Forest Stewardship Workshop: 
Timberland Security for Landowners

September 27, 2012; 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, Central Time
Gum Creek Lodge, 5800 Buck Ward Rd, Baker FL 32531

Some landowners, especially those who don’t reside on their land, may be at risk of losses or costs resulting from trespass, timber theft, dumping, drug farming, wildfire, arson or other property violations. This workshop will help landowners be more aware of security risks and take steps to minimize them.

Agenda:

9:00 am  Sign-in, meet and greet  
9:15 Welcome and introduction, Maria Wilson, Florida Forest Service and Chris Demers, UF-IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation
9:30 Trespass and liability concerns: is your property attracting visitors or trouble? (trespass, poaching, dumping, arson) David Holt, Okaloosa County Sheriff Office and Gary Holley, Florida Forest Service
10:30 Break
10:45 Prevent timber theft with clear boundaries and contracts, Ken Oser, Consulting Forester; Charles Padgett, Florida Dept of Ag and Consumer Services; and David Holt
11:30 Local timber theft case study and the timber theft tax deduction, Betty Ward, Landowner and Chris Demers
12:00 pm Lunch
1:00 Prevent cultivation or processing of controlled substances, Michael Rader, Okaloosa County Sheriff Office
2:00 Conclusion, evaluations, adjourn

Funding for Florida’s Forest Stewardship Program is provided by the USDA Forest Service through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Florida Forest Service and a grant from the Florida Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee.
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## Workshop Organizers, Presenters and Resource Contacts

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Bearden</td>
<td>Extension Agent II, UF-IFAS Okaloosa County Extension</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Headly@ufl.edu">Headly@ufl.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>David Holt</td>
<td>Okaloosa County Sheriff Office</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cholt@sheriff-okaloosa.org">cholt@sheriff-okaloosa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Padgett</td>
<td>Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Charles.Padgett@freshfromflorida.com">Charles.Padgett@freshfromflorida.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Demers</td>
<td>Forest Stewardship Coordinator, UF-IFAS School of Forest Resources &amp; Conservation</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Cdemers@ufl.edu">Cdemers@ufl.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Lee</td>
<td>Landowner Assistance Biologist, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Andrew.Lee@myfwc.com">Andrew.Lee@myfwc.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Rader</td>
<td>Investigator - Drug Task Force, Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mrader@sheriff-okaloosa.org">mrader@sheriff-okaloosa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary Holley</td>
<td>Forest Area Supervisor, Florida Forest Service</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Gary.Holley@freshfromflorida.com">Gary.Holley@freshfromflorida.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ken Oser</td>
<td>Consulting Forester, Oser Forestry Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:oserforestry@yahoo.com">oserforestry@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Darryl Williams</td>
<td>District Conservationist, USDA NRCS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Darryl.Williams@fl.usda.gov">Darryl.Williams@fl.usda.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Holley</td>
<td>Yellow River Soil &amp; Water Conservation District</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Susan.Holley@fl.nacdnet.net">Susan.Holley@fl.nacdnet.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria Wilson</td>
<td>Okaloosa County Forester, Florida Forest Service</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Maria.Wilson@freshfromflorida.com">Maria.Wilson@freshfromflorida.com</a></td>
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Questions about this or other Forest Stewardship Program activities can be directed to Chris Demers at (352) 846-2375, cdemers@ufl.edu. For more information and events see the UF Forest Stewardship Web site at:

http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/forest_stewardship
Florida’s Forest Stewardship Program

Forest Stewardship is active management of forests and related resources to keep these lands in a productive and healthy condition for present and future generations, and to increase the economic, environmental and social benefits of these lands. Forest Stewards are those landowners who manage their forestlands on a long-term basis by following a multiple resource management plan.

The Forest Stewardship Program addresses the improvement and maintenance of timber, wildlife, soil and water, recreation, aesthetics, as well as forage resources.

Eligibility

Private forest landowners with at least 20 acres of forest land and have a desire to manage their ownerships according to Stewardship principles can participate in the Forest Stewardship Program. Also, adjacent landowners, with similar management objectives, may combine their holdings to meet this acreage limitation.

Benefits to Landowners

- A customized management plan that is based on the landowner's objectives. The plan will include forest stand characteristics, property maps, management recommendations, and a five-year time line for future planning. This plan also serves as documentation of active management on the property that may help reduce tax liability.
- An opportunity for future public recognition as a certified "Forest Steward".
- Educational workshops, tours, web site and a quarterly Stewardship newsletter developed and distributed by the University of Florida, IFAS Cooperative Extension Service: [http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/forest_stewardship](http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/forest_stewardship)

Getting into the Program

Contact your local Division of Forestry County Forester and tell them that you would like to have a Forest Stewardship Plan written for your property. More information and application here: [http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/cfa_steward_index.html](http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/cfa_steward_index.html)
Tree Farm Program

The American Tree Farm System® is a program of the American Forest Foundation and was founded in 1941 to promote the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to family forest landowners. Nearly 26 million acres of privately owned forestland and 80,000 family forest landowners in 46 states are enrolled in this program and committed to excellence in forest stewardship. About half of all Tree Farms are located in the South.

Eligibility

Private forest landowners with at least 10 acres of forest land and have a desire to manage their ownerships according to sustainable forestry guidelines can participate in Tree Farm.

Benefits to Landowners

Tree Farmers are good stewards of their forestland committed to protecting watersheds and wildlife habitat and conserving soil. They manage their forestland for various reasons, including timber production, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, and education/outreach. 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 international standards of sustainable forest management.
- Participation in local, state, regional, and national Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year awards and recognition.

Getting into the Program

Contact your local Division of Forestry County Forester and tell them that you would like to join the Tree Farm program. More information here: http://www.floridaforest.org/tree_farm.php
The United States has almost 2.5 billion acres of which about 30%, or 750 million acres, consist of woodlands.

The U.S. Forest Service estimates that more than 10% of all trees cut from national forests are stolen.

A group of forest economists estimated that, across the United States, timber theft is a $1 billion a year business. Auto theft is $8B a year.

Those same economists estimated that enough trees are stolen every year to build 25,000 homes.

In Georgia, a single theft totaled more than $4 million.

The Lesson: Timber theft is not the accidental straying onto a neighbor’s land and taking a few trees. Timber theft is big business.
Environmental Impacts of Timber Theft

Direct/Visible Impacts: Because timber thieves don’t bother with good logging practices:

- They waste trees to facilitate rapid in-and-out.
- They bulldoze logging roads on very steep slopes, leading to major soil erosion.
- They make no effort to keep silt out of streams.
- They leave behind huge slash piles that pose a danger of out-of-control wildfires across large areas.

Indirect/Less Visible Impacts:

Fewer trees mean fewer conversion of CO2 to oxygen, resulting in poorer air.

Fewer live root systems lead to lower take-up of surface water, resulting in more runoff and less groundwater storage and replenishment.

Fewer trees mean less carbon sequestration, with two results:

- atmospheric warming is increased; and
- particularly proactive landowners (the kind our woodlands need) who have sold or are interested in selling carbon credits lose doubly, because when the trees are taken, they lose the value of the wood and also lose any current and/or future carbon credit income.

TIMBER THEFT is a major problem in Florida and across the United States.

But Why?
Because of a lack of enforcement nationwide.

- There are a number of reasons for the lack of enforcement, starting with deficiencies in the laws, deficiencies that effectively incentivize timber theft. Some of these are:
  - The lack of interest by law enforcement authorities in investigating and prosecuting timber theft. Part of that comes from the almost-universally prevalent attitude that stealing timber is not really stealing.

