

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Congratulations to the Register Family Partnership: 2016 Florida Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year, Leon County

By Dave Lewis, Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.

The Alonzo and Eliza Register Family Partnership, LTC, was formed in 1997 by Alonzo and Eliza Register so their land and timber would continue to be enjoyed by the family long after their deaths. Alonzo was born and raised on the land that makes up the Register Family Partnership. He worked the longleaf pine stands for turpentine from 1928 to the 1980's and continued to enjoy the land and timber until his death in 1998.



The Register Family Partnership was selected as the Florida Outstanding Tree Farm of 2016. Alonzo and Eliza Register's grandchildren, Frank Douglas, Julie Hannon, and Mary Grace Crosby, are pictured here with Dave Lewis of Southern Forestry Consultants on the right.

Today, the Partnership is made up of 35 family members and is managed by three general partners; Julie Hannon, Frank Douglas, and Mary Grace Crosby; all Alonzo's grandchildren. The Partnership was formed with the advice and help of a tax attorney, the late Tim Warfel, and the family has received ongoing tax advice from their accountant, Angelyn Bagwell. The family has worked closely with Dave Lewis, their forestry consultant (Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.) since the early 1990's on the forest and land management. The general partners and Dave meet twice annually (June and November) to review their management plan and make adjustments as needed. At the November meeting, the general partners will host

a "ride through" in which all family members are invited to participate. This will involve riding over the property to look at activities that have taken place or are planned.

The Register Family Partnership owns 1,139 acres of timber land in southeastern Leon County near the town of Woodville. All of the property is in timber production with either natural longleaf or in planted pine stands. Approximately 60% of the property is in natural longleaf stands, most of which has a healthy mix of mature trees (80+ years old) and various stages of younger trees that have been naturally regenerated. The rest of the timberland is planted in slash, loblolly, and longleaf pines and varies in age. The timberland is managed with periodic selection harvesting,



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mechanical treatments, and prescribed burning. The property has been under a written Forest Management Plan for many years and is updated every five years.

The centerpiece of the Register timber is the natural longleaf stands that are managed on a natural regeneration system that incorporates frequent, but light, selection harvests in conjunction with frequent prescribed fire. The

selection harvests utilize individual tree selection via hand marking by foresters to select the trees to remove. Emphasis is put on protecting existing natural regeneration, as well as promoting future regeneration. Most of the timber that is harvested is typically high value sawtimber and utility poles.

Prescribed fire is an integral tool used in managing the Register Family Partnership timber lands.

Essential in managing the longleaf stands, the planted stands are also prescribed burned on a 3-year rotation. Besides, timber harvesting, revenues are generated through hunting leases and pine straw harvests.

We congratulate the family on all of their accomplishments and exemplary land stewardship.

Landlocked? A Discussion About Access Easements

By Jon Gould, Florida Tree Farmer

First, let me clarify that this article does not address conservation easements. This article discusses easements that are used primarily for providing access by vehicular and foot traffic and above-ground utilities across property. Easements discussed here are defined and regulated by state law. In Florida the law for addressing easements is found in Florida Statutes Title XL – Real and Personal Property, Chapter 704 – Easements, Paragraph 704.01 – Common-law and statutory easements defined and determined.

The main purpose of an easement is to provide reasonable access to landlocked property from “...the nearest practicable public or private road in which the landlocked owner has vested easement rights.” In other words, if you own property that is surrounded by property owned by others and there is no established right-of-way that you can use to access your property, you are entitled to an easement across one of the surrounding properties. Neighboring landowners may not block your access by means of a fence, gate, structure, or any other obstruction. Like most laws there are many situations that can complicate the intent of this law that may result in litigation. Let’s discuss some of the more common situations that may arise.

First, if you are the landlocked property owner (called the Dominant Owner) surrounded by other property owners (called potential Servient Owners), whose property do you decide to try to obtain an easement across? The law states that the easement should be “the nearest practical route” to a public or private road. To illustrate the idea of practicality, what if the nearest route is a quarter mile through a heavily wooded swamp that floods frequently, whereas another route is over an established private road that is a mile long, extends through the middle of a well-managed Tree Farm, and passes near the house of the absentee landowner? An easement through the first property is the nearest route but may not be the most practical route compared to the second property. However, an easement through the first property may have a minimal impact on that landowner compared to the impact of an easement through the property of the Tree Farmer.

Constructing a road through the swamp will likely require special permits from the county, state, and/or federal agencies. On top of that, what if there are any endangered or threatened species within or near the proposed construction route? Issues like this may eliminate this route as a possible or feasible

easement. Even if approved, this route is going to be very expensive to construct and will likely require a wider than normal easement to build the road, install drainage structures, and provide overhead power lines.

