# FLORIDA LAND STEWARD

A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals **SPRING/SUMMER 2013 – VOLUME 2, NO. 2**

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## Creating Solutions for Tomorrow's Forestry Challenges: PINEMAP – Pine Integrated Network: Education, Mitigation and Adaptation Project

By Leslie Boby, Extension Associate, Southern Regional Extension Forestry

Drought, wildfires, diseases and insects are nothing new to forest landowners, especially the thousands of landowners across the southeast who "farm" planted loblolly pine. However, a changing and more variable climate is likely to intensify these forest threats and better forest management strategies are needed to lessen negative impacts. Increasing forest resiliency, the ability to withstand environmental pressures and thrive, is the best way to protect forests. The Pine Integrated Network: Education, Mitigation and Adaptation Project (PINEMAP) is an exciting new research project that brings together more than 50 researchers, educators and extension professionals from many universities and organizations throughout the Southeast, to develop and share strategies to protect southern pine plantations from a changing climate. Much of this research is focused on ways to improve forest sustainability through better genetics, management techniques and more efficient fertilization as well as on retaining and increasing the amount of carbon stored in pine plantations.

Traditionally, research is done on specific components of a system, or by individual researchers. For example, geneticists will study tree genetics and modelers may focus on growth and yield models independently. However, PINEMAP integrates four different research groups that encompass most aspects of forest farming, from seedling to forest products and include: 1. Ecosystem ecology/silviculture, 2. Genetics, 3. Modeling and 4. Economics. In addition to the research, there are education and extension groups involved, which are focused on educating stakeholders about steps they can take to improve their forests' resiliency.

PINEMAP

This project was funded by the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture based in part on the economic and environmental importance of planted pine in the Southeast and on the unique partnerships (research cooperatives/forestry extension system) that the group could leverage. Eight forest research cooperatives, which are public-private enterprises whose members include

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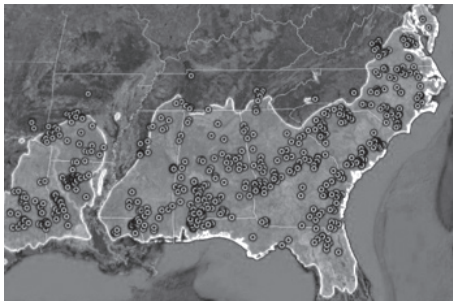
forest industry, government, private forestry consultants, forestry investment firms and forest researchers are involved in PINEMAP. The cooperatives, some of which have been around for more than 50 years, have been the leaders in forestry research and have rich pools of data that will be shared with the PINEMAP project. What this means is that instead of tracking results for only five years (the life of the project), researchers can access larger, longer-term monitoring datasets. These datasets have not been shared on such a large scale before, so even at this early stage, the combined data will already reveal new results. Subsequently, this large collection of data will be used to develop better management recommendations.

In addition to using data from Forest Research Cooperatives, PINEMAP researchers have also established more than a hundred monitoring sites where baseline environmental and tree data is measured across the range of loblolly pine. Rainfall-exclusion structures have been placed in selected locations to funnel approximately one third of rainfall out of the site. By monitoring the trees in these 'drought-induced' sites, we can better understand how they respond



PINEMAP monitoring sites

to decreased moisture. From all of this combined research will come a "decision support system," or DSS- which will be a web-based computer program that allows users (such as foresters, landowners and industry members) to select their specific area and obtain recommendations on planting, site preparation, density and other forest management that is specific to them. Each PINEMAP research component will be incorporated into the DSS to generate forestry recommendations for a specific area.

Finishing up year two of the PINEMAP project, extension professionals are working hard to share the latest developments from the project to forestry stakeholders including private forest landowners- who own about 60% of the Southeast's 20 million acres of planted pine.

PINEMAP's extension team is developing educational webinars, workshops, factsheets and a landowner's manual to educate private landowners and ensure that they receive the best information to manage their land. Last fall, a web-based series called Natural Resources Opportunities for Landowners educated current and potential landowners on different management options for their land. This spring, Clemson University (in partnership with the PINEMAP extension team), launched the Master Tree Farmer webinar series for landowners, which covered tree farming from seedlings to harvest. A series of workshops is planned for fall 2013. Ultimately, the goal of the PINEMAP project is to ensure that the newest research developments reach the people who need them and will use them to protect and manage pine plantations into the future.

