



Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries Update Newsletter

Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries
George Hopper - Professor and Head

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Calendar of Events - 2002

January 29

Timber Tax Workshop, Memphis
Shelby County Extension Office

January 30

Timber Tax Workshop, Columbia
Tennessee Farm Bureau

January 31

Timber Tax Workshop, Knoxville
U.T. Ag. Campus, Ellington Plant Sciences Bldg.

February 5 - March 19

Master Tree Farmer Advanced Program (MTF II), Satellite Shortcourse
Knoxville and Jackson

Faculty:

Brian Bond, Forest Products
Wayne Clatterbuck, Forest Management
Craig Harper, Wildlife Management
Thomas Hill, Fisheries Management

George Hopper, Natural Resources
David Mercker, Forest Management
Larry Tankersley, Forest Management

Timber Tax Workshops - Locations and Registration

Larry Tankersley, Forest Management

Timber tax workshops will be offered in three locations across the state of Tennessee. This workshop is designed to explain the Federal income tax as it pertains to timber. Landowners, managers, attorneys, accountants and other professionals who work with timber and timberland are encouraged to attend.

Federal taxes are second only to reforestation costs in their affect on returns from growing timber. Effective management of taxes is important for profitable forest management. The Internal Revenue Code contains a number of incentives designed to encourage timber production. It is our responsibility however to know how to take advantage of these opportunities.

We plan to discuss claiming casualty losses to damaged timber, reforestation incentives, cost-saving ways to report timber sale proceeds and more. Managing your taxes saves you money and encourages good forest management.

Please plan to attend one of the workshops and bring a friend. The registration fee to attend this workshop is \$30.00. Dates and locations are as follows:

January 29th, the workshop will be at the Shelby County Extension Office. Please contact Jeff Via, telephone: 901-544-0243, fax 901-544-0247 or e-mail jdvia@utk.edu.

January 30th, the workshop will be at the Tennessee Farm Bureau Office in Columbia. Please contact Richard Groce at the Maury County Extension office, telephone: 931-388-9557, fax 931-381-3690 or email regroce@utk.edu.

January 31st, the workshop will be at The University of Tennessee agricultural campus in the Ellington Plant Sciences building, room 128. Contact person is Larry Tankersley.

For more information contact: *Larry Tankersley at 865-974-7346*

latankersley@utk.edu

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Certification for the Small Forest Landowner

David Mercker, Extension Forester

Certification of forest products is a process which provides a guarantee to the buyer that his or her purchase comes from a well-managed forest and will not favor unsustainable or inequitable practices (Upton and Bass, 1996). If certification catches on, it may raise the standard on how forests world-wide are managed. Becoming certified will qualify a landowner for access to a market driven by certification and *may* allow for a higher market price for their timber when sold.

Product labeling is nothing new. As consumers, we are already aware of products labeled by the Underwriters Laboratory, of motion picture labeling and USDA grade A meat. Labeling sets a standard or norm and ensures consistency.

Labeling forest products, called *Forest Product Certification* (FPC), is gradually being introduced to the world market. It is not yet known if FPC will gain in popularity. Some trends to watch include: acceptance in the more advanced European market, the accounting industry entry into auditing the certifiers, participation of major lumber retailers (such as Home Depot) and large scale certification of publically owned forest lands.

For the small forest landowner, FPC can be costly with uncertainty of higher market price for future timber sales. However, one forest certification system is available free to private landowners. The American Tree Farm System, which originated in 1941, is ideally suited for small landowners.

To become a certified Tree Farm, a professional forester must visit the property, prepare a forest management plan, the plan must be partially implemented and landowners must agree to follow minimum standards. These standards include: reforestation (if needed), water protection, wildlife habitat, forest aesthetics and protection of special sites. Responsibly implemented timber harvesting *is* allowed and encouraged.

To inquire on the Tree Farm FPC system visit their website at <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/> or call your local Area Forester with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Forestry Division. The local number can be found by contacting the division's state office in Nashville (615-837-5411).

*For more information contact: David Mercker at (731) 425-4717
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Master Tree Farmer Advanced Program - Satellite Short Course - *Wayne Clatterbuck, Associate Professor, Forest Management*

Announcing the Master Tree Farmer (MTF II) Advanced Program, a southwide satellite broadcast shortcourse for forest landowners, 7 consecutive Tuesday evenings from February 5 through March 19. The program is designed to introduce landowners to many topics associated with forest management. The MTF II workshop is designed for woodland owners who have completed the level one program or those who have experience or knowledge of forest management activities. Subjects for this course include:

1. Managing the Forest Site
2. Silvicultural Prescriptions
3. Controlling Unwanted Vegetation
4. Forest Health, Forest Pest Management
5. Introduction to Best Management Practices
6. Forest Measurements and Forest Products

Site locations have been established in Knoxville and Jackson. Cost for the course is \$50. For more information or if you would like to establish a satellite location in your area, contact Dr. Wayne Clatterbuck.