Now the Tree Farmer may be considered to have the most practical route and may have to provide an easement that will grant access through his locked gate to people and equipment of the landlocked owner, including family and friends, contractors, service and utility companies, loggers, clients, etc. What if this property is leased to a hunt club? They aren’t going to want strangers passing through their leased property at any time, scaring and possibly killing some of the wildlife. If the landlocked owner is planning to build a residence or hunt camp he will want power and possibly other utilities, so these will have to extend all the way along the Tree Farmer’s road. In other words, what had been private property now has any number of trespassers traveling through it. However, the more inconvenient, invasive, and restrictive the easement is to the Servient Owner, the greater the compensation he/she may be entitled to.

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If the landlocked owner can't come to an agreement with one of the adjoining owners for an easement, then he can petition the court to decide who will provide the easement and the provisions of the easement; such as where it will be located on the property, the width of the easement, restrictions, who pays for the road maintenance, whether or not the landlocked owner will have to pay any compensation for the easement and how much, etc.

You can see where an easement across your property can devalue it and also even take away some or much of the joy of owning it. Therefore, if you are considering purchasing a piece of property it is a

good idea to look at the surrounding property ownerships to determine if any of those owners might someday seek an easement across the property you are interested in. Of course, you should also make sure that there is good legal access to the property you are considering.

If you are contacted by a landlocked owner or his attorney requesting a possible easement across your property, it would probably be wise to hire an attorney having experience with easements to represent you. An easement is a serious encumbrance that places restrictions on your property that normally stay with ownership of the property. An attorney can help you negotiate the

least restrictive easement and may even be able to suggest an alternate easement through someone else's property that would be more appealing to the landlocked owner. The attorney can also represent you in case of litigation.

Whether granting or obtaining an easement, make sure that all of the restrictions and provisions are clearly spelled out in the legal document granting the easement. If something important was not included, like who is responsible for maintaining the road, it could cause serious complications and even lead to costly litigation to resolve.

Northwest Florida Naturalists Grow Wildlife and Pollinator Habitat

By Renee Bodine, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Billy and Marcia Boothe are naturalists, having spent a lifetime observing, documenting, photographing and teaching about Florida's plants, insects and wildlife. So when they bought their land in the late 90s, it was to restore the land and preserve its plants, which include the *Torreya* tree, a very rare conifer that grows only in the bluffs and ravines in Gadsden and Liberty counties and an adjacent county in Georgia. Discovering a robust population of gopher tortoises with 40 burrows scattered throughout the property was a plus. Located between Torreya State Park and Greensboro, they named their property Crooked Creek Preserve after the creek running through their land to the Apalachicola River.

While working with a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's biologist they mentioned that they wanted to increase their wildlife habitat. He directed them to USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for financial assistance.



Billy and Marcia Boothe are restoring the longleaf pine forest on 22 acres in Gadsden County. Photo by Renee Bodine.

Billy and Marcia began the process of restoring longleaf on 22 acres to bring the ecosystem back to what it used to be before fire was excluded. They removed many of the encroaching hardwoods and planted 8,400 longleaf pine tubelings, along with 25,000 wiregrass plugs on a 6 foot spacing to help carry fire. Prescribed burns are set every two

years to promote a diverse ground-cover and wildlife has flourished. The Boothes watch quail, wild turkey, deer, bobcat and bear on the property. Fire has caused wildflowers, including some endangered species, to bloom profusely again. "It has worked out beautifully," Marcia says.

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A bee visits manyflowered beardtongue, an important pollinator-attracting plant established on the property. Photo by Billy Boothe.

Even though the couple manages their forest primarily for wildlife instead of harvest, Marcia recommends other landowners consider longleaf pine. “The tales about longleaf taking forever to grow aren’t really true,” she says. Although the species is slow growing the first 10 to 15 years, she says it catches up. “Longleaf is a lot less work. It is adapted to the habitat, drought and insect resistant, fire adapted and you get a lot more money for it,” Marcia says.

Last year they planted pollinator-attracting flowers, shrubs and trees. After clearing the area of weeds, they planted three acres in native

wild flowers bordered by hedgerows of Chinquapins, Chickasaw plums, redbuds and silverbells. They also planted less well-known plants such as native blueberries, aralias and Hercules’ clubs that Billy says are great for pollinators. He built 20 bee boxes.

Financial and technical assistance from NRCS helped them do the work through the agency’s Longleaf Pine and Pollinator initiatives. As soon as they cleared their land, they started seeing the benefits of their hard work. Motion-activated cameras set up at 14 gopher tortoise burrows track their behavior and wildlife passing by. The gopher tortoise is

the keystone species of the longleaf pine ecosystem and hundreds of species depend on their burrows for survival. And friends who keep 32 bee hives on the property provide the couple with honey. Billy photographs rare plants and wildlife for publication in natural history books, magazines and websites.

