

# FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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## Forestry Wildlife Best Management Practices For State Imperiled Species: Enrollment Grows to Over 3 Million Acres

By Roy Lima, Florida Forest Service

Florida has over 17 million acres of forests. Sixty percent of those acres are privately owned; the rest are owned by the public (36%) and forest industry (4%). Many of these private "working forests" are managed to produce a variety of wood and wood fiber products. In addition, these forests also support outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and millions of visitors to the state including important non-market based values, such as clean water, greenspace and other ecosystem services.

Florida's forest products industry and private landowners contribute a wealth of support to many communities. Forestry is a \$14.5

billion industry to Florida's economy and the state's forests provide a unique ecosystem serving many environmental benefits.

Florida Forestry Wildlife Best Management Practices (WBMPs) for State Imperiled Species were developed through a partnership between the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Florida Forest Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

For owners of forest property in the state of Florida, the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and FWC work together in administering the WBMP program. Toward that end, the FFS

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Natural Resources Conservation Service



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Forestry Rule 51-8 addresses 16 State Imperiled Species, like the gopher tortoise, which are considered to be potentially vulnerable to silviculture operations. Photo by Billy Boothe.

adopted Rule 5I-8 F.A.C. to provide additional incentives for landowners to follow WBMPs.

- Forestry Rule 5I-8 became effective October 21, 2014 to address the 16 State Imperiled Species which are considered to be potentially vulnerable to silviculture operations, including ten aquatic species, two burrowing animals, and four nesting birds.
- Forest landowners in the state can take advantage of incentives offered through Rule 5I-8 by submitting a Notice of Intent to use WBMPs to the FFS and FWC.

The Silviculture WBMP Notice of Intent (NOI) is a voluntary, one-time pledge indicating a landowner's intent to adhere to forestry wildlife BMPs on their property. Once a landowner has submitted the NOI to the FFS and FWC, and properly implement WBMPs they will no longer be required to obtain a permit authorizing the incidental take of State Imperiled Species during bonafide ongoing forestry operations. In addition, they will not be subject to any fines or penalties associated with an incidental take of the State Imperiled Species covered by the WBMP Manual.

Please feel free to contact the Florida Forest Service for more information about WBMPs or visit our website at

<http://FreshFromFlorida.com/BMP>

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## Wildlife-Friendly Fence Tips

By Tim Towles, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

How many times have you witnessed a wild turkey or sandhill crane pacing back and forth along a fence, looking for a way to get to the other side? I have observed such a situation on a number of occasions. Although one would think that a woven wire or barbwire fence could easily be negotiated by these species which both possess wings capable of a short flight that could take them over such an obstacle, this is surprisingly not the case. Like the proverbial chicken, they would rather walk to get to the other side. Both wild turkeys and Florida sandhill cranes spend most of their time walking around their territories, rather than flying, in search of various food resources. While wild turkeys walk around on forest floors and pastures, sandhill cranes also forage in shallow wetlands. Sandhill cranes, in particular, evolved in open landscapes with low stature grasses and wetlands, and few natural barriers. These birds will fly when there's a need to travel longer distances to reach roosting areas or more dis-

tant food resources, but such flights deplete their energy reserves more rapidly so they prefer to travel in a bipedal fashion similar to humans. Consequently, sandhill cranes and wild turkeys are very reluctant to back away from a fence and attempt to fly over it. Young sandhill crane chicks can squeeze through smaller openings and may get under a typical woven wire or through a 5-strand barbwire fence, making them susceptible to predation while the adult birds search unsuccessfully for a way through.

The FWC recently collaborated with USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on updating their state-wide Florida Fence Standard for woven wire, barbwire, high tensile smooth wire, and electric fences. Woven wire and barbwire fences with 5 strands or more have been documented to present a formidable barrier to the movement of sandhill cranes, wild turkeys, and other wildlife. Such fence designs are not recommended by NRCS or

FWC on properties where the welfare of wildlife is a key management consideration.

Fortunately, you can elect to construct or modify an existing fence so that it will restrain livestock while permitting wildlife to move relatively freely from one field to another. To facilitate movement of Florida sandhill cranes and their chicks between fields, barb or smooth wire fences should be limited to 3 strands if possible with 12 inches between strands, but most importantly have a gap of 18 inches at the bottom. If 4 strands of smooth or barbwire are deemed necessary for boundary fences, a gap of 18 inches between the bottom strand and the ground surface should be maintained. Please refer to the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, Section IV Fence Specification for details on the minimum requirements for barbwire and various other wildlife friendly fence designs that have been adopted by the NRCS State Rangeland Management

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Fences can be modified with a small walk-through frame to allow birds, like Florida sandhill cranes, to travel across the landscape. Photo by Brian Garrett.

