

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

FALL/WINTER 2022 - VOLUME 11, NO. 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Alachua County Trust Awarded Funding by USDA for a Forest to Gulf Regional Conservation Partnership Program	3
Half a Century since the Clean Water Act Amendments: The Success Story of Forestry Best Management Practices in the Southeast	4
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Eastern Population of Gopher Tortoise does not require Federal Protection	5
Timber Price Update	6
Certified Landowners	7

2022 Jon Gould Florida Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year: Albert Fuller

By Joe MacKenzie, Florida Forest Service, Ginger Feagle, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and John Nash, Florida Tree Farm Program

The Florida Tree Farm Program is proud to congratulate Mr. Albert Fuller of Levy County as Florida's 2022 Jon Gould Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. Mr. Fuller was selected for this award among other certified Tree Farm nominations in Florida, for implementing forest stewardship practices that protect and improve our forest resources and in recognition of his exceptional efforts to promote forest stewardship within his community.

Mr. Fuller is a man of many talents; however, his greatest joy is time spent on his 75-acre property of which 60 of its acres are certified as a Tree Farm. Mr. Fuller's

farm includes planted pines and natural stands of pines and hardwoods, as well as livestock, sugar cane, and other crops.

As a part of his forest management plan, Mr. Fuller manages his property with balanced objectives that include timber production, recreation, wildlife, water resources, and a desire to leave a long-term impact on his community. For example, longleaf pine on the property has been regenerated both naturally and with hand and machine planting. He sustainably harvests his forest for firewood and conducts periodic prescribed burning.

Continued on next page



Funding for this publication is provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Florida Forest Service and a grant from the Florida Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee.

An Equal Opportunity Institution.



Mr. Albert Fuller with Levy County Forester, Joe MacKenzie.



Albert Fuller in a young planted stand of longleaf pine. Photo by Joe MacKenzie, Florida Forest Service.

Vegetation management is accomplished through the use of prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, and to a lesser extent, herbicides when appropriate. In certain areas of his tract, Mr. Fuller manages for timber and goat production simultaneously though agroforestry practices which prevent the buildup of understory fuels.

Mr. Fuller's interest in trees and agriculture are rooted in his youth as a member of the New Farmers of America, a vocational agriculture program for African-American men, in the early to mid-1960's. Inspiration also came from his grandfather and great-grandfather, who both owned considerable acreage in Levy County, and helped develop his appreciation for land conservation. Mr. Fuller spent a 42-year career working in agriculture with 38 of those years with various programs of the University of Florida IFAS Extension Service.

Since his retirement from UF/IFAS, Mr. Fuller volunteers his time to deliver educational presentations to mainly minority landowners in Levy, Dixie, and Alachua Counties. His programs focus on building awareness of income-generating opportunities, and available landowner assistance programs provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Florida Forest Service. He

also promotes the use of various forest management techniques to reach multiple objectives. "Investment in land is one of the safest investments that can be had" and "it only produces attractive returns if you do something with it", says Fuller. With this realization, Mr. Fuller actively inspires and educates other forest landowners to manage their property and achieve returns that they may have not thought were possible.

Mr. Fuller is an active volunteer in his community and strives to make an impact with agricultural and forestry outreach. Locally, he shares his expertise to advise a minority farmer cooperative near Montechoa (Alachua County); guides access to cost-share assistance and forest management markets to small female-owned farms (Alachua, Marion, Levy Counties); leads a Community Garden; chairs the City of Otter Creek Planning and Zoning Council; and serves on the board of the Levy County Fair. Internationally, he is involved with leading community development and youth programs in 25 countries, including establishing a 4S (based on 4H) youth organization in Curacao (Netherlands Antilles).

Mr. Fuller is also personally involved with the City of Williston Citizens' Task Force; Community Resource Organization; political candidate forums; the Community

Mental Health Organization; Friends of Cornelius Williams Park; Church Events; a food bank that demonstrated raised bed gardening at 30 food distribution sites in multiple counties; and an elementary school program that facilitates teaching youth how to make positive life skill decisions.

