

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

SUMMER/FALL 2024 - VOLUME 13, NO. 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Conservation Easements Save Ag Lands and Wildlife	3
Meet the Panhandle Extension Forester - Ian Stone, R.F.	4
Remembering Bob Simons	5
Timber Price Update	6
Certified Landowners	7

A New Tool Helps to Prioritize Invasive Species Management Efforts

By Deb Stone, Invasive Species Extension Coordinator; and Dr. Michael Andreu, Associate Professor, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences

Balancing the increasing costs of invasive species management with limited budgets demands a strategic approach and clear priorities to make sure we're achieving our goals for our property and making our ecosystems more resilient. Even though it might take a bit of time, it's critical for making the most of our limited resources and being able to adjust our plans as we go along.

Dealing with limited resources often leads to implicit prioritization, where seemingly ad hoc decisions become the norm. But using a more structured approach has many advantages, such as improved natural resource protection, clearer decision-making processes, and wiser resource utilization. Including a geographic feature to this approach enhances its effectiveness further, allowing for the categorization of species based on habitat or size groups. Visualizing data on maps is more engaging and useful than just looking at lists, but also aids in logistical planning for day-to-day operations.

Thinking of the bigger picture, leveraging spatial data platforms like EDDMapS enable us to take a multi-scale approach to invasive species management, which is crucial for success. Invasive species know no boundaries, so we must work together to address them at a larger scale. However, most of us have to work primarily within smaller spaces delineated by property boundaries.

The Spatial Invasive Infestation and Priority Analysis (SIIPA) Tool

We offer a convenient, web-based solution for this challenge. Known as the **Spatial Invasive Infestation and Priority Analysis tool (SIIPA)**, it processes your invasive plant data to prioritize treatment areas according to your customized criteria. This platform merges the capabilities of big data and



An infestation of Old-world climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*) at University of Florida's Deluca preserve in Osceola County. Photo by Chris Demers.

Continued on next page

UF | IFAS
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



USDA **NRCS**
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



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.

spatial analysis into an accessible website, expanding access to this technology for a broader audience.

The SIIPA tool is designed for landowners or land managers seeking resource prioritization assistance. This framework prioritizes invasive populations based on four key characteristics: 1) impact severity; 2) infestation size; 3) control methods; and 4) habitat quality. Simply set your custom parameters using the wizard and run the tool. SIIPA generates a ranked list, identifying which areas/plant populations should be treated first for maximum positive impact.

There are six easy steps:

1. Select invasive plant data.
2. Set parameters using the wizard.
3. Run the tool.
4. Add optional map data.
5. Choose format for results.
6. Get ready for field work!

The SIIPA tool wizard is designed to be easy to use, featuring informative videos and tips at each step. It guides you through selecting your data and setting up your prioritization plan based on the four key characteristics. Each characteristic is introduced with an overview to assist in prioritizing decisions tailored to your needs, accompanied by informative videos for clarification (Figure 1).

Next, you use a slider to select the number of classes you want for each characteristic, assigning a short description and importance level to each class (Figure 2).

Following this, you match the categories you created with all the relevant items in your data, such as species or habitats (Figure 3).

Continued on next page

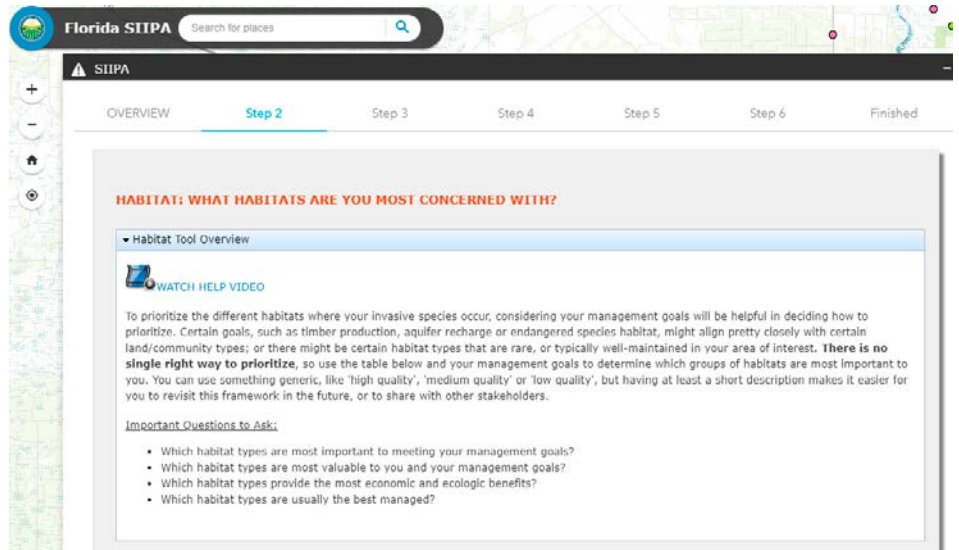


Figure 1: The SIIPA tool walks you through prioritizing your invasive species based on four characteristics, and each characteristic starts with an overview section and help video.

