

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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IN THIS ISSUE

The Coyote and Deer Management Conundrum	4
Timber Price Update	6
Certified Landowners	7

Forest Restoration and Management at Jenkins Millview Trace

By Robert Jenkins, 2020 Florida Land Steward of the Year

Robert (Bob) Jenkins' Stewardship Forest is in Millview, Florida, which faces the Perdido Bay west of Pensacola in Escambia County. Millview was a bustling timber town in the mid-1800s with multiple operating sawmills built on pilings over the bay and remnants of these pilings are still visible today. The locally cut pine logs were floated down the Perdido River to these mills to be processed and shipped by train to the Port of Pensacola.

The Jenkins family acquired their Millview property during the Great Depression in the 1930s. By then, the local pine forests had been timbered out and Millview was a ghost town, a shadow of its former glory. The family moved to Pensacola in 1956 but continued to grow pine for timber and turpentine on the Millview property. The land is named the Jenkins Millview Trace in honor of the last small trace of longleaf pine forest in Millview.

Bob graduated from Escambia High School just down the road from the family home in Pensacola in 1968. He went on to graduate from Cornell University in Engineering. He learned his love of the outdoors from years in the Boy Scouts, ultimately becoming an Eagle Scout. As a Scout, he planted pine trees as a community service project on land controlled by the Pensacola Naval Air Station where he also learned to shoot skeet and to hunt



Bob Jenkins and his chocolate Lab check out longleaf seedlings on the Jenkins Millview Trace. Photo by Stan Revis.

dove. Bob is now an active advocate of legislation that supports agriculture and hunting.

In the late 1980s he helped found the first local Quail Unlimited Chapter with other Pensacola conservationists. Early on, Bob participated with other Quail Unlimited Chapter members in several community projects supporting quail habitat in the Blackwater Forest. Through Chapter activities, he gained knowledge of quail life cycles and the importance of plants such as

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Continued on pages 2 & 3

lespedeza, wiregrass, broomsedge, and Chickasaw plums for quail. Most importantly, he learned about longleaf pine. The longleaf pine forest had been the predominant forest type of the Southern Coastal Plain and a habitat that supported great bobwhite quail hunting.

Jenkins' father had done a selective timber cut in the late 1960s but the trend at that time was to let slash pine naturally reseed and regenerate for the pulp and paper industry. During the 1950s and 60s the property was burned to keep lanes open for turpentine collection, but after that industry shut down, burning stopped and underbrush growth was unrestrained. When wildfires raged in the late 1990s on the west side of Escambia County, Bob realized his slash pine stand in Millview was at risk for a devastating fire due to years of fuel buildup from pine straw and underbrush overgrowth. Of equal concern were the subdivisions that had been built surrounding his property and the risk of what a fire on his property would do to these homes. His land, and the neighborhoods around it, had become a wildland-urban interface area and he decided to act.

In the early 2000s, working with his consulting forester, Stan Revis of the Tree Longevity Corporation, a long-term stewardship plan was devised to harvest the slash pine and replace them with longleaf pine. When established, longleaf pine is adapted to periodic fire, so the main goal was to keep the underbrush controlled by prescribed burns. This would allow the forest to be more open for easy walking and establishing varied wildlife habitats. This type of management also greatly reduced the risk of a wildfire for his neighbors.

Based on the plan, Bob implemented prescribed burning to control the understory and planted the first of over 300,000 longleaf pines. Purchase of an adjacent property has

increased the acreage of longleaf pine from 375 acres to 600 acres. Most of the forestry work is done by Bob and Stan Revis and includes long-term planning, site preparation, establishing fire roads and food plots, herbicide application to control invasive species such as Chinese tallowtree and cogongrass, beaver control, prescribed burning, and hiring and directing tree planting crews. The property has been burned regularly about every three years, but recently, mechanical mulching has been utilized to remove brush in areas that have not been burned successfully.

