IFAS Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center, 8202 CR 417, Live Oak, FL 32060. Sponsored by Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council and North Central Florida CISMA through a Kathy Craddock Burks Education Grant. <i>Details and registration at: http://www.eventbrite.com/e/invasive-plant-id-workshop-suwannee-county-registration-17152790458</i>
Aug. 28	Invasive Plant ID Workshop , 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, UF/IFAS Extension Taylor County Office, 203 Forest Park Dr, Perry, FL 32348. Sponsored by Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council and North Central Florida CISMA through a Kathy Craddock Burks Education Grant. <i>Details and registration at: http://www.eventbrite.com/e/invasive-plant-id-workshop-taylor-county-registration-17152028178</i>
Sept. 24	Forest Stewardship/Six Rivers CISMA Workshop: Cogongrass Identification and Control , 9 am to 2:30 pm CT, UF/IFAS Extension Walton County Office, 732 N. 9 th St, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433. FDACS CEUs and SAF CFEs approved. \$15 fee includes lunch and materials. <i>Register on-line at https://fsp-workshop092415.eventbrite.com/. You can also reserve a space by contacting UF/IFAS Extension Walton County (850) 892-8172 or haneyc@ufl.edu.</i>
Oct. 15	Forest Stewardship/Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance Workshop: Integrate Wildlife and Forestry , 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, Dixie Plantation, 1583 Livingston Rd, Greenville, FL 32331. Supported by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant. \$5 fee. <i>Register online at http://fsp-workshop101515.eventbrite.com/ or call UF/IFAS Extension Jefferson County at (850) 342-0187.</i>
Oct. 22	Forest Stewardship Tour at Sparkleberry Farm, Property of Bill Black and Denise Matthews, Alachua County , 9:00 am to 2 pm ET. \$10 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>Register on-line at https://fsp-tour102215.eventbrite.com/ or reserve a space by contacting Chris Demers, (352) 846-2375, cdemers@ufl.edu</i>
Oct. 29	Forest Stewardship Field Day: Tree/Plant Identification , 9 am to 3 pm, Morningside Nature Center, 3540 East University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32641. \$10 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>Register on-line at https://fsp-workshop102915.eventbrite.com/ or contact Chris Demers, cdemers@ufl.edu, (352) 846-2375.</i>

For many more events and information see: floridalandsteward.org

The Florida Land Steward Newsletter is a University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service, Florida Forest Service, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Florida Tree Farm joint project:

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