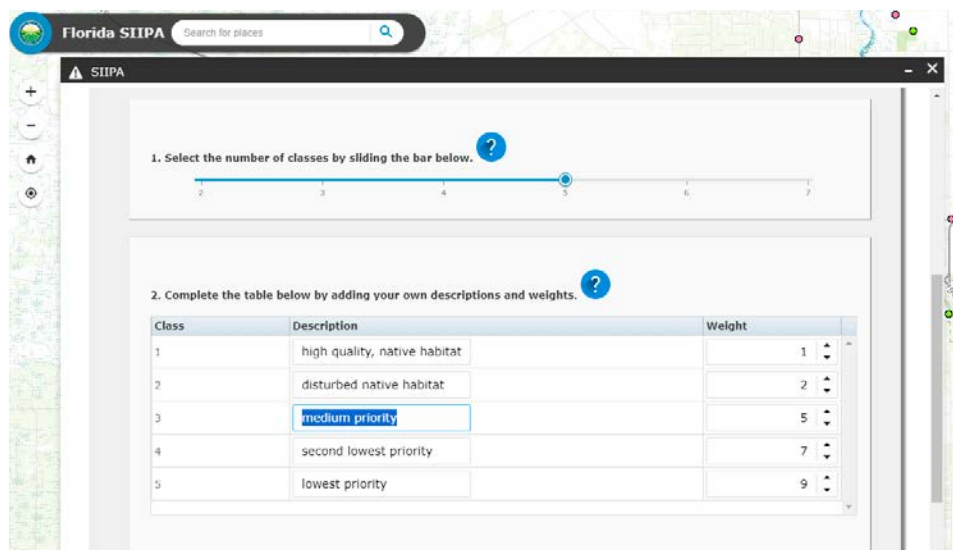


Figure 2: Choosing the number and description of classes for ranking the different characteristics is very easy with the SIIPA tool wizard.

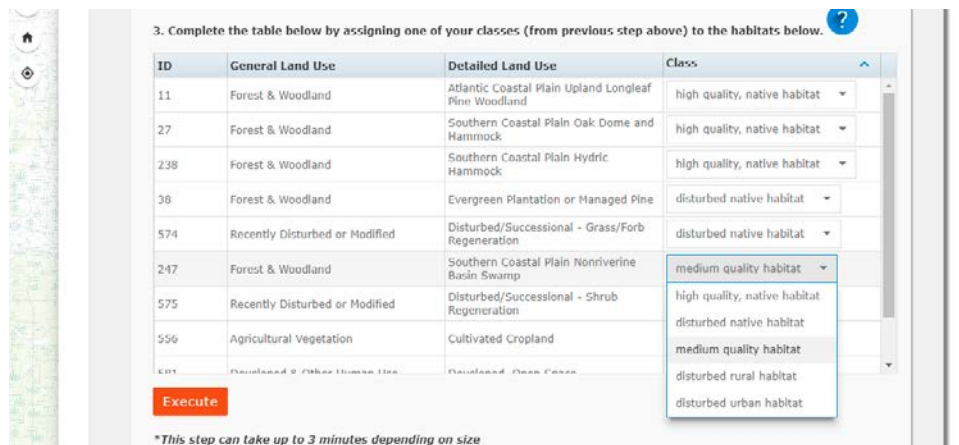


Figure 3: The wizard lets you assign your custom classes to all the items in your data, like habitat types or species name.

Finally, you determine the weight each characteristic contributes towards the final score calculation. The tool then generates your prioritized results, presented as a map, a report or database (Figure 4).

These results indicate the most critical invasive species to tackle first, based on your customized prioritization framework. Additionally, they highlight priority areas, not just the individual populations, helping you optimize time spent managing invasive species.

Find more information at: <https://www.eddmaps.org/florida/SIIPA/#home>. If you are interested in training on the SIIPA tool or have any questions, please contact Deb Stone at debtharp@ufl.edu.