For more information, please go to www.pinemap.org where you can sign up for our newsletter or follow us at www.facebook.com/pinemap. Contact Leslie Boby at (706) 542-9022 or at lboby@sref.info for more about PINEMAP!

## Chain of Custody – Linking Certified Forests and the Marketplace

By Jason Metnick, Vice President of Customer Affairs, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc.

Florida landowners care a lot about how their forests are managed – that's why more than 2.4 million acres – or 15 percent – of the state's forests are certified through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) or the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS®).

Today, across North America, more than 240 million acres are certified to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard, and

27 million acres are certified to the ATFS Standard. Both are third-party certification programs – this means a certificate is issued only after an independent auditor verifies that the forest operation conforms to the SFI or ATFS standard requirements.

SFI, a program of non-profit SFI Inc., is based on principles that promote sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, at-risk species and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value. ATFS, a program of the non-profit American

Forest Foundation, helps America's family forest owners meet the highest standards of sustainability by managing their lands for water, wildlife, wood and recreation.

Both programs have earned wide acceptance by meeting the specific needs of the United States, where 11 million family forest owners account for more than 60 percent of private forest lands. They both also have broad global acceptance, meeting the tough requirements of the international Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

In addition to forest management certification, the SFI program has chain-of-custody certification, which extends into the marketplace by tracking fiber content from certified forest content, certified sourcing, and post-consumer recycled content. Certified forest content can include fiber certified to the SFI or the ATFS standards.

There are more than 1,000 SFI chain-of-custody certificates at 2,500 locations worldwide. This means buyers are able to find SFI-labeled products to meet any need – whether it is furniture, lumber for their home, or paper for their office. A wide selection of popular products and major brands come in SFI-labeled packaging, including cosmetics, school supplies, food, shoes, magazines and paper cups.

Through its unique fiber sourcing requirements and partnership with ATFS, the SFI program stands apart from other certification programs by addressing the fact that all forest landowners – regardless of the size of their holdings, or whether their lands are certified – play a critical role in the long-term health and sustainability of forests. It requires that program participants promote responsible forestry by sharing management and stewardship knowledge when they buy fiber from lands that are not certified.

Ninety percent of the world's forests – and 85 percent of Florida's forests – are not certified. This is why SFI works with buyers of forest products, suppliers, landowners, government agencies and conservation groups to grow the certified land base, and make forest certification more accessible to smaller landowners.

The SFI Forest Partners program (www.sfiprogram.org/files/pdf/fpfactsheetfinalpdf) aims to provide even more opportunities so a broad base of interests can support conservation goals and sustainable forest practices through partnerships and SFI certification options across North America, starting in the southeastern United States. The Founding Forest Partners – Time Inc., the National Geographic Society, Macmillan, and Pearson – are working collectively with the SFI community, smaller and medium-sized mills and forest ownerships, to make certification more efficient and accessible by providing resources for activities such as shared consulting expertise, group certification or audit coordination.

The goal is to grow the certified forestland base by five million acres by the end of 2014 and by 10 million acres by the end of 2017 and to certify more mills to the SFI Certified Sourcing requirements or Chain of Custody Standard.

If you are a certified tree farmer and are getting ready to harvest, make sure your forester, logger or mill knows you are certified to ATFS or SFI. If you are working with a mill that does not have SFI fiber sourcing or chain-of-custody certification, encourage them to check it out at www.sfiprogram.org/standards-and-certifications/chain-of-custody-requirements/.

And make sure you encourage friends and family to ask for SFI-labeled wood or paper products so they can help shape the future of local forests and resource communities by choosing fiber from forests in North America that have been managed responsibly.

