

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Congratulations Bill Black and Denise Matthews, 2022 Florida Land Stewards of the Year!

By Chris Demers, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences

Bill Black and Denise Matthews purchased their 80-acre Sparkleberry Farm property in November 2010. Their goal was to transform the neglected stands of pine, cypress, and hardwoods into a more productive and sustainable condition for timber production, recreation, and native flora and fauna. To accomplish this they have, and continue to use forestry practices that enhance the native, fire-dependent ecosystem, including the use of mechanical understory reduction, prescribed fire, control of invasive species, and restoration planting of longleaf pine and wiregrass in forest openings. Hardwood swamps on the property are retained and protected above and beyond the standards of silviculture Best Management Practices, and slash pines are retained around the swamp margins, providing

some fuel to carry fire into those areas. Where safe to do so, lightning-killed pines are retained for woodpeckers as a food source and nesting.

Bill and Denise also appreciate and research the history of the area and the property. In early 1900s the property was owned by the Earle family, who leased the property for turpentine production and logging. The property was never farmed so many pieces of the pine resin-collecting Herty pots have been found on the property.

They worked with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to develop a Forest Stewardship Management Plan, and cost-share programs of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Bill Black and Denise Matthews at their Sparkleberry Farm property in Alachua County. Photo by Bill Black.



(R) Orange-fringed orchids (*Platanthera ciliaris*), photo by Bill Black. (L) Pitcher plants thrive in wet areas where fire is allowed to creep in from adjacent uplands. Photo by Chris Demers.

(NRCS) have helped to defray the cost of several management practices on the property. They work with Jowett & Wood Consultants to conduct forest inventories, thinning, and harvesting operations in the timber stands. FFS fire teams have also been used to conduct prescribed burns, and the FWC's Landowner Assistance Program (LAP) has provided habitat improvement assistance and support. The property is certified in

the American Tree Farm System and Forest Stewardship Program.

As a result of their regular use of prescribed fire, they are noting an increased abundance of unique and rare plants such as orange-fringed orchids (*Platanthera ciliaris*) as well as wire-grass and species of pitcher plants in the wetter areas. Many game and non-game wildlife species are seen on the property. Retained dead trees (snags)

have provided food and nesting for numerous pileated woodpeckers.

Engagement with conservation and environmental organizations and programs is an important part of earning recognition as an exemplary Land Steward. For the last 4 years, Bill has participated in the Audubon Society's Christmas bird count. Thirty-three species and a total of 324 individual birds were logged in the 2021 count.



Forest Stewardship Tour at Sparkleberry Farm in October 2015. Photo by Chris Demers.

He has also supervised several University of Florida undergraduate forestry students in hardwood and invasive species control, longleaf pine and wiregrass seedling planting, fence building, gopher tortoise burrow locating, and property maintenance. Two of the students received training in operating a compact track-loader with a brushcutter.

Bill has also been a land steward ambassador to the public and fellow landowners. In 2015 he hosted a Forest Stewardship Tour at Sparkleberry Farm where he effectively communicated his stewardship journey, the management practices he has used, challenges experienced along the way and how he addressed them, and sources of assistance. He maintains regular communications with forestry and natural resource partners and continues to encourage University of Florida researchers and students to

visit the property to observe and record rare plants.

After continuous, active management with prescribed fire and other land management practices, Sparkleberry Farm is now home to abundant wildlife; including gopher tortoises, deer, turkey, and quail; longleaf pine, naturally regenerated slash and loblolly pine stands, hardwood swamps, and a rich groundcover of unique and rare plants. Bill and Denise look forward to continuing their stewardship journey



Bill Black showing the diverse groundcover they have achieved at 2015 Forest Stewardship Tour at Sparkleberry Farm. Photos by Chris Demers.

at Sparkleberry Farm and beyond by encouraging research and education, and taking opportunities to promote land stewardship to fellow landowners and the public.

Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2021 Tax Year

To help you understand the forestry specific tax provisions and how the general tax rules apply to your forestry activities, the Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2021 Tax Year are provided by the USDA Forest Service and extension specialists at this link:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs_media/fs_document/Landowner-2021-Tax-Tips.pdf

Don't miss out on news and events!

Sign up for the regular Florida Land Steward email updates! Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the listserv. Email updates are sent once a week or every other week and include the latest calendar of workshops, tours, webinars, 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.