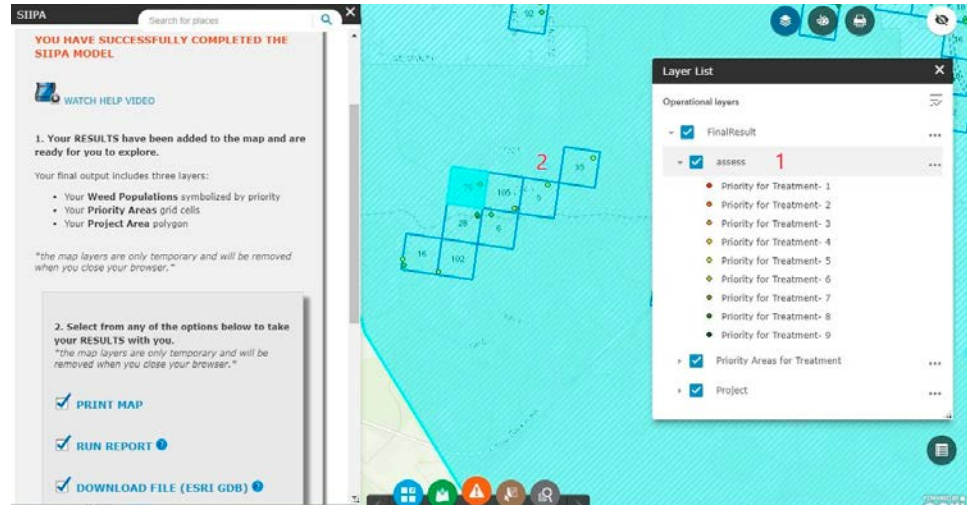


Figure 4: Example SIIPA output. The output options can be seen on the left, a map of the final output in the middle, and a legend on the right.

Conservation Easements Save Ag Lands and Wildlife

By Wendy Mathews, The Nature Conservancy in Florida

Conservation easements help land stewards protect and manage wildlife habitat while also maintaining agricultural uses on their lands. One recent example of this kind of partnership is G Road Grove, an active citrus grove and tree nursery in Hendry County that has been recently protected by The Nature Conservancy in Florida and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Agricultural landowners are critical partners in the effort to save rare and endangered species like the Florida panther.

“The G Road Grove easement is a wonderful example of providing vital habitat and cover for endangered species while also maintaining productive farms. The citrus trees provide protected, unobstructed travel routes that are so critical to the Florida panther,” said Sara May, Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Coordinator for NRCS in Florida, a key partner in protecting G Road Grove.



Panthers use G Road Grove to hunt, breed and roam. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has documented many animals on the G Road Grove property’s trail cameras. Photo by FWC.

“Conservation easements protect land from future development while also allowing land management activities and uses, such as agricultural activities, to continue on the property. With a conservation easement, we permanently protect G Road Grove’s agricultural uses and natural habitats.”

You can read more about this and other conservation easements on

The Nature Conservancy in Florida’s website at: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/florida>

Learn more about USDA NRCS Easement Programs at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program>.

Meet the Panhandle Extension Forester – Ian Stone, R.F.

By Ian Stone, UF/IFAS Extension Walton County, Forestry Agent



Ian Stone, Forestry Agent with UF/IFAS Extension Walton County

Hello everyone, I hope this article finds you all well and having a good and productive summer. For those of you planning to plant our next generation of Florida Forests I hope that your site preparations are going well, seedling orders are all in and secured, and planting will go well this winter. When I was young and before I became a forester, I remember someone saying to me “the most hopeful and optimistic thing you can do is plant a tree.” I would like to say that is the moment I knew I wanted to be a forester, but it took a while longer. I have learned though it is a great and true thing about the profession I have been blessed to take up.

The main purpose of this article is to introduce myself to the Florida Land Steward readership. I was hired as a multi-county forestry agent based in the Walton County office Defuniak Springs, FL in July 2022. For those that remember Mike Goodchild, I took up his position when he retired. I am ecstatic to be part of UF/IFAS as an Extension Agent, and this has always been a job I hoped I may work in one day. Both of my Paternal Grandparents worked in Extension as part of the Louisiana State University (LSU) AgCenter. My grandfather was a Regional Dairy Specialist covering several parishes and my grandmother worked as a program assistant in the food and nutrition assistance program. It really is a rewarding career that puts you in touch with some of the greatest folks you’ll ever meet, especially forest landowners.

Here is a quick snapshot of my professional background. For my education I received my Bachelor of Science in Forestry from Louisiana State University in 2009. After graduating I relocated to the University of Maine in Orono, ME and received my Master of Science in Forest Management in 2011. I did a one-year stint as a forestry instructor at Reedley College in Reedley, CA; but I missed my Gulf Coast Piney Woods and quickly

returned. Prior to working with UF/IFAS I spent 10 years with the Florida Forest Service; first as a state lands forester, then as a County Forester, and then Tree Improvement Manager; all out of the Blackwater Forestry Center in Santa Rosa County.