Bob has opened the property not only to hunting, but also to fellow landowners to participate in prescribed burner training. He has experimented with longleaf

planting techniques and survival rates by alternately planting five rows of containerized seedlings versus bare-root seedlings on one thirty-acre parcel. His Stewardship Forest and certification in the American Tree Farm System was recognized during the 2018 Escambia County Farm tour, organized by the UF/IFAS Extension Escambia County.

Although the goal of quail hunting has yet to be achieved, the forest is home to an abundance of wildlife including deer, turkey, dove, rabbits, coyotes, raccoons, opossums, and wood ducks to name a few. Recently a deer hunting club of local families that include young boys and girls has taken on the job of planting food plots and enjoying recreational opportunities on the property.



Prescribed fire is used to enhance wildlife habitat and maintain low fuel loads. Photo by Stan Revis.



The start of a goal: planted longleaf pine seedlings. Photo by Bob Jenkins.

Bob and his wife, Carol, have been married for 35 years and they have two grown children. The whole family, including a chocolate Labrador retriever, has helped

with planting and working on the Jenkins Millview Trace.

Bob Jenkins will host a tour of Jenkins Millview Trace on

May 15, 2020. Mark your calendar and stay tuned to Florida Land Steward email updates and upcoming issues of the newsletter for details and registration.

Don't miss out on news and events!

Sign up for the regular updates! Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the email listserv. Florida Land Steward 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.

The Coyote and Deer Management Conundrum

By Arlo Kane, Private lands biologist, Landowner Assistance Program, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

If you have read any outdoor magazine in recent years, then you may be familiar with the research that has been done on coyote impacts on white-tailed deer in the Southeast. Coyotes in the Southeast are portrayed as a novel predator of white-tailed deer, even though the red wolf was here before the coyote and filled a similar niche. Some biologists have indicated that predation by coyotes is largely responsible for the decline in and/or impeding the recovery of white-tailed deer populations. However, predation is not a new problem for deer and a lot of research has been done on predation of white-tailed deer. A selective review of those studies can lead you to conclude almost any viewpoint on coyote impacts that you want to believe. One group of researchers looking for a definitive answer reviewed much of the research on predation and found 31 studies indicating that predation was a limiting factor to ungulate populations. They also found 27 studies indicating that predation was not a limiting factor to ungulate populations. So what is going on? Are coyotes a threat to deer populations or not? The answer is not as simple as hunting magazines might lead you to believe.

A study published this year looks at the effects of coyotes on white-tailed deer after coyote colonization in the eastern United States. Eugenia Bragina and colleagues from North Carolina State University looked at the history of deer populations from six eastern states from Florida to New Jersey from 1984 to 2014 and compared that to the expansion of coyotes during the same time period. A novel predator would be expected to have little impact when they first arrive and after they become more abundant, would begin to have an impact on populations or growth rates of populations. What they found might surprise some. As



Are coyotes a threat to deer populations? The answer depends on the current deer population and many other factors. Photo by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

coyote populations were increasing in the east, so were deer populations. There was no negative association with the increase in coyote colonization, but rather a simultaneous increase in deer populations. So, were all the other studies on coyote impacts to deer in the Southeast wrong? Again, remember a selective review of the literature can reinforce any viewpoint you want to take on coyotes. Look at a large number of studies and you will begin to see patterns that help make sense of the coyote conundrum.

Consider the Fawn Crop

Predation by coyotes seems to be mostly limited to fawns during their first two months of life and is greatest during the first week after birth. After that a fawn has a good chance of avoiding predation. Coyote predation on newborns can range from 10-80 percent of the yearly fawn crop. Adults are rarely predated on

by coyotes, but it does happen. Virtually all researchers seem to agree that coyotes are the most common predator of white-tailed deer, other than humans, and that predation is mostly limited to a short period of the year when there are newborn fawns available. Coyote impacts to deer populations, though, remains a subject of debate. So the real question is not whether or not coyotes are eating all my fawn crop, but rather, are coyotes controlling the population size of my herd? The obvious follow up question then becomes, can I do anything about it?