For more information contact: Wayne Clatterbuck at (865) 974-7346
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Saving Southern Forests from Sprawl

Wayne Clatterbuck, Associate Professor, Forest Management

The USDA Forest Service just released the Southern Forest Resource Assessment (SFRA) (<http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/sustain>), a long-awaited analysis of public and private forests in the 13 southern states. The report is the product of two years of study by more than 25 scientists and analysts from several federal and state agencies and universities. The good news is southern forests are sustainable. That means that by and large they are well managed and will remain healthy, diverse and productive while providing economic and social benefits.

The SFRA cited urban sprawl — not timber harvesting or chip mills, — as the biggest threat to southern forests. Between 1992 and 2020, about 6 percent of the South's forests (about 12 million acres) could be lost to urban uses, says the report. And because 90 percent of southern forests are owned by small private landowners, the report indicates that the future of southern forests largely rests with people who own tracts of sometimes less than 100 acres. In the last 10 years, Tennessee gained nearly 1.3 million acres of forest land, primarily from the reversion of former agricultural land to forests and lost nearly 600,000 acres to urban sprawl giving a net gain of 700,000 forested acres. This supports the SFRA report demonstrating the concern about urban sprawl and development.

We need to look at avenues to help forest landowners stay in the business of forest management so they will not be tempted — or worse, forced for financial reasons — to sell their treasured forests to developers who will turn them into shopping centers or parking lots. There are a variety of government-based and private sector programs that provide outreach and assistance to landowners. Professional foresters can help landowners stay in business by maintaining productive and healthy forests that provide environmental and social benefits for future generations. Currently, only 10 percent of private forest landowners seek the advice of a forester before they make management decisions. Foresters can help landowners develop long-term management plans that address forest health problems such as insects and disease. Foresters also assist landowners with environmental standards and, when the time comes, to properly harvest the timber on their land to get the best return on their investment. This assistance will help landowners stay in business and achieve their dreams for their land.

Adapted from: William H. Banzhaf, Executive Vice President
Society of American Foresters, Bethesda, MD

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The Pine Resource in Tennessee

Wayne Clatterbuck, Associate Professor, Forest Management

With the release of the Southern Forest Resource Assessment (<http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/sustain>), a two-year study from 25 scientists and analysts from several federal and state agencies and universities, a media campaign has been conducted in Tennessee about the perils of the pine resource in Tennessee. Let's look at the statewide pine resource statistics: past and present.

- ▶ There was more softwood acreage in Tennessee in 1952 (1.8 million acres) than today (1.5 million acres). In 1952, softwoods composed 14 percent of the total forest acreage, today they compose about 10 percent. The softwood category also includes about 250,000 acres of eastern red cedar. Thus, the actual amount of pine acreage is less without the eastern red cedar component.
- ▶ Forest industry owns about 23 percent or 337,000 acres of softwoods, government 12 percent or 173,000 acres and private forest owners about 65% or 960,000 acres.
- ▶ The amount of acreage in softwood plantations has increased from 297,000 acres in 1962 to 458,000 acres currently. Pine plantations compose 3 percent of the 14.4 million acres of forest land in Tennessee. Acreage in natural pine stands has remained steady between 1.0 and 1.2 million acres for the last 40 years. About 57 percent or 261,000 acres of plantation are owned by forest industry and 37 percent or 169,300 acres are controlled by non-industrial private landowners.
- ▶ The occurrence of pine in Tennessee has shifted from the eastern mountains and northern areas of the state to southwest Tennessee, the Cumberland Plateau and the ridge and valley area along the Tennessee River. Loblolly pine is the most planted pine species, with shortleaf, Virginia and eastern white pine occurring in natural pine stands.

The pine resource has not changed much in Tennessee in the past 40 years. There are more plantations, most due to the cost-share programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Tennessee Reforestation Incentive Program (TRIP) that have taken highly erosive and marginal farmland out of agricultural production with the planting of trees. Landowners are realizing the investment potential of growing shorter rotation pines rather than the longer rotation of hardwoods. Several large retirement investment companies have also diversified their portfolios by investing in management of pine lands where returns are more frequent than on hardwood lands.

