

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Congratulations Boyles Tree Farm: 2025 Jon Gould Florida Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year!

By Joe Boyles, Boyles Tree Farm; Brian Cobble, Florida Forest Service; and Chris Demers, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences

The Florida Tree Farm Program is excited to announce that Boyles Tree Farm is recognized as the 2025 Jon Gould Florida Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year. Boyles Tree Farm LLC (BTF) began in 1942 when Eugene Boyles, then a 22-year-old lieutenant in the Army and 1941 graduate of the University of Florida School of Agriculture, purchased a 365-acre farm near his parents in Suwannee County, FL. For half a century, Eugene was at the helm and added additional timber tracts through purchase and 1031 exchange amounting to 1,145 acres. After Eugene's death in 1991, the management of Boyles Tree Farm conferred to his two sons; Joe and Fred, who have doubled the size of BTF to 2,235 acres. Joe Boyles is an Episcopal Priest, and Fred Boyles has a career in Historic Preservation. Joe and Fred work closely with the third generation of the Boyles family to facilitate succession and

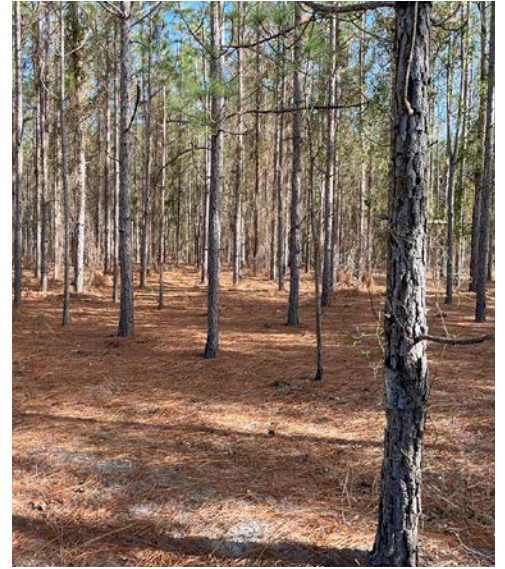
continue the family's stewardship legacy. Currently, nine descendants of Eugene and Frances own the properties.

Boyles Tree Farm has been certified in American Tree Farm System (ATFS) for over 50 years and they proudly display a gold 50-Year Tree Farm Sign on one of the Suwannee County properties. Joe Boyles explains the benefits of involvement with the ATFS: "Our relationship with ATFS has been very beneficial for information. My late father who began this enterprise as a young man in 1942 enrolled his forestry business (then 700 acres) in 1972 with AFTS. Today we are three times that size. Through the years, we have continued to expand our operation and broaden our business plan. We have learned new techniques and kept abreast of changes in the industry through our industry partners like ATFS."

Continued on next page



(Left) Joe Boyles with Florida Forest Service County Forester, Jacob Earnest at a Boyles Tree Farm tract in Suwannee County. Photo by Brian Cobble. (Right) Joe Boyles and grandson, Ian in a new longleaf pine plantation, planted in December 2024 in Suwannee County. Photo by Boyles Tree Farm.



(Left) Grandson, Ian standing in front of a 2-year-old slash pine stand; (Middle) 3-year-old longleaf pine stand in Madison County; (Right) This Suwannee County pine stand is managed for pine straw production. Photos by Boyles Tree Farm.

Diverse forest and watershed resources

There are ten geographically separated timber tracts, ranging in size from 100 to a little over 500 acres in size in Suwannee, Hamilton, and Madison counties. Some of these tracts border or have tributaries to the Suwannee and Withlacoochee Rivers. Important watershed features on these properties include sinkholes, lakes, intermittent streams, and karst topography. These are protected as designated natural

areas or with the use of Silvicultural Best Management Practices.

Pine stands are planted with longleaf, slash, and/or loblolly pines; and range in age from 1 to 18 years. Since 2018, all the pine plantations have been hand-planted with containerized, genetically improved seedlings, as available. BTF markets timber products, hunting leases, pine straw, real estate, and some stands are enrolled in the carbon market. Joe explains,

“This winter, we are planting 71 acres of containerized loblolly on Tract IIIB. We are entering a carbon credit program with Funga to treat the seedlings at the nursery (PRT/IFCO) to introduce fungus to replenish the soil. We hope to see 30 percent additional growth in the first 5 years. While we have investigated several carbon credit programs, this is the first where we have enrolled.”

