

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Here Comes Cogongrass: Hurricane Michael clears the way for a Terrible Invasive Weed

By Arlo Kane, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Hurricane Michael brought with it not only destruction to homes but also damage to 3 million acres of timber in Florida's central panhandle. Much of the timber will not be salvageable and most downed timber will have to be raked into piles and burned before the forest can be re-planted. As this reclamation process begins, there is a green monster waiting to raise its ugly head.

Cogongrass, one of the top ten worst invasive weeds worldwide, will be inadvertently spread by heavy equipment during the post-hurricane cleanup phase. Heavy equipment operations in forested landscapes is one of the most common ways this plant spreads. Cogongrass spreads by rhizomes, which are underground plant stems

that send up roots and shoots from its nodes. As equipment runs through a patch of cogongrass, the rhizomes are broken off and transported on tires and other parts of equipment. The disturbed soil is a perfect medium for growing cogongrass. Each piece of rhizome that lands back in the dirt starts a new plant.

The new plant is unlike any other you have encountered in your daily life. It forms dense mats that can spread rapidly. On clay soils, the rhizomes can reach down almost 3 feet deep. These aggressive rhizomes are thought to be the plant's main means of survival. Cogongrass already covers over 1.25 million acres of forestland in the southeastern

Continued on next page



Cogongrass, one of the world's most invasive plants, will be inadvertently spread by heavy equipment during the post-hurricane cleanup phase. Be on the lookout for new infestations on your property and treat them as soon as possible. Cogongrass has a white fluffy seed head like this in April and May. Photo by Arlo Kane.

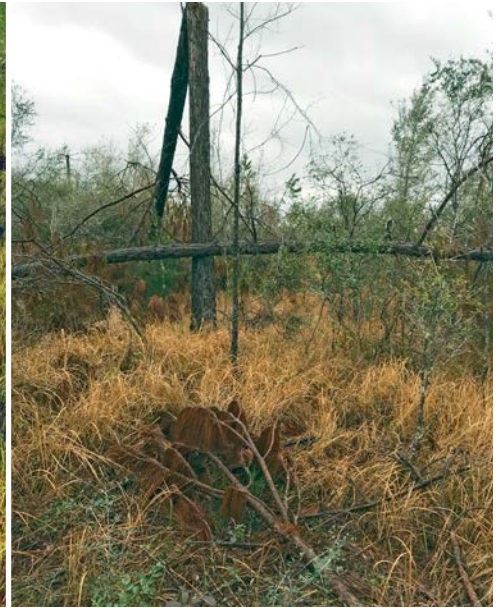
U.S. and is increasing every year. I have seen a five-acre patch of cogongrass explode to 40 acres in less than five years.

As a landowner, you may be wondering why you should care? Cogongrass is an aggressive weed that can choke out even the hardiest native plant, creating a monoculture in the understory of a forest. It can grow up to five feet tall and burn hot enough to kill pine trees, making management with prescribed fire difficult and the potential for wildfires destroying your timber stand even greater.

On top of everything else, this is not an easy plant to get rid of. It has been estimated that it may take over five years of treatments with herbicides to control cogongrass. The older the stand of cogongrass, the harder it is to control. The rhizomes have segmented nodes all along the rhizomes. These nodes can close off and prevent herbicides from reaching all of the root. Younger plants have less root system and are therefore easier to treat effectively.

Two herbicides have been shown to be the most effective at treating cogongrass: Imazapyr and glyphosate, which have shown the best results when used with a surfactant. Glyphosate is used in the early spring to prevent flowering and is combined with imazapyr in the late fall to kill the plant. Imazapyr is the most effective but it has its dangers. It is soil active and will kill hardwoods. Using it in pine stands year after year can harm the pines as well. In pines, you need to take a year break between applications. Switch to glyphosate in the intervening years.

The most effective treatment is one that starts as soon as the plant appears. As you begin your clean up, be on the lookout for small patches of cogongrass. It's much easier to control when it's young. Cogongrass has a white fluffy seed head in April



Cogongrass patch in Calhoun County, before (left) and after (right) Hurricane Michael. By Arlo Kane

and May, that is easy to identify. The leaves have an offset mid-rib but so do some other grasses. The rhizomes are the best identifier. They are segmented and have a very sharp tip.

For the next few years, be on the lookout. Cogongrass may not show up right away. If you already have some on your property, it will be spread by logging equipment, so it is unavoidable. Look for new patches and treat it as soon as you can, and you should be able to prevent its spread on your property. This will be a long-term battle, but ignoring cogongrass can be a devastating mistake for a newly planted stand of timber.