For more information, check out the SFI Inc. website at www.sfiprogram.org and the American Tree Farm System website www.treefarmsystem.org. SFI Inc. has an online Certification Database at www.sfiprogram.org/find-sfi-forest-products with searchable information on all certificates for SFI forest management, chain-of-custody and certified sourcing standards as well as products manufactured by SFI certified organizations.

## Get Email Updates!

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

# Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission Seeks Mink Sightings

By Chris Winchester, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

FWC Biologists want to know more about mink. These semi-aquatic animals are typically found in or near water but appear to be quite rare in Florida. However, their secretive nature makes them very difficult to study, and as a result little information is available on their distribution and abundance.

To help solve this problem FWC has recruited the services of Florida residents in order to gain more information on mink occurrence in Florida. In June 2012 FWC launched a web site where people can report mink sightings. This user-friendly site has a Google Maps tool for easily locating and marking mink sighting locations, as well as the opportunity to report comments on mink behavior and habitat use. The web site even accepts photo attachments if you are lucky enough to get a picture of one of these charismatic critters.

Since its inception, over 80 sightings were reported on the mink web site, with several pictures of mink in their natural habitat and tracks left behind in the sand and mud. FWC would like to thank everyone for their contributions to mink research and encourage residents to keep a watchful eye for these notoriously shy animals. The more information we obtain through the web site, the faster we will be able to evaluate the status of mink in Florida.

Top: Mink napping on oyster rake. Bottom Left: Mink tracks on sandy beach. Bottom Right: Mink at the entrance of cord grass den. Photos by Patrick Leary.

**Where can you find mink?**

Mink appear to be absent from the fresh water streams, rivers and wetlands of central and northern Florida. Reasons for this are unclear but may be due to predation from alligators. In northern Florida mink are more likely to be seen in salt marsh habitat along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. In southern Florida mink can be found in the fresh and saltwater marshes of the Everglades. Some known mink hot spots include salt marsh areas near Fort Clinch and Big Talbot Island State Parks, Cedar Key, and the Stand Forest of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park.

**What do mink look like?**

Mink are relatively small with a long sleek body, thick tail, small ears, and small eyes. Typically, mink are between 1.5 to 2.5 feet in length from nose to tip of tail and weigh up to 4 pounds as adults. Mink have a dark chocolate colored body and sometimes a small patch of white along the chin and throat. Mink can be confused with otter and weasel. Otters look similar to mink but are much larger in size (10-30 pounds). Weasels are smaller than mink, and have a distinct bi-colored appearance with brown along the back and yellowish along the belly.

**Report mink sightings**

If you see mink in Florida please visit https://public.myfwc.com/hsc/mink/getlatlong.aspx and report the location. If you have any questions on the web site or general inquiries on mink or mink research, please contact FWC Wildlife Biologist Chris Winchester, Chris.Winchester@MyFWC.com

## Plants Behaving Badly: Melaleuca Tree

By Alicia Campanella

Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenerva*); otherwise known as the "tea tree," "punk tree," or "paper bark tree"; is native to Australia. It grows in excess of 75 feet, and produces a flower that some say resembles a "bottlebrush." Its leaves are elliptical, and its seeds are long and woody, divided into squared segments. Its bark is lightly colored, paper-like, spongy, and occurs in layers. Wherever you spot a melaleuca tree, you are almost certain to find other stems or many seedlings nearby.

Melaleuca was introduced to Florida on a broad scale in the early 1940's by the Army Corps of Engineers, in an attempt to lower the water table, and control flooding. Melaleuca's tolerance for Florida's environmental conditions allowed it to establish itself rapidly. It thrives in saturated soils, standing water, and survives well in dry soils as well. It also has a wide tolerance for light and shade, growing in full sun and under a tree canopy.

Melaleuca Flower. Photo by Ann Murray.

Melaleuca Seed. Photo by Ann Murray.

Since its arrival in Florida, it has successfully spread across thousands of acres, displacing native plants and habitat at an alarming rate. Current distribution maps show that it extends from the lower keys to as far north as the Daytona Beach area. It creates thick, dense stands, and is among the most problematic and threatening of all exotic/invasive plants in the Everglades ecosystem. Interestingly enough, while its invasiveness in Florida may make it difficult to imagine, it is considered an endangered species in its native Australia. Conservation efforts are underway there to promote the proliferation of the species.

