

UPSTATE FORESTRY NEWS



Serving the Upstate of SC

Winter 2006

*Edited by D. Jason Caudill, County
Extension Agent, Oconee County*

Upcoming Conference on the Ecological Impacts of Fuel Reduction in Asheville, NC

Many U.S. Forests, especially those that historically burned at short intervals, are too dense and/or have excessive quantities of fuel. Widespread treatment is needed to restore ecological integrity and reduce risk of uncharacteristically severe and destructive wildfire in these forests. Within the array of possible treatments an appropriate balance among mechanical and prescribed fire is often unclear. For improved decision making, resource managers will appreciate relevant information about consequences of fire and fire surrogate fuel treatments presented at this workshop that includes both indoor and field sessions.

The conference will be held at the Asheville Renaissance Hotel on January 24th and 25th from 8:00am – 5:00pm each day. Space is limited to 100 participants. To reserve your spot please contact Richard Reitz at (706)559-4307 or e-mail at rreitz@fs.fed.us with your contact information.

Please prepare yourself for cooler and perhaps inclement, outdoor weather by bringing boots, raingear, warm clothes, gloves, and write-in-the-rain paper with pencil for the outdoor session.

Property Line Dispute?

*By Howard Hiller, County Extension Agent,
Oconee County*

If you needed to go out right now and find your property line on that 60 acre tract of timber

you are about to sell, could you find it so the logger will know where to stop cutting? Property lines that are not well marked or well known by landowners is a major reason that cutting the neighbors trees is not always willful. A high percentage of timberland that has been in the same family for years probably has not been surveyed for a long time. Thus, it is easy to lose the locations of corner and line markings.

In order to give you some background information on surveying, in South Carolina we use the METES AND BOUNDS system or method of describing real estate. This system has been used in England for many centuries and is still used there in the definition of general boundaries. By custom, it was applied in the original 13 colonies that became the United States and in many other land jurisdictions based on English Common Law. Typically the system uses physical features of the local geography, along with directions and distances to define and describe the boundaries of a parcel of land. The boundaries are described in a running prose style, working around the parcel of land in sequence, from a point of beginning, returning back to the same point. It may include references to other adjoining parcels of land (and their owners), and it, in turn, could also be referred to in later surveys. At the time at which the description is compiled, it may have been marked on the ground with permanent markers such as iron pins, concrete or stone markers. Old surveys commonly refer to landmarks such as large oak tree, streams, fences and roads. These landmarks are subject to change or even disappear.

The term “metes” refers to a boundary defined by the measurement of each straight run, specified by a distance between terminal points and an orientation or direction. A direction may be a simple compass bearing or a precise orientation determined by accurate survey methods. The term bounds refer to a more

general boundary description, such as along a certain watercourse, a stone wall, an adjoining public roadway, or an existing building. In addition to the original 13 colonies that formed the United States, this system is also used in West Virginia, Kentucky, Maine and Vermont. Beginning with the Land Ordinance of 1785, the United States began a transition to the PUBLIC LAND SURVEY SYSTEM (PLSS) used in the central and western states.

You can't manage your timber without first knowing what's yours and what's not. The property line is an imaginary projection between two corners; not trees, fences, etc., that may or may not be "on the line." If you have any doubts, have your property line location identified by a reputable land surveyor. Be sure the surveyor agrees to accurately stake and hack the line. Also if he does not agree to paint the hack marks on the trees, you should. Paint specifically formulated for marking boundary lines is available in spray cans and in quarts and gallons. This paint will normally last about ten years. If you are about to log a tract, painting line trees on two sides will make it a lot easier for the logger to spot. Flagging tape is also available in many colors. Corner markers should be well marked and protected. You can do this by placing a treated post or metal post beside them. These taller posts will also make it much easier to find the markers years down the road. Don't forget to periodically go out and check your lines. A well marked property line is cheap insurance. It should be very effective in keeping forestry operations in their proper location.

Tax Changes Affect Forestry

*By Wallace Wood, County Extension Agent,
McCormick and Abbeville*

The Reforestation Tax Credit is gone and lump sales can now be treated as a capital gain under certain conditions with changes made to the IRS code by the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004.

