
Landowner Cooperative Associations: Neighbors Helping Neighbors Madison County, FL

September 28, 2018

UF/IFAS Extension Madison County



Thank you for joining us today to learn about landowner cooperative associations and the benefits of working with neighbors. In addition to this topic we'll also get valuable information about white-tailed deer management and the history and certification process of the American Tree Farm System. We'll conclude with a question and answer session with a panel of experts from Florida Forest Service, UF/IFAS Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Agenda:

- 8:30 AM Sign-in begins
 - 9:00 Welcome and Introductions
 - 9:15 **Landowner Cooperative Associations: North Florida Prescribed Burn Association (NFPBA)**, Jess Rodriguez, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and Charlie Farr, NFPBA
 - 9:55 **American Tree Farm System**, David Findley, Florida Forest Service
 - 10:30 Break
 - 10:45 **White-tailed Deer Management**, Josh Gamblin, Tall Timbers Research Station
 - 11:25 **Past Landowner Cooperative Experience: Lessons Learned**, John Alter, Florida Forestry Association
 - 12:00 PM **Lunch** - sponsored by the Florida Tree Farm Program
 - 1:00 **Question and Answer Session** with Panel
 - 2:00 Evaluation and Adjourn
-



Support for this event is provided by the Florida Tree Farm Program, USDA Forest Service via the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service's Florida Forest Service, and the Florida Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee.

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<p>More UF/IFAS Extension Publications on forest and natural resource topics are available at: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_natural_resources_and_the_environment</p>	

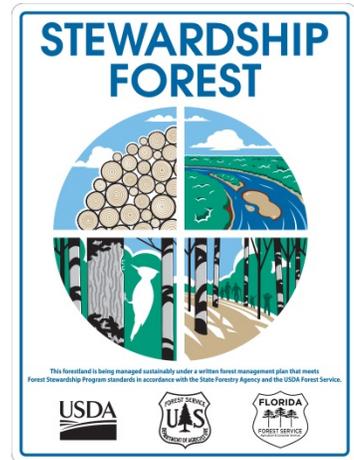
Workshop Resource Contacts

<p>John Alter Landowner Florida Forestry Association treeman@alterbevisfarms.com</p>	<p>Charlie Farr Landowner North Florida Prescribed Burn Association chf51951@gmail.com</p>	<p>Jazelle Jusino District Conservationist USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service 1416 East US 90 , Unit B Madison, FL 32340 (850) 973-6595, Ext.3 jazelle.jusino@fl.usda.gov</p>
<p>Jared Beauchamp Dixie, Lafayette, Taylor County Forester Florida Forest Service 203 W US 27 Mayo, FL 32066 (386) 294-2326 Jared.Beauchamp@freshfromflorida.com</p>	<p>Dan Fenneman Director UF/IFAS Extension Madison County 184 NW College Loop Madison, FL 32340 (850) 973-4138 dfenneman@ufl.edu</p>	<p>Greg Marshall President Florida Tree Farm Program, Inc. 410 SE Oleno Park Rd High Springs, FL 32643 (352) 233-8342 Gregory.Marshall@freshfromflorida.com</p>
<p>Zachary Butler Madison County Forester Florida Forest Service 2229 South State Road 53 Madison, FL 32340 (850) 973-5115 Zachary.Butler@freshfromflorida.com</p>	<p>David Findley Gadsden County Forester Florida Forest Service 65 McCall Bridge Rd Quincy, FL 32351 (850) 681-5896 David.Findley@freshfromflorida.com</p>	<p>Jess Rodriguez Private Lands Biologist Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 3377 East US Highway 90 Lake City, FL 32055 (386) 754-6245 Jess.Rodriguez@myfwc.com</p>
<p>Chris Demers Extension Program Manager UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources & Conservation PO Box 110410 Gainesville, FL 32611 (352) 846-2375 cdemers@ufl.edu</p>	<p>Josh Gamblin Conservation Stewardship Manager Tall Timbers Research Station 13093 Henry Beadel Drive Tallahassee, FL 32312 Cell: (770) 851-8430 jgamblin@talltimbers.org</p>	<p>Benjamin "Guign" Wyche Landowner Florida Tree Farm Program treefarmfl@gmail.com</p>

Florida's Forest Stewardship Program

Forest Stewardship is active management of forest land to keep it in a productive and healthy condition for present and future generations, and to increase the economic, environmental and social benefits of these lands. Forest Stewards are landowners who manage their forest lands on a long-term basis by following a multiple resource management plan.

The Forest Stewardship Program addresses the improvement and maintenance of timber, wildlife, soil and water, recreation, aesthetics, as well as forage resources.



Eligibility

Private forest landowners with at least 20 acres of forest land and a desire to manage their ownerships according to Stewardship principles can participate in the Forest Stewardship Program. Also, adjacent landowners, with similar management objectives, may combine their holdings to meet this acreage limitation.

Benefits to Landowners

- A customized management plan that is based on the landowner's objectives. The plan will include forest stand characteristics, property maps, management recommendations, and a five-year time line for future planning. This plan also serves as documentation of active management on the property that may help reduce tax liability.
- An opportunity for public recognition as a certified "Forest Steward".
- Educational workshops, tours and the quarterly Florida Land Steward newsletter developed and distributed by the University of Florida, IFAS Cooperative Extension Service and other partners.

How to Enroll

Contact your local Florida Forest Service County Forester and tell them that you would like to have a Forest Stewardship Plan prepared for your property. More information and application online at: <http://FreshFromFlorida.com/ForestStewardship>



Tree Farm Program

The American Tree Farm System® is a program of the American Forest Foundation and was founded in 1941 to promote the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to family forest landowners. Nearly 26 million acres of privately owned forestland and 80,000 family forest landowners in 46 states are enrolled in the program and committed to excellence in forest stewardship. About half of all Tree Farms are located in the South.

Eligibility

Private forest landowners with at least 10 acres of forest land and have a desire to manage their ownerships according to sustainable forestry guidelines can participate in Tree Farm.

Benefits to Landowners

Tree Farmers are good stewards of their forestland, committed to protecting watersheds and wildlife habitat and conserving soil. They manage their forestland for various reasons, including timber production, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, and education/outreach. Florida Tree Farmers receive many benefits:

- Representation on local, state, and federal issues affecting forestland owners.
- Exposure to a network of forestry professionals and landowners committed to sustainable forestry.
- Invitations to workshops, tours and the quarterly Florida Land Steward newsletter produced by University of Florida IFAS and other partners.
- Certification that meets international standards of sustainable forest management.
- Participation in local, state, regional, and national Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year awards and recognition.

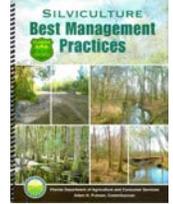
Getting into the Program

Contact your local Florida Forest Service County Forester and tell them that you would like to join the Tree Farm program. More information is available at:

<https://www.treefarmssystem.org/florida>



Florida Forest Service Silviculture Best Management Practices



SILVICULTURE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs)

Silviculture BMPs are the minimum standards necessary to protect our state's waterbodies and wetlands from the degradation and sedimentation that can sometimes occur because of erosion during and immediately following recent forestry operations. Silviculture BMPs should be applied on all bonafide ongoing forestry operations, especially those adjacent to waterbodies and wetlands, and may be enforced by federal, state, and local authorities through reference of regulatory statute or rule.

SILVICULTURE BMP COURTESY CHECKS

Silviculture BMP courtesy checks are available to give landowners, land managers, and loggers a "report card" on Silviculture BMP implementation for recent or ongoing forestry operations. This helps with future management planning as well as evaluating the performance of contractors on your property.

SILVICULTURE BMP SITE ASSESSMENTS

On-the-ground Silviculture BMP site assessments are available to discuss which Silviculture BMPs will apply to planned operations on a specific site. This helps with harvest plan development, road layout, mitigation of existing problem areas, etc.

SILVICULTURE BMP NOTICE OF INTENT

The Silviculture BMP Notice of Intent (Rule 5I-6 F.A.C.) is a voluntary one-time pledge that a landowner signs to indicate his or her intention to follow Silviculture BMPs on their property. Once a landowner has signed the Notice of Intent, he or she will become eligible to receive a *presumption of compliance* with state water quality standards during future bonafide ongoing forestry operations. This is very important if the landowner's property falls within an area covered by a Florida Department of Environmental Protection Basin Management Action Plan for impaired waters.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

For information on the services listed above or any other services provided by the Florida Forest Service's Hydrology Section please contact your local **BMP Forester**.

Panhandle Area
(850) 681-5942



Robin Holland
Peninsula Area
Robin.Holland@FreshFromFlorida.com
(352) 732-1781



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner



Forestry Wildlife Best Management Practices



- Forestry Wildlife Best Management Practices for State Imperiled Species (WBMPs) were adopted into Florida Administrative Code (Rule 5I-8) on October 21, 2014.
- WBMPs were developed through a partnership between the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Florida Forest Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).
- WBMPs are **voluntary** practices designed as a practical approach for avoiding and minimizing the loss of **State Imperiled Species** due to silviculture operations.
- WBMP practices address the 16 State Imperiled Species which are considered to be potentially vulnerable to silviculture operations including ten aquatic species, two burrowing animals, and four nesting birds.
- WBMPs are designed to supplement the existing water quality-based Silviculture BMPs which already provide many valuable benefits to the conservation and management of fish and wildlife in Florida.
- Landowners and other forestry resource professionals can enroll in the voluntary program by completing a WBMP Notice of Intent. Those who do not wish to enroll will continue to be subject to all current laws and regulations regarding State Imperiled Species.
- Once enrolled, applicants who **properly implement** WBMPs will no longer be required to obtain a permit authorizing the incidental take of State Imperiled Species during bonafide ongoing forestry operations. In addition, they will not be subject to any fines or penalties associated with an incidental take of the State Imperiled Species covered by the WBMP Manual.
- WBMPs are not designed to facilitate wildlife habitat restoration or species recovery and expansion. Also, they do not address any Federally Listed Species. For information on Federally Listed Species, refer to FWC's online "Florida Wildlife Conservation Guide."
- To obtain more information or a copy of the WBMP Manual and Notice of Intent, contact your local Florida Forest Service BMP forester (see below) or a FWC Landowner Assistance Program biologist (850) 488-3831.

