

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Mr. Jim Strickland: A Fixture in Florida Conservation

By Luis Gonzalez, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Congratulations to Mr. Jim Strickland, our 2021 Florida Land Steward of the Year! Mr. Strickland has become a welcome fixture in the Florida conservation community. A lifelong resident of Manatee County and sixth generation Floridian with over six decades of ranching experience, Mr. Strickland has developed a strong land ethic and is passionate about preserving the working and wild lands of his home state. Jim is owner of Strickland Ranch and managing partner of Blackbeard's Ranch, both located in Manatee County. It is for his work and accomplishments on Blackbeard's Ranch that he is recognized with the 2021 Florida Land Steward of the Year Award.

Blackbeard's Ranch is a 4,530 acre cattle ranch located near Myakka City, in a rural part of Manatee County. Although the area is still primarily rural, this part of the state is under increasing development pressure, due to its proximity to the expanding cities of Bradenton and Sarasota. Blackbeard's Ranch is primarily a cow calf operation and focused on beef production, but is also experimenting with production of pork, honey, goat cheese, heritage chickens, and other products. Although the ranch relies on agricultural production for its income, Blackbeard's Ranch is committed to an approach to agricultural use that focuses on long term sustainability

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Mr. Jim Strickland, 2021 Florida Land Steward of the Year, receiving his Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program sign. Photo by Luis Gonzalez.

in ranch operations, and good stewardship of the natural resources within the property. As part of good stewardship of the land, a large portion of Blackbeard's Ranch is preserved and managed as natural communities, including pine flatwoods, marshes and swamps, prairies, and hammocks. Mr. Strickland believes his lands should be as much a home to native wildlife as the livestock he derives his living from and manages the ranch with both in mind.

After Blackbeard's ranch was acquired in 2014, Mr. Strickland began reaching out to natural resource professionals to form partnerships that would help him realize his vision of managing the ranch in an environmentally sustainable way. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Landowner Assistance Program biologists completed a Conservation Stewardship Plan for the property in 2015, and ranch staff quickly began implementing the recommendations in the plan. They initiated a prescribed burn program, partnering with the Florida Forest Service and FWC for the initial burns conducted on site. They began aggressively treating invasive plant infestations found throughout the site, and initiated a feral hog control program, partnering with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to conduct helicopter hunts on the ranch. These efforts have borne fruit, with ranch staff reporting increases in the populations of game species on the property, including white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and Bobwhite quail. The management actions of Mr. Strickland and his staff are also improving the availability and quality of habitat for the many nongame species that also call the ranch home, including a number of imperiled species such as crested caracaras, gopher tortoises, sandhill cranes, and at-risk wading birds (wood storks, little blue herons, tricolored herons, and roseate spoonbills). Due to the



Jim Strickland provides information for a FWC Landowner Assistance Program video about using prescribed fire on his cattle ranch. Photo by Luis Gonzalez.

improvements made through the hard work of ranch staff, Blackbeard's Ranch was recognized under FWC's Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program in 2019.

Mr. Strickland strongly believes in preserving Blackbeard's Ranch's rangeland uses for the long term, and he is pursuing options for placing the land under perpetual conservation easement. To date, a conservation easement has been placed on 1,551 acres of the ranch, through the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) Wetlands Reserve Easement program. In addition to protecting the land permanently from development or conversion, this program will restore and enhance wetlands in order to benefit native wildlife and improve water quality and hydrologic function. Mr. Strickland is actively seeking other opportunities to try and ensure that the entirety of the ranch is protected in perpetuity, placing the property on the application lists for easements through Florida Forever and the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.