- Is it criminal or civil?

- It is rare to find a law-enforcement officer who will even investigate timber theft, much less take a case to the courts.

- It is also rare to find a criminal prosecutor that will pursue a case.

---

A Way Thieves Steal Trees - Number One:
Thieves will set up a harvest directly on your property or will move over on you from an adjacent ownership. Although mistakes can happen to honest loggers, I am talking here about timber being taken with "evil intent".
**Ways to Prevent the Theft:**

- Inspect your property regularly. Your own neglect can encourage thieves. Inspections will also catch insect and disease problems early and head off line encroachment.
- Maintain and "refresh" proper boundary markings. It is much easier to do this when property lines are still visible. Always freshen up your lines when harvesting is occurring on adjacent property.
- Cultivate good neighbors and encourage good lease-holders to keep an eye open.

**A Way Thieves Steal Trees - Number Two:**

- Thieves will offer absurdly low prices for timber knowing that the landowner has no idea of the value. Although it is not a crime to give away your trees, it is a crime to misrepresent their value.
Ways to Prevent the Theft:
• Timber market values and tree volumes can be hard to determine without a professional. Always get a second opinion of values and volumes, especially where large acreage is involved. You might want to hire a forestry consultant or buy a timber inventory from a third party.
• Check out all timber buyers by asking for referrals and by inquiring about the buyer at your local or state foresters office.
• Avoid the temptation to make a "quick sell" to a friendly buyer. Take a deep breath and ask the buyer for some time for you to think about what you are going to do. You should not feel pressured by the buyer.

A Way Thieves Steal Trees - Number Three:
Thieves can actually steal trees after you have approved and allowed the harvest. Poor accounting in both "lump sum" sales and "unit" sales can tempt a logger or a trucker to misreport trees cut and/or volumes represented.
Ways to Prevent the Theft:
• No timber should leave the loading site on "pay-as-cut" sales unless the load has been recorded by date, species, time and destination.
• All records must be available for inspection and collected at the end of each week. These records should then be compared to scale tickets for reconciliation.
• You or your agent needs to be on-site and visible at random times during the week.

Timber thieves often prey on the elderly, those in ill health, and those who live away from their timber land because they are easy victims. The poor are also often victims because they are poor; a victim who cannot afford to enter the justice system is the easiest victim of all.
• Receive Complaint
• Review Contracts and Documents
• Interview Victims
• Interview Witnesses
• Determine Property Boundaries
• Subpoena Records
• Stump Count
• Interview Suspect

812.014 Theft.— (1) A person commits theft if he or she knowingly obtains or uses, or endeavors to obtain or to use, the property of another with intent to, either temporarily or permanently: (a) Deprive the other person of a right to the property or a benefit from the property; (b) Appropriately the property to his or her own use or to the use of any person not entitled to the use of the property.

812.0145 Theft from persons 65 years of age or older; reclassification of offenses.— (1) A person who is convicted of theft of more than $1,000 from a person 65 years of age or older shall be ordered by the sentencing judge to make restitution to the victim of such offense and to perform up to 500 hours of community service work. Restitution and community service work shall be in addition to any fine or sentence which may be imposed and shall not be in lieu thereof.

(2) Whenever a person is charged with committing theft from a person 65 years of age or older, when he or she knows or has reason to believe that the victim was 65 years of age or older, the offense for which the person is charged shall be reclassified as follows: (a) If the funds, assets, or property involved in the theft from a person 65 years of age or older is valued at $50,000 or more, the offender commits a felony of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(b) If the funds, assets, or property involved in the theft from a person 65 years of age or older is valued at $10,000 or more, but less than $50,000, the offender commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(c) If the funds, assets, or property involved in the theft from a person 65 years of age or older is valued at $300 or more, but less than $10,000, the offender commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.
Timber Theft - Report it!

Charles Padgett
Law Enforcement Investigator II
Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
(850) 983-4551 Office
(850) 554-9609 Cell
(850) 983-4554 Fax
Charles.Padgett@FreshFromFlorida.com
6095 Old Bagdad Highway
Milton, FL 32583-8983
## Prevent Timber Theft with Clear Boundaries & Contracts

Ken Oser, RF  
OSER FORESTRY SERVICES

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<th>Per Unit/Ton Sales</th>
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<td>Potential Red Flags</td>
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### Boundaries
- Natural borders such as roads, fence lines or Ag fields; if using a stream, remember BMP's
- Property lines may have shifted; confirm property lines; physically inspect lines
- On wooded boundaries, paint and ribbon
- Record boundary with a GPS
- Review boundaries with buyer and crew operators; provide maps/ aerial

### Timber Sales
- Clearly state contract harvesting dates
- Retain a signed copy of the contract and include buyer's contract information
- Include a map
- With a performance bond, formally terminate contract at conclusion

### Lump Sum Sales
Owner is paid in advance for all timber included in sale.
This is common on clear-cuts and thinning large size timber when volume and logging conditions are favorable.

### Lump Sum Sales (cont)
- On clear-cuts, the potential for theft off your parcel (not neighbor's) is minimal
- On thinnings, clearly distinguish trees: paint at eye level and stump; penalty for harvesting trees not included in sale; inspect during harvest
- Physically inspect boundary lines
- Inspect adjoining forested areas

### Per Unit/Ton Sales
Owner is paid after the timber is harvested based on agreed-upon prices by units of measure of forest products harvested.
Typically the landowner is paid a few days to a week and a half after the end of the first "work week". Each company pays off differently and multi-crew logging companies may have different work weeks.
Per Unit/ Ton Sales (cont)

- Clearly state the units and specifications
- Within the contract, require a ledger with the scale tickets

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Scale Ticket #</th>
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Per Unit/Ton Sales (cont)

- Within the ledger, include:
  - date
d  - driver
t  - time
d  - scale ticket number
  - forest product
d  - weight
  - mill
d  - load number
- If practical, provide load tickets
- Retain power to stop/terminate harvesting
Actions to Reduce Potential Timber Theft

- Know the logger/timber company
- Regularly inspect harvesting
- Know work schedule and trucks
- Know what you have on property
- Motion detection camera

Potential Red Flags

- Independent wood yards
- Contract truck drivers
- Selling directly to a logger
- Hand written scale tickets
You are probably as tired of the word security as I am. It seems that security issues are in the news every day: border security, computer security, home security, and security from terrorists, just to mention a few. Security risks that landowners face, while not as newsworthy as the aforementioned, can have a dramatic impact on their bottom line. We will review the many security risks landowners face and then provide prevention methods you can utilize to mitigate those risks. Before we delve into the risks landowners face, let's define the phrase “security risks for landowners”. Security risks for landowners can be defined as anything that will adversely impact the productivity, profitability, or aesthetics of the land. This broad definition includes risks like dumping, drug production, trespassing, fire, timber theft, and other resources theft. Each of these risks brings different challenges to the landowner, but fortunately, a few basic steps will go a long way in reducing landowners’ exposure to these risks.

Dumping
As the real estate around us converts to higher-use activities, and as the population increases, our need for landfill space has also increased. As the pressure grows on our landfills, the managers of those facilities have had to increase the fees we pay to deposit our waste. This fee motivates some to bypass the waste disposal system and dump material in the most convenient, out-of-the-way place: your land.

