

# Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries Update Newsletter

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Website: <http://fwf.ag.utk.edu>

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## Dates to Remember

- April 28-30    Decatur County Logging Show
- May 3, 4        Master Logger Continuing Ed.  
                    Stewart County - *"Managing Visual Impacts of Forest Operations"*
- June 22        UT/NRCS Field Day  
                    Mayfield Farm in Athens, TN - *"Managing Native Warm-Season Grasses for Wildlife"*

## NOTES FROM THE WEB - Spotlight on - [www.earthforce.org](http://www.earthforce.org)

Earth Force engages young people as active citizens who improve the *environment* and their *communities* now and in the future. This website trains and support educators in programs that enable young people to lead community action projects focused on creating sustainable solutions to local environment issues in the community.

For example, an Earth Force class may decide that they want to clean up a local park strewn with litter. Cleaning up the park is an admirable task, but it does not ensure the park will be clean the next week. Earth Force encourages young people to look at the root cause of the issue and focus on creative solutions that address a public policy or community practice. Earth Force students have worked with city councils to enact better litter laws, another group conducted a campaign to instill community pride and discourage future littering, and others worked with officials to get more trash cans installed in the park.

*(The University of Tennessee does not necessarily endorse [www.earthforce.org](http://www.earthforce.org). This website is provided as a resource for environmental education purposes only.)*

*"Rivers course through my dreams, rivers cold and fast,  
rivers well-known and rivers nameless, rivers that seem  
like ribbons of blue water twisting through wide valleys,  
narrow rivers folded in layers of darkening shadows,  
rivers that have eroded down deep into a mountain's belly,  
sculpting the land. Peeling back the planet's history  
exposing the texture of time itself."*

*- Harry Middleton, Rivers of Memory*

*Photo by Beth Maynor Young*



## Wildlife Management Calendar for April

### Habitat Management

Finish burning woods (hardwoods and pines) and fields to enhance conditions for wildlife

- make sure firebreaks are in place
- get help from experienced personnel if you don't have experience burning
- **much** more beneficial for wildlife than bushhogging!

If you won't burn fields, now is the time to bushhog – just before spring green-up

- for best results for wildlife, disk some strips after bushhogging to facilitate litter decomposition, improve travel for small wildlife and stimulate the seedbank

Spray tall fescue, orchardgrass, and other perennial cool-season grasses

- spray a glyphosate herbicide @ 2 quarts per acre (with surfactant) when grass is 8 – 10 inches tall and actively growing
- after grass is killed, burn the field (if needed), then disk to stimulate the seedbank
- when disking in the spring, a pre-emergence application of imazapic (6 – 10 ounces of Plateau) may be necessary after disking to control johnsongrass, crabgrass, and other undesirables germinating in late spring

Disk strips around field edges to encourage early successional growth

- disk strips 2 tractor-widths wide (12 – 15 feet)
- can be used as firebreaks

Plant firebreaks and other disked strips not left for natural vegetation

- iron-clay cowpeas, re-seeding soybeans, milo, and various millets provide forage and seed for a variety of wildlife species
- see *Growing and Managing Successful Food Plots for Wildlife in the Mid-South*, PB 1743, for seeding rates and additional information

Finish fertilizing/pruning trees/shrubs for increased soft mast production

- this is for trees out in the open, not those in woods
- fertilizing oaks in woods is a waste of time and money; to increase mast potential for trees in the woods, timber stand improvement practices are needed

Spray perennial forage food plots for weed control if necessary

- see *Growing and Managing Successful Food Plots for Wildlife in the Mid-South*, PB 1743, for planting recommendations

Plant warm-season food plots

- see *Growing and Managing Successful Food Plots for Wildlife in the Mid-South*, PB 1743, for seeding rates and additional information

Plant NWSG and associated forbs

- kill existing sod before planting, then burn
- use pre-emergence herbicides
- plant before early June
- plant seed **no deeper** than ¼ inch
- be patient!