The couple continue their outreach and education about land stewardship through a Facebook page for landowners in Northwest Florida at: <https://www.facebook.com/FloridaLandStewardsofNWFlorida/>

Join the discussion about land restoration, tree selection, vendors, how to get forestry assistance and financial assistance at their Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FloridaLandStewardsofNWFlorida/>

See Billy and Marcia Boothes’ photography at <http://natureinfofocus.com/>

To learn how you can restore longleaf pine or develop wildlife or pollinator habitat on your land contact your local NRCS office.

Technical Assistance: Let a Landowner Assistance Biologist Work with You

By Jeremy Orange and Ginger Morgan, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Landowner Assistance Program biologists

“Technical assistance,” a phrase often used by resource professionals, may sound vague. Not all landowners are aware of the expansive definition of this phrase when it comes to conserving their land for native wildlife and habitats.

So what does it mean? In the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Landowner Assistance Program (LAP), the term “technical assistance” refers to the variety of information and resources that LAP

biologists provide to private landowners. Other resources for technical assistance include county foresters with the Florida Forest Service and district conservationists with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Taking advantage of LAP technical assistance helps private landowners conserve Florida’s fish and wildlife and the wild places they need to

thrive, so they can pass along the legacy of their land to future generations.

LAP biologists assist landowners in all aspects of conservation planning and wildlife habitat improvement on their properties. Biologists meet with an interested landowner to discuss specific goals, such as timber or agricultural production, property

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aesthetics, recreation, habitat improvement and wildlife enhancement. During a walk-through visit to the landowner's property, the biologist can address conservation-related questions and, when needed, follow up by contacting other resource professionals in the FWC or partner agencies.

LAP biologists can offer detailed information on topics such as: available cost-share programs, conservation easements, invasive species control, conservation programs, native plant sources, wildlife monitoring, landowner cooperatives, and educational opportunities.

After learning about the landowner's property, a biologist will recommend conservation activities to help the landowner achieve his or her goals, either through a simple schedule of activities or a formal conservation stewardship plan. The biologist will follow up later with the landowner to ensure all issues have been explained and addressed.

To utilize this free service offered by FWC's Landowner Assistance Program, contact the LAP regional coordinator in your area. A LAP biologist will begin working with you to address your conservation needs, whether it's a small or large property.

Remember, technical assistance is only a phone call away! Interested in working with a local LAP biologist to receive technical assistance? Contact your regional Landowner Assistance Program coordinator:

Northwest Region

Arlo Kane,
Arlo.Kane@myfwc.com
(850) 767-3616.

North Central Region

Ginger Morgan
Ginger.Morgan@myfwc.com
(386) 758-0525

Northeast/South Region

Mark Asleson
Mark.Asleson@myfwc.com
(352) 732-1225

Southwest Region

Luis Gonzalez
Luis.Gonzalez@myfwc.com
(863) 648-3200

More about FWC's Landowner Assistance Program is at
<http://MyFWC.com/lap>.



FWC Landowner Assistance Biologists provide guidance on longleaf pine planting during a site visit with a private landowner. Photo by FWC.

Get Email Updates!

Don't miss out on upcoming events and news! A lot happens between issues of this quarterly newsletter. Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the stewardship listserv. Updates are sent every week or two and include the latest calendar of workshops, tours and other events, a link to the current issue of this newsletter, updates on cost-share and other assistance programs and resources, and other stewardship related information.