A dump on your property obviously impacts the land’s aesthetics, but it could also have some pretty steep financial impacts, not to mention the possibility of chemical contamination. Keep in mind that the landowner assumes the liability for items dumped on his or her land. Once on your property it is your responsibility!

In years past, one of the ways to combat this was to actually dig through the trash looking for a clue to who dumped it, then take that information to local law enforcement and hope they could make that person clean up the mess. If this is still your method, stop now! Some dumps are created by drug production and the by-products of that production are lethal. Do not risk permanent damage to your lungs or even death to go digging through a dump. Report fresh dumps to local law enforcement who are properly trained in identifying the trash from drug production.

Drug Production
Ask any Forest Service employee and he or she will testify to the fact that drug production is a growing problem on public lands. Forestland provides the land, water, privacy, and cover for producing illegal drugs. The most common drugs being produced on the land are marijuana and methamphetamine.

The first sign of drug production on your property may well be a dump containing plastic pots, fertilizer bags, propane tanks, starter fluid cans, and cold relief packages. If you observe any of these items in a dump, walk away and contact the authorities.

Other signs your land is being utilized for drug production include a foul smell in the air, abandoned trailers, abandoned cars, strange vehicles entering and exiting your property, new paths into your property, and discarded PVC pipe. Also, be aware that the people who are trespassing and producing drugs have no qualms about setting booby traps to protect their “investment”. Be very cautious if you suspect this activity on your land.

Trespassing
Trespassing comes in many forms: from people fishing your pond, to ATV usage, to the use of your property for the illegal activities mentioned above. Signs someone else is using your property are similar to the signs mentioned above in the drug production section. Indications of trespass include new
Prevention Methods

Acting on the prevention methods explained below mitigates security risks for landowners. As with all risks, your goal is to manage the risk to lessen any potential impacts to you, your wallet, or your land.

The most important thing you can do is to clearly mark and maintain your property lines. It sounds very simple to do, but you may be surprised at the number of landowners who forget to do this. Clearly defining your property costs money up front but can save you money in the long run. Sometimes the beginning of this is getting an accurate survey of your land. An accurate survey provides invaluable information in the event of trespass, arson, and/or timber theft.

Limit access to your property. That is very easy for some of you to accomplish when there is only one private road into your property. For others who have multiple public roads crossing their property, it is a bigger challenge. In either case, a good sturdy gate on roads or right of ways entering your property will prevent unauthorized people from entering your land. And make sure the gate is highly visible. Also, post your land to communicate to all where your line is and that you do not welcome trespassers. In most cases, properly posted lines have the added benefit of limiting your liability to trespassers. In South Carolina, generally, landowners “owe no duty” to trespassers who have ignored posted and no trespassing signs. Check with your lawyer to get specifics pertaining to your land.

Visit your land often and inspect access points and trouble areas (attractive areas, nuisances, or structures). This can be done by you, your agents, or your neighbors. Make sure individuals charged with inspecting your land know what marijuana looks like and what growing conditions it requires. Armed with this knowledge, inspections can be focused. If you own large acreages, consider the use of aerial inspections.

Participate in the community near your land. Know your neighbors and local law enforcement agencies and cultivate relationships with any leaseholders. You may lease access to your property for a variety of reasons (hunt clubs, farmers, recreational users, bee keepers, etc.). This is an excellent way to expand your eyes and ears.

Timber Theft

Timber theft is one of the chief concerns of many landowners because this most obviously involves dollars, and we all pay attention when dollars are involved. Timber theft can include the theft of individual “high-grade” logs, the theft of hardwood pulpwood for firewood, theft of unmarked trees, or the theft of entire tracts. Absentee landowners are the most at risk for the latter.

Other Resources

Other resources found on the land are also at risk of theft if the product found on your land has value in the marketplace. Keep in mind the marketplace does not have to be in your surrounding geographical area. Resources at risk for theft include clay, field stone, decorative rocks, gravel, sand, topsoil, exotics (paulownia trees), roots, mushrooms, and pine straw.
on the property and to add additional income. In the event you do have someone leasing, be sure and use a specifically written contract.

Clean up any old dump sites on your property immediately, but use caution for the same reasons cited earlier. An old dump could contain many different varieties of hazardous materials and clean up should be handled carefully. A good rule of thumb to remember is a small dump invariably becomes a large dump. If someone spots a small dump on your property, it is an open invitation to add more. Also, if you catch anyone dumping on your land, be willing to prosecute the individuals in a court of law. Nothing says, "stay clear" to others as well as a notice in the local paper of an individual charged with cleaning up a dump. Contact your local government to check on the most current laws and fines regarding dumping.

Reduce the risk of wildfire (or arson) by reducing the fuel load on your land. The best tool for this is the use of prescribed burning. Prescribed burning has the added benefit of also requiring you to maintain adequate fire breaks throughout your property. Contact your state natural resource agency or forestry agency for more information or assistance.

**Conclusion**

Security risks to landowners are just like the risks you face everyday. Each individual is responsible for determining his or her risks and planning how each risk should be managed. Landowners with limited public access to their property will have limited exposure to illegal dumping because of their location. Conversely, a landowner with an extensive public road network throughout his or her property will have a higher risk of an illegal dump forming. Review your risks with your land in mind and/or hire someone to help you review your risks. Either way, it is your responsibility to manage the risks you face and minimize the impact they may have on you and your land.

About the Author
Aaron Gilland holds a BS in Forestry and Wildlife from Virginia Tech and is President of Dendro Resource Management, Inc., a timber audit and security firm. He has 8 years experience in wood procurement and 12 years in forestry operations auditing and timber security. Aaron is a Certified Fraud Examiner, a Certified Forester and is a member of the SAF, South Carolina and Virginia Forestry Associations, and is a board member of the Forest Resources Association. He can be reached at: (803) 438-6139, or agilland@dendroresourcemgt.com.
Prevent Trespassing in Your Woods

By TOM Kazee

Unless your woodlot is on the moon, you’ve probably had trespassers. And you are likely to understand the problems range from mild nuisance to expensive, dangerous trouble. Three particularly aggravating components come to mind immediately: four-wheel-drive all-terrain vehicles, marijuana farms, and meth labs. If you own or share responsibility for large or remote tracts, you must be sensitive to all the related issues.

Let me begin this discussion with the most critical issue: your personal safety. Unless you are a trained, sworn law enforcement officer, you are not equipped in any way to deal with criminals face-to-face. Do not let your emotions push you into a confrontation with trespassers. Even on your own property, it is always best to avoid a confrontation and report the matter to law enforcement for their investigation.

Landowners can prevent trespass, vandalism, and related problems with a series or set of cost-effective, common-sense barriers. “Preventing” trespass is actually impossible: We can only reduce the potential and the damage. Trespassing might be prevented on a suburban lot, but not a forest.

The critical component of this series of barriers is you, the landowner. If you are indifferent to or unaware of the potential problems, then all other components will be ineffective. The owner and his/her agents are the central and critical barrier to trespass. Other barriers include controlling access, posting, monitoring, and neighbors.

Controlling Access
For our urban neighbors, controlling access might mean fences. For large woodlots, a fence is rarely an economical option. But vandals are often lazy and they won’t walk very far, so a good gate in the right place will help.

Gates are a nuisance. They can attract bees and be a bother, as even the owners must have the right key to gain access. A good one can cost $1,000 or more to construct and install. They are common targets for vandals — but they are indispensable. You might need a dozen locks if you have a dozen hunt clubs behind the gate (not uncommon), and a gate alone might be insufficient. Barriers adjacent to a gate must be constructed to prevent the four-wheelers from going around the gate.