Conduct drumming counts for grouse in mid-April

Erect boxes for wood ducks and bluebirds

- 1 box per 100 yards of shoreline is adequate for wood ducks
- clean out old wood duck boxes and put in fresh wood shavings (about 4 – 6 inches)
- repair/install predator shields if necessary
- bluebird boxes should be no closer than 80 yards apart

Build brushpiles

- put large stems on bottom, small stems on top

Collect soil test samples from plots to be planted this fall and lime now as needed

- applications of lime require about 6 months before full effect on pH is realized

Establish salt/mineral licks for white-tailed deer

- best if offered in a metal-lined trough that can be cleaned occasionally with bleach/water solution

### **Wildlife Damage/Population Management**

- Leave young wildlife alone
- let nature take its course; you'll do more harm than good by trying to save "orphans"  
young birds "fall" out of the nest as they learn to fly
- fawns remain bedded in seclusion throughout the day for the first few weeks of life

Check for openings in the attic as nesting season approaches

- helps keep bats and squirrels from getting into places where they are not welcome

Close all entrances to crawl spaces and other areas where skunks are not wanted

- most skunks are born in May
- females are choosing sites to give birth now

Set traps correctly to catch moles!

- make sure runway (tunnel) is active before setting traps
- excavate 6-inch by 6-inch square exposing runway and determine exact depth of runway
- replace dirt firmly, but not compacted
- set trap at exact depth so mole will be caught

Put up chicken-wire fence 2 feet high around vegetable gardens to protect them from rabbits

Put up a 2- or 3-strand electric fence (one strand 6 inches above ground and the other 6 inches higher) to keep groundhogs and raccoons out of vegetable gardens

Erect a single-strand electric fence (2 ½ feet above ground) with aluminum tabs attached every 3- 5 feet to repel deer from vegetable gardens

- smear peanut butter on the aluminum tabs
- deer are attracted to peanut butter; when they touch the aluminum tabs with their mouths, they learn to stay away

Plant "alternative" forages for wildlife on the outside of fencing around a garden to satiate the appetite of deer, groundhogs, and rabbits, further helping to keep them out of the garden

- refer to *Growing and Managing Successful Food Plots for Wildlife in the Mid-South*, PB 1743, for seeding rates and additional information

Snakes are beginning to appear with warmer days

- clean-up around the house (mow, remove piles of wood, brush, and trash) to repel snakes
- there is no reliable "repellent" for snakes; only "snake oil"

Refer to *Managing Nuisance Animals and Associated Damage Around the Home*, PB 1624, for additional wildlife damage management information

## **Don't Burn Treated Wood**

*Adam Taylor, Assistant Professor, Wood Products Management*

The small scraps of lumber that seem to collect and multiply under back porches and in garages often make their way into wood stoves and fireplaces in the winter months. And, as long as it is dry, any species of wood will burn well. Small pieces of plywood or OSB (oriented strand board, aka “chipboard” or “flakeboard”) can also be burned, providing pleasant warmth and cleaning up a mess in the process.

In contrast, preservative treated wood should not be burned. For many years, the most common preservative mixture used for treated wood was CCA, a combination of chromium, copper and arsenic. When wood treated with this preservative is burned, some of the arsenic is released into the air with the fly ash, and the rest is concentrated in the ash that remains in the fireplace. Newer preservative formulations that do not contain arsenic have largely replaced CCA, but it is still not recommended that they be burned.

Treated wood is often used for decking, railings and exterior trim. The most common types of treated wood are green in color, and thus usually can be easily identified. These materials should go to the landfill along with ordinary household waste. Treated wood that has been outside for a long time may turn grey and can be hard to identify – if there is any doubt as to whether it is treated wood, throw it out. Wood that has been painted also should not be burned.

Some wood species such as cedar, redwood, cypress and black locust are used outside because they naturally contain chemicals which protect them from insect and fungal attack. It is perfectly safe to burn these woods.

Using wood “waste” as a fuel for fires is common in the wood products industry and is perfectly acceptable at home too. Just be sure to put painted and preservative treated wood in the garbage, rather than into the fireplace.

*For more information, contact Adam Taylor at 865-946-1125 or [AdamTaylor@utk.edu](mailto:AdamTaylor@utk.edu)*

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## **What Will Forest Certification Accomplish?**

*David Mercker, Extension Specialist, Forest Management*

A study of forest landowners in West Tennessee was recently conducted to assess their awareness, acceptance, and educational preferences toward forest certification. Participants were given the following definition of certification and then asked a series of questions on the subject:

Forest certification means that forests are managed in a sustainable manner and that trees are harvested with environmentally sound practices. These management practices are certified by objective third parties. Land-owner participation is voluntary.

