

# FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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## A Legacy of Excellence: Russell Brothers Farm – 2019 Florida Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year

By Cathy Hardin, Florida Forest Service

Russell Brothers Farm has received the distinction of the 2019 Florida Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year. This annual award recognizes private landowners that have done a remarkable job of sustainably managing forests on their property. Russell Brothers Farm exemplifies a legacy of family forest managed not only for wood that may one day be harvested, but also for water conservation, wildlife habitat and primarily to create a sense of place in honor of the Russell Family.

The farm was purchased by Jay and Clara Russell in 1946. Since Jay and Clara have passed on, the name on the deed has changed, but it remains family land that plays a central role in keeping the family together. John Russell lives on the property, managing it for the family, and hosting a large family gathering each Thanksgiving. They enjoy hayrides together hoping to catch a glimpse of some wild creature and marvel at the growth of young longleaf. Other times of year the Russell's grandchildren and great-grandchildren hike down to Pine Barren Creek in the north part of the property to explore and play in the water.

The 109-acre property has seen some changes over the years. Former row crop land is now a young but rapidly growing longleaf stand. A mature natural longleaf stand that was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004 has been replaced by a younger stand with native grasses



Congratulations John Russell, 2019 Florida Tree Farmer of the Year. Photo by Cathy Hardin

and wildflowers. A hay field separates the pine stands. Pine Barren Creek cuts across the northern boundary of the property and is surrounded by a variety of hardwoods, many of which are more frequently seen in areas north of Florida.

John works hard to keep up the property, hoping it will still be enjoyed by Russell family descendants in another hundred years. He maintains 3 miles of trails and is continuing a battle against invasive privet. John is a certified prescribed burner in order keep up with

Continued on next page



(Left) John Russell presenting information about BMPs at his October 25 tour, photo by Chris Demers.

(Right) John Russell receiving award with Wade Russell (left) and Florida Tree Farm President Stephen Lloyd. Photo by Chris Demers.

the burning on the property. The two young longleaf stands were planted by John and his brother, Keith. These stands are burned on a two-year rotation to encourage a low and diverse understory. John is rewarded not only by a sense of accomplishment for what he is doing for the land and his family, but also with sightings of wildlife during quiet morning walks. Through his diligent and careful management, he has noted an increase in wildlife of all kinds.

The Russells have always tried to do what is right for the land. Jay Russell started this legacy by becoming part of a Soil Conservation Service program to stop erosion that had

formed gullies on the edge of row crop fields. A Streamside Management Zone, which keeps trees and other vegetation in place, is maintained along the creek to keep soil from eroding off the steep slopes into the creek. John continues the legacy by attending landowner workshops and enrolling the property in programs such as the American Tree Farm System that assist him in his efforts to create a healthy longleaf ecosystem, conserve soil and water, and improve habitat for wildlife.

One family's healthy forest is a community benefit and John does his part. Not only does he hope a younger generation of Russells

are inspired to continue the legacy of caring for the land, but he tells stories of other children who have come to the property as family friends or in school groups, some who have never been in rural settings. He is pleased that these children leave in wonder at what they have seen and is happy the property can be used to spark their imaginations and educate them on the value of forest ecosystems.

John has shown leadership in sustainability and legacy. The Russell Brothers Farm is a gem in the Oak Grove community where evidence of good forest management is readily seen.

## Don't miss out on news and events!

Sign up for the regular updates! Send an email to [cdemers@ufl.edu](mailto:cdemers@ufl.edu) to be added to the email listserv. Email updates are sent once a week or every other week and include the latest calendar of workshops, tours and other events; a link to the current issue of this quarterly newsletter; updates on cost-share and other assistance programs, opportunities, and resources; and other stewardship related news and information.