Florida Forest Service BMP Foresters

Panhandle Area
(850) 681-5942



Robin Holland
Peninsula Area
(352) 732-1781

Robin.Holland@FreshFromFlorida.com





NORTH FLORIDA PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION

STARTING A PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION

A
LANDOWNERS PERSPECTIVE

WHAT IS A PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION?

A PARTNERSHIP OF LANDOWNERS &
OTHER INTERESTED CITIZENS TO CONDUCT
PRESCRIBED BURNS.

MEMBERS POOL THEIR KNOWLEDGE,
MAN-POWER, AND EQUIPMENT TO HELP
ASSOCIATION MEMBERS CONDUCT
PRESCRIBED BURNS.

WHY FORM A PBA?

ASSIST SMALL & MODERATE SIZED LANDOWNERS
TO BURN.

FFS & PRIVATE CONTRACTORS OFTEN ARE NOT ABLE
TO ACCOMMODATE THESE LANDOWNERS ON
SUITABLE BURN DAYS

A PBA OFFERS ASSISTANCE.

HISTORY AND CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS

- MANY MEETINGS HELD WITH EWC ASSISTANCE 2016/2017
- CHARTER FORMALLY ADOPTED 1/31/18 AT AUSTIN CARY
- 26 FOUNDING MEMBERS
- ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION FILED AS FLORIDA NON-PROFIT AND BYLAWS ADOPTED
- 501c3 TAX EXEMPT STATUS GRANTED BY IRS
- CHARITABLE STATUS WITH STATE OF FLORIDA APPROVED
- FLORIDA STATE TAX EXEMPTION GRANTED

AREA
OF
NFPBA



NFPBA ACTIVITIES - 2018

- TRAINING EXERCISE AT LITTLE ORANGE CREEK PRESERVE: OBSERVING A BURN AND SUBSEQUENT POST BURN VISIT TO SEE/DISCUSS EFFECTS.
- APPLIED FOR NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION GRANT TO FUND EQUIPMENT AND A TRAILER.
- INSURANCE, STANDARDS & PRACTICES, AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES FORMED, MET, AND REPORTED TO BOARD.
- BARRY COULLIETTE FROM ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST COMPLETED ASSESSMENTS OF POTENTIAL PROPERTIES TO BURN.
- HELD INFORMATIONAL TRAINING SESSION JULY 2018

NFPBA ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018



- Assisted with 7 burns on approximately 100 acres.
- Assisted 1 landowner become certified
- We have 3 people prepared for their check off burn
- 8 scheduled to take certification classes.

NFPBA PARTICIPATION LOG

LOCATION/LANDOWNER	
DATE:	
NUMBER OF NFPBA PARTICIPANTS:	
NUMBER OF ACRES BURNED:	
OBJECTIVES/PURPOSE OF BURN:	
BURN BOSS:	
NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS	CONTACT INFORMATION
1	
2	
3	

NFPBA ASSISTANCE REQUEST FORM

DATE OF REQUEST	
DATE OF PROPOSED BURN (IF KNOWN)	
LANDOWNER NAME/CONTACT INFORMATION	
LOCATION	
NUMBER OF ACRES	
CERTIFIED BURN BOSS NAME/CONTACT INFO	
DESIRED WEATHER PARAMETERS	
BURN PURPOSE	
PRESCRIPTION WRITTEN	YES NO
FIRE LINES IN PLACE	YES NO
HELP REQUESTED	
EQUIPMENT REQUESTED	
NO HELP REQUESTED - EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITY	

NFPBA WEBSITE

www.nfpba2017.wixsite.com/website



CHALLENGES

- GETTING MEMBERS CERTIFIED AS BURN MANAGERS
- WHO WILL PULL THE AUTHORIZATION FROM FFS FOR A PBA BURN
- ASSURE STAKEHOLDERS (MEMBERS, FFS) UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT/LIMITS OF A PBA
- INSURANCE – COVERAGE, TO REQUIRE OR NOT, FINDING AN INSURER
- DECIDING THE STRUCTURE OF PBA (WE FORMED A NON-PROFIT 501c3 CORPORATION WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF A MEMBER WHO IS AN ATTORNEY)

American Tree Farm System® Landowner Certification



The Beginnings



GROWING STEWARDSHIP FROM THE ROOTS

ATFS History

- “tree farming” was first used about 1940 to introduce the public to the capabilities of sustainable forestry.
- The first Tree Farm was established in 1941 by Weyerhaeuser in Montesano, WA.
 - It was created to prove that private owners were properly managing their forestlands and that government regulations or oversight were not necessary.



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ATFS History

- The focus became recognition of good stewardship on family forest lands.
- For nearly sixty years the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) grew and spread with few changes.
 - Until the idea that certification could demonstrate sustainability of forests.



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The need for Forest
Certification?
(you decide)



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ATFS History Certification



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ATFS History Certification

- In the late 1980s, concerns of the ability to sustainably manage forests.
- United Nation's Rio Earth Summit in 1992.
 - Determined a need for guidelines to define sustainable forestry.
- Late 1990s, the public's demand for certified wood had reached a tipping point.
- By 1998, the **Tree Farm System** needed to become a **certification organization** and the **2000 Standards of Sustainability** were developed.



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ATFS History Today & the Future



American Tree Farm System
We grow stewardship from the roots



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE
Good for you. Good for our forests.™



Caring for our forests globally



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Unique Partnerships & Recognition



- International Endorsement by *Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)*
- Mutual Recognition with the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)*
- Chain of Custody via PEFC and SFI



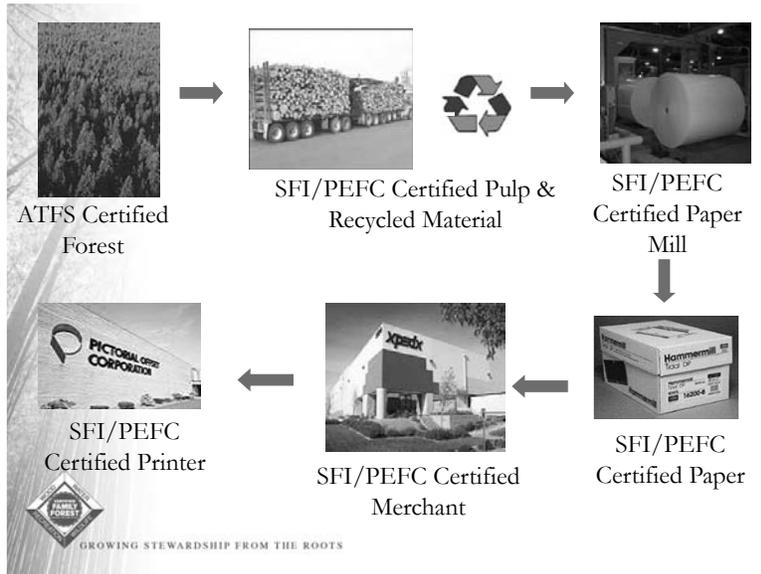
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Chain of Custody (SFI or PEFC)

- Certification sometimes is demanded by Consumer Products industry (Home Depot) on raw material suppliers (YOU).
- The system tracks the percentage of certified wood fiber used in products from the forest to the end customer.
- ATFS certified lands can be included as certified fiber under SFI and PEFC chain of custody systems.
- The benefits of being a part of this system are that Tree Farms may find that their wood is in higher demand.



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GROWING STEWARDSHIP FROM THE ROOTS

Why Tree Farm Certification for Landowners?



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What does the Tree Farm System provide for landowners?

- On-the-ground information.
- Access to tools they need to successfully manage their forest to meet objectives.
- And a future for your forest.
 - ATFS works with families on intergenerational planning.
 - And we work with policymakers to ensure that forests are a viable option for these family lands.



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Benefits of the Tree Farm Program

- Other Benefits for landowners:
 - Unique outreach and educational opportunities.
 - Information on sustainable forest management
 - Network of Tree Farmers
 - Newsletters, magazines, Tree Farm website
 - Third-party certification – access to green building, certified wood products, and carbon credit trading markets.
 - Representation on important policy issues



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Landowner Eligibility:

Property ownership Requirements:

- More than 10 but Less than 10,000 acres.
- Private or public ownership
- No publicly traded companies
- Nonindustrial but may be a small local business
- Committed to sustainable forestry through their management plan and conformance with Standards.



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How can you become a Certified Tree Farm?



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Tree Farm Inspections

Three Types of Inspections

1. Initial
2. Required sample
2. Optional re-inspection



Photo Connie Robinson-Clemons, 2009 North Central Regional Tree Farm Inspector of the Year

Inspections are essential to the ATFS Internal Monitoring System



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Tree Farm Inspections

Inspection protocol

1. Is the landowner willing to participate in a third-party certification assessment?
2. Review requirements of the Tree Farm program
3. Review AFF Standards
4. Inspect management plan
5. Inspect property



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Tree Farm Signs

2 types available:

- Certified Family Forest
- Certified Tree Farm

Landowners can order additional signs online:
www.treefarmssystem.org/atfssigns



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What are the AFF Tree Farm Standards of Sustainability?