Based on this definition, 81 percent of the respondents indicated that they would “consider” certifying their forest land, although 91 percent had little to no familiarity with it. When asked what they thought certification would accomplish, the following responses received high marks among those who are willing to consider certifying:

1. Certification will improve forest management;
2. Certification will increase profits from tree farming;
3. Certification will satisfy consumers that their wood purchases are supporting good forestry;
4. Certification will give recognition for the good forestry that is already being practiced;
5. Certification will be necessary for U.S. timber growers to compete in the international market;
6. Certification will lessen the need for forestry regulation.

If certification will achieve the above, it could be a worthy program. Forest certification appears to continually expand. Prudent forest landowners may want to examine the possibility of certification, and be prepared to take advantage of developing certified wood markets.

For more information contact David Mercker at 731.425.4703 or [dmercker@utk.edu](mailto:dmercker@utk.edu)

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### **Distinguishing Between the Hickories**

*David Mercker, Extension Specialist, Forest Management*

Hickory trees are truly an American group of trees. There are 23 known species of hickories, of which only 3 occur outside the United States. Hickories are actually classified under the walnut family (*Juglandaceae*), having similar characteristics as black walnut, butternut, and pecan trees. The wood of hickory is strong, tough, and straight-grained, and traditionally was used for handles, agricultural implements, and wheel spokes. More recently, it has captured some of the cabinet and hardwood flooring market, though its tough qualities make it difficult for machining.

Proper identification of hickory trees is challenging, even for seasoned foresters and botanists. The hardwood sawmills rarely separate hickory logs by species, rather grouping them together. The leaves of hickory trees are similar, all are compound, and having odd-numbered leaflets from 5 to 11. Proper identification of hickories normally requires more than examining leaves. Bark, buds, and fruit, if available, help to make proper tree I.D.

Four of the more common hickory species in Tennessee include: Shagbark, Mockernut, Pignut, and Bitternut. Though very similar, each has unique characteristics separating it from the others. We'll call these characteristics "Brief Recognizable Features" and summarize them as follows:

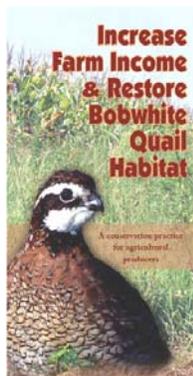
<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u>Brief Recognizable Features</u></b>
Shagbark Hickory the tree ( <i>Carya ovata</i> )	undeniable shaggy bark plates that noticeably hang from the trunk of  (all other species in this group have tight bark pattern); 5 large leaflets per leaf.
Mockernut Hickory ( <i>Carya tomentosa</i> )	scraping the bark away will normally reveal a rich chocolate color; leaflets and rachis (central stem of leaf) are hairy beneath; husk of fruit is very thick (up to ¼" thick); leaf with spicy odor; 7 – 9 leaflets per leaf.
Pignut Hickory ( <i>Carya glabra</i> )	Fruit is pear-shaped, with thin husk (1/10" thick) and husk splitting only to ½ to ¾ length (i.e., not completely to the base of the nut); Normally with only 5 leaflets; Bark is interlacing and with <u>very</u> small shag-type plates.
Bitternut Hickory color; ( <i>Carya cordiformis</i> ) 7-11	Terminal bud (found on the very end of the branch) is sulfur- yellow color; fruit with 4 distinct ridges or ribs occurring from the middle upward;  leaflets per leaf.

Aside from the strong attractive wood, the fruit of hickory trees is important for hard mast, benefitting an array of wildlife - this is especially the case during years of poor acorn production.