Resilience through three major hurricanes

On August 30, 2023, Hurricane Idalia hit Florida as a Category 3 storm with 125 mph+ winds. It ripped through Florida's Big Bend region where Boyles Tree Farm is located, destroying hundreds of thousands of acres of timberland. Just 11 months later, on August 5th, 2024, Hurricane Debby made landfall in the same region of Florida as a Category 1 storm, with winds and flooding affecting eastern Madison, Western Suwannee, and Hamilton County. Then, 6 weeks later, on September 24, 2024, Hurricane Helene made landfall in Florida as a Category 4 storm – the only known hurricane of this magnitude to be recorded in the Big Bend area of Florida since records began in 1851. Boyles Tree Farm was impacted by all 3 storms, but due to the management style of the Boyles family, they recovered and continued with management as normal.



Load of slash chip-n-saw logs headed for the mill. Photo by Boyles Tree Farm.

Continued on next page

Since Hurricanes Idalia, Debbie, and Helene have occurred, Boyles Tree Farm has actively managed salvage timber sales and commercial thinning, site preparation, and reforestation as a common occurrence. Regarding assistance with recovery from these storms, Joe explains, “We enrolled with two USDA programs through NRCS and FSA, the latter having the most promise. This will enable us to clean up the damage from recent hurricanes. We continue to visually monitor our timber stands and have seen no evidence of bark beetle activity.”

“Sustainable Forestry in North Florida since 1942”

The family takes the business and sustainability of their Tree Farm enterprise seriously. BTF has been registered as an LLC in the state of Florida since 1986. Joe explains the importance of their management plan: “One thing that sets BTF apart is that we have a very extensive and current forestry management plan which we wrote using the strategic planning or process developed by the Sterling Council. We update this annually to keep current with changes made each year. We have extensive data in our plan to help us with decisions.”

An annual report is produced each year, and the family meets several times each year to discuss management progress and upcoming activities. Joe explains, “We believe in the long-term benefits of forestry, both economic and environmental. We are dedicated to the land and real property and to the concept of stewardship. Our challenge is to make the real estate generate good economic return while at the same time benefiting water, soil, air and wildlife. We must be profitable in order to stay in business.”

BTF belongs to three professional and trade organizations: Florida Forestry Association; Forest Landowners Association, and the American Tree Farm System, which is their preferred certification program. Boyles Tree Farm family members have made several presentations to the Madison Rotary Club to describe and illustrate family forestry in North Florida. Their motto is “Sustainable Forestry in North Florida since 1942.”