Specialist for use in Florida: [https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/FL/FL\\_382\\_BW.pdf](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/FL/FL_382_BW.pdf)

Where woven wire fences must remain in place, a small-framed walk through (18 inches wide X 24 inches high) can be cut in the fence at regular intervals (0.3 mile). Cranes will find these areas and can use them to cross the fence, and the fence will still restrain livestock. Vegetation must be cleared from around the “crane crossings” on a regular basis to insure their continued use. Whenever a new fence is erected, all of the old fencing wire should be completely removed so as not to pose as an additional barrier to wildlife movement.

Woven wire fence topped with barbwire is the most lethal fence type. Deer and other animals that try to jump over this type of fence are likely to tangle a back leg between the top barbwire and the stiff woven wire, or between two top wires that are loose or too close together. To help remedy this situation, avoid us-

ing woven wire fence or maintain 12 inches between the top and adjacent barbwire strand to prevent inadvertent entanglement of deer, sandhill cranes, and other wildlife. The best choice is for woven wire and 5-strand barbwire not to be used at all, but if that is not an option, simple modifications to existing barbwire fences can reduce wildlife injuries and deaths. Adjust the height of the top wire so that it is no more than 40 to 42 inches high. Replace the top one or two strands and the bottom strand with smooth wire or a wood rail. Leave 12 inches between the top two wires and at least 18 inches between the bottom wire and the ground.

Fences across ditches, streams, or rivers, in coves on lakes or ponds, in estuarine areas, or near tall vegetation may be exceptional hazards because they are less likely to be seen by birds attempting to take flight or to land. Hazardous fences should be marked to increase their visibility, replaced by less dangerous fences, or removed, especially in areas used

by shorebirds, waterfowl, or cranes. You can make smooth/barbwire more visible by adding small sections of white PVC pipe or metal tags – anything that shimmies in the wind; white is best.

Erecting or modifying existing fences so that they are wildlife friendly will save countless numbers of animals that evolved in the wide open expanses of prairies, savannahs, and wetlands of our state. For more information on wildlife friendly fencing or other wildlife related technical assistance, please contact the FWC Landowner Assistance Coordinator serving your area at <http://www.myfwc.com/conservation/special-initiatives/lap/contact-us/>



Fence tags like this can help increase the visibility of fences for wildlife. Photo by FWC.

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## Research Report Brief: Economic Impact of Cogongrass on Nonindustrial Private Forest Landowners in Florida

By Chris Demers, UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation

A 2016 study published in *Forest Science* examined the costs of controlling cogongrass infestations among nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners in Florida. The analysis was based on information collected through a mail survey that was widely distributed among NIPF landowners in Florida, reaching a final sample of 1,060 landowners. The survey revealed that nearly 30% of respondents have problems with cogongrass on their property. Close to 41% of the landowners indicated that cogongrass has reduced the recruitment and/or growth of trees in their woodlands, and 54% of them responded that cogongrass has increased the hazard for wild-fire in the area of infestation. Data on direct costs associated with chemical or physical control of cogongrass was collected to complete an economic analysis, which revealed that cogongrass control

costs resulted in total economic losses of \$35 million annually to the forestry industry and related business sectors throughout Florida.

If you are among those dealing with a cogongrass or other invasive species problem, you can find information and assistance at the Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants at <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/>; <https://www.cogongrass.org/>, and the Florida Invasive Species Partnership at <http://www.floridainvasives.org/>.

### Reference:

Divite, N., D. Solis, M. H. Thomas, S. Alvarez, and D. Harding. 2016. An Economic Analysis of the Impact of Cogongrass among Nonindustrial Private Forest Landowners in Florida. *For. Sci.* 62: 1-8.



The economic impacts of cogongrass infestations to forest landowners, the forest industry and related business sectors are significant. UF/IFAS file photo.

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## ACF Consultant's Corner: What's in a Title?

By John Holzaepfel, ACF, CF, CA, Natural Resource Planning Services, Inc.

This is a new column in the *Florida Land Steward* newsletter that is provided as a service by the Florida Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF). We hope to provide timely articles about a variety of natural resource topics, though this first one will be more introductory in nature centered mostly around the concept and title of a Forester.

A "forester" is defined by the *Dictionary of Forestry* (SAF, John A. Helms, editor, 1998) as "a professional engaged in the science and profession of forestry". Most articles provided in the *Florida Land Steward* are composed by those with professional degrees and training

in forestry, wildlife management, natural resource science, or other related fields. Many of these authors have also obtained certifications through professional organizations such as the Society of American Foresters (SAF), the Wildlife Society, ACF, and others. Why can this be important? One reason is that, in Florida, anyone can use the business title of Forester or Wildlife Biologist even if they have no formal training or experience. Our neighboring states have Registered Forester laws; you must be recognized as a Registered Forester with the respective State Forestry Boards to advertise yourself to the public as a "Forester". Florida also had a

Registered Forester law at one time, but it was discontinued in 1979 by Governor Bob Graham.