All the latest news and events are online at the new UF/IFAS Florida Land Steward Program web site: <https://programs.ifas.ufl.edu/florida-land-steward/>

Forest Carbon: Who's who in the Forest Carbon Market, Part 2

By Natalia Medina-Irizarry and Dr. Michael Andreu, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences

In Forest Carbon: A Potential Source of Income for Forest Owners, Part 1 (in Florida Land Steward issue 10.3 and online at <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/ffgs/2021/09/08/forest-carbon-a-potential-source-of-income-for-forest-owners-part-1/>) we introduced the inner workings of the forest carbon market and briefly defined terminology/jargon such as: carbon trading, carbon projects, carbon credits, and the foundational principles. Project developers, registries, standards, and methodologies were also introduced in Part 1 and will be discussed in more detail in this article (Part 2). Briefly, project developers help the landowner develop carbon projects, arrange property assessments, and initiate interactions with registries and verifying bodies. While registries, standards,

and methodologies offer the regulatory structure required to ensure the credibility of carbon offsets.

Project Developers

Carbon project developers offer carbon programs that streamline the process of carbon project development, registration, and management for the landowner. Landowners will find that the majority of their interactions throughout the lifecycle of a carbon project will be with their project developer. The services offered by project developers, costs, surveying techniques, eligible standards, and methodologies vary for each program. Therefore, landowners should be aware of these differences before making decisions. For instance, some project developers

will take on projects at no cost to the landowner. However, their efforts are later compensated through commission from carbon credits developed and sold.

Project developers may be independent organizations or individuals with an expertise or specialization in offset project development. Table 1 compares project developers that can help landowners develop a forest-based carbon project. Note that the Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP) cannot currently support projects in Florida and are expected to expand into the Southeast in the future. Also, Finite Carbon is rolling out their CORE Carbon program regionally in 2022, beginning with the Southeast.

Table 1*: Comparison of project developers and the carbon project programs they offer. Some of the information in this table requires contacting the organization directly.

Project Developer	Eligible Locations	Property Size Minimum	Fees	Term Length	Carbon Standard	Property Assessment Method	Payment Reoccurrence
Natural Capital Exchange	Contiguous U.S.	None	None	1 year	VCS (currently seeking approval)	Remote sensing	Yearly
Family Forest Carbon Program By AFF & TNC	Specific counties in Pennsylvania ¹	30 acres	None	10-20 years	VCS	Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) comparison	Yearly
CORE Carbon by FiniteCarbon ²	All U.S. states ²	40 acres	None	40 years	ACR	Remote sensing	Twice a year
Forest Carbon Works	Contiguous U.S. and southern parts of AK	40 acres	\$75 application fee	40 years	ACR	Historical aerial photography; FCW Forest Technician	Yearly
3GreenTree	No geographical restrictions, depends on forest type	None	Project is fully funded by landowners ³	20-40 years	VCS or ACR	Remote sensing and field plots	Yearly

*Special thanks to Calvin Norman from Pennsylvania State University and Chris Demers from the University of Florida for their input on the table provided.

¹Future opportunities in the Southeast

²Rolling out regionally in 2022 beginning with the Southeast, followed by New England and the Lake states. Between the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023 the program is expected to rollout in the Midwest and Southwest.

³Costs to the landowner/s range from \$60,000-\$80,000

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Third-Party Verifiers vs. Registries

To ensure accountability, carbon projects must be verified by a *third-party verifier* and registered for tracking purposes. These verifiers are referred to as third-party certifying bodies or third-party verification bodies. Third-party verifiers offer validation, verification, and certification of carbon projects against the standard the project is enrolled under.

Registries are the system where the reporting of credits generated, credit ownership, credit sales, and credit retirement are documented and tracked. Such tracking of carbon projects is required for those who intend to participate in the voluntary and compliance markets because it safeguards carbon credits from being double counted, guaranteeing their credibility. In essence, the registries serve as the library or database that stores every project and transaction that takes place.

The terms 'third-party verifier' and 'registry' are frequently used interchangeably. Although they serve different functions within the carbon offset industry, the terms overlap in reference because third-party verifiers often have their own registry. For instance, the most recognized third-party verifiers in the U.S. include the American Carbon Registry (<https://americancarbonregistry.org/>) and Verra (<https://verra.org/>), and their respective registries are the American Carbon Registry (<https://americancarbonregistry.org/how-it-works/registry-reports>) and Verra Registry (<https://registry.verra.org/>).