There has been some conversion of hardwood land to pine by landowners, investors and forest industry, a point of contention for many critics. However, this conversion is not the amount that is portrayed in the media as noted in the statistics above. Probably a like amount of land is reverting from pine back to hardwood. A pine or mixed hardwood-pine stand will naturally succeed to a hardwood stand over time because of the short life span of pines. Pine stands that are harvested and not regenerated back to pine will become a hardwood stand. Generally, hardwoods present under a pine overstory will be the future trees. Many pine stands that have been ravaged by southern pine beetle will naturally succeed to hardwoods if provisions are not made to prepare the site for pine planting. The reversion of pine to hardwood is just as

prominent, but not as obvious, as the conversion of hardwood to pine. Each of these tends to offset the other, leaving almost a static pine acreage component in Tennessee.

More intensive management on forested acreage, such as pine plantations, will yield more wood fiber per acre, lessening the demand for wood production on other, less productive acres. This frees land for other forested uses.

Most of the land in pine is controlled by private landowners. These landowners have the responsibility to practice wise forest stewardship that will not only satisfy their objectives, but protect certain societal benefits as well. However, landowners also accept all the expense and risks of ownership. Property owners buy the land, pay the annual property taxes and assume the liability associated with their land. Investments in forest management are risky with large capital outlays on the front end that must be carried for a long term before a return is realized. If the forest land use does not pay for itself, most landowners will change the use of that land to something that is more valuable.

Investments in conservation and management are always at risk from weather, insects and disease, fire vandalism, imposed regulations and other factors that are beyond a landowner's control. All these expenses, risks and uncertainties influence the land management decision of forest landowners. The management of pine is just one option to fulfill landowner objectives and expectations.

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Winter Is the Time to Lime Ponds

Tom Hill, Professor, Fisheries

For both freshwater fish and freshwater prawn production, water pH of 6.5 - 9.0 is the desirable range. To avoid extreme fluctuations either above or below these levels, it is very important that the alkalinity of the pond water be above 20 ppm.

Phytoplankton are microscopic aquatic plants which are responsible for most of the oxygen (through photosynthesis) and primary productivity in ponds. Ponds with alkalinities below 20 ppm do not usually support good phytoplankton blooms and do not commonly experience dramatic pH changes.

Total alkalinity in ponds can be raised by adding agricultural limestone. To determine the need and how much to add, send a pond bottom sample to the Soil Testing Lab in Nashville and the results with a recommendation will be returned.

Lime should be added to ponds in the winter because it will cause phosphate in the water to precipitate and be unavailable for growing phytoplankton when applied in the summer.

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Tips for Winter Bird Feeding

Craig Harper, Assistant Professor, Wildlife

Now that winter is finally coming around, it is a good idea to refill your bird feeders. Various seeds and dried soft mast (e.g., wild cherries, grapes, dogwood and holly) are at a premium this time of year and many birds are attracted to feeders as many of their natural food sources become hard to find. By knowing the type of feeder and seed (or other food) that different birds prefer, you can cater to several different species.

Feeder design is less important than seed type, especially if you use a fly-through feeder, which will accommodate most bird species. More selective are the tube-type or cylindrical feeders used to offer thistle seed to goldfinches and pine siskins. The table below lists different seeds and other types of food that may be offered to attract different birds.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Preferred Food</u>
mourning doves	black oil-type sunflower seeds, white proso millet
woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches	black-oil type sunflower seeds, cracked nuts, shelled and broken peanuts, bread crumbs, suet
blue jay	sunflower seeds (all types), peanuts, cracked nuts, shelled and cracked corn, suet
mockingbirds, brown thrashers, robins, thrushes, catbirds	cut apples, oranges, raisins, bread crumbs
cardinals	sunflower seeds (all types), cracked corn, shelled and broken peanuts
Eastern towhees	white proso millet, sunflower seeds (all types), cracked corn, shelled and broken peanuts
evening grosbeak	sunflower seeds (all types), cracked corn, shelled and broken peanuts
goldfinches	niger thistle, hulled sunflower seeds, black oil-type sunflower seeds
house finch	black oil-type sunflower seeds, niger thistle
purple finch	sunflower seeds (all types)
sparrows, juncos	white pros millet, black oil-type sunflower seeds, wheat,

bread crumbs

grackles

hulled sunflower seeds (all types)

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Don't forget to try suet feeders, fruit halves nailed to a tree or post, peanut butter smeared into pine cones or onto the side of a tree, and old breads and cakes. Offering several types of foods will ensure a diversity of birds visiting your backyard. Remember to clean feeders periodically with hot, soapy water fortified with a capful of bleach. Bottoms of platform feeders (and others that might hold water) should have small holes drilled into the bottom to allow water to drain after a rain. Finally, beware of cats. House cats are extremely efficient predators and can severely reduce the number of birds and small mammals visiting feeders, especially when only one or two feeders are used and birds are concentrated around them. For additional information on ideas for your backyard wildlife, pick up a copy of *Improving Your Backyard Wildlife Habitat*, PB 1633, at your county Extension office.

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