Mr. Strickland is not content with managing Blackbeard's Ranch in a sustainable manner for his own benefit, but strongly believes in sharing this conservation-based approach to ranching with as many people as he can. He intends Blackbeard's Ranch to serve as a

working example for other land owners and managers who share his land ethic and are interested in a conservation-based approach to working lands. He also envisions the ranch as a natural laboratory, where environmental research opportunities can be pursued, and new approaches to sustainable agriculture can be experimented with. Jim regularly invites other ranchers, land managers, conservation professionals, government officials, politicians, scientists, and educators to the ranch, in order to promote his vision, actively share the lessons he has learned, and to advocate for the preservation of working and wild lands throughout his home state. Mr. Strickland's advocacy extends well beyond the boundaries of his own properties, and he is often found in the state capital, advocating for land conservation opportunities. He is vice chairman and co-founder of the Florida Conservation Group (FCG), a cooperative of ranchers, conservation and policy experts, and scientists who advocate for science-based protection of working ranch lands and wild lands in Florida. The group focuses its efforts on land conservation, conservation assistance, conservation science, and advocacy and education. Mr. Strickland has been recognized for his efforts by a wide array of conservation and agricultural groups. He was awarded "Sustainable Rancher

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Blackbeard's Ranch is home to several imperiled species such as wood storks.
Photo by Tyler Jones, UF/IFAS.

of the Year" by Florida Audubon in 2019, and recognized through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Award Program the same year. Jim was awarded the 2018 Florida Cattleman's Association Environmental Stewardship Award and Florida Agricultural Commissioner's 2018 Agricultural-Environmental Leadership Award, and was also

named as one of Florida Trends 500 Most Influential Business Leaders for 2018 and 2019 for his work in agriculture and conservation.

Working lands in Florida contain much of the state's remaining wildlife habitat and environmental resources. Ranch owners, forest landowners, and agricultural producers will continue to play a critical role in

conserving what remains of natural Florida and ensuring that it provides economic and environmental benefits for future generations. Their commitment to a land ethic, and to stewardship of the lands to which they are privileged to own will play a determining role in the future of environmental quality within the state. Mr. Jim Strickland's dedication and commitment to a land ethic, and good stewardship of the lands he controls provides an excellent example of these values, embracing a view of cattle ranching that preserves the ranching tradition while simultaneously protecting the state's fragile natural resources.

Learn more about Jim Strickland and Blackbeard's Ranch at <http://stricklandranch.com/>

Watch a video about management and a prescribed burn at Blackbeard's ranch at the FWC's Landowner Assistance page: <https://myfwc.com/lap/>

University of Florida Launches new Fire University Podcast



The UF Disturbance Ecology and Ecological Restoration (DEER) Lab just launched a podcast named Fire University in a podcast network called Natural Resources University.

The network features four science-based podcasts with leading scientists in each topic area. Topics include Deer University focused on white-tailed deer biology and management, Habitat University focused on the science of wildlife habitat management, Pond University focused on delivering the latest science about managing fishing ponds and aquatic ecosystems, and Fire University which delivers the latest research and science on fire ecology and related wildlife and forest management.

These podcasts are available on all the major podcast platforms and people can follow us @UFDEERLab and @NRUniversity where we post additional content related to natural resource management.

Web links:

Natural Resources University (NRU) podcasts: <https://naturalresourcesuniversity.libsyn.com/>

Fire University Podcasts: <https://fireuniversity.libsyn.com/>

For more information contact Dr. Marcus Lashley, (352) 846-0870, marcus.lashley@ufl.edu

Get acquainted with the 2021-2025 American Tree Farm System Standards of Sustainability

By Stephen Lloyd, Florida Tree Farm Program



Participating in the Tree Farm Program comes with many benefits for landowners including obtaining valuable management advice, recognition, educational opportunities, and certification of sustainably produced forest products. Forest certification through the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) must meet the rigorous requirements set forth by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). As the need for certified wood grows, so does the need to update and improve the standards and performance measures by which certification is determined. PEFC updated their standards in 2020. The American Forest Foundation (AFF), the parent organization for ATFS, in turn has released their updated standards. The new ATFS Standards of Sustainability will be released in March of 2021 and will be fully adopted on January 1, 2022. Here are a few of the changes you should be aware of:

Standard 1

- Landowners are encouraged to seek out educational opportunities including workshops, field days, professional consultations, online resources, etc. There was no mention of landowner education in the previous version.