Validation and Verification Bodies (VVB's)

Carbon projects must be independently assessed to ensure project activities occur and the project performs as predicted. These independent assessments are carried out by *Validation and Verification Bodies (VVB's)*. VVB's are independent companies, often environmental consulting firms, that have been approved and accredited by third-party verifiers to execute the validation and verification of carbon projects. Verification activities differ between project types, but generally involve ongoing monitoring, assessment, and auditing until the project ends.

Carbon Standards

Similar to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standards, *carbon standards* are developed for the purpose of providing rules and measurement criteria for carbon projects. Additionally, standards define what project success is and terms by which carbon credits must be quantified, monitored, reported, verified, registered, and issued.

Be attentive to the differences between carbon standards as individual components and terminology can vary- slightly complicating the decision-making process. Some of the most recognized standards in the U.S. include the American Carbon Registry (ACR) standards, Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) by Verra, and Gold Standard. All three standards may generate carbon credits for both the voluntary and compliance market; keep in mind not all standards do so.

Methodologies (AKA: Protocols)

Methodologies, also known as *protocols*, are the frameworks prescribed to carbon projects that define the greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting rules and parameters that are required to generate carbon offsets. These rules and parameters are used to determine the eligibility, additionality, and baseline or business-as-usual (BAU) scenario of a carbon project. The most recognized methodologies are established by third-party verifiers for each carbon standard. However, project developers may develop their own methodologies, especially if available methodologies do not suit a particular project. New methodology proposals must be submitted to the carbon project's corresponding third-party verifier for approval.

Existing forestry methodologies include Improved Forest Management (IFM), Afforestation/ Reforestation, Avoided Ecosystem Conversion, and Avoided Forest Degradation. Both ACR and VCS have several versions of such methodologies pre-approved. The United Nations Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the Climate Action Reserve (CAR) are also widely recognized for their development of methodologies for forest-based carbon projects. ACR accepts methodologies developed by the CDM, while VCS accepts methodologies developed by both the CDM and CAR.

We realize this topic can be confusing and we hope this helps to clarify some of the terminology you encounter. As the forest carbon market continues to evolve and expand, we look forward to releasing additional educational resources.

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.

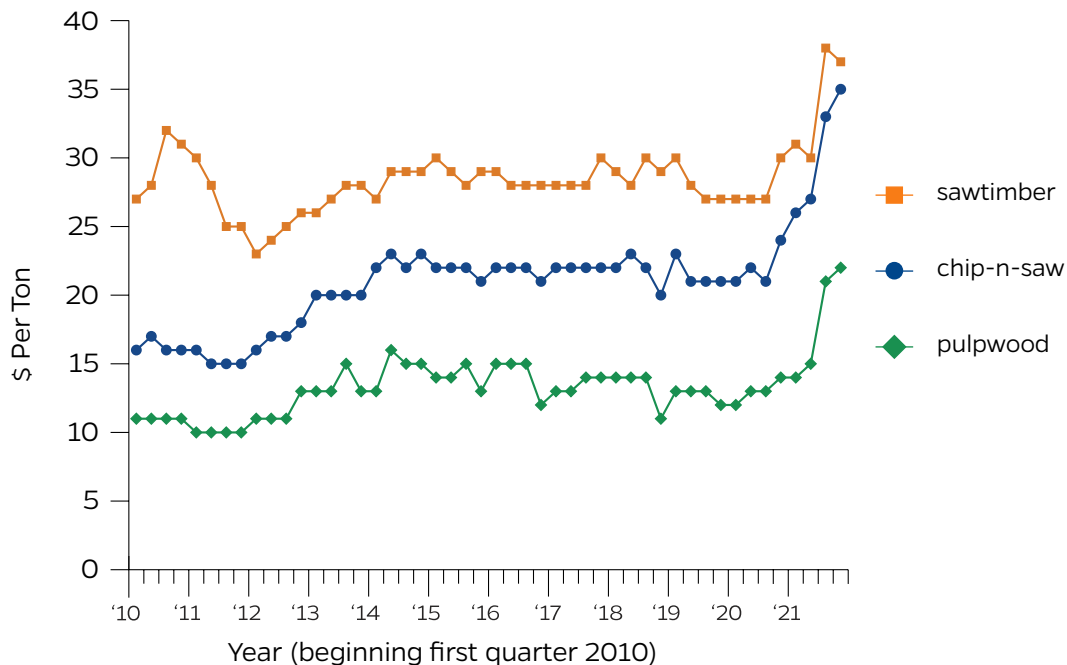
Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **4th Quarter 2021** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$22/ton, ↑ slightly from 3 rd Qtr. 2021
Pine C-N-S:	\$35/ton, ↑
Pine sawtimber:	\$37/ton, ↓ slightly