In rare cases, it might make sense to close a road with a ditch or mounds of soil or rock. This can be effective at limiting access to trespassers, but it also limits the owner’s access. And whether you utilize gates or barriers, you must consider and limit your liability. Cable gates were common 30 years ago, but these are difficult to see and very hazardous to four-wheelers. Cutting an existing road would create a hazard for everyone accustomed to traveling that road freely. A child on an all-terrain vehicle will not always exercise good judgment; I recommend you view your liabilities with that in mind.

And you can’t limit access to public roads. If the state or county claims a

Registered forestier Tom Kazee helps clients across the Southeast reduce the potential for financial crimes through his firm, Woodland Security Inc. in Orange Park, Florida. Reach him at (904) 504-9489 or woodlandsecurity@gmail.com

Tree Farmer MAY/JUNE 2010
Posting & Protecting Forested Property

Follow these step-by-step directions to post and protect your Tree Farm.

1. Know your property. Ensure the physical property is 100 percent consistent with your legal description. If you are unsure, a surveyor or forester can help. If you have never walked your property lines, today would be a good day to start (as long as you are physically able).

2. Ensure your property is very well marked on the ground. Ideally, there will be evidence of a survey, such as corner monuments or an old axle. Boundary line trees should be painted or marked enough for the paint to be readily visible. "On side," "off side," "line trees," and "witness trees" should all have unique markings. "No Trespassing" signs are an option to consider.

3. Consider access control. You own the road, you can limit who uses it to invited guests, leases, and others at your discretion. Gates are discouraged because of hazards to the general public. Barriers such as ditches and boulders can be used, but limit access for everyone equally.

4. Regularly inspect your property. How often you inspect depends on the value of the land and timber, along with the risk of trespass, theft, and vandalism. You can inspect it yourself or you can work with a local forester. Please remember the most important rule: Keep yourself safe at all times.

5. Know your neighbors and ensure they know you. Neighbors include game wardens, deputies, joining landowners, hunting clubs, and vendors hired to work on your land. Make sure they all have your phone number.

6. Quickly consult with local experts when a serious problem occurs. Surveyors, foresters, your legal counsel, and law enforcement agencies fall into this category.

—T.K.

Neighboring

Good neighbors are a huge security asset. In this category I would include deputies, game wardens, adjoining landowners, all leaseholders, and any vendors working on your property. You should be on friendly speaking terms with all these folks and invite them to call you anytime there is an issue with your property. It could be a fire nearby, beaver damage in a watershed, or a meth lab operating on your property. If you happen to be a non-resident landowner, good neighbors are a wonderful thing to have. Make sure they all have your phone number.

If you ignore the potential for trouble, you are more likely to be a victim. Being proactive and preventive is always cheaper than dealing with the aftermath of neglect. Gates and posted signs will be targets for the wrath of vandals; the alternative is to surrender your property to them.

When crimes are suspected, call the sheriff or game warden. All serious, ongoing criminal activities must be left to law enforcement. Please consider and plan for your personal safety at all times. A small bit of preventive medicine might just keep your forest safe for generations to come.
By TOM Kazee

For all of us who love the forest and the business of forestry, the words “timber theft” are bad words, like “bark beetles” and “ice storms.” And if you’ve read this column in the past, you are probably aware that theft is only part of the problem. In the arena of financial crimes, white-collar crimes (fraud, theft by deception and manipulation) can be the greater risk.

When you consider your woodland operations and the associated risk of financial crimes, a large number of potential issues come to mind. Physical security is one: Boundary line maintenance and access control will always be important. Negligence is another critical issue. You may hire honest and wonderful people: If their work is sloppy your business is at risk.

Often I have written entire articles about one subject or another — load reports, lump sum versus pay as cut, and so forth. But in recent weeks several subjects have seemed very timely. I detail them below.

Firewood
Home-heating costs will be higher this year than last; maybe a lot higher. Wood-burning stoves will become “hot” items again. I have already seen large piles of firewood prepared for market ... in Florida! Your hardwood trees could be in peril of becoming kindling before they can become veneer.

A footnote to history: We experienced a similar spike in home-heating costs back in the 1980s. Firewood became popular and logging contractors began to lose large hydraulic cylinders from their logging equipment. The cylinders were stolen to become part of wood splitters. Just a month ago a local business caught several employees stealing gasoline from company pumps used for company business. Large economic events produce predictable results.

To reduce the risk: Focus on tract inspections, boundary line maintenance and access control. If you are a non-resident landowner, have good neighbors. A good hunting club is a great asset in physical security. The local game wardens are good people to know.

Natural Disasters
Recent hurricanes dramatically altered the markets for timber. And this aggravates a problem that always exists: Laymen (anyone not active day-to-day in the buying and selling of timber) can’t know what their timber is worth.

When a large disaster damages a huge volume of timber, the layman should beware if he must sell his timber. For anyone living in the southern half of Mississippi or Louisiana, September and October would have been the wrong time to sell undamaged timber. And those markets will be altered for a long time to come.

Registered forester Thomas Kazee helps clients across the Southeast reduce the potential for financial crimes through his firm, Woodland Security Inc. in Orange Park, Florida. Reach him at (904) 504-9489 or <tom@woodlandssecurityinc.com>.
But the effect of these disasters extends far beyond the immediate area. If there is an increase in the demand for building products, wood products all over the country could become more valuable. Sudden and significant changes in the market value of timber may leave some landowners underpaid for their timber.

When a Pay-as-Cut Sale Goes Uncut
When you enter into an agreement to sell your timber on a pay-as-cut basis, beware of the fact that some such sales are never cut.

Suppose you receive a very nice price for your timber on a per-ton sale. Or, suppose you receive just a fair price. Markets change, buyers get smarter or they encounter better opportunities. Six and 12 and 18 months go by and the sale contract expires with not one stick cut. You've received no income and your stand has not been thinned or harvested.

Consider these possibilities when you enter into a sale agreement. Your contract must contain provisions that help get the job done. Here are two examples:

- **An Advance:** When the buyer puts down a significant advance, he is anxious to recover that investment. An advance is a lump-sum payment, usually a percentage of the expected revenues, that is paid when the contract is executed and liquidated as the timber is cut. Once the advance is liquidated, that next ton is paid at the per-ton rate. I see advance payments from 5 to 75 percent. At times, the seller will require a 25 percent advance, followed by another 25 percent when the first one is cut. So the buyer has a constant incentive to get the wood cut.

- **A Performance Deposit:** A performance deposit should be part of the seller's protection in any timber sale contract, unless you have a long-term professional relationship with the buyer. This protects the seller against all manner of contract violations, from BMP violations to road damage. If the buyer fails to harvest the timber on a pay-as-cut sale — when there was full opportunity to do so — the performance deposit should be forfeit. A $1,000 deposit is likely to be insufficient; a $5,000 deposit is more likely to get results.

If your sale contract has no provisions to encourage the buyer to cut your timber, then it just might not get done. If the buyer is making good money on your timber, then he'll certainly get to it. If the market goes the other way, you may have to wait for the contract to expire and start over again.

Almost everyone you ever encounter will be honest; they will operate in good faith and be diligent. But there will be exceptions. You, the landowner, must look after your own interests and take meaningful precautions. Keeping "an honest man honest" is a great concept. With all the cost-effective and prudent preventative measures in place, you can enjoy your property and pass along a great treasure to future generations.