**Control**

Fire has not proven to be a successful control method, as it only seems to help in the distribution and successful establishment of seeds. Herbicides such as Round-up, Garlon, and Arsenal are useful in controlling Melaleuca. Various methods of applications can be used, such as cut stump applications, or simply cutting through the papery bark and spraying the growing tissue of the stem directly. Always follow the manufacturer's recommended use and safety guidelines when using these products, and wear personal protective equipment.

**Biological Control**

A biological control has been released. As with any biological control, it must pass years of testing in a controlled setting (called a quarantine period.) The melaleuca weevil (*Oxyops vitiosa)* has passed the testing period and is currently being monitored in the field. Much to the delight of land managers, it seems to have proven itself as a viable means of damaging these trees and is slowing their spread, but there is still much work to be done.

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

## Trying to cut down on paper mail?

The Florida Land Steward newsletter is available online from floridalandsteward.org and the link to the current and back issues is included in each weekly email update. If you would like to discontinue the hard copy delivery of each issue to your mailbox and access the newsletter electronically, contact Chris Demers at (352) 846-2375 or cdemers@ufl.edu to request that. Your mailing status won't be changed unless you request it.

# 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.

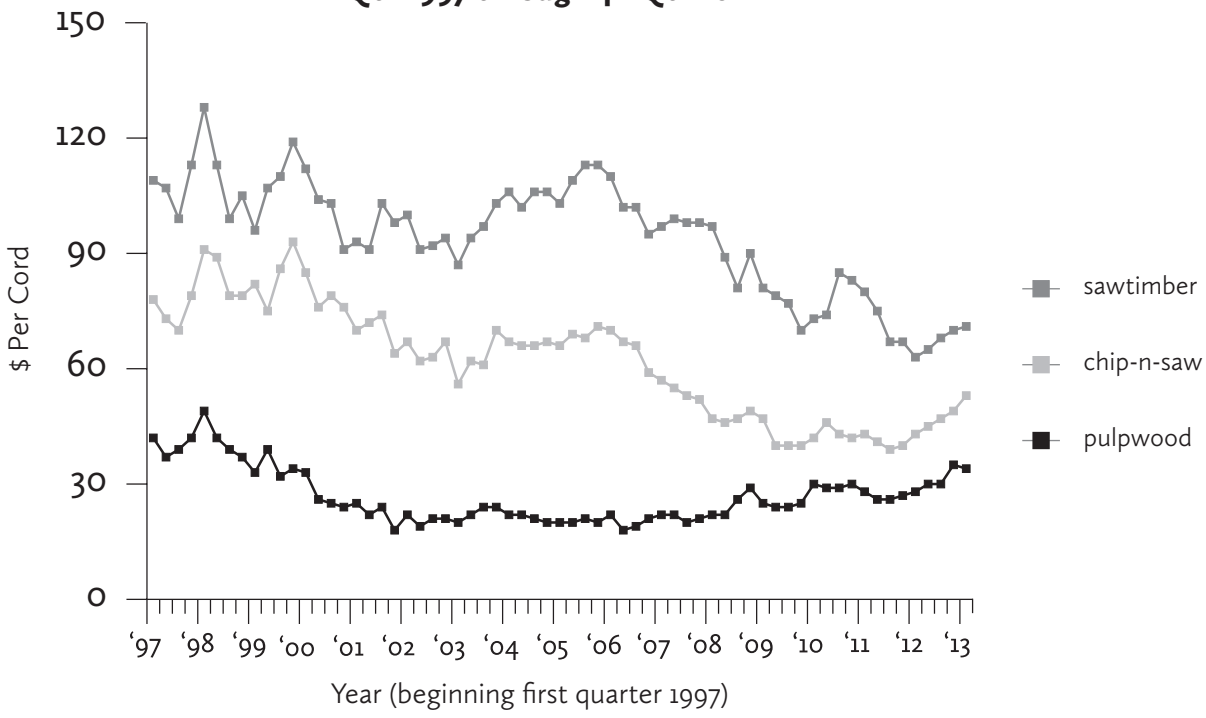
Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **1st Quarter 2013** Timber Mart-South report were:

| **Florida Stumpage Prices** |
|---|
| **Pine pulpwood:** $34/cord ($13/ton), ~ same as 4th Qtr 2012 |
| **Pine C-N-S:** $53/cord ($20/ton), ↑ |
| **Pine sawtimber:** $71/cord ($26/ton), ~ same |