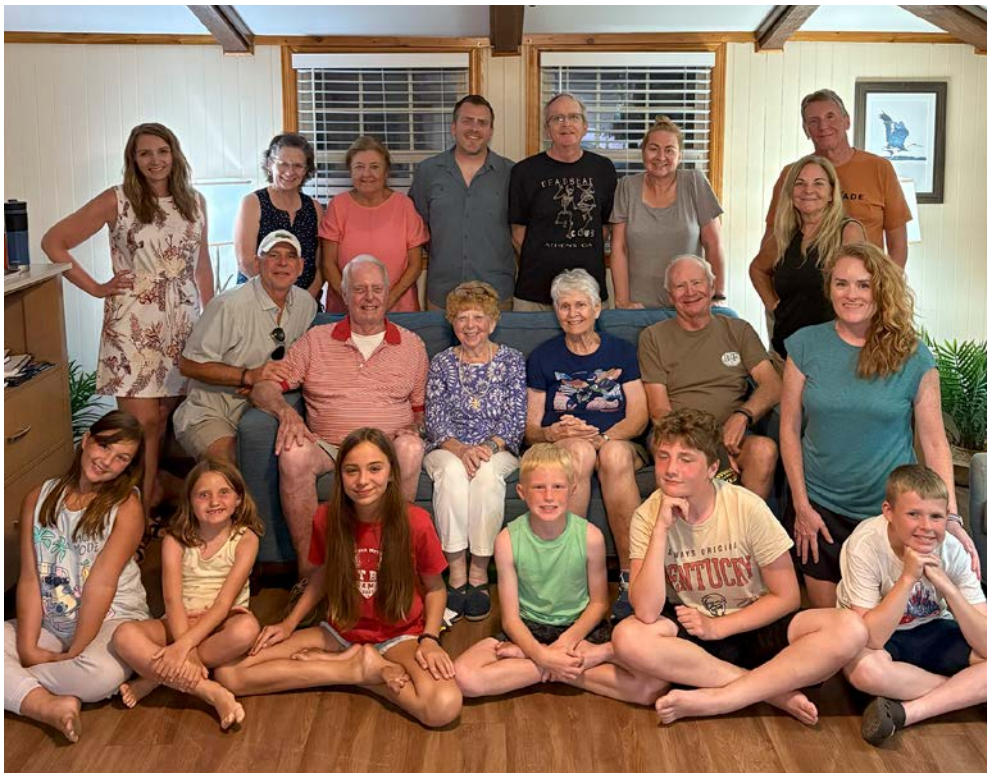
Jon Gould

Florida’s Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Award honors the memory of Mr. Jon Gould, a respected member of Florida’s Tree Farm Program State Committee and a proud Tree Farmer and advocate for forestry for more than 30 years throughout the southeast. Mr. Gould was selected as the Florida Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year in 2006 and as the Southern Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year in 2018. Mr. Gould passed in 2019. His legacy lives as an ultimate model of the Tree Farm Program for which the Florida award is now renamed beginning in 2020. Learn more about Jon, his wife Carol and the Gould Tree Farm at: www.treefarmssystem.org/south-nominee-goulds.

Learn more about the Florida Tree Farm program at www.treefarmssystem.org/florida.

Learn more about the Funga carbon program at www.funga.earth.

Learn more about the Sterling Council at thesterlingcouncil.org.



(Left) The Boyles family gathered in 2025. Photo by Boyles Tree Farm. (Right) Jon Gould. Photo by Tyler Jones.

Woodlot Management in Florida? A Forest Management Model for Small Tracts

By Ian Stone, UF/IFAS Extension Walton County

In Florida “woodlot” is not a term we often hear. Here and in the Southeast in general, forestry tends to focus on timber production and plantation-style management. For small ownerships though this presents a challenge, especially when considering stand improvement options and timber harvesting. With high production mechanical logging systems being the norm and timber markets that work on large volumes, managing a small tract can be a challenge. When tract size starts to dip below 40 to 50 acres this often means it is below the operable size for most consulting foresters, loggers, and forestry contractors to consider. This doesn't mean the tract cannot be managed, it just means that it doesn't fit the typical model and requires some unique approaches. For landowners with small ownerships, it may require getting creative and taking different approaches to realize your management goals. This is where “woodlot management” concepts can be useful.

Woodlot management?

In other regions, such as the Lake States and New England, you will hear of “woodlot management.” The term “woodlot” is typically used in reference to small forest tracts that are part of larger properties or are small individual ownerships. Firewood, high value hardwoods, and other more specialized products and markets in these regions lend themselves well to the woodlot concept. Our forests and markets may be different in Florida, but the woodlot framework can work here. Management of a small woodlot-sized tract generally focuses on achieving desirable conditions via alternative objectives and management practices such as non-timber forest products, high-value specialty wood products, small-scale local markets, and do-it-yourself approaches.

So, what would management of a small woodlot of say 20 to 40 acres look like in Florida? The first step is to establish a baseline of current forest conditions and then begin planning out some goals and objectives. Landowners with 10 or more forested acres can apply for a management plan through the Florida

Forest Service under the Forest Stewardship Program (www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/For-Landowners/Programs-for-Landowners/Forest-Stewardship-Program).

Once you have your plan then you can start planning management activities, which is often where woodlot ownerships can meet roadblocks. This is where some creativity can be useful. You may need to moderate expectations and look at your operation differently. If you can get an overstocked stand thinned for a few dollars an acre or at no cost, you accomplished your goal and your forest health and wildlife habitat will improve. Here are some strategies that can be successful for Florida woodlots of 40 acres and under.

Pine Straw: For a good stand with solid production this is an excellent option for smaller ownerships. Longleaf is the primary straw species, but slash has some value as well. Loblolly is generally not desired in this market. Pine straw production and harvesting requires vegetation management and may not be compatible with some wildlife habitat objectives. Whether you get a contractor through an annual rental agreement or bail and sell it yourself, it can be very lucrative, even on small tracts.

Upscale your undesirable hardwoods: A common problem in Florida is hardwood competition or overstocked/undesirable hardwoods. While the home heating market for firewood is limited, there are other options. Consider selling bundled firewood for camping or for selling woods for smoking and BBQ. Small oak and other hardwood logs are well suited to shiitake and other mushroom farming and can provide several options to make otherwise unusable wood valuable. Again, you can do this yourself or you can work with interested parties to work out a contract. This is an excellent way to accomplish a management goal and make some revenue.



Portable sawmill. Photo by Suzette Cook.

Network locally for small sawmilling and specialty wood markets: While the standard timber markets may be difficult to access for woodlot owners in Florida, there are small sawmills and specialized markets like artists or craftspeople in need of a particular type of wood, woodturners, etc. This requires a bit of networking and investigation, but these opportunities can be lucrative.