## Longleaf Pine

By Stan Rosenthal

Longleaf pine was once the dominant tree in the Southeast, estimated to have occupied more than 90 million acres. The seemingly endless forest shaped the recent culture of the Southeast. Longleaf pine is rich in gummy resin that produces tar, pitch, turpentine and rosin – or naval stores, which were sought worldwide for a multitude of uses. Early economics of the Southeast centered on the export of longleaf pine products. Longleaf pines were also cut for timber by early settlers, and the harvesting of longleaf pine intensified with the development of railroads in the late 1800's. By 1930 almost all the virgin longleaf had been cut. Now, due to past harvesting, the conversion of much of this land to other human uses and the restriction of natural fires, it only occupies 3 percent of its original range.

*Pinus palustris*, as it is known to botanist and foresters, is a tree well adapted to fire. Longleaf pine has many characteristics to survive frequent low intensity forest fires. Research shows that these low inten-

sity fires were very common to this area and on average, occurred every 2-3 years. These adaptive characteristics give longleaf pine a competitive advantage over trees that are less able to survive frequent fires.

One of the most striking characteristics of longleaf pine is its grass stage. When the trees are young, they exist in a stage in which they look almost identical to a tuft of grass. This grass stage is very resistant to forest fires. The trees store energy during this grass stage so that they can quickly grow through the one to ten-foot fire vulnerable height. Other trees grow more slowly through this height and are often killed or burned back to the ground. As the longleaf pine tree grows larger, it will then begin to accumulate thick bark that protects it from fires and its foliage will be higher and less likely to catch on fire.

While longleaf seedlings in the grass stage are not “fireproof,” careful prescribed burning can be done when the trees are in the

grass stage including making sure they have had one full growing season, and upon inspection, have developed into vigorous grass-stage seedlings. Much more detail on prescribed burning young longleaf can be found at the Longleaf Alliance's web site: <https://www.longleafalliance.org/what-we-do/restoration-management/prescribed-fire>

Seedlings can remain in the grass stage from two to twenty years. The length of time in the grass stage varies with how much root and shade competition from other plants they have to endure. Carefully conducted prescribed burns can help with this. It is also good to remember that when planting seedling/tublings, it is best to reduce competition from other plants as much as possible. Skimping on site preparation is not recommended as that is one place that longleaf often needs a little extra care. If your replanted sites end up with low density spots, you can interplant longleaf pines.

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(Right) Longleaf pine in the bottle brush stage. Photo by Stan Rosenthal. (Left) The thick, flaky bark of longleaf pine is an important part of its adaptation to frequent fire. Photo by Chris Demers.

This is unique to longleaf pines, as other pines in our area suppress inter-planted seedlings.

When seedlings begin to initiate height growth, they have a very foreign look that attracts immediate attention, this unusual appearance is often described as bottle brush. As the trees continue to mature, they put out branches to form a more normal looking tree. Longleaf pines can get quite large, 80 to 100 feet tall is not uncommon. Their lifespan can extend to 300-400 years. Although not as long as its common companion wiregrass, which has been found to live up to 600 years. The old trees have tall, straight trunks with open irregular crowns, one-third the length of the tree. Longleaf pine self-prunes well and produced good quality lumber. While not immune to disease, longleaf is less susceptible to a fungus called fusiform rust that is very common on the trunks of slash and loblolly pines. Longleaf pine is attacked by pine beetles as are other pines in our area, but it's very sappy nature helps it resist the pine beetles better.



Longleaf pine straw for sale. Photo by Stan Rosenthal.

Longleaf pine can be distinguished from other pines by, as its name implies, its needles that vary from between eight and eighteen inches in length. The needles are in fascicles (bundles) of three. Its long needles make excellent pine straw if you are looking for some additional income. Their thin airy crowns allow for good light penetration, thus giving ground cover plants access to sunlight. This can benefit wildlife and wildflowers greatly.

Cones begin to be produced when trees reach 20-30 years in age. The

very large cones, which can be 5-10 inches long, make great miniature Christmas trees. The seeds inside the cones are also very large and are enjoyed by many wildlife species. More than 30 endangered and threatened species, including red-cockaded woodpeckers and indigo snakes, rely on longleaf pines for their habitat. Learn more about the red cockaded woodpecker at <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Birds/Red-Cockaded-Woodpecker>

The longleaf pine will grow on all but our wettest soils, being a good choice for very sandy, dry and infertile soils. While it may be difficult to plant enough longleaf pine to restore it to its original glory, it is a good tree for many reasons and a good choice to consider when replanting.