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Standard 1

- Active and adaptive written forest management plan
- ATFS offers development tools for foresters and landowners:
 - Template (NRCS, Forest Stewardship, ATFS)
 - Management Plan Addendum



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Plan must include:

- Clear landowner objectives
- Description of desired forest conditions
- Management activities to achieve these goals
- Feasible strategy for activity implementation
- Tract map: Significant forest-related resources and special sites.



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Required Elements to address in the Plan:

- Forest health
- Soil
- Water
- Wood and fiber production
- Threatened and endangered species
- Special sites
- Invasive species
- Integrated pest management
- High conservation value forests



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Optional Plan Elements

- Prescribed fire
- Wetlands
- Recreation
- Aesthetic quality measures
- Biomass
- Carbon



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Keeping the plan and all plan elements relevant

- Monitoring
- Notes
- Updates
- New plans
- Management Plan Addendum



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Standard 2

- Compliance with Laws
 - Must comply with relevant laws and BMPs
 - Must correct conditions that led to any adverse regulatory actions



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Standard 3

- Reforestation and Afforestation
 - Must ensure adequate stocking levels
 - Within 5 years or in compliance with law (none in FL.)
 - Use of desired species suitable to soil & site conditions



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Standard 4

- Must follow Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Must minimize disturbances in riparian zones and wetlands



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Standard 5: Fish, Wildlife & Biodiversity

- Threatened and endangered species
- Landowner's desired species
- Invasive species
- Forest of Recognize Importance (FORI)



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Standard 6

Forest Aesthetics

- Should apply visual quality measures
- Compatibility with appropriate silvicultural practices



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Standard 7

- Protect Special Sites
- 2 levels of requirements
 - Research, locate and identify
 - Be sure special site is indicated on tract map!
 - Maintenance of sites
 - Ex: fencing around cemeteries



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What may be included in Special Site considerations?

- Historical
- Archeological
- Cultural
- Geological
- Biological
- Ecological



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Standard 8

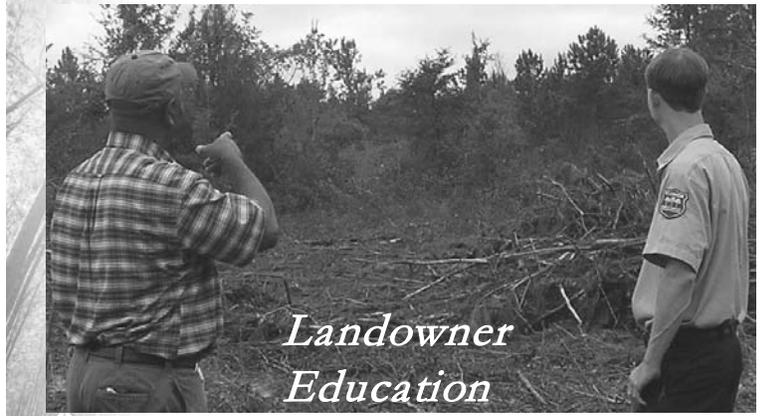
- Forest Product Harvest and Other Activities
 - Use qualified professionals and contractors
 - Use contracts for harvests and other activities
 - Liability and Workers' Comp insurance considered



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ATFS is More than Certification

Landowner Outreach



Landowner Education

Landowner with Tree Farm Inspector



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Networking

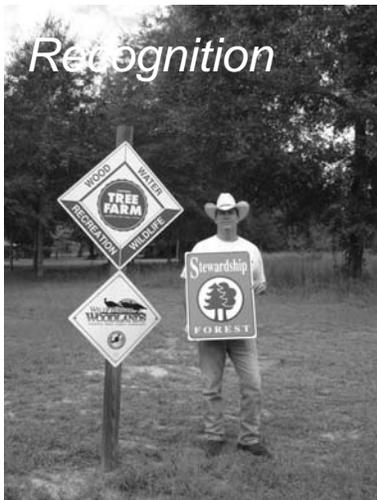
Landowner Tour in Madison County – 2008



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Local Community



Recognition

2013 Florida Tree Farmer of the Year- Madison County, FL



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Legacy



Register Family, Leon County



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Finally, Example of Sustainable Forestry!



Santé Fe River – Suwannee / Gilchrist County, FL



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- Where Does Florida Stand
- Taking Certified Pathway
- What Does Florida Need to Do Now?
 - Update Database with accurate Tree Farmer Information.
 - Fundraise!
 - Provide Educational Opportunities to Landowners!



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Questions?



2014 – Girl Scout Forestry Tour – Gilchrist County, FL



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Thank You!



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Deer Management & Landowner Cooperatives

Josh Gamblin
 Certified Wildlife Biologist
 Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy

How can cooperatives help with deer management?

- Herd Management
- Herd Monitoring
- Habitat Management
- Government Programs
- Reduce Costs



Herd Management

- Prevent Overharvest
- Manage Population Below Carrying Capacity
- Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY)
 - Maximize Opportunity
- Age Structure
- Sex Ratio



Herd Monitoring

- Surveys
 - Spotlight Surveys
 - Camera Surveys
 - Incidental Observation Surveys
- Harvest Data
 - Bucks
 - Live Weight
 - Jawbone (Age)
 - Antler Measurements
 - Does
 - Live Weight
 - Lactation
 - Jawbone (Age)
 - Fetal Data



Spotlight Surveys

- Equipment Needed
 - Two (2) Spotlights
 - Binoculars
 - Rangefinder
 - Data Sheets
- Requires three (3) people
 - Driver
 - Two observers
- 3-4 repetitions
- Visibility survey
 - Determine acreage surveyed
- Population Index vs. Population Density



White-tailed Deer Spotlight Survey

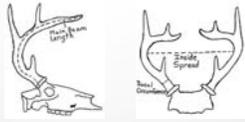
Property: _____ Date: _____ Trinnsect Direction: _____
 Observer 1: _____ Observer 2: _____ Driver/Recorder: _____
 Sunset: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____
 Start Temperature: _____ Humidity: _____ Wind speed: _____ Cloud cover: _____
 End Temperature: _____ Humidity: _____ Wind speed: _____ Cloud cover: _____
 Comments: _____

	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Unknown	Group Size	Comments		Bucks	Does	Fawns	Unknown	Group Size	Comments
1							16						
2							17						
3							18						
4							19						
5							20						
6							21						
7							22						
8							23						
9							24						
10							25						
11							26						
12							27						
13							28						
14							29						
15							30						

Estimate Boone & Crockett Score from simple antler measurements

Estimated B&C Score	Main Beams	Number of Points	Circumferences	Inside Spread	Equation
115	36	8			Least accurate equation
109	36	8			
113	36	8	9		
118	36	8	9	16	Most accurate equation

Main Beams = Sum of left and right main beams in inches.
 Number of Points = Total number of antler points 1 inches or longer. Includes typical and non-typical points.
 Circumferences = Sum of left and right basal circumferences in inches.
 Inside Spread = Inside spread of main beams in inches.



<http://www.msdeerlab.com/estimateboonecrockettsscore.asp>

Habitat Management

- Prescribed Burning
- Timber Management
- Invasive Species Control
- Feeding Program
- Food Plots



Prescribed Burning

- 2-3 year fire interval
 - Set back succession
 - Promote beneficial forbs
 - Growing and dormant season
- Growing season fire
 - Reduce hardwoods
 - Promote forbs
- Dormant season fire
 - Reduce fuel loads
 - Promotes hardwoods

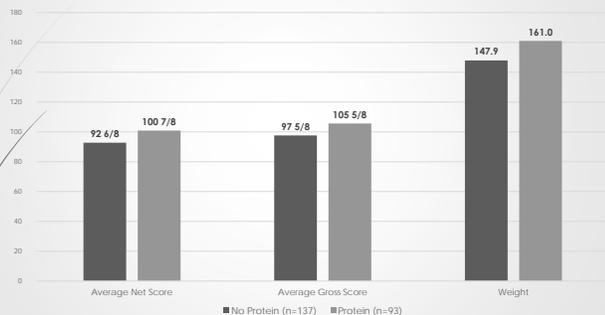


Feeding Programs

- Does not replace the need for quality habitat management
- Protein
 - Increase antler growth, reproduction, and lactation
 - Year round for best results
 - Free feed stations
- Corn
 - Main benefits come when other sources of nutrition is limited

Seed	Frequency of Occurrence
Zea mays (Corn)	60.0%
Quercus spp. (Acorns)	9.8%
Quercus virginiana (Live Oak Acorns)	3.3%
Quercus spp. (Shoestring Acorns & Fragments)	2.6%
Quercus nigra (Water Oak Acorns)	1.6%
Quercus muhlenbergii (Mullein Oak Acorns)	0.8%
Muhlenbergia spp. (Dayflower)	4.8%
Ambrosia artemisiifolia (Common Ragweed)	4.8%
Aeschynomene spp. (American Sainfoin)	4.0%
Cyperus spp. (Rushes)	4.0%
Avena sativa (Oats)	4.0%
Digitaria spp.	3.2%
Panicum millispicum (Miller)	2.4%
Paspalum spp.	1.6%

Average B&C Scores and Weights for Bucks 4.5+ Years Old



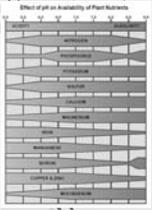
Food Plots

- Spring/Summer
 - Aeschynomene
 - Cowpeas
 - Grain Sorghum
 - Alycecolver
 - Sunn Hemp
- Fall/Winter
 - Cereal Grains (Oats, Wheat, Rye)
 - Clover (Crimson, Durana)
 - Chicory
 - Austrain Winter Pea



Food Plots

- Pull soil samples
- Lime your fields several months before planting
 - It can take up to 6 months for soil to be neutralized
 - Improves fertilizer efficiency up to 50%
- Plant species that are adapted to your area
- Install food plot enclosures to monitor browse pressure