Consider a DIY approach to your woodlot: When you can't get a contractor you may need to investigate what is feasible for you to do yourself. Many vegetation management and habitat improvement activities can be done at small scales with a little bit of know-how and some readily available equipment. Organizations like the Prescribed Burn Associations, landowner associations, and public agencies can help you learn how to do some basic land management practices.

Woodlot management is all about finding management solutions that work at your scale. Alternative methods, doing things yourself, and establishing a network of other landowners and available public resources is key. For a woodlot property the best approach is more holistic - determining multiple approaches that are feasible and align with outcomes.

Ian Stone is the forestry and natural resources extension agent serving Walton County and can be reached at (850) 892-8172, ian.stone@ufl.edu.

Seen a Panther? Sightings can be Reported to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

If you observe a Florida panther—whether in person, on a trail camera, or through signs such as tracks, scat, or scratches—you can report your sighting to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at myfwc.com/panthersightings.

Your reports play an important role in FWC's panther research and management.

Community sightings help us monitor where panthers occur across the state and have improved our understanding of their range. Sightings that include video can also help us identify panthers showing signs of feline leukomyelopathy (FLM), such as unusual or uncoordinated

movements. You may also submit videos of bobcats that show an unsteady gait.

When submitting a report, please include a photo or video of the animal whenever possible. For signs like tracks or scat, be sure to include an object for scale to help with identification.

For helpful tips on identifying the Florida panther and its signs, see the UF/IFAS Extension publication, Did I See a Panther? at edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW144.



Florida Panther. UF/IFAS photo by Cat Wofford.

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: programs.ifas.ufl.edu/florida-land-steward.

Enroll in the Online Forest Landowner Academy

Are you new to forestry and land management? Have you recently purchased or inherited land and wondering what to do next? Hard to fit travel for tours and workshops in your busy schedule? Need a course in a self-paced format that you can take on your own time? The Forest Landowner Academy is for you!

Seven course modules cover a variety of topics on understanding your forest resources, developing your management plan, timber management, marketing forest products, other forest enterprises such as pine straw and hunting leases, wildlife management, and planning for the future.

The course is self-paced. Each module includes pre-recorded content from the field or virtual classroom, supplemental reading material, and an assessment where you can apply what you've learned to your land or situation. The cost of the course is \$150 and those completing the course will earn a University of Florida

Certificate. For more information and to enroll in the Forest Landowner Academy visit the course page at ifas-sfrc-for.catalog.instructure.com/courses/for-fla.

For more information, contact Chris Demers at cdemers@ufl.edu, (352) 846-2375 or Dr. Michael Andreu at mandreu@ufl.edu.



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.

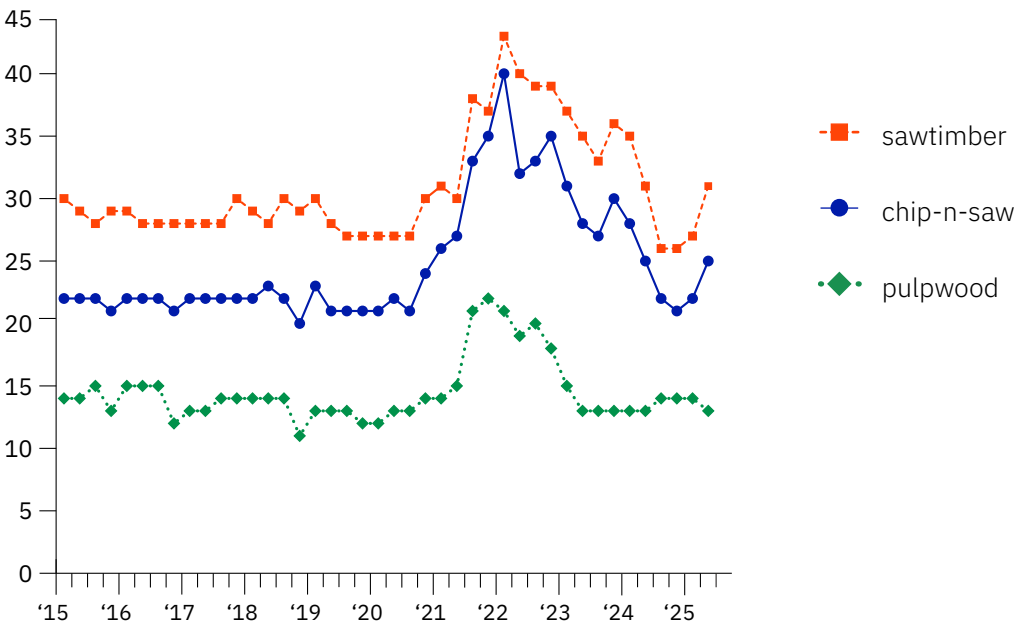
Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the 2nd Quarter 2025 Timber Mart-South report were:

| Florida Stumpage Prices |
|---|
| Pine pulpwood: \$13/ton, ↓ 1 st Qtr. 2025 |
| Pine C-N-S: \$25/ton, ↑ |
| Pine sawtimber: \$31/ton, ↑ |