Trend Report

Average pine stumpage prices in Florida continued to rally in the last quarter of 2021. Steady demand and constrained wood supplies caused by wet conditions in many areas have sustained some of the highest pine stumpage prices we have seen in a long time. Building construction and other indicators of wood product markets have continued to hold strong. After a 50% decline in the 3rd quarter 2021, retail lumber prices rebounded with a 75% increase in the 4th quarter. While lumber demand will more directly drive retail prices, wood availability and stumpage prices will likely be at the mercy of the weather.

Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida (\$/Ton)
1st Qtr 2010 through 4th Qtr 2021



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, and/or Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program and demonstrate excellent stewardship of their land resources.



Dick Shaw, Gadsden County



Russell Kelly and Merle Langston,
Santa Rosa County



Josh Gamblin and Keenan Baldwin
with Joe Sage (R), Desoto County



Ricky Ferrel, Gene Paul, and David
Emry with Joe Sage (2nd from L),
Desoto County



Sharon Wombles, Santa Rosa County

Upcoming Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Feb. 15	Woodland Stewards Forestry Taxes Webinar: Coping with Losses from Nature and Chance. 1:00 pm ET. Join this webinar for insights into best ways to cope with timber losses from nature and chance. <i>For details and registration see https://forestrywebinars.net/webinars/coping-with-losses-from-nature-and-chance-1</i>
Feb. 21-24	2022 Central Panhandle Pesticide Applicator Training Series. The Central Panhandle Pesticide Applicator Training Series is a multi-county collaboration between Holmes, Washington, Calhoun and Jackson County Extension agents. The 2022 series is scheduled for February 21-24th and will take place this year in Blountstown. at Rivertown Community Church (19359 SR 71, Blountstown, FL 32424). <i>Registration starts at 7:45 am CST each session and is \$15/session. See https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-central-panhandle-pesticide-training-tickets-24676468827 for details and registration.</i>
March 1	Florida Timber Tax Virtual Workshop. 2:00 to 4:00 pm ET. Hosted by the UF/IFAS Florida Land Steward Program, this workshop will provide basic information about timber taxation and the latest changes to tax laws and rules for 2021 tax return preparations. Topics will focus on federal timber income tax issues for private forest owners. Presented by Dr. Tamara Cushing, Assistant Professor and Forest Business Extension Specialist, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences. <i>See https://ufl.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1JcguOIR1-8-WHW_FR4yw to register.</i>
March 11	Florida Tree Farm Program Tour at Wetland Preserve LLC, property of Ben and Louann Williams, Putnam County. 9:00 am to 2:00 pm ET. Join us for another immersion experience in “Conservation Compatible Forestry”. This is the fitting theme of Ben and Louann Williams’ Wetland Preserve, LLC. For their land management, conservation, and outreach efforts, they were recognized as the Jon Gould Florida Outstanding Tree Farmers in 2021. <i>Join us for a tour of the property and meet these amazing landowners. \$10/person fee covers lunch and materials. For details and registration see https://fls-tour031122.eventbrite.com</i>
March 31	Environmental Lands Management Workshop. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm ET at UF/IFAS Range Cattle Research and Education Center, 3401 Experiment Station Rd., Ona, FL 33865. Provided by the UF/IFAS Beef Forage Program. This program is for property managers who currently have grazing leases or would like to learn more about the benefits of grazing leases. Other topics will include managing pasture nutrients, invasive plant management, wild hog management, and more. \$50 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>For more information contact Laura H. Bennett, laurahbennett@ufl.edu, (352) 518-0156, option 6. For details and registration, see https://www.eventbrite.com/e/environmental-lands-management-tickets-241175110247.</i>

More events, news, and information can be found at programs.ifas.ufl.edu/florida-land-steward

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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