Standard 3-G for 3.1.1.

- A non-forested ecosystem may be afforested or reforested to add economic or ecosystem value, provided the conversion does not have a negative long-term effect.
- The standard also allows the planting of “naturalized” species. Though not properly stated, the intent of this standard is to allow afforestation and reforestation with only native or non-invasive naturalized species.
- Guidance was added for genetically modified (GMO) trees. Trees improved through selective breeding are not considered GMO. ATFS commits to follow the emerging science and revisit this subject as needed.

Standard 4-G for 4.2.2 (THIS ONE IS VERY IMPORTANT)

- Landowners **must** maintain and provide documentation of pesticide (including herbicide) use on their property. Documentation **must** include what was applied, when, and where.
- This change can have a direct effect on certification. During the transitional period to the new Standards, if a landowner has not retained this information, they should work with their forester to develop records based on the information they have available (i.e., firsthand knowledge of what/when/why a pesticide was applied).

Standard 5-I for 5.1.1

- Threatened and Endangered Species: this section provides clarification on credible resources that can be used to meet this standard.

Standard 7-G for 7.1.1

- Special Site: this section provides clarification on credible resources that can be used to help meet this standard.

Standard 8

- This was edited to include the landowner’s use of a “designated representative” to monitor forest management activities.

Most of the changes listed above are minor and include clarification, guidance, and additional resources. **Only Standard 4 adds the additional requirement of pesticide documentation** to meet the requirements of forest certification. Understanding the changes that are coming will help landowners prepare for their next certification visit. If you have questions regarding Tree Farm certification, please contact your local Tree Farm Inspector. Find your Florida Tree Farm Program District Representative at: <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/about-fl>

Read the latest on the 2020-2025 American Tree Farm Standards of Sustainability here: <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/standards-review>

Enrollment is Open for Hurricane Sally Emergency Assistance

Farmers and forest landowners in four Florida Panhandle counties can begin applying for additional Hurricane Sally assistance through the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Enrollment for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) runs through March 4, 2021.

The activation of the ECP and EFRP programs are for those with farmland and private forestland damaged by natural disasters in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties. This assistance is in addition to USDA FSA disaster loans through the Secretarial designations for Hurricane Sally-impacted producers in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Holmes, Washington, Calhoun, Gadsden, Jackson, and other contiguous counties. Enrollment for ECP and EFRP will be facilitated by county FSA offices, as with loans and other disaster assistance programs. See the USDA's Disaster Recovery Assistance Tool to get started: <https://www.farmers.gov/recover/disaster-tool#step-1>

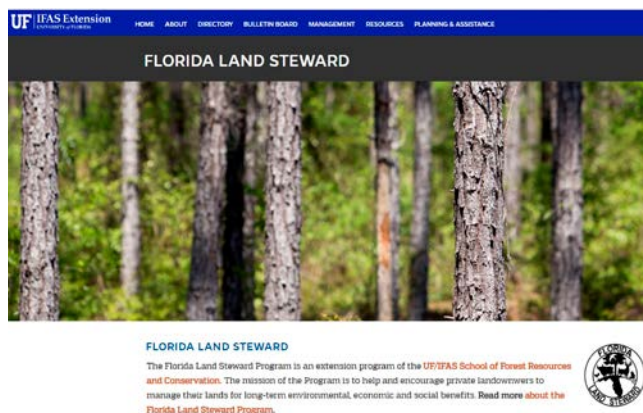
Applications still accepted for the Florida Timber Recovery Block Grant

Registration for the Florida Timber Recovery Block Grant Program is still available to forest landowners who suffered damage from Hurricane Michael in October 2018. Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the program is managed by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) in conjunction with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the Florida Forest Service (FFS), which will provide technical assistance to forest landowners required to produce documentation to receive compensation for their loss.