If you need financial assistance to treat your cogongrass, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a program that can help defray some of the costs. Contact your local NRCS District Conservationist and ask about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. To learn more about managing wildlife and habitat on your property, check out our habitat how-to section at the FWC's Landowner Assistance Program by going to MyFWC.com/LAP. You can also contact a LAP regional biologist for technical assistance. For more information on how to identify and treat cogongrass go to <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/imperata-cylindrica/>.



Cogongrass burning hot under a pine stand. Photo by Chris Demers

Prescribed Burn Assistance Available from Wildland Restoration International, Attack-One Fire Management Services, Tall Timbers Research Station, and Alachua Conservation Trust

Wildland Restoration International (WRI) and Attack-One Fire Management Services are providing prescribed burn assistance to landowners participating in USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) cost share programs. These organizations have been awarded funding from the Endowment for Forestry and Communities to help landowners implement prescribed burning practices funded by the NRCS. Representatives from these organizations are available to meet onsite with landowners to discuss their goals and assist with prescribed burn prescription and implementation.

WRI is funded to assist landowners in all counties east and south of Hamilton, Columbia, Gilchrist, and Dixie, extending down through the whole peninsula, excluding Monroe and Miami-Dade counties. Landowners in these counties, with a NRCS contract that includes prescribed burning, are encouraged to contact Ryan Kennelly, WRI Fire Program Coordinator, ryan.kennelly@wildlandrestoration.org, (352) 373-0550

Attack-One Fire Management Services is funded to assist landowners in Suwanee, Lafayette, Taylor, Madison Counties, and west across the Panhandle, and throughout the state of Georgia. Attack-One can also assist landowners with current or former NRCS contracts if active gopher tortoise habitat is present. Contact Kevin Carter, kevin@attack-one.com, (850) 926-6534

Tall Timbers Research Station is now funded by a Longleaf Legacy Landscape project to provide fire consultation, planning, and implementation to private landowners in the Florida Panhandle from Pensacola to Lake City and in west Georgia as far north as the Chattahoochee Fall Line (Columbus, GA). Contact Matt Snider, msnider@talltimbers.org, (912) 704-5732.



Alachua Conservation Trust has a prescribed fire specialist available to assist private landowners with burn planning in Alachua, Putnam, Marion, Levy, Bradford, Clay and portions of Flagler, Volusia, Lake, Sumter, and Citrus Counties. Contact Barry Coulliette at act.barryc@gmail.com

Cost of Forestry Practices in the South Survey

The Forest Landowners Association and Auburn University have partnered on a survey to determine cost ranges of forestry practices in the South. Please participate in study if you have some cost information to report. All data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous.

Complete the survey at:
https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezWGKS7LEiXYtdb



Sign up for the Longleaf Pine Landowner Incentive Program

By Jennifer Tucker-Jenks, Florida Forest Service

The Florida Forest Service will administer the Longleaf Pine Private Landowner Incentive Program for 2019 in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This program aims to enhance longleaf pine ecosystems in Florida by helping private landowners to establish, restore, and maintain longleaf pine forests through technical guidance and incentive payments. The program offers incentive payments for longleaf pine seedling establishment, timber stand improvement, prescribed burning, native plant understory establishment, mechanical underbrush treatments, and invasive exotic plant treatment.

Information for the 2019 application period will be available on the Florida Forest Service's Longleaf



Funding is available from the Florida Forest Service to help with longleaf pine seedling establishment, timber stand improvements, prescribed burning, and other practices. Photo by Leslie Hawkins

Pine Private Landowner Incentive Program website at <https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/For-Landowners/Programs/Longleaf-Pine-Private-Landowner-Incentive-Program>. Visit the website to learn more about available practices, program requirements, and payment rates. Contact Jen Tucker-Jenks at Jennifer.Tucker-Jenks@FreshFromFlorida.com or your Florida Forest Service county forester for more information. Find your county forester at <https://www.freshfromflorida.com/CountyForester>.

Funding Available to Cover Consultant Forest Stewardship Management Plan Preparation

By Jennifer Tucker-Jenks, Florida Forest Service

The Florida Forest Service has received funding to help cover the costs for private natural resource consultants to write Forest Stewardship plans covering hurricane resiliency and/or longleaf pine management. Eligible Stewardship plans must include information and recommendations related to: forest resilience and recovery following hurricanes, forest and landowner preparedness for hurricanes, and/or resources available to assist private forest landowners following hurricanes and/or longleaf pine

establishment, restoration, improvement, and management for landowners with existing longleaf stands or those who want to establish longleaf pine on appropriate sites.