Home-heating costs will be higher this year than last. I have already seen large piles of firewood prepared for market... in Florida! Your hardwood trees could be in peril of becoming kindling before they can become veneer.  

Marietta State Nursery
ODNR-Division of Forestry
P.O. Box 428
Reno, OH 45773-0428
P (877) 691-8733
F (740) 373-5200
<forestry@dnr.state.oh.us>
www.ohiodnr.com/forestry/seedling
Roger Henderson, Nursery Manager
Marietta State Nursery, Division of Forestry, is the largest producer of bare root seedlings for reforestation and conservation in Ohio. New lower prices offered with over 60 species of hardwoods and conifers including National Champion stock available. Early order discount expires December 31. Large volume sales of ungraded stock receive an additional 20% discount. Call toll free: 877-691-8733 or download an order form from our website that includes full-color descriptions of our seedlings.
www.ohiodnr.com/forestry/seedling.

Timber theft, or timber trespass, is common throughout the Southeast. Each year numerous private forest landowners discover their timber has been stolen or inadvertently harvested. Timber theft carries a civil penalty in Tennessee and often results in a complete financial loss to the owner. The value of stolen timber can be written off against income tax as an involuntary conversion. The deductible loss, however, is limited to the tax basis of the timber. If caught, the trespasser can be required to pay damages double or triple the current market value of the timber, according to whether the timber was negligently (accidentally) cut or knowingly (intentionally) cut from the property of another (refer to TCA 43-28-312 for the specific law - found at conclusion of this publication).

Why Does Timber Theft Occur?

1. **It's profitable.** Timber has undergone significant price escalation over the past several decades, a result of increased demand for forest products. Prices are expected to continue increasing, especially for finer quality hardwood timber. Trespassers can realize considerable profit by harvesting and selling timber not owned by them.

2. **It's often hard to detect.** Particularly when timber is located in remote areas. Absentee landowners (those living away from their property) and those who travel regularly are especially at risk.

3. **Property lines are often not marked clearly.** Property lines not marked clearly can confuse loggers or indicate landowner complacency, which invites timber theft. Landowners are responsible for clearly marked property lines.

4. **Often the highest-value, best-quality timber is located near property lines.** Timber near property lines is usually not harvested. This is either because of the uncertainty of property line location or due to the fear that falling timber could accidentally damage neighbors’ trees. High-value timber tempts timber trespassers.

How You Avoid Timber Theft

To minimize the likelihood of timber theft, **property lines should be marked** with bright paint and/or steel posts. **Communicate with your neighbors** about property lines, when forestry activities are occurring near a property boundary. To prevent misunderstandings, walk your property lines with loggers prior to a logging operation (whether it is your trees being cut...
or your neighbor’s). It is wise to keep an updated timber inventory and value estimate, which allows for an accurate timber appraisal if theft occurs. To have a legal case, you must have verification trees existed and their value. Finally, absentee landowners should have a friend or consulting forester make periodic inspections of their property lines to check for timber trespass. Using a lease program allows hunters to do this for you.

Timber theft does not always occur by trespassing. It also can occur within your boundary lines in an ongoing timber sale. Sometimes loggers harvest trees other than those you marked and sold. This is theft. Therefore, prior to a timber sale, specify in a contract the number of trees to harvest and mark them with paint confirming those to be harvested. Use a thorough contract to communicate the conditions of the sale and minimize the likelihood of theft (for specifications on timber sale contracts, see Clatterbuck and Tankersley, 1999, Landowner’s Guide to Timber Sale Contracts, UT Extension publication PB1607).

**What to Do if Theft Occurs**

In the unfortunate event that your timber is stolen, specific steps should be followed. First, attempt to resolve the situation with the adjacent landowner(s) and the loggers. Communication is vital. If that fails, then:

1. Record the date, time and location of the activity and take pictures or video of the evidences of theft. Include a notebook, maps, plastic bags (for evidence collection) and measuring tape to aid in gathering information. **The best evidence to convict a timber theft is eyewitness testimony.**
2. Once evidence has been obtained, report the incident to the sheriff.
3. Consider the assistance of a private consulting forester to represent you in detailing the event and in estimating fair market value. Consultants can “re-create” stolen trees through measurements and estimate fair market value prior to theft. Contact either The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service or the Tennessee Division of Forestry for a list of consulting foresters.

Timber can represent a considerable part of a landowners’ assets. Having those assets stolen can be financially painful. Timber theft can discourage landowners from growing timber and realizing its ultimate value if harvested too early.

For further assistance, contact:

- Extension Forester
- The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service
- Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries
- Knoxville TN 37996-4563
- 865-974-7126

- State Forester
- The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Forestry Division
- P.O. Box 40627, Melrose Station
- Nashville TN 37204
- 615-837-5411

**TCA 43-28-312 Cutting timber from property of another – Civil liability.**

(a) (1) Civil liability for the negligent cutting of timber from the property of another shall be in an amount double that of the current market value of the timber.

2. If the timber is negligently cut from the property of another because the landowner for whom the timber is being cut has marked or designated the boundary of such landowner’s property incorrectly, then such landowner shall be jointly liable for such double damages.

(b) Civil liability for knowingly and intentionally cutting timber from the property of another shall be in the amount treble that of the current market value of the timber.

(c) Nothing in this section shall preclude an owner of property on which timber has been cut by another from recovering damages for loss of value other than commercial timber value, if any, of the timber negligently or intentionally cut.
Steps to Marketing Timber

Marketing timber involves selling forest products in a competitive market to get the best return on your investment or to meet other objectives. This process requires some planning and pre-sale preparation before you advertise or talk to prospective buyers. Timber sales should be approached in a business-like manner to ensure that both the seller and buyer are satisfied with the results. Following are some important guidelines to follow when planning and conducting a timber sale.

Start with Your Objectives and Financial Situation

Timber is sold for many reasons. The most obvious reason is to convert the timber asset into money. However, the decision to sell timber should be based on the objectives you have for your land. You may harvest trees in order to: regenerate or improve the future value of a stand, reduce stand density (thinning), salvage damaged timber, maximize profits, improve wildlife habitat, or develop recreational opportunities. These types of management decisions should start with a written management plan, which outlines your objectives, identifies the steps necessary to achieve them, provides a timetable to guide management activities, and is the first step to a successful harvest.

Consider Your Tax Situation

How you treat the expenses and income associated with your forestland for tax purposes depends on the scope and nature of your timber-related activities. If you have a small holding with occasional transactions, you would most likely treat these activities as an investment. If your holdings produce regular and continuous transactions, your forestland may constitute a business. Regardless of your tax status, it is extremely important to maintain thorough records for all management activities and costs.

Money from a timber sale could significantly raise your taxable income, but part of that money is your investment, or basis, in the timber sold. The basis must be adjusted up for new purchases or investments and down for sales and disposals. In general, it is most often advantageous to report your timber sale income as a capital gain rather than as ordinary income. Capital gain income is taxed at a lower rate than ordinary income and is not subject to the self-employment tax. These points are made to...
emphasize the importance of considering federal income taxes and knowing your tax status before planning a timber sale, but they are by no means complete. Consult a tax attorney, certified public accountant or a knowledgeable forester about your specific tax situation. For the latest timber tax updates and information see http://www.timbertax.org/.

**Financed Property**

If your property is financed, the timber on it is probably covered by the mortgage and, if so, might be part of the lender's collateral. If it is, the lender will require notification and may require that all or a part of the proceeds from a timber sale be applied to the loan. Regardless, the timber buyer will need a release from the mortgager. This will need to be determined and all relevant arrangements made in writing with the lender before you sell timber in order to avoid future legal or financial complications.