Coyote Impact Depends on the Deer Population

When do coyotes have a significant impact on deer populations and when are they simply a nuisance? When deer populations are near their carrying capacity, coyotes have little to no impact on deer populations and mortality from coyotes is compensatory. Those that died from predation would have died from some other mortality factor anyway. When deer populations are very low then predation is additive, and each death adds to the overall mortality rate. Most predation is somewhere in between, neither all compensatory nor all additive. So, if your deer population is high, then coyote control will do little to increase deer numbers. If your deer population is very low, then coyote control may allow deer population numbers to increase but only if you keep up the control.

Predation can be influenced by the availability of alternate prey items for coyotes. Much of the coyote diet is made up of small mammals and fruit. One study in the Northwest found that predation on mule deer fawns was highest when rodents, the coyotes main prey item, were scarce. Another study in the Southeast found that when persimmons



Predation by coyotes is likely limited to young fawns. Photo by Josh Wickham.

were producing abundantly, predation on fawns was lower. In Florida, one study found the fall diet of coyotes contained 77 percent persimmons and only 15 percent deer. In parts of the state where fawn drop occurs in late summer to early fall, like the far western panhandle, persimmons may be an important alternate food source that can be used to reduce predation on fawns.

Eliminate Coyotes?

One question we have not answered is can you actually eliminate coyotes from your property? The answer is probably not. Researchers removed coyotes for three years on one study site. Fawn mortality prior to removal was 80 percent. After three years of removing coyotes, fawn mortality was 79 percent. The lack of response was attributed to a quick rebound in coyote numbers. Studies in North Carolina found radio-tagged coyotes moving up to 267 miles. Other studies have found that as coyotes were removed, new coyotes immigrated in immediately to fill the open territories. About 30 to 50 percent of Southeastern coy-

otes are transients or nomads and quickly recolonize territories vacated by coyotes following removal efforts. Coyotes can easily withstand a 75 percent harvest. Combine that with their high reproductive capacity and you would theoretically need to trap over hundreds of square miles to have any impact. However, large-scale trapping has not been shown to be feasible or effective. In fact, the United States government over the last century has spent over \$1 billion dollars on predator control and the result is more coyotes living in more places than ever before.

What about Rodent Control?

Are there any negative effects to reducing coyote numbers? Yes, coyotes help control rodents and medium sized mammals like raccoons and opossums. In California, where coyotes were reduced on a study area, the result was an increase in predation on songbirds. Coyotes hunt primarily by sight and not by smell. They are not major predators of adult turkeys or quail but will occasionally destroy nests of ground

nesting birds. Raccoons and opossums, though, are major nest predators and without coyotes around their numbers increase which increases nest predation. In the 1940s, the citizens of Klamath County, Oregon decided to rid the county of coyotes. After a few years, they had killed more than ten thousand coyotes. The population of field mice in the absence of coyotes exploded. It was estimated that at one time there were over 10,000 field mice per acre. The monetary loss from crop destruction was in the millions of dollars. The cost of exterminating the mice was high also. In the end, the citizens reintroduced coyotes into their farmlands. This was a valuable lesson on understanding the balance of nature and the effect of unintended consequences.

Focus on the Deer Population

What is the best way to reduce the effects of coyotes on your deer herd? The first response to low deer populations should always be to reduce doe harvests. Mortality to mature female deer has more impact on the herd size than impacts to the fawn crop in the long term. Only consider coyote removal efforts when you know the population is well below carrying capacity, you can intensively trap for an extended period of time, you limit trapping to the fawn drop period, keep trapping to a local area, and are willing to spend a lot of money. Estimated cost of removal efforts can run \$200/coyote. Most people don't have the time or money it takes to keep coyote numbers down.

To learn more about managing wildlife on your property, check out our habitat how-to section at the FWC's Landowner Assistance Program by going to MyFWC.com/LAP. If you need technical assistance you can also contact the LAP regional biologist at the nearest FWC Regional Office.