Stan Rosenthal is a forester with Florida Wildlife Federation and UF/IFAS Extension Forestry Agent Emeritus.

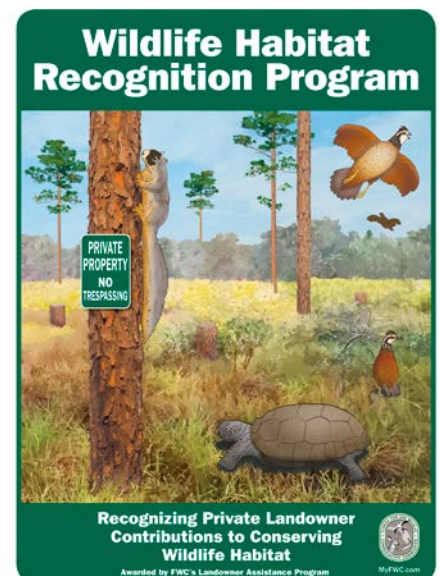
## Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program Recognizes Private Landowners

By Tony Grossman, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Landowner Assistance Program (FWC-LAP) has created the Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program (WHRP) to show appreciation for the important contributions to wildlife conservation made by private landowners. Upon request, FWC-LAP biologists will visit a private landowner's property to evaluate if there is active management and improvement of land for wildlife. Upon qualifying, the landowner will receive a program

sign to display and a certificate. Applications to the WHRP can be made online at <https://myfwc.com/media/5062/lapapplication.pdf>.

To learn more about managing wildlife on your property, check out the Managing Your Land section online at [MyFWC.com/LAP](https://MyFWC.com/LAP) or schedule a visit by contacting the FWC-LAP regional biologist at the nearest FWC Regional Office.





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## Congratulations Cathy Hardin, Recipient of the Glen Harris 2019 Florida Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector of the Year Award

Cathy Hardin, Florida Forest Service county forester serving Escambia County, is recognized for her excellent service to private forest landowners, the Florida Tree Farm Program and the American Tree Farm System. Cathy started her county forester and Tree Farm inspector career around 2010. During her tenure in these roles, she has completed a total of 76 Tree Farm inspections and has authored more than 25 management plans for landowners who have achieved certification in the American Tree Farm System. She has promoted and enrolled private forest landowners in the new Landscape Management Plan (LMP) that is now established and operating in her Northwest Florida district, with eight landowners benefiting from her assistance using the LMP.

Cathy has shown initiative in finding new ways to serve landowners in her area. While serving Gadsden County, she worked with the local community to start a group of women landowners called the Network for Women Landowners. This group provided opportunities for women to network, gather, and



Cathy Hardin receiving the Glen Harris 2019 Florida Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector of the Year award with Florida Forest Service Director Jim Karels (left) and Florida Tree Farm President Stephen Lloyd. Photo by Chris Demers.

learn about forest management in more effective and inviting formats than traditional landowner workshops. This effort made a big impact by helping women landowners learn new skills and meet other women landowners in similar situations. These outcomes would not have been realized without Cathy's efforts.

Private Landowners, assistance programs, and the Tree Farm Program

have all benefited from Cathy's dedication and hard work. She has had a tremendous impact on the expansion and implementation of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Program and Tree Farm Program in Escambia County. Making it a top priority to revitalize the program in Escambia County, that county is now among the top performing counties in the state with respect to landowner cooperation and enrollment. One of the Tree Farms in her county, Russell Brothers Farm, is recognized this year as the 2019 Outstanding Florida Tree Farmer of the Year.

On behalf of the leadership and everyone involved in the Florida Tree Farm Program, we recognize and congratulate Cathy Hardin on all her accomplishments thus far and being awarded the Glen Harris 2019 Florida Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector of the Year.