## Trend Report

South-wide average stumpage prices for most products continued their increase in the first quarter of 2013. Average stumpage prices for all the major timber products are up compared to the same period last year. Wet weather and storms influenced local markets with some landowners with dry tracts offered higher prices to augment supply. Market indicators continued their improvements this quarter, with housing starts approaching levels last seen in 2008. Global political and economic distresses continue to loom and encourage cautious investments.

**Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida**
**1st Qtr 1997 through 4th Qtr 2012**




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, call your County Forester or learn about it at:

http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/cfa_steward_index.html

or

http://www.floridaforest.org/tree_farm.php

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.


Lane Green (center) with Stan Rosenthal (L) and Mike Humphrey (R), Jefferson County


Lee and Erika Stahelin (R) with Chris Otremba, Lake County


John Frank Ward (R) with Rick Bray, Walton County


Gail Watson (also certified Forest Steward) with Greg Staten (L) and Brian Cobble (R), Hamilton County

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## Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

| Date | Event, Location, Contact |
|---|---|
| May 21-23 | **2013 UF/IFAS SFRC/FL SAF Spring Symposium: "Practical Aspects of Geomatics in Natural Resource Management,"** Paramount Plaza Hotel, 2900 SW 13th Street, Gainesville, FL 32608. *Details and registration at http://springsymposiumgeomatics.eventbrite.com/* |
| May 21-22 | **2013 FL Exotic Pest Plant Council (EPPC)/Southeast-EPPC Joint Annual Symposium – Plant Wars: The EPPC's Strike Back**, Edgewater Beach Resort in Panama City Beach, FL. *Details at http://www.fleppc.org/Symposium/2013/* |
| May 30 | **Forest Stewardship Workshop: Timberland Security for Landowners**, 3:00 to 7:15 pm, UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center, Quincy, FL. $10 fee. *Details and registration online at http://fsp-workshop053013.eventbrite.com/* |
| June 5 | **Tree Farm Tour at Austin Cary Forest**, 9 am to 1 pm, ET, Austin Cary Forest, 16025 NE Waldo Rd, Gainesville, FL. *Please Pre-Register before May 31: (850) 414-9934, Roy.Lima@FreshFromFlorida.com* |
| June 8 | **FAMU Farm Fest 2013**, 9 am to 3 pm, FAMU Research & Extension Center, 4259 Bainbridge Hwy, Quincy, FL. Topics include container gardens, horticulture, hydroponics, high tunnels, livestock, urban farming, vegetable plots, youth development, and more. |
| Aug. 2-4 | **2013 Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference**, Osceola Heritage Park, 1875 Silver Spur Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34744. *Details at http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/location.html* |
| Aug. 22 | **Invasive Exotic Species and Control Workshop**, UF/IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center, Fort Pierce, FL. Presented by Florida's Forest Stewardship Program, Treasure Coast CISMA, Osceola County CWMA. $15 fee. *Details and registration online at http://fsp-workshop082213.eventbrite.com/ or call (352) 846-2375* |
| Aug. 24 | **Annual Grape Harvest Festival**, 8 am to 4 pm, Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit Research, 6505 Mahan Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32317. Hosted by FAMU. *For more information, call (850) 599-3996.* |
| Sept. 19 | **Invasive Exotic Species and Control Workshop**, UF/IFAS Extension Jackson County Conference Room. Presented by Florida's Forest Stewardship Program and Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance. $10 fee. *Registration online at http://fsp-workshop091913.eventbrite.com/ or call (850) 482-9620* |

**For many more events and information see: floridalandsteward.org**

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

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