The American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 repealed the reforestation tax credit. However, you can now deduct outright the first \$10,000 of qualified reforestation expenses. In addition, you can amortize (deduct), over eight tax years, **all** reforestation expenses in excess of \$10,000 incurred during the tax year. Due to the half-

year convention, you can only claim one-half of the amortizable portion the first and eighth years.

This rule became effective October 23, 2004. Before then, you could claim a ten percent investment tax credit for the first \$10,000 you spent for reforestation during the tax year. You could also amortize up to \$10,000 of reforestation costs, minus half the tax credit taken, over eight tax years.

The American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 also changed how "lump sum" sales can be treated as long-term capital gains. Before January 1, 2005, if you "materially participated" in a trade or business, you could not sell your timber "lump sum" and it be treated as a long-term capital gain. You could get long-term capital gains treatment if you were classified as an investor.

Now, if you hold timber 12 months or longer, you can get long-term capital gains treatment, no matter if you are "materially participating" or an "investor." If you report timber sale income as ordinary income, you could pay significantly more taxes than you would if you report it as a long-term capital gain. The maximum long-term capital gains rate for 2005 is 15 percent for timber sold after May 6, 2003. The minimum rate is 5 percent.

Also, capital gains are not subject to the self employment tax, as is ordinary income. The net self-employment tax rate for 2005 is 15.3 percent for self-employment income of \$400 or more.

More details on the reforestation tax deduction and capital gains can be found in "Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2005 Tax Year" at the Southern Region Extension Forestry website, <http://sref.info> under "News." Another good source of timber tax information is the National Timber Tax website, www.timbertax.org.

Much of this information is condensed from "Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2005 Tax Year."

Master Tree Farmer II Program to be Offered

*By Brian Callahan, County Extension Agent,
Pickens County*

The Clemson Extension Service will be offering the Master Tree Farmer II program in February and March of 2006. This workshop is designed for people who have completed Master Tree Farmer I program, or who have experience with forest management activities. Landowners and persons considering land ownership who are interested in managing their land will find this workshop an exceptional opportunity. Anyone with forest cover on part of their property will learn how to practice sustainable forestry and manage the land to meet their objectives. The course introduces you to best management practices for protecting the environment, discusses different prescriptions for management, intensive management practices and wildlife management.

The Master Tree Farmer courses are the only satellite broadcasts of their kind for forest landowners throughout the South. Clemson University serves as the host for the programs, and forestry professionals from multiple universities along with private and public organizations participate as instructors and presenters. Broadcasts are live from Clemson to viewing locations around the south.

Beginning February 7th and lasting until March 21st, 2006, workshop sessions will be held each Tuesday evening from 7:00 pm until 10:00 pm. Instructors and coordinators will be available through a toll-free number and on site until 10:15 pm. Application forms containing all of the details for the 2006 Master Tree Farmer 2 program may be obtained by contacting your local Clemson Cooperative Extension office or visiting the website, www.mastertreefarmer.org. Space is limited for this educational workshop. Pesticide recertification and CFE category 1 credits will be requested. Should you require special accommodations due to a disability, please notify our office at least ten days prior to the event.

Ice Damage, Now what?

By Darren Atkins, Extension Forester, Newberry County

In some areas of the upstate, the recent ice storm has weighed heavy on the shoulders of numerous pine stands as well as some susceptible species of hardwood such as maple and cherry. Broken, bent, or uprooted, there are some approaches that can be considered by a

landowner. Since there are limited steps that you can take to prevent ice damage to forest stands, let's focus on what to do now.

First and foremost, the damage to a stand has to be evaluated and quantified if possible. This is usually best achieved by using a professional forester. To simplify, consider grouping the severity of damage into three categories. 1) <50% crown loss – good chance of recovery 2) 50-75% crown loss – could potentially recover depending on future environmental conditions and biological infestations such as insect and decay 3) >75% crown loss – high risk of mortality and a salvage cut is warranted. If nothing else, remove to avoid promoting the spread of insect and disease problems. For conifers, consider doing this within the year of the storm, hardwoods, within two years. The reason for this is that fungus and decay tends to spread quicker in softwoods than hardwoods. This will degrade the value of the timber rapidly. During assessment, there needs to be a few management considerations stuck in the back of your mind.