<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1769.pdf>

Government Programs (FWC)



- Private Lands Deer Management Program
 - 5,000+ contiguous acres
 - Hunters are permitted to use any legal method of take during entire deer season
 - Antlerless and antlered deer tags
- Antlerless Permits
 - 640+ contiguous acres
 - 1 antlerless tag per 150 acres



Aging Bucks on the Hoof

- Factors affecting aging
 - Time of year
 - Position of deer in photo
 - Always use multiple pictures to determine age
 - Habitat quality
 - Take into account all factors when aging bucks



Characteristics by Age Class – 1.5 Year Old

- Very long legs
- Thin neck and waist
- Slim body
- Hind end is higher than front end



Characteristics by Age Class – 2.5 Year Old

- Legs still look too long for body
- Thin waist
- Hind end is more developed than shoulders
- Some swelling in neck during rut



Characteristics by Age Class – 3.5 Year Old

- Length of legs look proportionate to body
- Muscle development in shoulders and hind end looks equal
- Neck is much more developed



Characteristics by Age Class – 4.5 Year Old

- Legs appear too short for body
- Fully muscled shoulders
- Heavy swelling in neck during rut
- Waist has dropped down to become even with chest



Characteristics by Age Class – 5.5+ Year Old

- Legs appear too short for body
- Fully muscled shoulders, hind end, and neck
- Pot belly
- May begin to have swaying in back



Websites to Order Items for Data Collection

- Jawbone Puller (\$14.95)
 - <https://shop.qdma.com/jawbone-extractor-zinc-plated.html>
- Ring End Measuring Tape (\$9.00)
 - <https://pope-young.org/store/details.asp?uid=8A98EC6D-17A8-4569-B4FC-1056321E87F5>
- Measuring Cable (\$5.00)
 - <https://pope-young.org/store/details.asp?uid=28B56C9B-CC09-4306-B7F4-580BD23ED8D6>
- Fetal Aging Scale (\$4.95)
 - <https://shop.qdma.com/fetus-scale.html>

Check List for Starting a County Landowner Association

- Obtain list of County's landowners
- Analyze numbers for potential membership and revenue to set budget
- Develop list of potential Steering Committee members
(Consider all agriculture/business segments and geographic representation)
- Arrange location, date and time for first Steering Committee meeting
- Identify Steering Committee Host
- Mail invitation letter to potential Steering Committee members
- Obtain sponsor for first Steering Committee meeting and arrange lunch
- Develop County Landowner Association logo
- Provide for Steering Committee Meeting I
 - Agenda
 - Attendee Roster
 - Draft of bylaws including "County X" name
 - Examples of other Landowner Association materials:
 - Flier
 - Newsletter
 - Letterhead
 - Meeting I Goals:
 - Accept County Landowner Association concept
 - Revise Steering Committee Roster of interested members
 - Set next meeting date/time/place
 - Preview agenda items for Steering Committee Meeting II
 - Arrange sponsor for next meeting
- Provide for Steering Committee Meeting II
 - Agenda
 - Attendee Roster
 - Revised bylaws
 - Meeting II Goals:
 - Elect Board of Directors
 - Adopt bylaws
 - Discuss and accept dues structure
 - Discuss and accept logo
 - Discuss and set first membership meeting content, speaker and date/time/place
 - Set next meeting date/time/place
 - Preview agenda items for Steering Committee Meeting III
 - Arrange sponsor for next meeting

Jackson County Landowner Association Board Member Status

Election to be held in September at each Annual Meeting

One Year (2000)	Two Years (2001)	Three Years (2002)
Dale Eade	Jimmy McArthur	John Alter
Tommy Jackson	Chad Taylor	Cora Nell Haggard
Tom Stadslev	Bruce Turnbull	Jerry Kandzer

Ex officio members:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Steven Hall | 4-H |
| Ed Jowers | Agriculture Extension Office |
| Charles King | Jackson County Forester |
| Wendell Taylor | Jackson County |
| Jarett Tyus | Future Farmers of America |
| John Valenta | Northwest Florida Water Management District |

Jackson County Landowner Association Bylaws

3/1/99

Article I

Name

The name of the organization shall be the Jackson Landowner Landowner Association (hereafter referred to as the Landowner Association”), a local affiliate of the Florida Forestry Association (hereafter referred to as the “State Association”).

Article II

Purpose

The purpose of the Landowner Association shall be to serve landowners in Jackson County and to conduct communications and educational programs that will foster better land management and utilization, as well as an understanding of and appreciation for the land and land based industries and other related sciences of Jackson County, Florida.

Specifically, the Landowner Association will work to coordinate and stimulate programs that will:

- 1) promote, develop and protect land and natural resources in Jackson County;
- 2) promote the use of all food and fiber products grown, manufactured in, and distributed from Jackson County, the State of Florida, and other domestic and foreign markets;
- 3) maintain a political and economic climate in Jackson County that is conducive to the development and stewardship of land and natural resources and;
- 4) cooperate with allied associations, public and private agencies and universities in conducting programs beneficial to agriculture and all related natural resources in Jackson County.

Article III

Membership, Privileges and Dues

Section 1: Membership

Any person, firm, corporation, or organization engaged in or interested in the ownership and/or management of land used for food and fiber products grown, manufactured, and distributed in the state of Florida shall be eligible for membership in this Landowner Association, in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Directors.

Section II: Privileges

Each person, firm, corporation, or organization duly qualified as a member shall be entitled to one vote each.

Section III: Dues

The Board of Directors shall determine the basis of membership dues for this Landowner Association. A member shall have access to all Landowner Association privileges. However, these privileges are limited only to those benefits provided by the Landowner Association; it does not include those provided by the State Association. To receive these additional privileges including receipt of State Association publications and attendance at State Association meetings, an individual or entity must fill out a separate State Association Membership application and pay

additional annual membership dues to the State Association.

Article IV

Board of Directors

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall be composed of nine directors. Initially, the Board will be appointed by the Florida Forestry Association and approved by the Landowner Association Steering Committee. After the first term, the Board will be elected by the membership. Exofficio members shall consist of a representative of the following: Division of Forestry; Extension Service; Future Farmers of America; 4-H Clubs; Water Management District and will have voting privileges.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall begin on October 1 and shall be for three years, with the terms of one-third of them expiring annually.

Section 3. In the event of a vacancy in the Board, the Board shall appoint a member of the Landowner Association to serve for the unexpired term.

Section 4. The Directors shall represent as much as possible the geographical areas and communities of Jackson County.

Section 5. The Board shall act upon all business of the Landowner Association arising between annual meetings.

Section 6. The Board shall meet at least two times per year and as often as it decides. Special quarterly meetings of the Board may be called by the President as needed. In the case of special meetings, five days written notice of time and place shall be given.

Section 7. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 8. All Officers and Directors shall be dues paying members of ~~both~~ the Landowner Association and encouraged to become members of the State Association.

Article V

Officers

Section 1. The membership shall elect officers from the Board of Directors as it feels necessary annually to serve for a term of one year; provided, however, that the elected officers shall include a president, vice-president, a secretary -treasurer, and the immediate past president.

Section 2. The term of office of the officers shall begin on October 1. Elections for each office shall be annually. No officer shall be reelected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms. Any former officer can be reelected by the membership after a two year hiatus as an officer.

Article VI

President and Vice President

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board. The President shall appoint a chairman of all committees and shall sign all contracts made for and in behalf of the Landowner Association.

Section 2. The Vice President shall preside in the absence of the President. He shall assist the President and shall act in his place in the even of sickness or inability of the President to perform

the duties imposed upon him or incident to the office of President.

Section 3. The immediate Past President shall be considered an officer of the Landowner Association and shall serve as member of the Board the year following his tenure as President.

Article VII

Secretary - Treasurer

Section 1. It shall be the duty of the Secretary -Treasurer to properly account for all receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer shall make annual reports to the members showing the balance on hand and outstanding obligations and provide an annual audit to be compiled by an independent accounting firm, with copies provided to the board and members. In addition, he shall upon request of the Board, make special financial reports to the Board. He shall conduct the correspondence of the Landowner Association, have charge of and be responsible for the membership records and other books of account, give notice in writing of all annual and special meetings of the Landowner Association and its Board, and keep a permanent record of all the business conducted. In addition, provide additional copies of all activities including elections, by laws and annual reports to the Executive Vice President of the State Association within one month of completion. Initially, the Executive Vice President of the State Association shall serve as the Secretary-Treasurer.

Section 2. The President shall approve all receipts and expenditures and jointly sign all checks over \$250 with the Secretary-Treasurer.

Article VIII

Membership Meetings

Section 1. There shall be an annual meeting of the County Landowner Association scheduled at the discretion of the Board. Notice of said meeting shall be given to the membership at least ONE MONTH prior to said meeting.

Section 2. Other meetings may be called by action of the Board, provided the membership is given five days written notice.

Article IX

Procedure

Section 1. Amendments to the Bylaws may be made by a two-thirds affirmative vote of all members present at any annual meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose provided that written notice of such meeting shall include a copy of the proposed amendment.

Section 2. Business can be conducted by a majority vote of all members present and voting at any annual meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose.

Section 3. The fiscal year shall be from October 1 through September 30.

Section 4. Parliamentary proceedings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

Article X

Committees

Section 1. Committees may be appointed on an as-needed basis by the President. Committees

may be established by motion.

Article XI

Landowner Association and State Association Relationship

Section 1. Organization: A Landowner Association may consist of a group of Florida Forestry Association members and non-members. No Landowner Association shall use the name "Florida Forestry Association" without the written authorization of the Florida Forestry Association Board of Directors. The Florida Forestry Association will not use the Landowner Association name or make pronouncements without the consent of the Landowner Association Board.