**Know What You Are Selling and Its Value**

To determine the value of the timber you are selling you should know what products you have to sell. Unless you have experience with forest inventory, it is best to seek the services of a professional forester for this. A forester can accurately estimate the number and volume of trees by product class and then appraise the current market value of the timber you want to sell. This is extremely important because the price of different product classes can vary significantly and will dictate in part how much the buyer will pay for the timber. This information will be worth the price of the inventory when it is time to sell. As with some other forest operations, per acre costs for inventory tend to increase for small properties and non-uniform stand conditions.

Your timber is worth as much as the buyer will pay for it at a certain time. This price is determined by current market conditions, local competition for particular tree sizes, mill requirements, difficulty of logging a site, harvesting equipment, total volume in each product class, size of the sale, volume per acre, quality of the timber, and distance to different mills. All these factors interact to cause timber prices to vary considerably from place to place and over time, and this variability will affect the price a buyer will pay for your timber. In addition, each buyer may have a different set of cost constraints that will influence what the buyer can offer for a particular sale.

**Time Your Sale Strategically**

Try to sell your timber when prices are high relative to past prices and expected future values. It is easy to compare current and past prices, but anticipating how prices will change in the future is much more difficult. This requires some knowledge about the behavior of timber prices and markets over time.

Timber price trends have two components: long-term trends and short-term fluctuations. Long-term trends are controlled by major economic factors such as building construction, global paper consumption, foreign currency exchange rates, mill openings and closures, and availability and accessibility of timber resources locally and in other regions. These market trends last for periods of years or decades. Short-term fluctuations often coincide with the seasons or certain weather conditions. Over much of the South, periods of very wet weather can inhibit loggers' ability to harvest timber, resulting in a decreased timber supply and subsequent increased prices. Conversely, timber prices tend to decrease or remain stable during dry weather, when timber is more accessible and supplies increase. As a rule of thumb, it is best to sell timber when current prices are above the long-term trend line. Take advantage of active market periods and avoid selling, if possible, during periods of decreased demand for your products. The advantage of growing trees is that you can usually "bank on the stump" until market conditions improve. Salvage sales after fires or hurricanes obviously don't enjoy this luxury. Information about the timber market can be obtained by subscribing to timber market periodicals and checking with local timber buyers, foresters, and forest owners.

To track trends, you can obtain average prices for the past 3 to 12 months from your county Extension office.
**Decide on a Selling Method:**
*Negotiation or Sealed Bid*

The two selling methods used in the South are negotiation and sealed bids. In a **negotiation**, the seller arrives at a price after negotiating with one or more potential buyers. This method may yield a fair price but it may not be as high as the value of a bid that receives responses from a larger number of potential buyers. Sellers do not usually have as much information about current market values as the buyers in a negotiation. However, negotiation is necessary and appropriate when: the tract is small and/or irregular; small volumes are sold per acre; timber is sold from a thinning or salvage sale; there are few mills within a reasonable trucking distance; specialty products are sold; and when the seller prefers or has a previous working relationship with a certain buyer.

In a **sealed-bid** timber sale, the seller advertises the sale to as many prospective buyers as possible. The seller may specify a minimum bid or the right to refuse all bids. Potential buyers submit confidential written offers that are opened at a specified time and place. Each bidder is allowed a single bid and no bids are accepted after the bid closing. Sealed bids are most appropriate when the area to be harvested is large and uniform (i.e., clearcut harvest). Sealed bids historically have yielded the highest price to the landowner and take advantage of competition among buyers. Generally, the likelihood of finding a buyer who is willing and able to offer a high price increases with the number of bids. This selling method is not suitable for small, irregular tracts; and it eliminates opportunities for negotiation.

**Decide on a Payment Method:** **Lump Sum or Pay-As-Cut**

A critical step in marketing timber is deciding on the payment method. The two methods of payment for timber are lump sum and pay-as-cut. In a lump sum payment, the seller and buyer agree, either by negotiation or through the bid process, on a total price for the timber before it is cut and the full payment is made at contract closing. A lump sum can also be paid in installments. This payment method is best when the sale boundary is easily defined and the timber to be cut is uniform. The advantages of lump sum payments for sellers are that they receive full payment before harvesting begins and risk of timber loss is transferred to the buyer. When sealed bids are used for lump sum sales the seller uses competition among buyers to find the buyer willing to pay the highest price, and the landowner may benefit if a particular buyer overestimates the amount of timber in the sale. On the other hand, and depending on the circumstances, some bidders may offer a lower price for lump sum than they would for pay-as-cut because of their costs for: (1) spending time to accurately determine the amount of timber in the sale before they bid; (2) financing the money they would pay you before the harvest begins; and (3) shouldering the risk of loss once the bid is accepted. Keep in mind that this type of sale may take longer to complete because both the seller and buyer should have an accurate inventory of the products to be harvested. Therefore, it may not be the best method when trying to salvage timber after a fire, storm or other disaster.

The **pay-as-cut** payment, or *scale sale*, is the most common method of selling timber. This type of sale requires the seller and buyer to agree on per-unit prices and specifications for each product before harvesting. There is usually an initial advance payment or deposit, with subsequent payments as the timber is harvested. The seller retains ownership of the timber and risk of loss until it is harvested. This method is best when: the seller needs to sell quickly, thinning, harvesting areas with difficult or uncertain access, a timber cruise will be difficult or inaccurate because of non-uniform conditions, or when the seller wants to ensure capital gains tax treatment of income. Close monitoring of this type of sale is critical because improper sorting of the timber products by the logger can significantly reduce the income from the sale. Another disadvantage of this kind of sale is that the total amount of income is unknown until the end of the sale.

**Tax tip:** as of 2009, income from both lump sum and pay as cut timber sales can generally be treated as capital gains.
Advertise the Sale and Select a Buyer

The sale advertisement or notice of a sealed bid sale should include specific information about the sale and be distributed to as many prospective buyers as possible. County foresters can provide a list of reputable timber buyers in your area. The following items should be in the notice:

• Your name, address and phone number and/or that of the forester managing the sale.

• The location of the timber. A map, legal description, and directions, as well as how the sale boundaries will be marked.

• Description of the timber. Keep this general, such as all timber or timber within a specific unit.

• Type of bid. Lump sum or pay-as-cut.

• Time when buyers can inspect the sale area. Usually at least one month is allowed between the notice and bid opening.

• Date, time, and location of bid opening and notification of winning bidder. Also notify all unsuccessful bidders promptly.

• Down payment. This is not necessary, but if you require it, an amount of 5 to 10 percent of the bid price is reasonable and should be returnable to unsuccessful bidders.

• Provisions for payment. Specify preference for a personal or certified cashier's check and time of payment.

• Limitations or special ownership considerations. Include provisions for best management practices, harvesting deadline, access restrictions, times when loggers cannot operate (e.g., during wet weather), leave trees for wildlife, restoring roads, etc.

• Performance bond requirement. Often 10 percent of the sale price (less on large sales) is held in escrow to ensure that the buyer abides by the contract terms. The deposit is refunded immediately following the sale given adherence to contract requirements.

• Insurance requirements. Always insist on a certificate of insurance: workers compensation, general liability, vehicle.

• Requirement that a Master Logger conduct the logging operation.

• Statement of the right to refuse all bids.

• A copy of your timber sale contract if you have one you prefer.