This award is a tribute to the late Glen Harris, a forester, exemplary Tree Farm inspector, and a key individual responsible for re-energizing the Tree Farm Program in Florida.

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## Tribute to Jon Gould, Florida Tree Farmer and Friend



We are deeply saddened to announce the loss of Jon Gould who, along with his wife Carol, was awarded the Florida Tree Farmer of the Year Award in 2006 and the Southern Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Award in 2018. Jon was a proud Tree Farmer and advocate for forestry for more than 30 years throughout the southeast. Jon

served on Florida's Tree Farm Program State Committee for 12 years and was a co-editor of, and regular contributor to, this Florida Land Steward newsletter for over 10 years. Jon has also written articles for several other forestry and wildlife publications, served on forestry panels, hosted Forest Stewardship and Tree Farm tours at his property, and spoken to civic organizations promoting sustainable forestry and the American Tree Farm System. Jon and Carol were among the original members of The Longleaf Alliance, and Jon was a speaker, representing private landowners, at their 2014 biennial conference. Jon and Carol were featured in our Family Forests book that

was published in 2018. Jon's legacy of leadership, commitment, and service to the Florida Tree Farm program, the American Tree Farm System, Florida's Forest Stewardship Program and the greater Florida Land Steward Partnership cannot be overstated. Jon was also a friend to many of us who had the privilege of working with him and visiting with him and Carol at his Washington County Tree Farm. His hard work and thoughtful contributions were always paired with a warm smile and good cheer.

Learn more about Jon, Carol and the Gould Tree Farm at:  
<https://www.treefarmssystem.org/south-nominee-goulds>

# 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 **3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2019** Timber Mart-South report were:

## Florida Stumpage Prices

**Pine pulpwood:** \$13/ton, same as 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2019

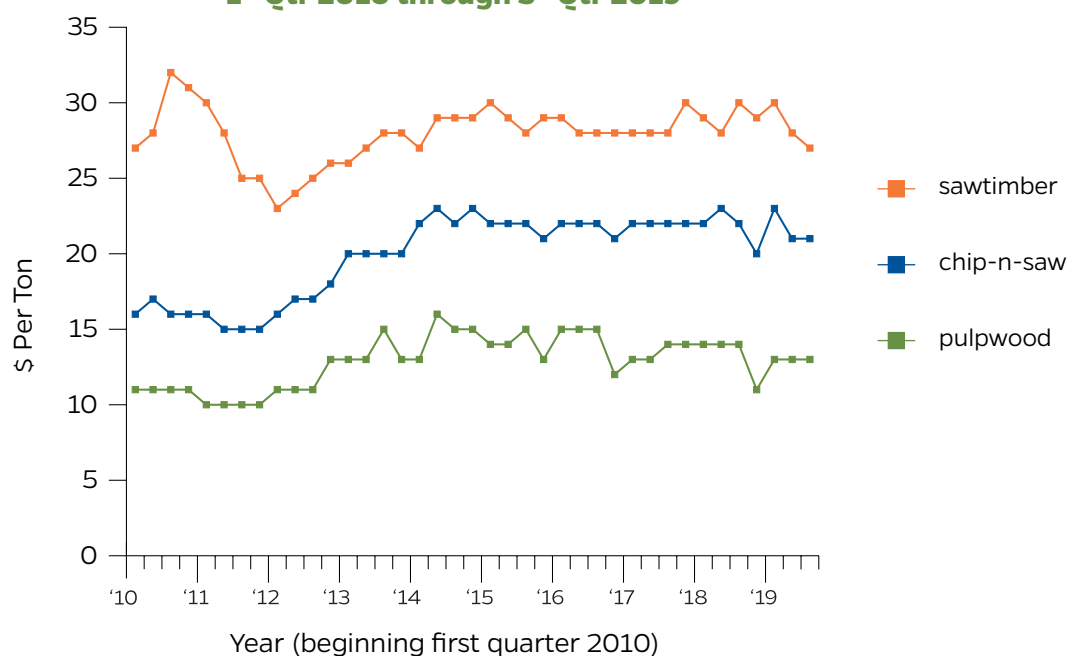
**Pine C-N-S:** \$21/ton, same

**Pine sawtimber:** \$27/ton, ↓

## Trend Report

While the trend was relatively flat in Florida, South-wide average stumpage prices were down for most of the major products again in the third quarter of 2019. This trend is largely attributed to dry weather during this period across much of the region. Market conditions were also challenging this quarter with some setbacks in construction starts, depressed pulp prices, and lumber exports down. Hurricane Michael recovery continues. We will share information on the latest disaster recovery assistance as it is available in Florida Land Steward email updates. Send an email to [cdemers@ufl.edu](mailto: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, opportunities, and events.

**Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida (\$/Ton)**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Qtr 2010 through 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 LANDOWNERS

More information about certification in these programs is available at:

<https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/For-Landowners/Programs/Forest-Stewardship-Program>

<https://www.treefarmssystem.org/florida>

<https://myfwc.com/lap>

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



Bill Rogers, Okaloosa County



Anthony Boggess, Hamilton County



Bill and Marcia Boothe, Gadsden County



Ronnie Stephenson, Jackson County



Patrick Hulbert and Meighan Hornady with Ethan Greene (L), Pasco County



Steve Smith and Ray Windham, Jackson County



Doug Moore with Ginger Morgan (L) and Lanie Carter (R), Baker County



Terence Barnes, Okaloosa County

### Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Nov 21	<b>2019 Florida Ag Expo</b> , UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center. Join us for a day of networking, education and a chance to see all of the great work being done at the GCREC. <i>Details at <a href="http://floridaagexpo.net">http://floridaagexpo.net</a></i>
Dec 5	<b>Get Your Farm Finances on Track for 2020 Workshop</b> , 9 am to 4 pm CT, UF/IFAS Extension Jackson County Office, 2741 Penn Ave. #3, Marianna, FL. Provided by Farm Credit of Northwest Florida. Topics include balance sheets, income statements, technology and record keeping, crop and livestock insurance, marketing, and employee management. <b>Free.</b> <i>Register today by contacting Rachel Watts at (850) 718-5582 or <a href="mailto:Rwatts@farmcredit-fl.com">Rwatts@farmcredit-fl.com</a></i>
Dec 6	<b>Get Your Farm Finances on Track for 2020 Workshop</b> , 9 am to 4 pm ET, UF/IFAS Extension Madison County, 184 College Loop, Madison, FL. Provided by Farm Credit of Northwest Florida. Topics include balance sheets, income statements, technology and record keeping, crop and livestock insurance, marketing, and employee management. <b>Free.</b> <i>Register today by contacting Rachel Watts at (850) 718-5582 or <a href="mailto:Rwatts@farmcredit-fl.com">Rwatts@farmcredit-fl.com</a></i>
Jan 23, 2020	<b>Longleaf Pine Forest Restoration and Management Workshop</b> , Marion County. Provided by Florida Forest Stewardship Program and Florida Forest Service. <i>Details to be posted in regular email updates. Contact <a href="mailto:cdemers@ufl.edu">cdemers@ufl.edu</a> to join the updates.</i>
Feb 23-25	<b>Southeastern Society of American Foresters Annual Meeting: Recovering From the Storm: Where We Have Been, and Where We Are Going</b> , Edgewater Resort, Panama City Beach, FL. While Hurricane Michael impacts and recovery topics will be on the agenda, the meeting will provide information to help us through future catastrophic forest losses, including floods, fire, and insect and disease outbreaks. <i>Details and registration at <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-sesaf-symposium-recovering-from-the-storm-tickets-74528339269?aff=ebdssbdestsearch">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-sesaf-symposium-recovering-from-the-storm-tickets-74528339269?aff=ebdssbdestsearch</a></i>

### More events and information are posted at [floridalandsteward.org](http://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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