Section 2. In addition to dues, the members of each Landowner Association may assess themselves for any costs incurred in conjunction with the activities of the Landowner Association.

Section 3. Bylaws: A Landowner Association shall make bylaws for their governance not inconsistent with the bylaws of the State Association and shall file bylaws with the Executive Vice President of the State Association.

Section 4. Reports: Each Landowner Association shall file copies of its minutes and an annual report with the Executive Vice President of the State Association. The President or his designated representative shall be encouraged to attend meetings of the Florida Forestry Association Board of Directors.

Section 5. A Landowner Association shall have the right to release through its officers, or a duly authorized spokesperson, expression or opinion, views, statements or other public pronouncements on matters of interest to and affect the welfare of the member of the Landowner Association and the general public. Copies of all releases shall be furnished to the State Association.

Section 6. The State Association does not assume any responsibility for, nor will it necessarily report, the action of any Landowner Association unless such action shall have first received approval of the Florida Forestry Association Executive Committee. The Landowner Association does not assume any responsibility for, nor will it necessarily report, the action of the state Association, unless such action have first received approval of the Landowner Association Board of Directors.

Section 7: The State Association will not assume liability for debts incurred by or for the expenditure of any Landowner Association. The Landowner Association will not assume liability for debts incurred by or for the expenditure of the state Association.

Section 8. The Florida Forestry Association shall have the right to rescind its affiliation with the Landowner Association. The Landowner Association reserves the same right to rescind its affiliation with the state Association.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Jackson County Landowner Association is to ensure that land and natural resources in Jackson County, as well as the products produced from those resources, are promoted, developed, and protected in ways that are of maximum mutual benefit to the owners of these resources, to the consumer of products provided, and to the economy and community of Jackson County.

Adopted March 1, 1999

Jackson County Landowner Association Committees

Programs Bruce Turnbull

Membership Jerry Kandzer
Tom Stadskev
Wendell Taylor

Nominations Wendell Taylor

Sponsors (Finance) Tommy Jackson
Jimmy McArthur
Tim Slichter

Public Relations John Alter

Issues Cora Nell Haggard
Chad Taylor
John Valenta

Special Programs

- **Youth Tours** Steven Hall - *Wof Fl* Larry Kool
Bruce Turnbull
Jarett Tyus
- **Farm-City Week** Ed Jowers
- **Economic Development** John Alter
Ed Jowers
- **Forestry Field Day** Charles King
- **Absentee Landowner Kit** John Alter
Charles King
Bruce Turnbull

Jackson County Landowner Association

2000 Annual Activity Calendar

“200 in 2000” Membership Campaign

<p style="text-align: center;">January</p> <p>Winter <u>LandLines</u> Board Meeting 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">July</p> <p>Summer <u>LandLines</u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">February</p> <p><i>Peanut Short Course 2</i> <i>MTF2000 1, 8, 15, 22, 29</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">August</p> <p>Board Meeting 7 (7:00 p.m.)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">March</p> <p><i>MTF2000 3/7, 14</i> Board Meeting 6 <i>Farm Credit Dinner 7</i> <i>Panhandle Beef Cattle Conference 15</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">September</p> <p>FFA Annual Meeting 6-7 Board Meeting 11 Annual Dinner Meeting 21 (1/3 Board Election)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">April</p> <p>Spring <u>LandLines</u> Easter 23 Board Meeting 25 <i>Herbicide Uses in Forestry Workshop</i> Mid-Year Meeting 25</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">October</p> <p>Fall <u>LandLines</u> County Fair 3-7 <i>Farm Bureau Dinner 5</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">May</p> <p><i>Landowner Tour 20</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">November</p> <p><i>Cattleman's Dinner 9</i> Board Meeting 13 Student Tour 14 Farm-City Tour 15 <i>Farm-City Week Dinner 16</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">June</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">December</p>

Note: 1. Activities written in *Italics* indicate opportunity for JCLA sponsorship.
2. Members will be notified of education/information opportunities, as they become available.

April 27, 2000

Annual Meeting Planner

Pre-Meeting Day Events

TIME	ACTIVITY	ACTION	REMARKS
Completed	Confirm date, place and time	Alter	Thursday, September 21, 2000 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Jackson County Fair Grounds
Completed	Contact speaker (Wayne Harris)	Turnbull	Management of Bobwhite Quail Habitat A/V requirements: 35mm projector Stand
Completed	Select caterer and menu	Taylor	Sonny's (pork/beef/chicken) BBQ \$6.99
	Secure meeting sponsor(s)	Doran	
	Contact 4-H / FFA	Schultz	Support for set up and handouts
Completed	Develop flier and mail	Alter	FFA to reproduce and mail
	Solicit industry displays	Turnbull/Hall	Send offer letters provided by Doran
Completed	Write and send media announcements and news release	Alter	
	Develop program, Q&A forms, and registration sheet	Alter	

Meeting Day Events

2:00 (Possibly day before)	Room set up	Taylor Alter Hall	Dais, tables and chairs, serving tables, podium, flags, signs, banners, table clothes, AV & PA system, registration & industry displays __Recorded music: Hall Table decorations: Taylor
4:00	Distribute handouts	4-H / FFA	
5:00	Food set up	Taylor	
5:00	Board arrive	All	Assist in final set up requirements
5:30	Registration open	Valenta Kandzer Haggard	Name tags? Push membership!
6:00	Welcome & short business session	Alter	Pitch JCLA purpose and membership; election of officers; invocation—Brasher
6:20	Dinner is served	Taylor	<u>GOAL: Served in less than 30 minutes;</u> 2 serving lines; go through exhibit area
6:50	Sponsor/VIP recognition	Alter Taylor, Wendell	
7:00	Program	Turnbull	
8:30	Q&A session	Turnbull	
9:00	Closing comments & dismissal	Alter	Thank sponsors & membership push



The Value of Forming a Prescribed Burn Association

John Diaz, Jennifer E. Fawcett and John R. Weir

Introduction

Prescribed burning is the application of fire to the landscape to meet multiple land management objectives.¹ It is one land management practice that can be used to restore the natural balance of ecosystems in a safe and calculated way, while also reducing wildfire risk. While most plant communities in the South are dependent on fire to maintain plants and native wildlife, many lands do not receive as much fire as they need.

In the South, the majority of forest land is privately owned. This means that the ability to manage fire-dependent and fire-adapted ecosystems is contingent upon the private landowner's capacity to use prescribed fire on their lands. Many landowners already use prescribed fire for accomplishing their management goals, but most do not. To some, burning is viewed as a risky and daunting task, which hinders their willingness to utilize prescribed fire. However, evidence shows that with the help of neighbors and other landowners, prescribed burning is easier, safer, and more economical than when trying to burn on one's own.^{2, 3, 4}

The development of Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs) is becoming an increasingly popular approach to increase private landowner's ability to utilize prescribed fire.

What Is a Prescribed Burn Association?

A PBA is a group of local landowners and other concerned citizens that form a partnership to conduct prescribed burns.³ PBAs have successfully increased prescribed fire use by landowners and land managers, mainly by making it easier and safer to use prescribed fire.⁴ The goal of a PBA is to promote the safe and responsible use of fire in the region through increasing landowner access to education, training, technical support, funding, equipment for burning, and hands-on experience to achieve multiple management objectives.³ Each PBA is operated by private landowners and other local volunteers.³ Examples of PBA-led activities can include conducting training and workshop events, working to improve prescribed burn laws, tracking prescribed burn activity in the region, and purchasing burn equipment for use by PBA members.³

PBAs can be formed at various levels, such as local, county, or multi-county, depending on the need. A state-level PBA, such



Members of the Roger Mills County PBA in western Oklahoma get ready for a prescribed burn. Photo: John Weir.

as the Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas (www.pbatexas.org) or Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association (www.ok-pba.org), can also be formed to support existing local, county, or multi-county PBAs and to help develop new PBAs within the state. These larger-scale PBAs can assist local organizations by providing additional resources, promoting the establishment of local PBAs, and advocating in state legislatures and regulatory agencies. Such state-level fire coalitions and prescribed fire councils were a driving force in passing "Right-to-Burn Acts" that established prescribed burning as essential to maintaining and restoring ecological integrity.⁵

In 2015, there were 62 known PBAs in eight states, along with two statewide burn associations (Oklahoma and Texas) and one regional alliance.⁴ This represents an increase from the 50 PBAs that were in existence as of 2012. In 2016, a new PBA was developed in North Carolina (North Carolina Sandhills Prescribed Burn Association) increasing the current figure to 63.⁶

For more information and an interactive map of existing PBAs, please visit www.gpffirescience.org/fire-organizations-agencies.



Members of the North Carolina Sandhills PBA shared resources and equipment to conduct a prescribed burn on a landowner's property. Photo: Brady Beck Photography.

Barriers to Burning and How PBAs Can Help

According to surveys, landowners have listed several reasons they do not burn.^{7, 8, 9} These surveys identified the following major barriers, which are described in more detail below:

- Liability concerns
- Lack of capacity
- Lack of training and/or experience
- Resource concerns (including limited access to equipment)
- Weather (including narrow burn windows and limited burn days)

Prescribed Burn Associations can help members to

- Obtain insurance and effectively manage risk by addressing the other needs,
- Increase available peer support to burn,
- Gain experience through assisting with burns,
- Take advantage of narrow burn windows by deploying quickly and having multiple groups burning at once, and
- Pool equipment to increase resource availability.

Liability

The fear of liability is arguably the most significant concern related to prescribed burning among landowners. By increasing capacity, experience, and equipment through a PBA, liability risk will subsequently be reduced. Planning burns with multiple landowners, where neighbors assist one another, reduces liability as well because if a landowner burns only their property, the biggest concern is keeping the fire on their property. If multiple landowners plan their burns together, they allow fire to pass freely from one property to another without the worry or fear of liability. This also can make burning more economical due to using natural or man-made firebreaks that may exist on a neighboring property, along

with burning larger blocks at once, thus reducing costs, time, and number of burn days needed.