Mr. Fuller is proud that his property serves as home to day-camp programs that introduce basic forest ecology, outdoor skills, and archery to youth along with hosting special programs that instruct women and youth on firearm and ATV safety. Mr. Fuller feels strongly that his property shall continue to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, environmental education programs, remain in his family, and be productively managed.

Across Florida, family forest owners like Mr. Fuller are active in their community and care for the largest portion, more than half, of Florida's forests. Forest landowner efforts are crucial to the sustainability of our country's forest resources that provide benefits such as clean water and air, wildlife habitat, carbon storage and a wood supply for the over 5,000 forest products Americans use every day. All from a natural resource that is solar powered, biodegradable, renewable, recyclable, and beautiful.

Alachua County Trust Awarded Funding by USDA for a Forest to Gulf Regional Conservation Partnership Program

By Heather Obara, Associate Director, Alachua County Trust

Opportunities are in the works for private landowners in North Central Florida to receive land management assistance and participate in conservation projects. The Alachua Conservation Trust's (ACT) Forest to Gulf Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) has been awarded \$7.85 million to expand conservation programs in North Central Florida.

The RCPP is administered through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and will expand Farm Bill conservation by leveraging the resources of public-private partnerships. ACT's Forest to Gulf RCPP project area encompasses parts of Marion, Alachua, Levy, Putnam, Sumter Citrus, and Hernando counties. This region is home to large rural and natural landscapes of longleaf pine forests, critical wildlife habitat, farms, timberlands, wetlands, floodplains associated with the Suwannee and Withlacoochee Rivers, as well as one of the State's largest estuaries along the Nature Coast.

ACT will lead the Forest to Gulf partnership, which includes state and federal agencies, local government, other nonprofit organizations, and private stakeholder groups. Notably, this award



The Forest to Gulf RCPP will provide funding to conserve and protect important resources from the forests to the estuaries of the Gulf coast of north Florida.

will compliment other local and state land protection programs, including Alachua County Forever, Florida Forever, and the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program. In addition, it will expand funding for private lands management, with an emphasis on prescribed burning and forest management practices to improve wildlife habitat.

As development increases in the region, natural and rural landscapes are increasingly important for wildlife habitat and estuary protection. The Forest to Gulf RCPP award is made possible with partner contributions that will provide funding for conservation easements, conservation lands acquisition, and pri-

vate land management practices. In addition, the program will offer expanded opportunities for education, research, and outreach to historically underserved landowners.

The Forest to Gulf RCPP will extend through 2026. In addition to NRCS, there are several contributing partners that will help make this project possible, including Alachua County, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Forest Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Stetson University, University of Florida, Wildlands Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Federation, Putnam Land Conservancy, North Florida Prescribed Burn Association, Equine Land Conservation Resource, and the Cultural Arts Coalition.

For more information about the Forest to Gulf RCPP, contact the Alachua Conservation Trust at (352) 373-1078, info@alachuaconservationtrust.org.

As always, we will announce specific opportunities associated with this and other regional projects in the regular Florida Land Steward email updates. Contact cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to that service.



Half a Century since the Clean Water Act Amendments: The Success Story of Forestry Best Management Practices in the Southeast

By the Southern Group of State Foresters

Since its inception in 1972, the Clean Water Act has provided protection to waterbodies and has enabled the restoration of degraded waters to meet the needs of human use and ecological sustainability. The legacy of the Clean Water Act is often recalled as one of permitting, rules and limits on pollution discharges. However, one often overlooked aspect of the law's benefits is the largely non-regulatory approach it takes to managing pollutants that may impact waterbodies from agricultural and forestry practices. This approach, known as nonpoint source (NPS) pollution management, is accomplished collaboratively through the application and monitoring of developed Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Since the state forestry agencies began monitoring implementation of BMPs around 2007, the implementation of voluntary BMPs consistently falls in the upper 80 to 90 percentiles across the South, in most instances. There is room for improvement for certain practices, but the expectation and adoption of BMPs is now incorporated as standard practice. States continue work in the development, refinement, training and monitoring of forestry BMPs. Most states have updated their forestry BMPs multiple times to

keep up with changes in regulations, technology, science and socio-cultural expectations. As new loggers and forestry practitioners enter the workforce, there continues to be a need to train them. In addition, a new generation of forest owners is emerging and they will likely have different expectations and goals than their predecessors, and it will be important to educate these future forest owners on how BMPs can accomplish environmental goals while still incorporating the forest resource production needs of society.