TIMBER PRICE UPDATE

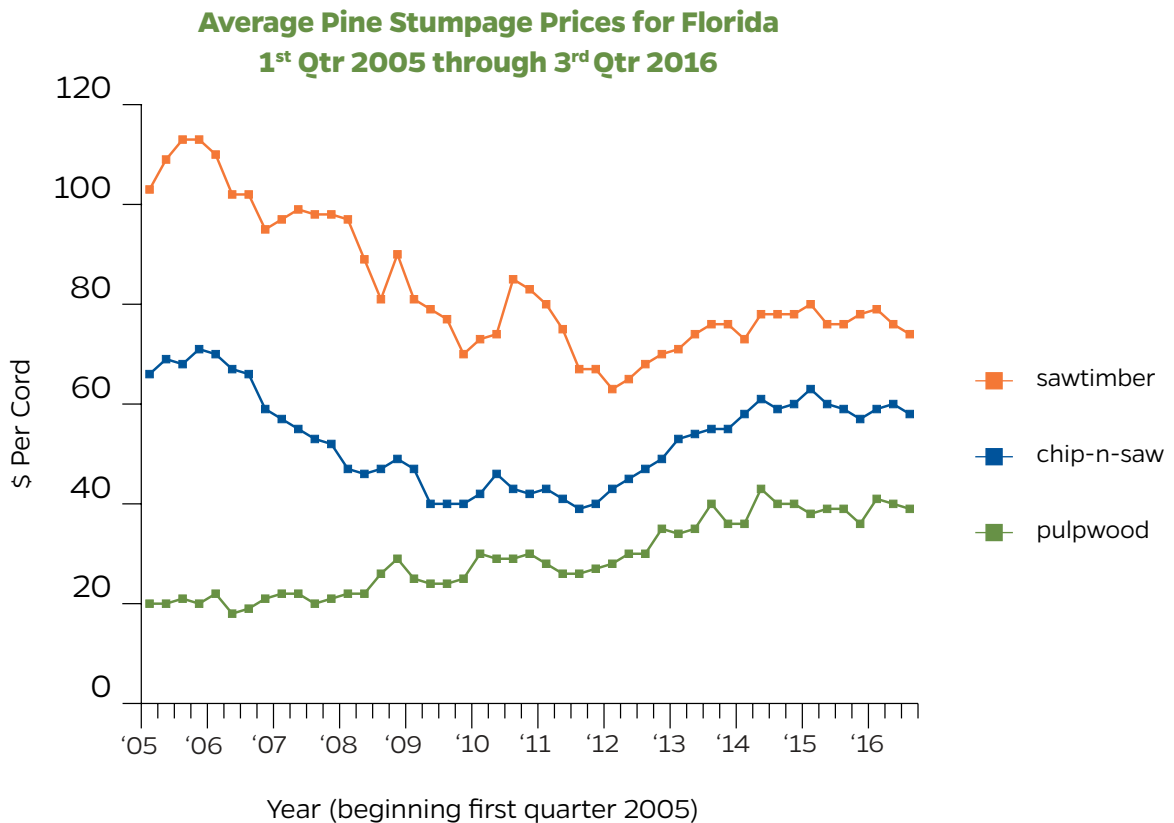
The timber pricing information below is useful for observing trends over time, but does not reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale are advised to solicit the services of a consulting forester to obtain current local market conditions.

Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **3rd Quarter 2016** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$39/cord (\$15/ton), ↓ slightly from 2 nd Qtr. 2016
Pine C-N-S:	\$58/cord (\$22/ton), ↓ slightly
Pine sawtimber:	\$74/cord (\$28/ton), ↓ slightly

Trend Report

Dry weather across much of the Southeastern U.S. has provided more accessibility to wood, increased supply and lower stumpage prices across much of the region, including Florida. Market indicators remain relatively stable with paper and paperboard production down slightly this year as compared to a year ago. U.S. building construction continues to improve with housing starts up from the same period last year. Log and lumber exports are up substantially from last year and the U.S. dollar remained strong in the third quarter.



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.



Eric Marvin, Washington County



Howard Harden (L) with Ariel Sewell, Washington County



Varley Grantham (L) with Calin Ionita, Indian River County

Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Nov 15	Florida State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting of the USDA NRCS, Producers and Partners , 10 am - 12:30 pm, Doyle Conner Bldg., 1911 SW 34 th St, Gainesville, FL. Public, ag producers, natural resource interest groups invited. Hosted by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. <i>Contact: Jeff Woods, 352-338-9515</i>
Dec 5-7	Weather & Climate Decision Tools for Farmers, Ranchers & Land Managers , University of Florida Campus, Gainesville, FL. This conference is designed to give producers and land managers a competitive edge in increasing productivity and reducing risks associated with climate variability and change. <i>Please contact Caroline Staub (carogstaub@ufl.edu) or Carolyn Cox (crcox@ufl.edu) with any questions. Details and registration at: http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/decision_tools/registration.html</i>
Feb 10, 2017	Small Scale Mushroom Production , UF/IFAS Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center, Live Oak, FL. <i>See https://www.eventbrite.com/e/small-scale-mushroom-production-registration-28235044779 for details and registration, or contact Dilcia Toro at dtoro@ufl.edu or (386) 362-1725 ext.102</i>
March 13-14 or March 17-18	Starting a Successful Hydroponic Business , UF/IFAS Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center, Live Oak, FL. <i>See https://www.eventbrite.com/e/starting-a-successful-hydroponic-business-registration-28233604471 details and registration, or contact Dilcia Toro at dtoro@ufl.edu or (386) 362-1725 ext.102</i>

For many more events and information see: floridalandsteward.org

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