PBAs exhibit relative success in mitigating issues of liability in relation to the occurrence of spotfires (a fire started by flying sparks or embers at a distance from the main fire) and escaped burns. A study by Weir et al. found that spotfires occurred on prescribed burns conducted by PBAs at the identical rate (1 of 5 burns) relative to experienced crews within the same region.⁴ They also found that only 1.5% of a total of 1,094 fires conducted by PBAs escaped, with no reported insurance claims against any of the PBAs or members. This demonstrates that PBAs can manage spotfires and mitigate the potential for escaped burns.

Also, in some cases, PBAs can provide prescribed fire liability insurance at an affordable rate to landowners through a group discount. Potential damages caused by escaped fires, suppression costs, injury to people assisting with the burn, or problems caused by smoke are usually covered with insurance. A minimal annual fee and additional charge may incur for each burn the landowner would like to have insured.

Capacity

A significant challenge for prescribed fire implementation both at a national and regional level is lack of capacity. Research shows that there is a lack of trained prescribed fire managers, training opportunities, private contractors, and partnerships that has resulted in a major bottleneck for the appropriate application of prescribed fire.¹⁰ PBAs provide a successful method for building prescribed fire capacity through the development of a collaborative network of landowners, government agencies, conservation groups, and other interested individuals and organizations that come together with the common goals of expanding the use of prescribed fire in a specific geographic region.

Training and Experience

Knowledgeable landowners who are well equipped with an informed crew are less concerned about liability because they know how to effectively plan and manage prescribed fire.¹¹ Successful PBAs can also assist in confronting negative local attitudes and reactions to burning. For example, one Texas PBA was able to successfully rebut accusations of property damage and received an apology in the local paper from the accuser.⁵ Weir et al. surveyed 50 PBAs located in five Great Plains states about their formation, burn history, fire planning, member experience, external assistance, and other information.⁴ The majority of respondents reported that their members had a mix of training or experience prior to joining the PBA, with 75% reporting that some members did not have prior training or experience and 88% reporting that some members did have prior training or experience. This shows that PBAs provide an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning as both experienced and non-experienced burners can work side-by-side to gain valuable experience in the implementation of prescribed fire.

Resources

In the same survey of PBAs, members indicated that drip torches, radios, slip-on pump units and ATV sprayers, ATVs, weather instruments/kits, utility vehicles, flappers/swatters and fire rakes were commonly used on burns.⁴ Gloves, flame retardant shirts and pants, and goggles/safety glasses were reported as the personal protective equipment most frequently worn on burns. Members identify the value of pooling their equipment so no one person has to buy all of the equipment needed to burn. Some PBAs partner with their local fire department to rent or use equipment for conducting burns, as well as having the local fire department present with additional manpower and equipment for burns.³

In addition to equipment, PBAs can receive funding through grants or donations. The aforementioned survey found that all responding PBAs received funding in the form of private donations, nongovernmental organization grants and donations, along with state and federal grants ranging from \$500 to \$250,000.⁴ The funds have been used for needs such as equipment and training activities.

Weather

Narrowing burn windows as a result of weather or limiting burning to a single season of the year also presents a very significant challenge when coupled with the aforementioned impediments related to capacity. Experience has shown that PBAs are more efficient in accomplishing prescribed burns than landowners burning on their own because they can organize the required labor and support quickly within the often narrow window of desired weather conditions.⁴ Also several PBAs have enough members and equipment available to conduct multiple burns in a single day.

Summary

The total value of forming a PBA is not only realized by one individual, but by many. The services resulting from an active PBA benefit neighbors, as well as the community through healthy forests and rangelands, reduced wildfire impacts, and the multitude of other benefits that prescribed burning provides. A video, produced by the North Carolina Sandhills Prescribed Burn Association, depicts the value of this PBA to its members: <https://youtu.be/HaHt6ZLYd3o>. More information about forming a PBA is available at <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2819/F-2880web.pdf>.

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Authors

John Diaz, University of Florida; Jennifer E. Fawcett, North Carolina State University; and John R. Weir, Oklahoma State University



NC STATE UNIVERSITY



For more information, visit www.southernfireexchange.org or email contactus@southernfireexchange.org.



The Southern Fire Exchange is funded through the Joint Fire Science Program, in agreement with the United States Forest Service, Southern Research Station. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Ten Tips for Encouraging the Use of Your Pine Plantations by Game Species¹

Holly K. Ober, Stanton Rosenthal, and William Sheftall²

Many forest landowners are interested in managing their property to achieve more than one objective. A common combination of objectives for Florida forest landowners is producing timber products while also providing habitat for wildlife that can be hunted. These two objectives are compatible, but some tradeoffs may be required because strategies that maximize timber production are not always the same as those that provide superior habitat for game species.

Before implementing any forest management activities, it is important to think through your objectives and decide which is the higher priority: wildlife or timber production? Individuals who prioritize wildlife over hunting may sacrifice some income that could have been attained through timber, but they may recoup this if they charge for hunting leases after they have improved the habitat for game species.

Habitat is a species-specific concept. What makes a particular area good habitat for one species may make it less useful for other species. Therefore, it is impossible to manage a single stand of trees to provide quality habitat for all wildlife species simultaneously. However, many of the popular game species in Florida have similar habitat needs, so it is possible to implement strategies that are likely to benefit several of the species you may want to attract across your entire acreage. Here we provide brief tips on how to

make pine plantations more suitable for game species, and list additional resources where further details can be found. Information on increasing the wildlife diversity in pine plantations is available in *Ten Tips for Increasing Wildlife Biodiversity in Your Pine Plantations* (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW319>).



Figure 1. Pine plantations can provide habitat for game such as white-tailed deer.

Credits: Holly Ober, UF/IFAS

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2. Holly K. Ober, associate professor and Extension specialist, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, North Florida Research and Education Center; Stanton Rosenthal and William Sheftall, natural resource Extension agents, UF/IFAS Extension Leon County; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.

Tip #1—Increase Spacing among Trees

Forest owners interested in maximizing growth rates of pines typically plant at high densities (often 726 trees per acre, or tpa). Stands planted at high densities allow little sunlight to reach the forest floor. This greatly limits the amount and variety of herbaceous plants (i.e., grasses, legumes, and forbs) that can grow within the stand. Because most game species rely on herbaceous plant growth on the forest floor for food (grazing, seed eating, bugging) or cover, dense tree spacing may prevent use of these stands by these animals.

Two modifications can increase the suitability of pine plantations for game species. First, pines can be planted initially at lower densities (350 to 500 tpa). Alternatively, pines can be planted at high densities and then thinned several times early in the life of the stand. The first thinning should occur when trees reach a merchantable size (usually around 15 years for pulpwood). Subsequent thinning can be planned every 5 to 10 years thereafter. Thinning according to this schedule will not only increase food availability and cover for game, but will also improve growing conditions for the remaining trees.

Tip #2—Use Herbicides to Selectively Control the Hardwood Midstory

Pine stands with wide spacing can develop a dense midstory of hardwood shrubs and trees if these are left to grow. A dense midstory prevents sunlight from getting to the ground. It also creates competition between the pines, the hardwoods, and the non-woody plants that occur at the ground level. As mentioned in tip #1, the herbaceous plants that occur at the ground level provide an extremely important source of food for game species.

Herbicides can be used to selectively remove the midstory hardwood layer while not disturbing the desirable plants.

Tip #3—Use Fire to Stimulate Non-Woody Groundcover and to Control Hardwoods

Natural fires were historically a common occurrence in Florida, and they alter forests in ways that benefit wildlife. Prescribed burning is a technique that can be used to

obtain the same benefits that would occur after a wildfire, but under more controlled conditions.

Fire increases habitat quality in pine stands for game species in several ways: it reduces the hardwood midstory, increases the quantity and diversity of herbaceous plants, and improves the quality of herbaceous plants as wildlife food. Younger herbaceous plants tend to be more palatable and more nutritious than older plants, so fire benefits wildlife by creating a flush of highly nutritious food plants. Also, fire increases seed, fruit, and flower production of many species, which results in a greater diversity and increased quantity of food for wildlife. Varying the time of year when burns are implemented and the return intervals between fires will favor different plants. See *Prescribed Burning Regulations in Florida* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR055>, for additional information on prescribed burning.

Tip #4—Maximize the Amount of Edge Habitat

Game species thrive in areas where multiple habitat types meet. Most game species feed on herbaceous plants that are typically more abundant outside of planted pine stands than within, but they rely on the forest to provide cover from predators. Thus, by creating numerous small forest stands rather than a few large stands, a large amount of this transition area—called “edge habitat”—is created. Forest stands planted next to one another should be at least 8–10 years apart in age to maximize the difference in food and cover resources available from each.

Edges can be either “hard” or “soft”. Hard edges are abrupt transitions between habitats, whereas soft edges are more gradual transitions. Because abrupt habitat transitions are less beneficial to game species than more gradual transitions, efforts should be made to make hard edges softer. This could involve a gradual thinning of trees between a dense forest stand and a grassy area or the promotion of weedy and shrubby areas between grassy areas and forest stands.

Tip #5—Maintain a Diversity of Food Sources

Certain hardwood trees and shrubs provide hard mast (nuts) and soft mast (fruit) that serve as important sources of food for game species. Hardwood drainages and bottomland forests are examples of areas where hardwoods naturally predominate, and where a variety of food sources are typically available to wildlife. These areas should not be

converted to pines, but should be allowed to stay as is so that a sequence of varying food resources becomes available throughout the year. If any hardwoods are harvested from these areas, care should be taken to retain those individual trees that consistently produce large crops of mast. See *Managing Oaks to Produce Food for Wildlife* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW293>, for additional information on managing oaks for wildlife.