The Clean Water Act redefined the nation's expectations and recalibrated our awareness of the importance of keeping our waters clean. Forestry non-point source pollution management has successfully delivered results in a cooperative approach between federal, state, and private-sector constituents through the creation, development, delivery and monitoring of forestry Best Management Practices.



Cypress trees on the Santa Fe River, UF/IFAS Photo by Tyler Jones.

To see the full post by the Southern Group of State Foresters, see <https://tinyurl.com/2n47uw9s>

Don't miss out on news and events!

A LOT happens between quarterly issues of this newsletter!

Sign up for the regular Florida Land Steward email updates so you don't miss out on assistance and educational opportunities. 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/>.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Eastern Population of Gopher Tortoise does not require Federal Protection

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

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently announced its findings that increased protections for the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) under the Endangered Species Act are not warranted. The USFWS found that populations of gopher tortoises east of Alabama's Tombigbee and Mobile rivers are sufficiently "robust" and are no longer candidates for federally protected status. The species in the western segment of its range in western Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana will retain its threatened status.

The findings were based on a survey of gopher tortoise populations on public and private lands over the last several years. An estimated 149,000 reported gopher tortoise individuals are distributed across their range with most found in the eastern segment. Only 8 percent reside in the western segment.

The robust status of the gopher tortoise's eastern populations is likely due to the success of collaborative conservation and habitat restoration efforts between private landowners and agency



The gopher tortoise is a keystone species of upland forest habitats of the Southeastern U.S. Photo by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. UF/IFAS Photo by Tyler Jones.

partners such as USFWS, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Defense, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, state forestry and wildlife agencies, and other partners. The gopher

tortoise is a keystone species of the longleaf pine ecosystem of the Southeastern U.S. It is reported that hundreds of other species of animals feed, shelter, and nest in gopher tortoise burrows.

Women's Outdoor Group Starting up in 2023

Ladies!! Are you ready to connect with each other to learn about land ownership, management, and outdoor education from a woman's perspective? Come join us as we enjoy sharing and learning together! Please contact Allison Nash, Nash.allison@gmail.com, (941) 725-1640 or Ginger Feagle, ginger.feagle@myfwc.com, (386) 586-8249 to learn more about this new ladies' group. Our first event will take place in January! Details will be posted in Florida Land Steward email updates.

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.

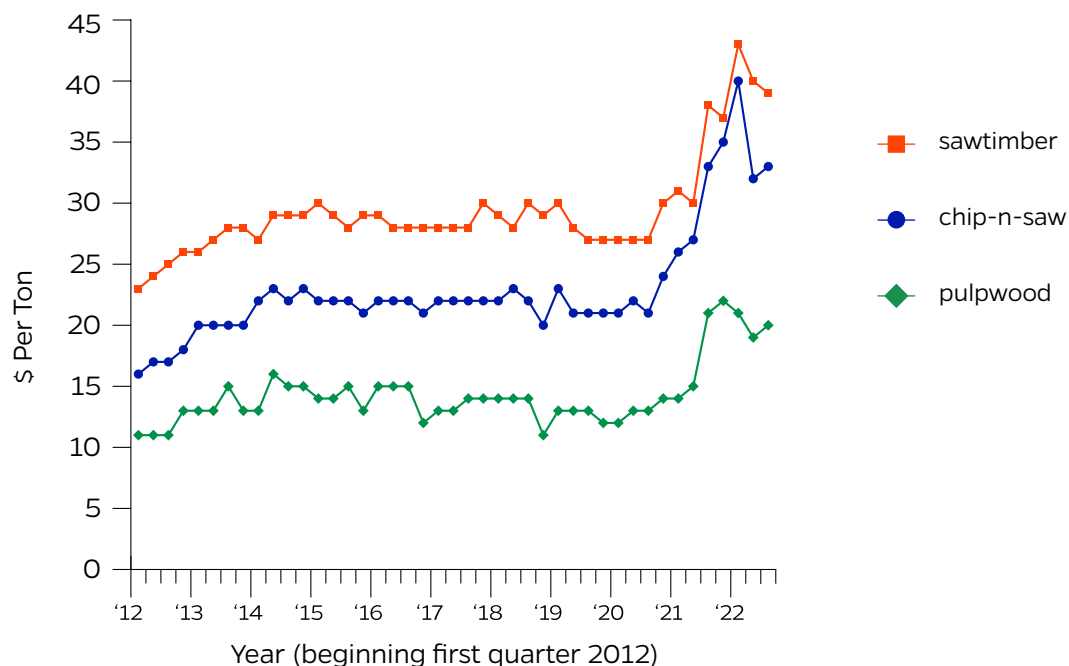
Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **3rd Quarter 2022** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$20/ton, ↑ from 2 nd Qtr. 2022
Pine C-N-S:	\$33/ton, ↑
Pine sawtimber:	\$39/ton, ↓