The original registration period is closed. However, registrations received at this time will be placed on a wait list and FDEM staff will notify those registrants to continue the application process based on the availability of grant funds.

The direct link to the Block Grant web page and registration form is at FloridaDisaster.org/timber. Register there to begin the application process. For questions about the registration or application process call the FDEM hotline at 850-270-8317. Questions can also be emailed to timber@em.myflorida.com

UF/IFAS Florida Land Steward Program Web Site Updated



One benefit of more office time over the last year was the opportunity to give our web site a much-needed overhaul. Our new site is up and running and includes all the

information that was in the old site plus some new features like an automatic feed to our news blog. The latest news and events are all easy to find within a click or two from the home page. Give it a look at <https://programs.ifas.ufl.edu/florida-land-steward/>.

We appreciate feedback and please do

let us know if you find a contact or something that needs updating. It continues to be a work in progress. Email cdemers@ufl.edu if you have an update.

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.

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/>

TIMBER PRICE UPDATE

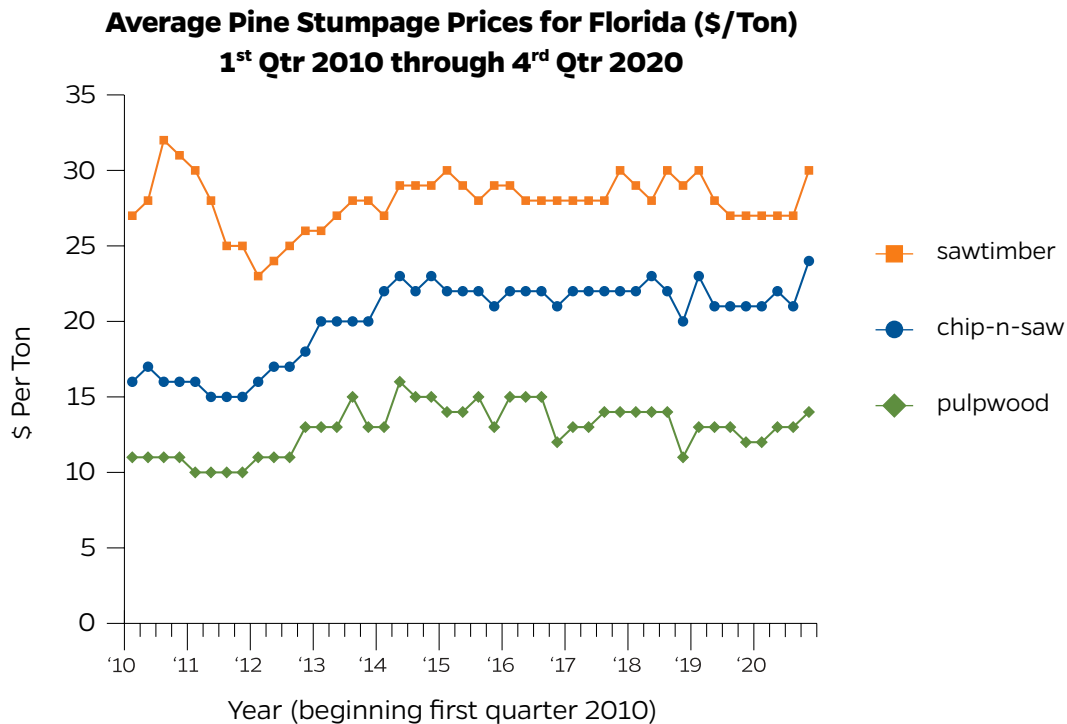
The timber price information below is useful for observing trends over time, but does not reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale are advised to solicit the services of a consulting forester to obtain current local market conditions.

Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **4th Quarter 2020** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$14/ton, up slightly from 3 rd Qtr. 2020
Pine C-N-S:	\$24/ton, ↑
Pine sawtimber:	\$30/ton, ↑

Trend Report

For all that can be said for 2020, Southeast timber markets ended the year on a good note with average stumpage prices on the increase across the region in the last quarter. Wood and paper products industries experienced growth and winter logging conditions across the region constrained supply, which gave stumpage prices a nice boost. In Florida average sawtimber and chip-n-saw stumpage prices were up more than \$2/ton from those of the 3rd quarter of 2020. Registrations are still being accepted for the Timber Recovery Block Grant for landowners to receive compensation for timber value lost in Hurricane Michael in 2018. See the piece about this funding in this issue and make sure you apply if you lost timber in this storm. Email updates are the best way to stay current on news, opportunities, webinars, and events. Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to this service if you do not receive the email updates.



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



Mike Simonson, Jackson County



Grady Hartzog, Gilchrist County



Eli Miller, Escambia County



Edward and Barbara Glenda Ward, Santa Rosa County

Upcoming Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Feb. 9	Florida Land Steward Webinar: Vegetation Management Primer - Why Use Herbicides? 2-3 pm ET. Join us to get a primer on forest vegetation management and why we use herbicides to help our forest stand become established, improve habitat for wildlife, combat invasive species, and more. <i>Please register in advance. Registration link is on our events calendar linked from https://programs.ifas.ufl.edu/florida-land-steward/</i>
Feb. 12	Florida Project Learning Tree Virtual Professional Development Training Experience. 10 am-12:30 pm ET. Join us to explore and experience PLT activities, hear from guest speakers on relevant environmental topics; and discuss ideas with other educators for using PLT to engage students in learning both indoors and outside. A second part of the course will be a self-paced training. <i>Registration link is on our events calendar linked from https://programs.ifas.ufl.edu/florida-land-steward/</i>
Feb. 16	Florida Land Steward Webinar: Advances in Herbicide Technology in Pine Management. 11 am-12 pm ET. Provided by Florida Forest Service and UF/IFAS. Dr. Pat Minogue, UF/IFAS, will share the latest information on forestry herbicides. Please register in advance - see link above. 1 Cat. 1 SAF CFE approved, FDACS CEU pending approval. <i>Registration link is on our events calendar linked from https://programs.ifas.ufl.edu/florida-land-steward/. If you are new to forestry, we recommend joining the February 9 vegetation management primer-why use herbicides (above).</i>
Feb. 23-25	2021 National Leadership Conference & Inaugural Virtual Landowner Convention. The American Tree Farm System's National Leadership Conference offers a variety of sessions for American Tree Farm System leaders and volunteers, American Forest Foundation conservation partners, and landowners. <i>Registration is \$50 per attendee and will allow registrants and includes all three days and all sessions and materials during and after the conference. SAF CFEs are pending approval. See https://aff-nlc.secure-platform.com/a/ for details and registration.</i>
March 27-28	Central Florida Sportsman's Expo. Tom Varn Park, 301 Darby Rd., Brooksville, FL 34601. UF/IFAS and FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will be exhibiting and available to answer questions. <i>\$5 Entry Fee, children under 12 Free. See https://centralfloridasportsmansexpo.com/ for details and video about the event.</i>
May 14	Florida Land Steward Tour at Jenkins Millview Trace, Escambia County, FL. 8:30 am-2 pm CT; Jenkins Millview Trace, Pensacola, FL. Mr. Robert Jenkins, owner and manager of Jenkins Millview Trace, is the 2020 Land Steward of the Year. This tour date was moved to 2021 due to the COVID-19 health crisis. Join us to learn about longleaf pine forest restoration and management, enhancing wildlife habitat, tree planting, and the challenges of land management in the wildland-urban interface. Updated flier and registration page will be linked here and in Florida Land Steward email updates when we have this event confirmed and set.

More events and information are posted 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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