Compensation rates and additional information are provided in the Forest Stewardship Program Consultant Plan Preparation Agreement available at: <https://forms.freshfromflorida.com/11268.pdf>. This form also serves as the application for

reimbursement. All applications that meet requirements as described above will be considered in the order in which they are received. Please contact Jennifer Tucker-Jenks at Jennifer.Tucker-Jenks@FreshFromFlorida.com or your county forester for more information. Find your county forester at <https://www.freshfromflorida.com/CountyForester>

Get the Florida Land Steward Newsletter by Email

The Florida Land Steward newsletter readership is strongly encouraged to join the Florida Land Steward email listserv to receive this publication, as well as updates on upcoming events and news, electronically. Don't miss out!. Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the email listserv. Email updates are sent once a week or every other week and include a link to the current quarterly Florida Land Steward newsletter, calendar of workshops, tours and other events; updates on cost-share and other assistance programs, opportunities, and resources; and other stewardship related news and information.

Thank You 2019 Florida Forest Stewardship Program Sponsors!

Each year several organizations provide support for our Florida Forest Stewardship Program events. We thank these organizations for their support at the level indicated:

Sustaining Steward Level

Florida Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Implementation Committee

Magnolia Level

Florida Tree Farm Program, Forest Environmental Solutions, Farm Credit Associations of Florida, Red River Specialties

Cypress Level

American Forest Management, F&W Forestry Services, Florida Forestry Association

Dave Conser named Florida's Nominee for Forest Stewardship Forester Award of U.S. Forest Service Southern Region

By Jennifer Tucker-Jenks, Florida Forest Service

The Florida Forest Service (FFS) is pleased to announce that Dave Conser has been recognized as Florida's nominee for the 2018 Forest Stewardship Forester Award for the U.S. Forest Service Southern Region. Dave serves as Senior Forester for

Alachua County and has been with the FFS for over 30 years. His accomplishments for Forest Stewardship and rural program landowners over the 2017-2018 award period are reflective of a career-long commitment to providing outstanding tech-

nical, educational and professional assistance. The Southern Region winner will go on to compete for the National Forest Stewardship Award. Congratulations to Dave for his nomination and excellent work!



Alachua County Forester, Dave Conser, in action at a forest plant identification workshop. Dave is Florida's nominee for the U.S. Forest Service's Southern Region Forest Stewardship Forester Award. Photo by Chris Demers.

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 2019** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices

Pine pulpwood: \$13/ton, ↑ from 4th Qtr. 2018

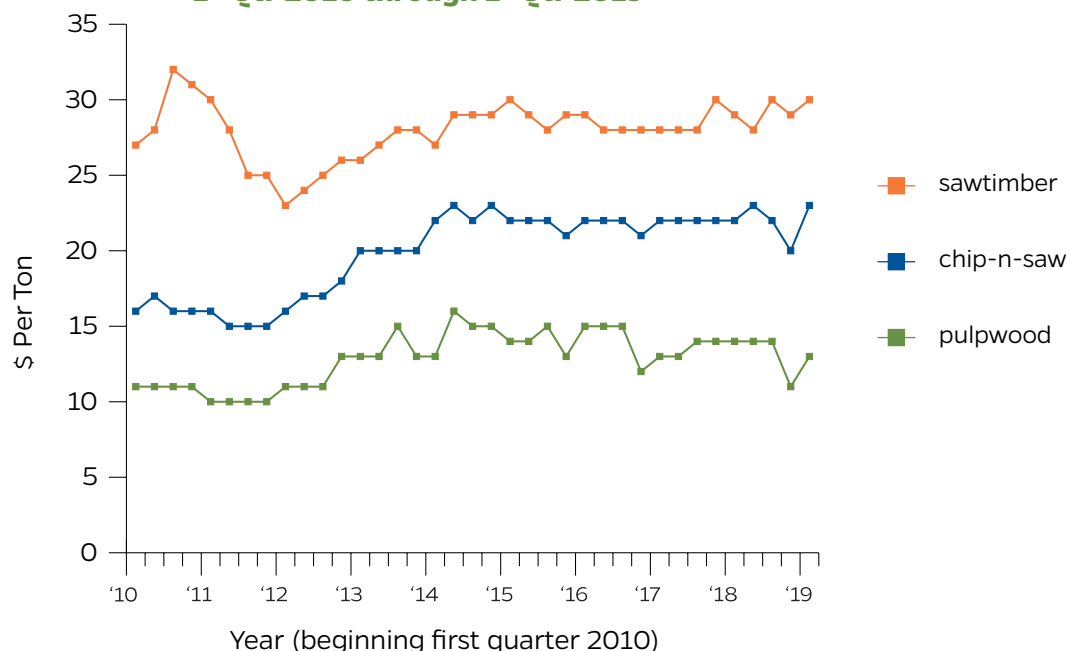
Pine C-N-S: \$23/ton, ↑

Pine sawtimber: \$30/ton, ↑

Trend Report

Note that the price trend graph below has been converted to price per ton units. Persistent wet weather has limited wood accessibility across the region, pushing average stumpage prices up for most products this quarter. The central panhandle region continues its slow recovery from Hurricane Michael. At this point the priority is getting wood off the ground and into biomass or pulp mills to make way for forest restoration efforts. Despite all the efforts of Florida legislators and forestry stakeholders to attempt to secure financial assistance to timberland owners, it is sad and frustrating that there has been no legislation passed to help landowners recover all or part of the timber value lost in the storm. We will continue to share information on available disaster recovery assistance and related news and events on Florida Land Steward email updates. Send an email to Chris Demers, cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the distribution if you are not on it. This is the best way to stay current on news and events.

Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida
1st Qtr 2010 through 1st Qtr 2019



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/tree_farm.php

These landowners have achieved certification in the Tree Farm, Forest Stewardship, and/or Forces Forest Programs and demonstrate excellent stewardship of their land resources.



Allen Gencarelle, Volusia County



Lisa and Paul Entrekin, Escambia County



Dura Nelson, Escambia County

Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
May 30	Invasive Species and Control Workshop , Suwannee County, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm EDT, Suwannee River Water Management District Office, 9225 County Road 49, Live Oak, FL 32060. Provided by North Central Florida Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area and Florida Forest Stewardship Program. FDACS CEUs approved, SAF CFEs pending, \$15 covers lunch and materials. Register on-line at https://fsp-workshop053019.eventbrite.com/ . For more information contact Chris Demers, (352) 846-2375, cdemers@ufl.edu
June 1-3	Burn and Learn Workshop: Hands-on Training for Private Landowners , 8 am - 4 pm each day, Forever Florida, 4755 N. Kenansville Road, St. Cloud, FL. Provided by Wildland Restoration International and The Nature Conservancy. Call (781) 361-9711. Details and registration at http://wildlandrestoration.org/burn-learn-workshop/ Questions can be directed to Ryan Kennelly, ryan.kennelly@wildlandrestoration.org , (352) 373-0550
June 5	2019 Landowner Assistance Expo , 9 am to 3 pm, UF/IFAS Bert J. Harris Jr. Agricultural Center Auditorium, 4509 George Boulevard Sebring, FL 33875. Landowners are invited to participate in conversations related to technical assistance, cost-share opportunities, conservation easements, and the financial implications of each program. Free, lunch included. Details and registration at https://lax2019.eventbrite.com . For more information contact Chad Allison, (863) 534-7130 ext. 106 or callison@cfrpc.org
July 16-17	2019 Southern Cover Crop Conference , Auburn Hotel and Conference Center, 241 S College St, Auburn, AL 36830. This conference brings researchers, Extension personnel, farmers, and ag industry specialists together to discover the latest information related to cover crops in the South. Details and registration at https://cses.auburn.edu/sccc/
October 3	Forest Stewardship Tour at Property of Billy and Marcia Booth , Gadsden County, Details and registration to be posted in Florida Land Steward email updates. Contact Chris Demers, (352) 846-2375, cdemers@ufl.edu for details.
October 29	Grass/sedge Identification Workshop , Wekiwa Springs State Park, 1800 Wekiwa Circle, Apopka, FL 32712. Provided by the Central Florida, East Central Florida and Osceola CISMAs and the Florida Forest Stewardship Program. This will be an all-day training with a classroom and field portion and a hands-on ID session. Native and invasive species will be discussed. Free workshop. Various categories of CEUs pending approval. Mark your calendar. More details will follow in FL Land Steward email updates.

For many more events and information see: floridalandsteward.org

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

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