For more information contact David Mercker at 731.425.4703 or [dmercker@utk.edu](mailto:dmercker@utk.edu)

## **Conservation Reserve Program CP33-Conservation Buffers DVD Available**

*Craig Harper, Associate Professor, Wildlife Management*



Historically, idle or fallow grassy areas were common in agricultural landscapes along field edges. Although often perceived as unproductive or unavailable for farming, these idle areas provided important habitat for wildlife. As farming has become more efficient, former idle areas such as fencerows and field margins subsequently have been placed into production. Such practices have all but eliminated idle grass communities that formerly provided habitat for quail and other

grassland birds. In late 2004, USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Northern Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative began and is aimed at creating 250,000 acres of native grass buffers along agricultural field borders in 35 states. Under the Continuous CRP, financial incentives are available to producers for creating Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds (CP33) on cropland. Eligible producers will receive annual rental payments for the length of the contract (10 years), plus bonus incentives and cover establishment and maintenance cost-shares. Besides benefiting bobwhite quail and farm economics, these buffers will also benefit other birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic species. Additional environmental benefits include reduced soil erosion from wind and water, increased soil and water quality, and improvement of the overall on-farm ecosystem. Program sign-up is underway at local FSA offices and eligible land may be enrolled at any time until a state's allotted buffer acres have all been enrolled or December 31, 2007. Producers interested in CP33 should contact their local FSA office for more information. Mississippi State University, along with number of cooperators, recently developed a DVD to promote the CP33 practice. The DVD was developed for agricultural producers and explains both the economics and wildlife benefits of the CP33 practice. A brochure was also developed to assist national promotion of the practice. Both the DVD and brochure are effective tools that can be used by natural resource agencies, conservation groups, and others to promote the CP33 practice to producers. This information was provided by Rick Hamrick, Mississippi State University. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the DVD or brochure should contact Rick at Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi State, MS 39762-9690; phone: 662-325-5470; email [rhamrick@cfr.msstate.edu](mailto:rhamrick@cfr.msstate.edu). Single copies are free, and larger orders can be purchased for a nominal cost. Don't miss out on this opportunity to promote quail habitat practices in your area!

*For more information contact Craig Harper at 865.974.7992 or [charper@utk.edu](mailto:charper@utk.edu)*

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## **Some Thoughts on Oak Regeneration**

*Wayne K. Clatterbuck, Associate Professor, Forest Management and Silviculture*

The forests of Tennessee are composed primarily of oaks. Various oak species form the dominant and codominant crown canopy over a broad range of sites. As mature stands of oak have been harvested on lower quality sites, oaks generally have been successfully regenerated. Mixtures of white, post, southern red, chestnut, and scarlet oaks are common in the uplands and water, pin, overcup, and willow oaks in the bottoms. On the better sites, where oaks, particularly northern red, cherrybark, Shumard,

white, swamp chestnut, and Nuttall oaks, compose a substantial and valuable component of mixed hardwood stands, regeneration of oaks following harvest has seldom included a sufficient number of dominant and codominant oaks to replace those that were cut.

Most oaks are intermediate in their light tolerance rating, a classification between sun-loving or intolerant to shade species and shade tolerant species. As such, intermediate light requirements required to regenerate oaks are difficult to simulate in practice. Too much sunlight perpetuates faster-growing, pioneer species such as yellow-poplar, cherry, yellow pines, and sweetgum. Too little sunlight or shady conditions are favorable to shade tolerant species such as maple, beech, hemlock, dogwood, elms and blackgum. Intermediate levels of sunlight favor oak regeneration compared to other species.

The oaks are advance growth dependent species. Successful regeneration comes on all sites from stems present on the site at the time of harvest (seedlings present in the understory as “advance reproduction” or sprouts from stumps of harvested trees), rather than new seedlings established after the harvest. New oak germinants do not grow as fast as those with already established root systems (advance reproduction or sprouts). These “new” seedlings generally cannot compete with other faster-growing vegetation.

The size of oak advance growth is an important factor in its contribution to the next stand. The probability of contributing a dominant or codominant stem to the next stand is greatest for stems between 2 and 5 inches DBH and decreases with increasing diameter. Larger trees are less likely to produce viable stump sprouts than are smaller stems. For advance reproduction (stems < 2 inches in diameter), the probability of contributing a dominant or codominant stem to the next stand increases with increasing diameter. The combination of oak stump-sprout potential and oak advance reproduction that exists in a mature stand is the oak regeneration potential. Sampling in mature stands to estimate the size distribution of oak during the prescription process allows assessment of oak regeneration potential.