Trend Report

Average pine stumpage prices decreased across much of the Southeast region this quarter. Average price changes from last quarter were mixed in Florida but didn't shift much in either direction. Overall the trends were in line with seasonal norms. Winter supply constraints have been largely alleviated over much of the reporting area. As was the case last quarter, markets for pulp producers held steady while those for solid wood products weakened a little. Residential building construction, a driver of solid wood markets, continues to hold strong. Drier weather over the last few months has boosted access to wood, but has also increased wildfire risk in some areas, especially in the central and western Florida Panhandle.

Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida (\$/Ton)
1st Qtr 2012 through 3rd Qtr 2022



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/Forest-Wildfire/For-Landowners/Programs-for-Landowners/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 Programs and demonstrate excellent stewardship of their land resources.



Floyd Vanzant, Nassau County



Chris Moemke and Eric Malnove with FWC Biologist Jason Ballard (R) and consultant Bill Korn (L), Putnam County



Midge and Frank Mercer, Madison County



Steve and Betty Updegraff with FWC Biologist Joe Vaughn (L), Levy County



Kathleen and Gary Barber with FWC Biologist Ginger Feagle (right of center) and Nick Byatt (L), Baker County



Kenny Carman, Volusia County

Upcoming Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Dec. 8	Tour at the Property of Albert Fuller, 2022 Jon Gould Florida Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year, Levy County. 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET. Provided by Florida Tree Farm and UF/IFAS Florida Land Steward Programs. Join us to meet Albert Fuller, see his property, and learn about multiple-use forest stewardship. Topics will include agroforestry, livestock grazing, wildlife management, longleaf pine regeneration, prescribed burning, and more. This will be a walking tour of reasonable length. \$10 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>Details and registration at https://otfy-tour120822.eventbrite.com</i>
Dec. 16	Central Florida Prescribed Council Hybrid Annual Meeting. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Osceola Heritage Park in Kissimmee, FL. Rescheduled to December 16 due to Hurricane Ian impacts. Co-hosted with Southern Fire Exchange. This year the Central Florida Prescribed Fire Council will offer a hybrid meeting format held in person at the Osceola Heritage Park and virtually on Zoom to accommodate folks who prefer to join virtually. <i>See link above for details and registration.</i>
Jan. 28, 2023	2023 Flatwoods Fire and Nature Festival. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET, Austin Cary Forest Campus near Gainesville, FL. Join us for a celebration of Florida's forests and the role of fire in maintaining and enhancing their beauty, diversity, and habitat value. Fun for the whole family. Activities include educational exhibits and activities, live animals, prescribed burn demonstrations, a visit from Burner Bob the bobwhite quail, food vendors, live music, and more! No dogs allowed, only service animals. <i>See the event Facebook page for information and to express interest: https://tinyurl.com/yxyc98su</i>

More events, webinar recordings, 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:

Chris Demers (editor)
 UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences
 (352) 846-2375 • cdemers@ufl.edu

Chad Allison (co-editor)
 US Fish and Wildlife Service
 (904) 731-3096 • chad_allison@fws.gov

Dr. Michael Andreu (co-editor)
 UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences
 (352) 846-0355 • mandreu@ufl.edu

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

Will Liner (co-editor)
 Florida Forest Service
 (850) 545-6194 • William.Liner@FDACS.gov

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