Tip #6—Create Travel Corridors

Most animals do not feel comfortable moving through exposed, treeless areas during the day, which can limit their ability to obtain food and find cover. Planting narrow lanes of trees to connect isolated stands of trees in open agricultural landscapes will increase animal movement among stands. Similarly, if trees and shrubs are allowed to grow along fence lines, these linear routes will be used more frequently as travel corridors than if all natural vegetation is regularly removed.

Tip #7—Create and Maintain Permanent Forest Openings

As mentioned in tips #1 and 2, naturally occurring herbaceous plants are an important source of food for game species. Because the amount of groundcover that will grow within pine stands is limited, the areas next to pine stands can be managed to provide additional food resources. Roads, firebreaks, power line easements, and rights-of-way are areas that need to be maintained in fairly open conditions to serve their primary purpose, and can easily be managed in ways that increase food availability for wildlife.

Periodic disking, mowing, or prescribed burning will prevent growth of trees and shrubs while stimulating herbaceous plants as well as the seeds and insects associated with them that are food for young turkey and quail. Disturbing the soil at different times of year will stimulate different plants: October disking will promote heavy-seeded annuals, April disking will promote seed-producing grasses, and June disking will promote plants that attract insects. Disturbing different areas at different times of the year makes a variety of food available to wildlife.

Tip #8—Use Logging Decks Strategically

Make decisions regarding the location of logging decks carefully. These areas can serve as permanent openings that provide food for wildlife. They should be positioned strategically—to intersperse food and cover into large

blocks of forests; to increase edge; to add contrasting habitat in areas where upland forest and drains converge; and to encourage aggregation in locations convenient for hunting and viewing and in places where the soil is conducive to grow the type of cover or forage desired.

You will reap the greatest benefits from logging decks that are properly maintained. It is wise to assess what you can do to your logging decks up-front to reduce your maintenance costs later on. Carefully consider soil conditions when siting your decks and invest in up-front weed control and liming if needed. Be sure to discuss with loggers how stumps will be removed and where debris will be piled for later burning. If you do not plan this out before the logging begins, a great deal of time and effort may be required to clear stumps and debris later.

Tip #9—Create Food Plots

Poor soil fertility tends to produce natural vegetation which is low in nutritional quality. Most of Florida's soils are low in fertility compared to soils elsewhere in the United States, which is part of the reason Florida has relatively small-bodied deer relative to more northern states. Planting food plots with nonnative varieties known to be palatable to game species can be a good strategy to provide nutrients known to be limiting to wildlife, such as high protein foods during warmer months when animals are reproductively active, and carbohydrates during the cooler months. Food plots are also an option for aggregating game for viewing and hunting. It is important to keep in mind that Florida's low soil fertility makes it difficult to grow some forages that thrive in other regions of the country, so be sure to select forages appropriate for the soils in your area

A great deal of information is available on how, where, and when to plant food plots as well as which plants to include in a food plot. See *Establishment of Food Plots for White-Tailed Deer in Central and South Florida* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW262>; *A walk on the wild side: 2013 cool-season forage recommendations for wildlife food plots in North Florida* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ag139>; and *Supplemental Feeding and Food Plots for Bobwhite Quail* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW264> for information tailored to specific species and regions of the state.

Tip #10—Leave Some Brushy Areas

Although it is important to prevent hardwoods from forming a continuous, tall canopy under your pines across large acreages, leaving a few small, scattered areas of brushy

vegetation is a good idea. Turkey hens seek out areas with dense brush 2–3 feet high that provides overhead cover to conceal their nests from predators during nesting season (April through June). Although quail prefer warm-season bunch grasses 1–2 feet tall when nesting (May through August), small patches of low brushy vegetation in and around pine stands will provide escape cover and food resources. Disturbing such areas on a periodic basis (every 3 to 5 years) will stimulate early-successional mast-producing species such as blackberries and dewberries, while preventing the establishment of woody trees.

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW262>.

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White-tailed Deer Spotlight Survey

Property: _____ Date: _____ Transect/Direction: _____
 Observer 1: _____ Observer 2: _____ Driver/Recorder: _____
 Sunset: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____
 Start: Temperature: _____ Humidity: _____ Wind speed: _____ Cloud cover: _____
 End: Temperature: _____ Humidity: _____ Wind speed: _____ Cloud cover: _____
 Comments: _____

	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Unknown	Group Size	Comments	16	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Unknown	Group Size	Comments
1							16						
2							17						
3							18						
4							19						
5							20						
6							21						
7							22						
8							23						
9							24						
10							25						
11							26						
12							27						
13							28						
14							29						
15							30						

Cost Share Programs for Florida's Agricultural Producers and Landowners¹

Rao Mylavarapu, Kelly Hines, and Tatiana Borisova²

Introduction

Several US Department of Agriculture (USDA) sponsored programs encourage and reward agricultural producers and landowners practicing environmental stewardship. Authorized by the federal Farm Bill and administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), these programs provide technical and financial assistance to eligible producers and landowners who voluntarily implement practices to protect soil, water, air, wildlife habitats, and related natural resources. In 2014, congress passed a new Farm Bill that will govern the nation's laws of agriculture for the following five years. This legislation will be regulating funding for nutrition, conservation, research, and energy programs. Of a total \$956 billion budget over ten years, the 2014 Farm Bill dedicates approximately \$58 billion toward conservation programs, specialty crops, pest and disease, research and the expansion of trade, over that period.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

The EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and ranchers who voluntarily install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land to protect soil, water, air quality, and/or wildlife habitat. This program promotes agricultural

production and environmental quality as compatible goals (USDA-NRCS 2014). Eligible participants are able to receive financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices on their owned land. Payments of up to \$450,000 are made to participants after an EQIP plan/practice is constructed and/or measures have been carried out (generally, covering not more than 75% of the conservation project cost, and not more than 100% of the foregone income). EQIP contracts have maximum ten-year duration for funding. In addition, socially disadvantaged, new and limited resource farmers, Indian tribes, and veterans are eligible for/may be eligible to receive advance payment of up to 50 percent to purchase materials and/or services needed to carry out conservation practices as dictated in their EQIP contract, and may be able to request EQIP funding to cover up to 90% of the project costs. The former Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is now merged with EQIP, providing cost-share for the landowners who improve habitat (USDA-NRCS 2014). New programs that have merged under EQIP are the Air Quality Initiative (AQI), Organic Initiative, and National Water Quality Initiative, and are available to Florida agricultural land owners and producers.

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2. Rao Mylavarapu, associate professor, nutrient management specialist, Department of Soil and Water Sciences; Kelly Hines, chemist, Nutrient Management Program, Department of Soil and Water Sciences; Tatiana Borisova, assistant professor, Food and Resource Economics Department; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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The priorities for EQIP's national and state participation are to:

- reduce pollutants, such as excess nutrients, pesticides, and salinity that may harm surrounding surface or ground water resources;
- reduce emissions such as oxides of nitrogen, organic compounds and particulate matter to protect air quality;
- reduce soil erosion and excess sediment accumulation on farm land;
- protect existing habitats of endangered and threatened wildlife;
- create new habitats or improve existing habitats for specific fish and/or wildlife species (former WHIP program) (NRCS 2014).

To be eligible for EQIP funding, the applicants must be agricultural producers or owners of non-industrial private forestland. Indian tribes are also eligible to apply for EQIP. Land that is eligible includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland, and other farm or ranch lands, that are privately owned. The producer or land owner and local NRCS will create a specific plan of operation that includes specific environmental conservation measures to be achieved, identifies one or more conservation management practices that will be used, and includes a timeline of implementation. Application deadlines for this program are determined annually by NRCS.

- Newly added and more focused regions of EQIP include the Air Quality Initiative (AQI), Organic Initiative, and National Water Quality. These programs all fall under EQIP jurisdiction but are more specific in their areas of focus (USDA-NRCS, 2014).
- The Air Quality Initiative provides financial assistance to agricultural producers or land owners to implement conservation practices for air quality resource concerns and reduction of air ozone and particulate pollutants for certain high priority geographic locations. Priority states are designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) yearly.
- The Organic Initiative (OI) provides assistance and helps producers plan and develop a conservation plan with NRCS to keep their organic operations environmentally sustainable. This plan includes producers who are already certified organic or are transitioning to organic status.
- National Water Quality helps producers and ranchers create and implement a conservation system to reduce nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorous, sediment,

and pathogens from farm or ranch land to a specific designated watershed.

More information on application can be found on the following website <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/> (USDA-NRCS 2014).

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical help to landowners or producers to help conserve and protect integrity of agricultural land and wetlands, and prevent conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. This program was not available in the previous Farm Bills, and it integrates components of former Wetland Reserve Program, Farmland Protection Program, and the Grassland Protection Program. There are two components to this program: (1) Agricultural Land Easements component, which aids Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect current agricultural land and limit non-agricultural use of the land; and (2) Wetlands Reserve Easements that includes restoration, protection and enhancement of enrolled wetlands (USDA-NRCS 2014).

The benefits of this program are seen in the two program sections. Agricultural Land Easement was developed to protect the long-term functionality of the US food supply by preventing conversion of working agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. Land is protected by agricultural land easements to provide the following benefits: enhancing environmental quality, historic preservation, wildlife habitat and inclusion of open space. The benefit of Wetland Reserve Easements is to provide an enhanced habitat for fish and wildlife, with emphasis on endangered species, improve water quality through filtration and removal of excess sediment and chemical waste, reduce flooding and erosion, recharge groundwater sources, protect biodiversity of species, and provide opportunities for public educational, scientific and recreational activities (USDA-NRCS 3/2014).