Trend Report

South-wide average prices increased for both sawtimber and chip-n-saw in the second quarter but decreased for pulpwood. This trend held in Florida as well. An evolving market issue we are monitoring closely is the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) law which aims to stop products linked to deforestation from being sold in Europe. This law will impact U.S. businesses that sell forest products to Europe as such companies will need to meet strict reporting and compliance rules or risk losing access to the EU market. EUDR is currently scheduled to be enacted December 31 of this year. We'll provide an update on this when policy is settled. Our regular Florida Land Steward email updates are a good way to stay current on the latest news, events, and opportunities. Drop a line to cdemers@ufl.edu to subscribe. This is a free service.

Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida (\$/Ton)
1st Qtr 2015 through 2nd Qtr 2025



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 www.tmart-south.com for information on subscriptions.

CONGRATULATIONS CERTIFIED LANDOWNERS

More information about certification in these programs is available at:

www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/For-Landowners/Programs-for-Landowners/Forest-Stewardship-Program

www.treefarmssystem.org/florida

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.



Audrey Greene with Joe Vaughn (FWC), Columbia County



Bill Black, Alachua County



Billy Braun, Escambia County



Clay Phillips (L) with Jason Foshee (FFS), Putnam County



Daniel Bell (R) with Tristan Ross (FFS), Baker County



Ernest and Kay Ziemke, Escambia County



Stephen Buxton, Marion County



Michael Jenkins (L) with Ed O'Daniels (FWC), Walton County



Stuart and Teri Rowan, Columbia County

UF/IFAS

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Upcoming Events

| Date | Event, Location, Contact |
|------------|--|
| Aug. 19 | Florida Land Steward Webinar: Woodlot Management Options. 2:00 p.m. ET. UF/IFAS Extension and Florida Land Steward Program. The term “woodlot” is sometimes used to describe smaller forest properties where the more traditional, larger-scale approaches to forest management may not be feasible. Managing a woodlot is all about finding solutions that work at your scale. Alternative enterprises, alternative methods, doing some things yourself, and establishing a network of other landowners and available resources are key to successful woodlot management. <i>For details and registration see tinyurl.com/5672xk6k.</i> |
| Aug. 23 | Florida Panhandle Landowner Assistance Expo. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT at the Walton County Fairgrounds, 790 N. 9 th Street, DeFuniak Springs. Forest landowners and agricultural producers are invited to learn about programs and partnerships to assist with managing lands for wildlife, timber, row crops, and cattle. <i>For details and registration see tinyurl.com/58jwf49v.</i> |
| Aug. 26-28 | Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show. Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, 9300 Emerald Coast Pkwy W, Miramar Beach, FL 32550. Plan to join us at Sandestin us for this annual continuing education and networking event to get the latest industry updates and catch up with forestry friends and colleagues. <i>For details and registration flforestry.org/benefits/networking/annual-meeting/hotel-registration.</i> |
| Sept. 17 | Madison County Landowner Cooperative Group Meeting. 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at UF/IFAS Extension Madison County Office, 184 NW College Loop, Madison, FL 32340. Join us to learn about Florida’s Big Bend Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), conservation easement opportunities, and the new Private Lands Tool Cache Program. <i>For more information contact Megan Ellis at (352) 339-3016, Megan.Ellis@MyFWC.com</i> |
| Sept. 25 | Florida Land Steward Tour at the Jenkins Family Property, Walton County. 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. CT at the property. Topics will include pine straw and timber production, wildlife management, the gopher tortoise recipient site program, and more. <i>Details will be posted in Florida Land Steward email updates and on the FL Land Steward events calendar at fls-tour-2025-09-25.eventbrite.com. For more information contact Ian Stone, ian.stone@ufl.edu, (850) 892-8172.</i> |
| Oct. 3 | Tall Timbers Red Hills Fall Field Day. 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET at Meander, 3496 Simpson Road, Monticello, FL 32344. The field tour includes discussions on modern quail management on a historic property and the benefits to other species. \$50 fee includes tour and lunch. <i>For details and registration see tinyurl.com/39ymtrjn.</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:

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