TIMBER PRICE UPDATE

The timber price 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.

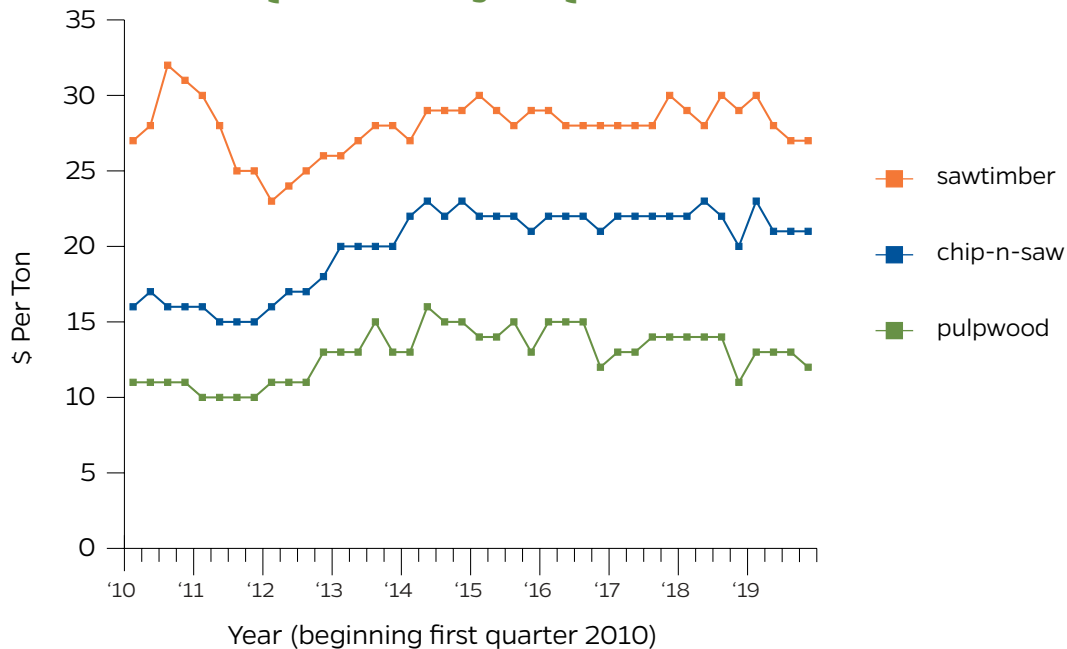
Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **4th Quarter 2019** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$12/ton, down slightly from 3 rd Qtr. 2019
Pine C-N-S:	\$21/ton, same
Pine sawtimber:	\$27/ton, same

Trend Report

The trend in stumpage prices was again relatively flat in Florida and the Southeastern region, with prices in each product class changing only 1% or less in either direction. Market conditions were mixed in the 4th quarter of 2019. Wood pulp prices remain low but U.S. building construction gained modest increases in housing starts. Diesel prices were down slightly and natural gas prices were down 13%. Lumber exports were down 25% from the same period in 2018. Financial markets were up overall and the dollar remained strong. Hurricane Michael recovery continues in the timber basket of the state. As of this writing the USDA and FDACS are still hammering out how the \$380 million in block grants for disaster recovery will be distributed. We will share information on that and other news as it is available in Florida Land Steward email updates. Send an email to 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)
1st Qtr 2010 through 4th 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

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.