Where oak regeneration potential is high, whether on high or low quality sites, clearcutting or other heavy removal cuts can be expected to result in successful oak regeneration. However, if significant advance oak reproduction is not already present in the stand at the time of harvest, especially on high quality sites, regeneration of oak species is in serious doubt. Silvicultural practices must be employed to increase oak regeneration potential prior to heavy removal cuts.

Oak regeneration potential is generally high in mature stands on lower quality sites, those sites with a site index of 65 or below (base age 50 years) for oaks. Conversely, oak regeneration potential is usually low on higher quality sites, especially those containing yellow-poplar.

On those higher quality sites, research has shown that if cutting (disturbance) is too heavy, yellow-poplar will become established and outgrow oaks. In addition, sprouts of shade tolerant species will quickly reoccupy growing space made available by partial cutting. Even though oak advance reproduction does respond after such partial cutting, it is overtopped quickly by both yellow-poplar seedlings and sprouts of tolerant subcanopy trees. Thus, some control of competing vegetation is required to enhance the development of oak.

Oak regeneration will occur on the poorer upland sites, especially those with a southern exposure and limited soil moisture. However, if oak is desired on the more productive sites (bottomlands, northern exposures and benches), then time and expense to culture advance oak regeneration will need to be considered well in advance of the harvest cut.

Oak regeneration is a **process, not an event**. Simply expecting oak regeneration after any cutting regime or treatment without adequate oak advance reproduction will not perpetuate oak in future stands. Advance regeneration of oak must be cultured, especially on the more productive sites. Successful oak regeneration depends on the presence of large advance reproduction in the initial load of propagules, i.e., sprouts and seeds. However, large advance reproduction will not develop in the absence of disturbance. Thus, silvicultural practices must be employed to increase oak regeneration potential prior to

potential prior to harvest cuts. These will probably involve treating the mid- and lower canopy trees with herbicides 5 to 10 years prior to overstory removal. This level of disturbance will simultaneously enhance the growth and development of oak advance reproduction prior to overstory removal and eliminates sprouts from the tolerant mid- and lower canopy trees from the initial load of propagules after overstory removal.

*For more information contact Wayne Clatterbuck at 865.974.7990 or wclatterbuck@utk.edu*

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### **What is Sustainability?**

*Wayne K. Clatterbuck, Associate Professor, Forest Management and Silviculture*

Most everyone agrees on the general definition of sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. How sustainability is measured or determined is an open question. Sustainability has become the “buzz” word for all that is deemed good. Sustainable is an adjective that is often used as a modifier for some subject, i.e., sustainable environment, sustainable development, or sustainable practice. However, just how can you determine what is sustainable or not? Sustainability usually depends on a temporal and size scale that generally cannot be determined in the near term.

I will be attending a natural resource sustainability extension conference later this year. The title of the meeting is *Finding the “Ability” in Sustainability*. A few of the titles of presentations at the conference are as follows:

- A Sustainable Land Use Education Network
- Sustainable Living 101: A Values Approach to Intelligent Consumer Decisions
- Environmental Service Learning Lays Groundwork for Living Sustainability
- Improving Sustainable Educational Programming
- Sustaining Wildfire Preparedness Planning in Communities
- Sustaining the Cultural and Natural Resources
- Sustainability through Agroforestry
- A New Manual and Educational Program Promote Sustainable Forestry
- Sustaining Family Forestlands Across the Generations
- Sustainability Through Collaborative Resource Stewardship
- Promoting Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Environments
- Keeping Extension Sustainable and Relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- The Landscape Management System: A Tool to Evaluate Alternatives for Sustainable Forest Management
- Promoting Sustainable Wildlife Management
- Educating Extension Professionals in Sustainability

After viewing these titles, I’m not sure exactly how sustainability is defined and practiced. Apparently “sustainability” is wide ranging term that is in vogue for many. The term is used in many contexts. However, I question what is different today compared to the past. Environments continue to change and adapt. Environments are dynamic and not steady-state because of increasing populations, changing values and competing land uses. Thus, how is sustainability determined?