Sale notices can be distributed to potential buyers by mail, fax, personal delivery, or as some sellers now do, through the Internet. You may want to know something about the potential buyers’ credentials and reputations. Choose carefully the recipients of your notice. Once you advertise for bids, you are obligated to sell your timber to the highest bidder, unless you don't want bidders on your next sale. The Florida Forestry Association maintains a Master Logger Directory, which lists loggers that have completed an educational program in safety, proper harvesting techniques, business management, and environmental protection and regulations. This directory is available on-line at http://www.floridaforest.org/. Many mills will not purchase timber today unless the loggers have completed the Master Logger program. A poor logging job may be expensive to correct.

Contract With a Buyer

The sale transaction must include a formal, legally binding, written agreement specifying the responsibilities and expectations of both parties. A well-written sale contract will save both the seller and buyer money by eliminating problems, or even litigation, that can result from misunderstandings. The contract will ultimately serve as the mechanism by which any disputes are resolved.

The contract does not need to be lengthy or complex but it must reflect the expectations and responsibilities of the seller and buyer. An effective timber sale contract will contain the following provisions:

• Identification of parties. Include addresses, phone numbers, e-mail.
Steps to Marketing Timber

• **Method of payment.** This should specify the amount the purchaser agrees to pay the seller as a lump sum or pay-as-cut as well as how the buyer will provide verification of the amount of timber cut and paid for.

• **General description of timber sold.** Describe how the trees or harvest area will be marked, and a provision for trees that grow into a merchantable size during the contract period.

• **Care of property.** Describe each part of the property that could be subject to damage (i.e., fences, roads, bridges, buildings, nest boxes, residual trees, etc.). Include allowable limits of damage and provisions for repair or payment for damages.

• **Arbitration.** Specify a method for settling disputes. Arbitration panels are generally preferred over litigation in courts.

• **Guarantee of ownership.** All buyers will require a title search and an abstract that show clear ownership, especially if a lump sum payment is agreed on.

• **Right of ingress and egress.** Provide buyer the right to come and go to remove timber. Specify entrances and roads to use.

• **Harvest method.** Address the layout of log decks, log roads, and areas to be cut. State any restrictions on equipment use and logging during wet periods or other times (e.g., hunting season). Include provisions for use of Silvicultural Best Management Practices, compliance with environmental regulations, local ordinances, and specify that you reserve the right to inspect the logging site and, if necessary, halt all operations.

• **Penalties for noncompliance.** Detail penalties for noncompliance with contract terms. Address penalties for activities such as cutting non-designated timber, as well as for damaged property, including damages to adjacent landowners' property. Specify provisions for payment of penalties and an escrow account or performance bond.

• **Length of agreement.** State the beginning and end dates of the agreement and provisions for or against renewing the contract if it expires before harvesting is complete.

• **Insurance requirements and indemnification of seller.**

• **Bottom line.** Signatures of all parties, signature dates, notarization of agreement, and registration at the courthouse.

In addition to the above contract provisions, you may wish to consider additional clauses to cover special situations. One that can prevent many problems is a statement for or against assignment of the contract to a third party. You may be fully protected by the contract between you and the buyer but that protection may be compromised if the buyer reassigned the contract to another logger or mill.

Try to prepare a short contract with clauses that are relevant and important to you. Long, complicated, restrictive contracts may scare buyers away and make supervision of the operation difficult. Buyers sometimes have pre-written contract forms, which may satisfactorily reflect your objectives, but the decision to use a buyer's contract should be based on sound legal advice.

**Supervise the Operation**

Review the contract with the logger, timber buyer, or forester before harvesting begins; and be sure they understand your harvest objectives. If they know you and are familiar with your objectives they should make a greater effort to do a good job; their reputation depends on it. You and/or a forester should visit the area frequently once the operation begins to make sure it is in compliance with the contract terms. Violations of the contract should be addressed immediately. Once the harvest is complete according to the terms of the contract, write a letter releasing the buyer from the contract and refund the performance bond.

**Assistance**

Professional foresters can assist you in selling your timber. Consulting foresters, county foresters,
Steps to Marketing Timber

Consulting foresters can perform all duties of the sale, including an inventory, the sale contract, and harvesting supervision for a fee. Research has shown that timber sales handled by qualified consultants consistently bring significantly more money than sales sold by landowners on their own. Landowners can get a directory from the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF) or can go to ACF's website to find an ACF member in their area. The Florida Division of Forestry also maintains a consultant directory, by geographic area, that is available free to landowners. See http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR125 for tips on selecting a consulting forester.

County foresters' services are free but they are limited to technical advice on management practices and management plan preparation for properties 160 acres or less. Your county forester can be found in the phone book under State Government Offices, Florida Division of Forestry.

Industry foresters can also provide management and marketing assistance via their landowner assistance program (LAP), which can be found under timber company names in the phone book or on the Internet. A typical LAP is free of charge and helps with timber sales, reforestation, mapping, and other land management tasks.

Other recommended sources of assistance include an attorney for counsel on the sale contract; and an accountant, for advice about the sale with respect to your specific tax situation. You can also find additional marketing information and sample contracts at Web sites for other state forestry extension programs, such as:

Mississippi State University, http://msucares.com/forestry

Clemson University, http://www.clemson.edu/extension/natural_resources/index.html

Oklahoma State University, http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-275

Conclusion

Marketing your timber or other forest products is usually the culmination of a long investment strategy and a means to reach a variety of resource management objectives. It deserves patient planning, careful consultation and a keen knowledge of what and why you are selling. It is also the beginning of the next management period for your property. Planning for forest regeneration should be as much a part of your sale as wise marketing.

References


Steps to Marketing Timber

1620, MS State Ext. Serv. 6pp. Available online:


http://www.timbertax.org/developments/TaxTip09-Final.pdf
Florida’s Silviculture Best Management Practices  
Should You Be Implementing Them?

Silviculture Best Management Practices (BMPs):

- Apply to ALL Bonafide Ongoing Forestry Operations
- Represent a Balance Between Overall Natural Resource Protection and Forest Utilization
- Are Considered the Minimum Standards Necessary for Protecting the State’s Water Quality During Forestry Operations
- Are NOT Applicable on Timber Harvesting Activities for Purposes other than Ongoing Forestry, such as Land Clearing for Pastures, etc..

Silviculture BMPs protect our natural resources from the degradation and sedimentation that can sometimes occur during forestry operations. They also help to provide shelter and food for aquatic organisms as well as many wildlife and plant species. Silviculture BMPs should be applied on all forestry operations, especially those in close proximity to waterbodies, wetlands, and sinkholes.

The Florida Forest Service is not the regulatory agency responsible for ensuring compliance with state water quality laws. However, as the lead agency responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of Silviculture BMPs, the Florida Forest Service is committed to educating landowners and forestry professionals about Silviculture BMPs as well as assisting landowners with BMP compliance on their property. It is important for you to know that Silviculture BMPs may be enforced by other federal, state, and local authorities through reference of regulatory statute or rule.

To this end, the Florida Forest Service conducts voluntary Silviculture BMP Courtesy Checks. These on-site inspections evaluate present or past (within a two year period) forestry operations such as timber harvesting, site preparation, forest roads, stream crossings, etc. This evaluation provides the landowner with a report card on the quality of the work that was conducted on their property as well as suggestions for ways to correct or improve BMP implementation. Evaluations can also be conducted before planned forestry operations begin to ensure all applicable BMPs are clearly understood. To request a BMP Courtesy Check or obtain more information about Florida’s Silviculture Best Management Practices contact your local BMP Forester. When you call be sure to ask about Rule 5I-6 F.A.C. and how it affects you.
Rule 5I-6 F.A.C. is a voluntary program established to provide incentives for landowners to follow Silviculture BMPs during all bonafide ongoing forestry operations.