Cindi and David (not pictured) Stewart, Jackson County



Eddie Slay (R) with Cathy Hardin, Escambia County



Jim Strickland (center) with Brian Jones (L) and Ricky Douglas (R), Manatee County



Lane Greene, Leon County



Sandra Neal, Santa Rosa County



Palmer Simmons (R) with Joe Sage, Highlands County



Robert and Melissa Carreiro, Holmes County



Steve and Susan Roeser, Holmes County

Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Feb 23-25	Southeastern Society of American Foresters Annual Meeting: Recovering From the Storm: Where We Have Been, and Where We Are Going , Edgewater Resort, Panama City Beach, FL. Will provide information to help us through future catastrophic forest losses, including floods, fire, and insect and disease outbreaks. Approved for 8.0 SAF CFEs. <i>Details and registration at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-sesaf-symposium-recovering-from-the-storm-tickets-74528339269?aff=ebdssbdestsearch</i>
Feb 25	Northwest Florida Ecotourism Summit , 8 am CT, 4750 Collegiate Dr, Panama City, FL, 32405. This will bring together industry leaders, educators, students, potential new businesses, and eco-friendly enthusiasts to enhance our ecotourism communities in the Florida Panhandle. See https://explore-northwest-florida.yapsody.com/event/index/483466?ref=ebtn for details and registration
Feb 26	Forest Health Updates , 8:00 am to 3:30 pm CT, West Florida Research and Education Center 5988 U.S. 90 Milton, FL 32583. Topics include proactive invasive plant management and new technology, hurricanes and bark and ambrosia beetles, forest management post-disturbance, invasive insect and fungi, and more. \$20 fee, lunch included. SAF and ISA CEUs approved. Register online, https://www.eventbrite.com/e/forest-health-updates-tickets-86734710855
Feb 27	5th Annual Florida Agricultural Policy Outlook Conference , 9:00 am to 4:30 pm ET, UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center, 700 Experiment Station Road, Lake Alfred, FL 33850. Join us to examine critical policy issues facing Florida agribusiness leaders and explore valuable economic insight helpful for making informed business and policy decisions. \$50 fee. See https://www.eventbrite.com/e/5th-annual-florida-agricultural-policy-outlook-conference-2020-tickets-88881086723 for details and registration.
March 11	Best Management Practices for Forestry in Florida , 10:00 am to 3:00 pm ET, St. Johns River Water Management District Office, 4049 Reid Street, Palatka, FL 32177. Provided by Florida Forest Service. Forest landowners and land managers are invited to learn about Florida's Silviculture BMPs for water quality and the Forestry Wildlife BMPs for State Imperiled Species. Free, BYO lunch. <i>Must pre-register by March 9th. Call or email Robin Holland, Florida Forest Service, (352) 732-1781, Robin.Holland@FDACS.gov. Approved for 4.0 SAF CAT-1 CFE's. More about BMPs at https://www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/Silviculture-Best-Management-Practices</i>
March 23-26	Prescribed Fire for Wildlife Training , Everglades Youth Conservation Camp, 12100 Seminole Pratt Whitney Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33412. Provided by South Florida Water Management District, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, FL Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management. <i>Basic registration \$175. For additional information about this class please contact Jim Schortemeyer 239-455-5847, Schortfire@aol.com</i>
May 15	Florida Land Steward Tour at Jenkins Millview Trace in Escambia County, property of Robert Jenkins: Florida Land Steward of 2020 , 9 am to 2 pm, Jenkins Millview Trace. Topics include longleaf pine forest restoration and management, prescribed fire, wildlife habitat, forestry in the wildland-urban interface, invasive species control and more. Mark your calendar. <i>Details and registration to be posted soon in Florida Land Steward email updates. Contact cdemers@ufl.edu for details</i>

More events and information are posted at 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.

Chris Demers (editor)
 UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources & Conservation
 (352) 846-2375 • cdemers@ufl.edu

Dr. Michael Andreu (co-editor)
 UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources & Conservation
 (352) 846-0355 • mandreu@ufl.edu

Tony Grossman (co-editor)
 Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
 (850) 410-5268
Anthony.Grossman@myfwc.com

Joseph Prenger (co-editor)
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program
 (904) 731-3096 • Joseph_Prenger@fws.gov

John Nash (co-editor)
 Florida Tree Farmer
osceolapines@gmail.com

Jen Tucker-Jenks (co-editor)
 Florida Forest Service
 (850) 681-5874
Jennifer.Tucker-Jenks@FreshFromFlorida.com