Now that I am with UF/IFAS Extension I am focused on providing the best quality forestry program I can in the Panhandle, which is one of the most heavily forested regions in the state. My program focuses on two areas primarily: rural forestry support and development and urban and community forestry. Since starting I have done programs in invasive species control, advanced silviculture applications, prescribed fire, urban tree care, and mushroom cultivation on hardwood logs. I place a big emphasis on programs that keep working forests working and meeting landowner objectives. One area I have been working on expanding is program offerings for small tracts and woodlots, which is a growing area as the average tract size is decreasing. I look forward to working with all our landowners, forestry professionals, and local citizens and offering extension programs to meet their needs. You can contact me at (850) 892-8172 or by email at ian.stone@ufl.edu.

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/>.

Remembering Bob Simons

By Chris Demers

We lost a colossal land steward in the summer of 2024. Florida Land Steward readers who had the privilege to meet, know, and/or work with Bob Simons will agree that it's difficult to put a title with the man. Bob Simons was a forester, ecologist, naturalist, biologist, teacher, mentor, friend, and all around great human being. His knowledge of Florida's natural areas and resources has informed and inspired the work of so many people who work in the conservation field today, including mine.

Ten years ago Bob hosted a stewardship tour at an Alachua County property along the Santa Fe River that he and his wife Erika own and manage. On the morning we planned the tour, Bob and I enjoyed some time walking around the property and talking about his land management strategies, life, music, and, as he would have said, anything worth talking about. The uplands where he was restoring longleaf pine forest transitioned gradually to the riparian hardwood forest that eventually led to the river. For Bob it was all

connected and every part was important, from the wiregrass and longleaf pine on the hill to the hardwoods and cypress habitats bordering the river. His wisdom about nature and life was quite often mixed with good humor and a jovial tone. Time with Bob was time well spent. His conservation legacy will be with us forever in the landscapes he managed and had a role in conserving for future generations.



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.

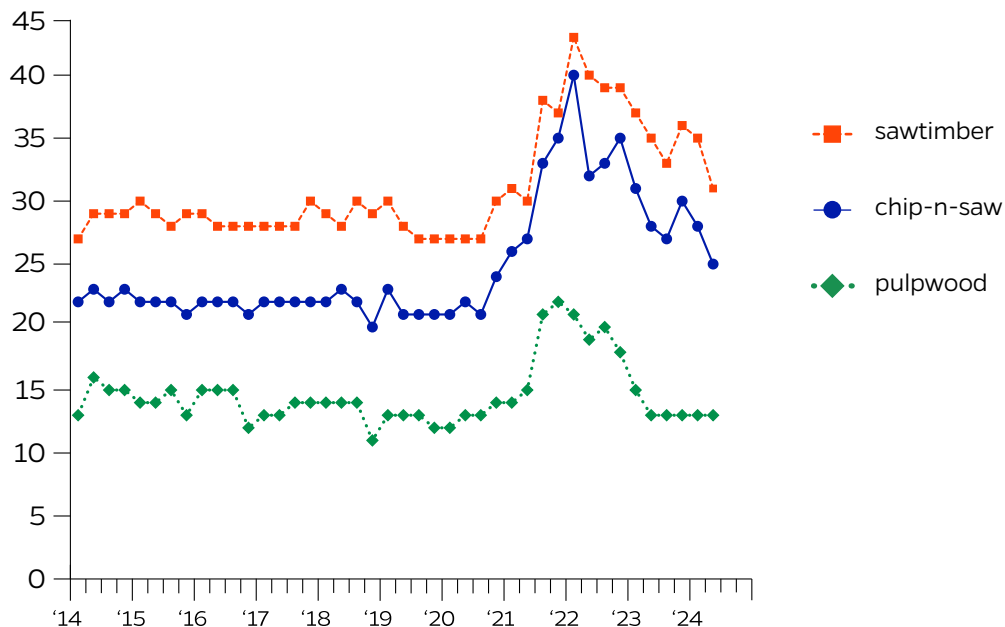
Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **2nd Quarter 2024** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$13/ton, same as 1 st Qtr. 2024
Pine C-N-S:	\$26/ton, ↓
Pine sawtimber:	\$31/ton, ↓

Trend Report

Average stumpage prices for most major timber products generally decreased in the second quarter of 2024 in Florida and much of the region as drier weather boosted supply. Market conditions are also down for most wood products. In Florida we are certainly in a time of market uncertainty as some significant wood using mills in a couple areas have shut down. While the uncertainty seems to linger it is important to keep in mind that our region is still considered to be the wood basket of not only the U.S., but the entire world. All eyes are still on us as the source of raw material for wood and thousands of wood derived products for which there is global demand. An advertisement for a timber-rich county of Florida is noted in the 2nd quarter issue of Timber Mart-South, boasting “a sustainable supply of 3 million tons of pine timber - a rare find around the world!” Keep planting those trees!

Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida (\$/Ton)
1st Qtr 2014 through 2nd Qtr 2024



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.



L-R: Blake Josephson (FFS), Corey Young, and Jason Ballard (FWC), Putnam County



L-R: Donna Coan, Richard Larson (FFS), Brian Moore, and Zach Wolfrey (FFS), Sarasota County



L-R: Jay Vogel, James Hancock, and Eric Handley, Trailhead Blue Springs, Levy County



L-R: David Hamilton and Dave Miller, Suwannee County



Kelly Smith, 50 Years in Tree Farm, Putnam County



Skip Heidrich with Jason Ballard (FWC), Osceola County



Sharon and Joni Pankau, Santa Rosa County



Dennis Johns and David Lindley, Caber Corporation, Levy County



L-R: Jason Ballard (FWC) and Tim Harris, Putnam County



L-R: Juan Quiroga, Jason Ballard (FWC), and David Dotherow, Osceola County

UF/IFAS

School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences
 PO Box 110410
 Gainesville, FL 32611-0410

Non Profit Org.
 US Postage
 PAID
 Gainesville
 Florida
 Permit No.94

Upcoming Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Aug. 22	Florida Land Steward Webinar: Is it Time to Thin Your Timber Stand? 2:00 p.m. ET. Provided by UF/IFAS Extension and Florida Land Steward Program. An important part of tending your timber stand is managing the density of the trees. This will be a TEAMS webinar. <i>Please register in advance at https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/6a691ca4-112b-48ee-a597-c32af64873bf@0d4da0f8-4a31-4d76-ace6-0a62331e1b84</i>
Aug. 23	Wild Hog Management Workshop. 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET, Range Cattle Research and Education Center, 3401 Experiment Station, Ona, FL, 33865. Presented by UF/IFAS, FWC/LAP, and USDA/APHIS. Presentation will include trap demonstrations. Attendees will have opportunities to interact with managers, contractors, and other landowners. <i>Please RSVP to Lacey.McClenithan@MyFWC.com or (772) 696-3587 by August 16.</i>
Aug. 27-29	2024 Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting & Trade Show. Omni Amelia Island Resort, Amelia Island, FL. Educational sessions will include forestry resilience, the use of AI in quantifying environmental services, USDA NRCS programs, and more. <i>See https://www.flforestry.org/annual-meeting for details and registration.</i>
Oct. 7	Florida Land Steward Tour at Property of Gus Andrews, Walton County. Topics include forest and wildlife management, prescribed fire, and more. <i>More details will be posted on the online Florida Land Steward calendar and email updates. Contact UF/IFAS Extension Walton County for more information at (850) 892-8172.</i>
Oct. 22-23	2024 Florida Forests & Water Forum. UF Stern Learning Center at Austin Cary Forest campus. <i>More details and registration link will be posted on the online Florida Land Steward events calendar and email updates.</i>
Oct. 24	Florida Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Tour at Vanzant Farm, Nassau County. 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET at Vanzant Farm near Hilliard, FL. Meet Floyd Vanzant, our 2024 Jon Gould Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year, and learn out the economic and environmental benefits of a silvopasture operation. Silvopasture combines forage, livestock, and timber production on the same acres. <i>More details and registration link will be posted on the online Florida Land Steward events calendar and email updates.</i>
Oct. 25	Florida Land Steward Tour: Sparkleberry Farm, Alachua County. 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET at Bill Black and Denise Matthews' Sparkleberry Farm property in Alachua County. Bill and Denise were our 2022 Florida Land Stewards of the Year. We're getting back there for a tour this fall when the fall wildflowers will be in bloom. Topics will include wildlife habitat management, longleaf pine, prescribed burning, and more. <i>More details and registration link to be posted in email updates. Contact Chris Demers, cdemers@ufl.edu, (352) 846-2375.</i>
Nov. 7	Florida Land Steward Nursery Tour at Andrews State Tree Nursery. Mark your calendar. <i>Details will be posted on the online Florida Land Steward events calendar and email updates.</i>

More events, webinars, 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, U.S. 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)
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 (352) 749-2447 • 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