Silviculture BMPs are the minimum standards necessary to help forest landowners conduct ongoing forestry activities near waterbodies and wetlands in a manner that is environmentally sound.

Silviculture BMPs protect our natural water resources from the degradation and sedimentation that can sometimes occur because of erosion during and immediately after forestry operations.

Silviculture BMPs should be applied on all bonafide ongoing forestry operations, especially those adjacent to waterbodies and wetlands, and may be enforced by federal, state, and local authorities through reference of regulatory statute or rule.

One incentive provided by Rule 5I-6 F.A.C. is a presumption of compliance with state water quality standards. This means that a forest landowner who elects to comply with the rule and follows Silviculture BMPs during forestry operations would not be subject to enforcement action for a water quality standards violation, should one occur.

Compliance with rule 5I-6 F.A.C. involves submitting a Notice of Intent to the Florida Forest Service. This Notice is simply a commitment to follow Silviculture BMPs during all ongoing forestry operations. The Notice can be submitted one time for all current and future forestry operations. After submitting the Notice, a landowner would be responsible for following BMPs and for keeping any records that might be necessary to verify BMP implementation.

To this end, the Florida Forest Service conducts voluntary Silviculture BMP Courtesy Checks. These on-site inspections evaluate ongoing or recently completed forestry operations such as timber harvesting, site preparation, forest roads, stream crossings, etc. This evaluation provides the landowner or contractor with a report card on the BMP compliance of the work that was conducted as well as suggestions for ways to improve BMP implementation.
Got Invasives?

Invasive exotic plant problem? Use the Florida Invasives.org website to find financial and or technical assistance to manage or prevent an infestation.

FloridaInvasives.org is an online resource of management assistance programs to help in your fight against problematic plant species. This resource takes the guesswork out of finding the agencies or organizations offering assistance and will direct you to available programs. It will also provide the requirements for each program, to help you decide if they are a good match for your needs.

Why was FloridaInvasives.org developed?
Public and private land managers have identified the high ecological and economic cost of invasive species as a statewide problem in Florida. The Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP) is a collaboration of federal, state and local agencies along with nongovernment organizations in Florida, formed to link efforts at preventing and controlling infestations of invasive exotic plants across agency and property boundaries. FISP has developed an on-line tool of available financial and technical assistance sources to make it easier for landowners and land managers to find them.

How does FloridaInvasives.org help you?
Each year, multiple agencies and organizations provide cost-share programs, grants and/or technical assistance to help landowners and land managers with various agriculture or natural resource management practices. Invasive exotic species management is an important practice covered within many of these programs.

FISP has created a searchable database, accessible at FloridaInvasives.org, that allows you to determine which agency or organization(s) might have an assistance program for your needs. Simply provide your county, target species and other pertinent information into the online tool, and you will retrieve a current list of available programs along with the most up-to-date contact information. FloridaInvasives.org will help provide focus to your search so that you can get the right person at the right program.

FloridaInvasives.org builds community awareness, leverages limited resources through cooperation and may reduce individual land management costs. This resource will be regularly updated with the most current program information to provide you the most up-to-date opportunities. Log on at http://FloridaInvasives.org to find assistance with your invasive species problem.

Conclusion
The Florida Invasive Species Partnership has created FloridaInvasives.org to help connect Florida's landowners and land managers with available technical and/or financial assistance programs to prevent or control invasive exotic species problems. These programs have been collected, evaluated and categorized in a single resource, making it easier to find the financial and/or technical assistance available to Florida landowners.

Go to FloridaInvasives.org to find out more.

Florida Invasive Species Partnership

Think Locally, Act Neighborly
Invasive exotic species know no boundaries!
UF-IFAS Extension Publications:

Online at [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_Forest_Management_and_Stewardship](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_Forest_Management_and_Stewardship)

More at [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/department_forest_resources_and_conservation](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/department_forest_resources_and_conservation)

- **Assessing the Economic Feasibility of Short-Rotation Woody Crops in Florida**
- **Assessment and Management of Hurricane Damaged Timberland**
- **Conservation Easements: Options for Preserving Current Land Uses**
- **Cooperation and Communication: Benefits for Non-Industrial Private Forest Landowners**
- **Dead Wood: Key to Enhancing Wildlife Diversity in Forests**
- **Environmentally Sound Forest Harvesting**
- **Forest Management in the Interface: Forest Health**
- **Forest Management in the Interface: Practicing Visible Stewardship**
- **Forest Resource Information on the Internet: Connecting to Today's On-line Resources**
- **Forest Terminology for Multiple-Use Management**
- **How Much Wood Is In Your Woods? A quick and simple method for pine timber volume estimation**
- **Improving, Restoring, and Managing Natural Resources on Rural Properties in Florida: Sources of Financial Assistance**
- **Improving, Restoring, and Managing Wildlife Habitat in Florida: Sources of Technical Assistance for Rural Landowners**
- **Logging Operations -- OSHA Standard 1910.266**
- **Longleaf Pine Regeneration**
- **Making the Most of Your Mast**
- **Management Practices to Support Increased Biodiversity in Managed Loblolly Pine Plantations**
- **Opportunities for Uneven-Aged Management in Second Growth Longleaf Pine Stands in Florida**
- **Ownership Succession: Plan Now for the Future of Your Land**
- **Pine Straw Management in Florida's Forests**
- **Pre-Commercial Thinning Loblolly Pines -- Does It Pay?**
- **Selecting a Consulting Forester**
- **Steps to Marketing Timber**
- **Ten Tips for Encouraging the Use of Your Pine Plantations By Game Species**
- **Ten Tips for Increasing Wildlife Biodiversity in Your Pine Plantations**
- **Thinning Southern Pines - A Key to Greater Returns**
- **Using Seasonal Climate Variability Forecasts to Plan Forest Plantation Establishment**
- **What is in a Natural Resource Management Plan?**
- **What to Expect in a Forest Inventory**
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**BO EWING**
(229) 924-9459
bo.ewing@rrsi.com

**FRANKIE HALL**
(352) 374-1542

**BILL WALLER**
(850) 832-8346
bwaller@greencirclebio.com

**WAYNE BELL**
(229) 985-0321
(800) 633-4506
Mobile: (229) 873-4316
wbell@interforestry.com

**JOSEPH GOCSIK**
(352) 206-8776
JOE@FESFL.com

**WAYNE BELL**
(229) 985-0321
(800) 633-4506
Mobile: (229) 873-4316
wbell@interforestry.com

**STACEY L. MCGILVRAY**, Vice President
(850) 833-8136
Stacey.McGilvray@regions.com

**BLANTON'S LONGLEAF CONTAINER NURSERY**
Jason Blanton
(850) 973-2967
blantonsnursery@earthlink.net

**MICHIELE CURTIS**
Wood Supply Manager
Buckeye Florida L.P.
One Buckeye Drive
Perry, FL 32348
o: (850) 584-1218
m: (850) 838-7420

**MARDEN INDUSTRIES**
Dan Darby
(800) 881-0388 x.33
mardenind@mindspring.com

**McGOWAN FORESTRY**
Babe McGowan
(229) 376-0581
babemcgowan@gmail.com