Part 1: Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

Financial assistance is available to eligible partners for the purchase of Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) that protect land that meets criteria for agricultural use and natural conservation measures. In the case of working agricultural lands, the program helps producers keep their land in agriculture and prevents non-agriculture development. ALE portion of ACEP also utilizes agricultural grazing land for continued grazing and related conservation by conserving

grassland, rangeland, pastureland and scrubland. Partnership eligibility includes the following: Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs. The financial assistance provided by the NRCS is as follows: NRCS may contribute up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement. In certain surveyed areas where NRCS determines that a particular grassland is of an important environmental significance, up to 75 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement may be compensated for (USDA-NRCS 3/2014).

Part 2: Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)

Financial aid from the NRCS is available to private landowners and Indian tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands through the purchase of a wetland reserve easement. For land owned by an Indian tribe, there is the possibility of an extended 30-year contract. Wetland reserve easements covered costs include the following recording the easement in the local land records office, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance (USDA-NRCS 2014).

- **Permanent Easements**—Permanent Easements are conservation easements with indefinite ownership and management through the NRCS. NRCS will pay 100 percent of the easement value for the purchase of the easement. Associated restoration costs are absorbed by the NRCS at 75-100 percent.
- **30-year Easements**—These easements will expire after 30 years. NRCS will pay 50 to 75 percent of the easement value for the purchase of the easement and between 50 to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
- **Term Easements**—Term easements are easements that are for the maximum duration allowed under individual state law. NRCS will pay 50 to 75 percent of the easement value for the purchase of the term easement and between 50 to 75 percent of the restoration costs (USDA-NRCS 3/2014).

Applications for enrollment are taken year around and more information can be found at the NRCS website at [-http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/easements/acep/?cid=stelprdb1242695](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/easements/acep/?cid=stelprdb1242695).

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The current CSP program is designed to reward agricultural producers who have a record of implementing practices that conserve and protect soil, water, wildlife habitats,

air, and environmentally responsible energy production. CSP participants will receive payments for conservation performance the greater the performance level the higher the payment (although the payment may also be based on costs incurred and income foregone).

Eligibility for CSP includes privately owned and tribal land used for agricultural purposes. Cropland, grassland, pastureland, rangeland, and nonindustrial forest land are all eligible. CSP is available to all producers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Island areas. There is no size or crop limitations imposed by this program. Individuals, legal entities, joint operations, or Indian tribes are eligible as long as they have at least two priority resource concerns upon application. Applicants must meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the contract as determined by the NRCS (USDA-NRCS 3/2014).

CSP has two payment types depicted in five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation measures and maintaining existing accepted practices; and supplemental payments for adding in a resource-conserving crop rotation. Producers may be able to renew a contract yearly if they have fulfilled the original contract and agree to add one more additional conservation practice for each year of renewal. A financial limit of no more than \$200,000 for an individual or legal entity is in place for fiscal years 2014-2018. Applications are taken year round with payments received in October of the fiscal year. For more information please see the website

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp/>.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a new program adopted by the 2014 Farm Bill that is designed to promote coordinated efforts between NRCS and other partners to deliver conservation financial assistance to producers and landowners on regional and/or watershed scales. NRCS uses program contracts or easement agreements to form partnership agreements for financial assistance to agricultural producers. RCPP is a combination of four former conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, and the Great Lakes Basin Program (USDA-NRCS 2014).

The goal of RCPP is to encourage environmental resource partners to join in efforts with agricultural producers to increase the improvement and sustainability of soil, water, wildlife, and related natural resources on regional or watershed scales. The RCPP program utilizes NRCS and its partners to aid producers in developing a conservation plan, along with installing and maintaining conservation activities in specified regional areas. RCPP funding in project areas is based on the level and quality of achieved. The Secretary of Agriculture may also designate up to eight critical conservation areas to focus RCPP assistance. This is currently being addressed (USDA-NRCS 3/2014).

Eligible Partners

Eligible Partners include agriculture producer associations, farmer cooperatives, state or local governments, American Indian tribes, municipal water treatment groups, water and irrigation districts, conservation-driven nongovernmental organizations, and institutions of higher education. Eligible Participants include agricultural producers and landowners and owners of non-industrial private forestland. Either participant is eligible to merge with a Partner to develop conservation program contracts or easement agreements under a mutual partnership agreement.

Applications for Participants

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/?cid=stelprdb1242732>

NRCS will outline requirements for proposal submissions for funding. Partnership proposals will be reviewed according to the priorities announced, and then selections will be made. After selection of a partnership proposal, NRCS and the partner will enter into a partnership agreement, where both parties coordinate to provide producers in the designated project area financial and technical assistance. Partnership agreements may be for a period of up to five years. NRCS has the ability to extend the partnership an additional twelve months in order to complete the project (USDA-NRCS 3/2014).

1. If the producer is in agreement, a partner may submit the application for participation in a selected project area
2. Directly at their local USDA Service Center in a selected project area
3. Directly at their local USDA Service center in a critical conservation area designated by the Secretary of Agriculture

Partnership Agreements

1. Eligible activities to be constructed
2. Designation of agricultural or nonindustrial private forest operation affected
3. Geographic area covered (local, state, or regional)
4. Planning, implementation, and assessment to be conducted

Partners are responsible for financial support of the project, providing education to eligible producers for potential participation in the project area, and for conducting an assessment of the long term goals of the project. Partners may act on behalf of the eligible landowner or producer in the application and negotiation process for developing the project and receiving appropriate funding provided. Before finalizing the contract the partner must provide an assessment of the project costs, plan of action, and conservation effects (USDA-NRCS 3/2014).

Conclusion

Overall, 2014 Farm Bill provides a variety of cost-share programs to encourage implementation of environmental stewardship programs on agricultural lands. Significant emphasis is made on funding environmental programs and projects on working land conservation programs (e.g., EQIP and CSP programs), as opposed to funding agricultural land retirement projects (e.g., CRP). Specifically, combined funding for EQIP and CSP is projected to account for more than 50% of the Farm Bill conservation spending in 2014–2018 (even though a large proportion of these funds will be spent on the contracts signed in the past).

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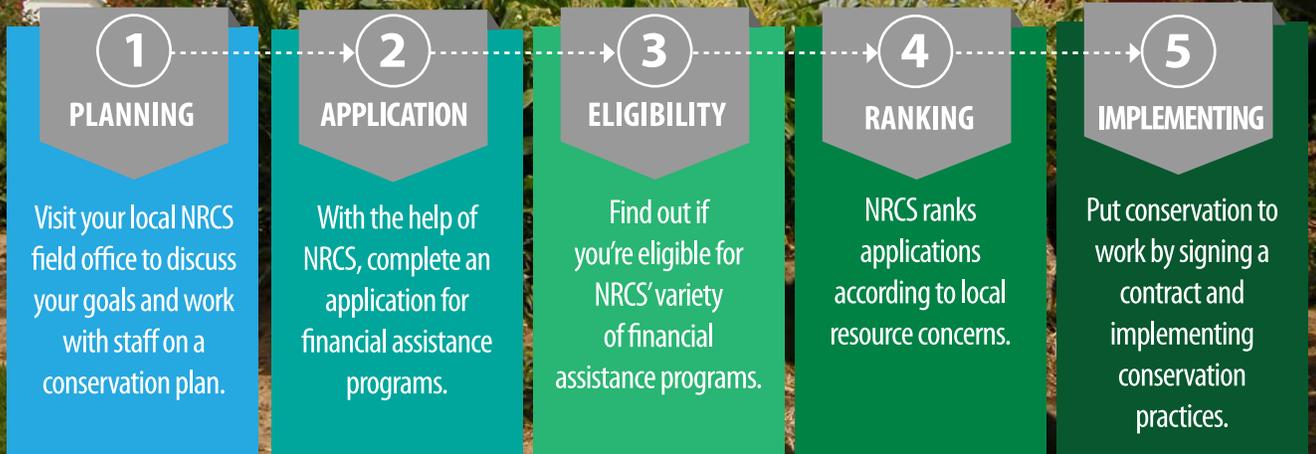
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5

Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS for Farms, Ranches and Forests



Get Started with NRCS

Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

1 Planning To get started with NRCS, we recommend you stop by your local NRCS field office. We'll discuss your vision for your land.

NRCS provides landowners with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you.

2 Application We'll walk you through the application process. To get started on applying for financial assistance, we'll work with you:

- To fill out an AD 1026, which ensures a conservation plan is in place before lands with highly erodible soils are farmed. It also ensures that identified wetland areas are protected.
- To meet other eligibility certifications.

Once complete, we'll work with you on the application, or CPA 1200.

Applications for most programs are accepted on a continuous basis, but they're considered for funding in different ranking periods. Be sure to ask your local NRCS district conservationist about the deadline for the ranking period to ensure you turn in your application in time.

3 Eligibility As part of the application process, we'll check to see if you are eligible.

To do this, you'll need to bring:

- An official tax ID (Social Security number or an employer ID)
- A property deed or lease agreement to show you have control of the property; and
- A farm tract number.

If you don't have a farm tract number, you can get one from USDA's Farm Service Agency. Typically, the local FSA office is located in the same building as the local NRCS office. You only need a farm tract number if you're interested in financial assistance.

4 Ranking NRCS will take a look at the applications and rank them according to local resource concerns, the amount of conservation benefits the work will provide and the needs of applicants.

5 Implementing If you're selected, you can choose whether to sign the contract for the work to be done.

Once you sign the contract, you'll be provided standards and specifications for completing the practice or practices, and then you will have a specified amount of time to implement. Once the work is implemented and inspected, you'll be paid the rate of compensation for the work if it meets NRCS standards and specifications.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

To find out more, go to: www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted

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