In forest management, we are fortunate that when most forest lands are harvested, whatever the intensity, that over time forests will reappear. Regeneration methods such as clearcutting, seed tree, shelterwood, single tree selection and group selection are all sustainable practices. Consider abuses

such as indiscriminate harvesting or repeated fire. New forests have developed. Thus, in that context the forests are sustainable. However, the question of forest community sustainability is more formidable. Communities change as vegetation grows and modifies their environment, usually creating an environment more attractive for other vegetation, i.e., succession. Thus as a community changes into another functioning community, is that considered sustainable? This is open to interpretation and the value of what one considers sustainable. For example, a natural pine stand that is attacked by southern pine beetle succeeds to a hardwood stand, a completely different community. Is that sustainable? Is a pine plantation considered sustainable, whether in the short term where pine is replanted after harvest or where pines are not replanted and natural hardwoods slowly reappear? What is different when converting or restoring former bottomland agricultural land to hardwoods through planting or direct seeding? Is this considered sustainable compared to the pine plantation practices? Thus, how one interprets sustainability will depend on perspective, values, scale and time.

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### **Hardwood Plantings: Do They Pay?**

*Larry Tankersley, Extension Forester*

How do you define “Pay”? Money, Habitat, the Right Thing? Many landowners do consider financial goals important in land management. Creating and enjoying wildlife habitat are great sport and often planting trees just seems the “right thing” to do. For those of you interested in the financial prospects of planting hardwood seedlings, the answer to “do they pay?” is often **Yes! IF :**

- You don’t spend” too” much to establish the trees, you’ve got to get a stand but don’t spend more than necessary. Good seedlings, planted well with adequate weed control is important. Cost sharing is available and important, as is reforestation tax incentives and capital gains treatment of income.
- You’re in a good Market. Prices should move at least with inflation with good potential for additional increases. A higher price today translates to higher prices tomorrow in most analyses.
- You can grow good volumes in a reasonable amount of time. Spend money on better sites for greater potential returns. Planting the right tree for the site is important.
- And your cost of money/time is not too expensive, i.e. What’s your discount rate? Have you got alternatives for using the money/land? Cash flows are often far apart in timber operations, but annual expenses are typically low.

Planting any species of tree can be rewarding and watching them grow even more so!

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## **Plant Trees**

*Larry Tankersley, Extension Forester*

Deciding what to do with a piece of land is not always easy. The choices for using land are many. One choice that many should consider is the planting of tree crops. Although a large number of acres are required for an annual income from timber crops, owners with more modest-sized properties and who do not require annual income from their land can achieve profits from tree growing.

Trees grow in size at varying rates depending on the species present and the productive capacity of the soil. Timber values have also increased in the past and are expected to do so in the future. Tree crops also require minimal inputs/costs once they are established relative to other land uses such as farming or producing livestock.

Tax treatment of tree crops is also favorable relative to other investments as the Federal government allows the deduction of timber establishment costs and taxes income at long-term capital gains rates when the trees are ultimately harvested.

Tree crops/forests are not for all landowners but can be profitably managed and enjoyed as they grow into timber/wood products. As planted trees become forests they become habitat for a variety of wildlife species and places of beauty and solitude while protecting soil and water for years to come. Many of these nonmarket values for many landowners become greater than the monetary return originally considered when we were considering what to do with our land.

*For more information contact Larry Tankersley at 865.974.7977 or [ltanker1@utk.edu](mailto:ltanker1@utk.edu)*

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## **Money in Hardwood Timber is in the Grade**

*Larry Tankersley, Extension Forester*

We often hear of big prices for hardwood timber. These are real. Some landowners are also often bewildered when their timber doesn't command the same price. What is going on?

Basically, prices for hardwood timber are greatly influenced by the grade of the trees for sale. Note the prices listed in the latest Forest Products Bulletin <http://www.state.tn.us/agriculture/forestry/tfbp.pdf> produced by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry. Number one red oak delivered is valued at roughly \$800 per thousand board feet (MBF) while grade three only commands around \$250/MBF. This trend is similar for all species destined to become hardwood lumber.

Grade is determined largely by the size of the trees and the number of defects noted on the surface of the tree's bark. Good grade lumber requires spans of defect free wood called "clear cuttings". Observe the logs that you are selling. Are they defect free? Defects include bumps, epicormic branches, knots, seams, splits, butt scars, bird peck, etc. If your timber has a lot of these defects this may explain why the price you have been offered is not necessarily the big money you may be hearing about.

Contact your natural resources professional and ask them to help give your trees a grade.

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