State agencies typically have minimum professional education standards when hiring "foresters" or "biologists". When employing a private sector forester, landowners might want to utilize professional foresters with credentials from organizations that advance the professionalism, competency, and ethics of professional forestry. Two well-regarded designations include full membership in the Association of Consulting Foresters and designation as a Certified Forester (CF) with SAF. For qualifying foresters, the post nominal initials "ACF" and/or "CF"

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will appear after their names in correspondence. Both designations require minimum college educational requirements, on-going continued education standards, and adherence to a code of ethics or be potentially subject to discipline/expulsion. SAF was established in 1900 as the professional organization for professional foresters (and now related resource professionals) and ACF was established in 1948 specifically for consulting foresters. Both organizations have stood the test of time.

I do not know if I have ever met a practicing professional forester that has expressed the thought, "I wish I had chosen a career in a different field other than forestry". The nature of forestry work varies widely by employer and position, though most positions require an interesting blend of biological and social sciences and often economic/business skills. If you know a young man or woman desiring to become a professional forester, where would they start? My recommendation is to obtain an AS degree and find a university with a SAF Accredited forestry program. In Florida, the University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC) has multiple SAF Accredited forestry programs with diverse specializations including Forest Resource Management, Urban Forestry, Business Management, Protected Areas Management, and Recreational Resources Management. Still other non-accredited forestry and natural resource programs exist at SFRC, and if looking at a career outside of forestry, programs are available in Fisheries and Aquatic



Professional foresters offer many services, such as helping diagnose forest health issues. UF/IFAS file photo.

Management and Geomatics, Surveying and Mapping. Other SAF Accredited forestry programs exist in many other states.

It is with great pleasure that the FL-ACF can potentially assist the forest landowners of Florida in a small way as a contributor to this newsletter. Forest landowners' goals are unique to each ownership, but are often driven by a desire to conserve the land for its value to provide income, wildlife habitat, environmental benefits, beauty, recreation, solitude and many other benefits. In future articles, we hope to provide you information that will assist in making informed decisions to accomplish these goals. I believe Stewardship Forest/Tree Farm landowners commonly feel strongly

about practically employing a land ethic in the management of their forests. I leave you with a quote from Aldo Leopold, forester and ecologist, who eloquently argued for a land ethic in his writings many decades ago.

"Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

*~Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There (Oxford University Press, New York, 1949)*

## Get Email Updates!

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

# TIMBER PRICE UPDATE

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

Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2017** Timber Mart-South report were:

## Florida Stumpage Prices

**Pine pulpwood:** \$35/cord (\$13/ton), ↑ from 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2016

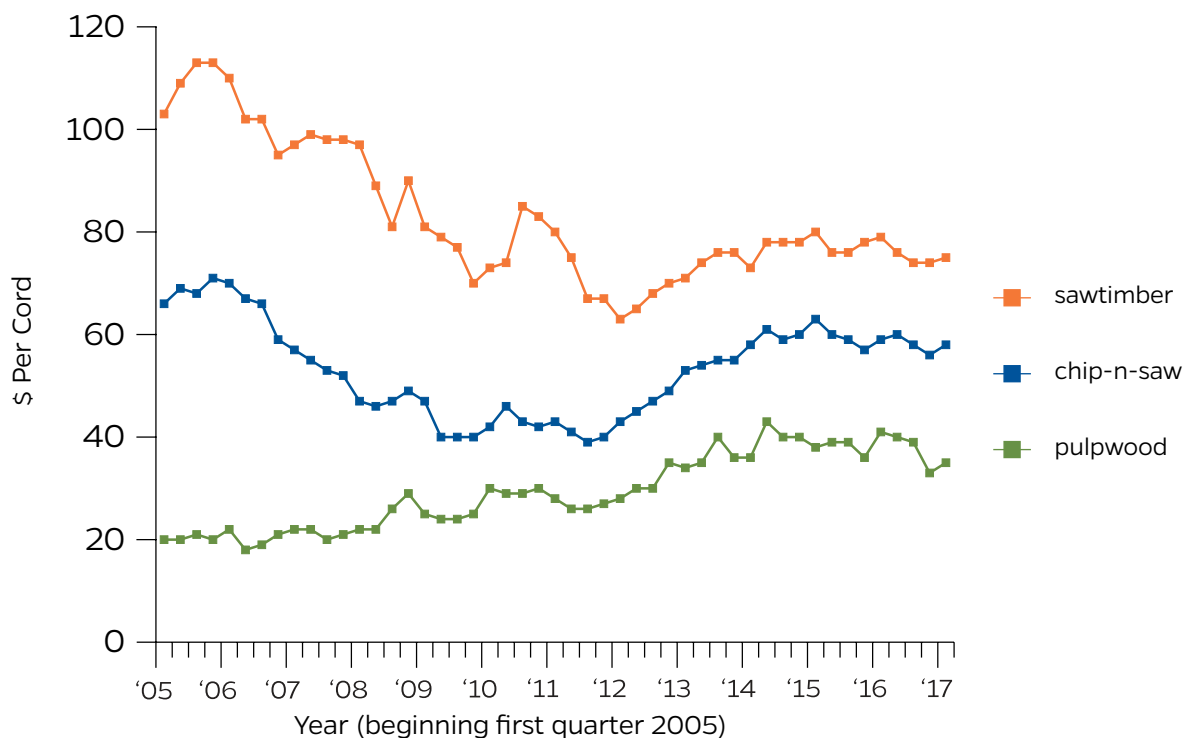
**Pine C-N-S:** \$58/cord (\$22/ton), ↑

**Pine sawtimber:** \$75/cord (\$28/ton), same

## Trend Report

Lumber, panel, and paper markets improved during the first quarter of 2017, but continued dry weather have kept stumpage prices relatively flat across much of the Southeastern U.S. The prolonged drought is causing damage to many stands across the region. Drought and associated wildfire activity will likely result in an increase in southern pine beetle infestations over the next quarter. Keep a close eye on your pine stands and consult your forester if you suspect a forest health issue.

**Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida  
1<sup>st</sup> Qtr 2005 through 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr 2017**



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



# CONGRATULATIONS

## CERTIFIED FOREST STEWARDS AND TREE FARMERS

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

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

or

<http://www.floridaforest.org>

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



Buddy (L) and Maria Vincent with Joe Vanderwerff and Dr. Ryan Drum (R), Gulf County



Don Showalter (R) with Barry Stafford, Jackson County



John Russell with Cathy Hardin, Escambia County



David Maddox, Calhoun County



Rick and Beverly Sharp with Matt Kennard (center), Volusia County



Dr. William Smith, Escambia County



Martin Riley with Cathy Hardin (R), Escambia County



Karen and John Gilliland with Chris Otremba (center), Lake County

### Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
May 18-21	<b>37<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Native Plant Society Conference</b> , Westgate River Ranch Resort & Rodeo, 3200 River Ranch Boulevard, River Ranch, FL 33867. The conference will address the biological and ecological connections important to the Kissimmee River Basin and beyond. <i>See <a href="http://www.fnps.org/conference">http://www.fnps.org/conference</a> for details and registration.</i>
May 22-25	<b>GIS Workshop: Applied Geospatial Solutions in Natural Resources</b> , Tall Timbers Research Station, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32312. Email Theron Terhune, <a href="mailto:theron@ttrs.org">theron@ttrs.org</a> for details.
May 25	<b>Forest Stewardship Workshop: Sell Your Timber for what it's Worth</b> , 9:00 am to 2:00 pm ET, UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center, 155 Research Rd, Quincy, FL 32351. Join us to learn the necessary steps to get the best return on your timber investment and meet your forest management objectives. \$10 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>Register at <a href="https://fsp-workshop052517.eventbrite.com/">https://fsp-workshop052517.eventbrite.com/</a>. You can also call UF/IFAS NFREC, (850) 875-7100 to reserve a space.</i>
June 12-15	<b>Advanced GIS Workshop: Python scripting and GIS Programming</b> , Tall Timbers Research Station, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32312. Email Theron Terhune, <a href="mailto:theron@ttrs.org">theron@ttrs.org</a> for details.
Aug 29-31	<b>2017 Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting &amp; Trade Show</b> , Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Miramar Beach, FL. <i>Details at <a href="http://floridaforest.org/annual-meeting/">http://floridaforest.org/annual-meeting/</a></i>
Sept 28	<b>Invasive Exotic Species and Control Workshop</b> , 9 am to 3 pm CT, UF/IFAS Extension Okaloosa County Office, Crestview, FL. Join us to learn about identifying and controlling some of the most troublesome invasive exotic plants and animals. Earn pesticide applicator CEUs and forestry CFEs and connect with partnership and assistance opportunities! Presented by the Six Rivers Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area and Florida Forest Stewardship Program. \$10 fee includes materials and lunch. <i>Contact UF/IFAS Extension Okaloosa County Extension at (850) 689-5850 to register.</i>

### For many more events and information see: [floridalandsteward.org](http://floridalandsteward.org)

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

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