When I am assessing an ice-damaged site, the first thing I ask myself is “what is this going to do to the stocking level of this stand?” If all of the damaged trees are removed, what is going to be the residual Basal Area? Now, with that being said, what are the management objectives of this stand? These questions will cause your management prescription to vary. Use this for an example, the result of the recent ice storm causes you to lose ½ of your total Basal Area to ice damage leaving you with BA=55 (which is relatively low stocking). If your primary management objective includes wildlife habitat management, you may decide to salvage all of the damage trees and continue to manage the rest. A landowner with timber revenue in mind may decide to harvest and start over. Of course this decision would depend on other site factors as well and would be best made with the advice from a professional forester.

You may want to consider focusing on sawtimber-sized stands first. Although saplings and younger stands may have a lot of bent trees, most of these stems will recover from ice damage. It is best to re-evaluate these stands in 3-5 years. If recovery isn't evident at that time, then consider group selection harvest perhaps. Since sawtimber-sized stands are more valuable

and less vigorous, attention to these are needed first.

Don't forget about the wildlife. Not all damaged trees need to be removed. For instance, trees greater than 15 inches in diameter with the top broken out have a good chance to develop into good cavity trees. It's always a good idea to leave some of these for that purpose.

If salvaging is warranted and desired, be careful with your residual trees. Commonly, damage occurs with these during salvage operations due to the limited space for maneuvering harvesting equipment. A wound on a butt log is far more serious in terms of value, than a wound from a broken limb in the crown. It makes little sense to salvage damage trees if the residual trees are going to be damaged in the process.

I may start to sound like a broken record, but use a forester to help make these decisions. Every stand is different and every landowner has his/her goals for their property. This information is simply a guideline. Good luck!

SC Timber Prices Online

Reprinted from December Edition of South Carolina Forestry Association

Timber pricing information is now available on the SC Forestry Commission's website. Compiled quarterly by private research firm Forest2Market, the site reports actual stumpage prices paid for timber in South Carolina.

While the report shows average amount paid for pine and hardwood timber in several commodity classes, it should be used only as a general guide. Timber values vary significantly depending on the amount and quality of timber offered for sale, logging conditions, proximity to the mill, and local demand. "This is not a substitute for a professional appraisal of timber value," said Commission forest management chief Joe Fielder. "Anyone planning to sell timber should first get advice from the Forestry Commission or a registered consulting forester."

The guide is on the Commission's forest management page at <http://www.state.sc.us/forest>.

Arbor Day Marks the Beginning of Tree Planting Season in South Carolina

By Jeff Fellers, County Extension Agent, Union County

Arbor Day marks the beginning of tree planting season in South Carolina. South Carolina celebrates Arbor Day on the first Friday in December. During this time of the year, trees become dormant and there is more moisture in the soil to support a growing root system. The dormant season also helps to reduce the shock to the root system from being transplanted. South Carolina's tree planting season runs from December to Mid-March. We see most of the trees planted during December, January, and February.

This year, I had the pleasure of attending a celebration that partnered the Excelsior Milliken Plant and Excelsior Middle School in Union. Children through out the school gathered around a tree to learn about how trees benefit them. As we watched the tree being planted, I thought about all the gifts trees actually give us. Arbor Day is a celebration that recognizes the importance that trees have in our lives. Trees are vital to our everyday life. They provide us with lumber, paper, and many other additives to other products. Consider for a moment what you would have around you without trees.

Forget about lumber, paper, and wood products for a moment and consider what trees give us before they are sent to the mill. Trees improve our quality of living. They clean the air we breathe just as air filters do in your home. They reduce air pollution, smells, and noises from roads, construction sites, or agricultural fields. One of the most important benefits we receive from trees is oxygen. Without them what would we breathe? Leaves use carbon dioxide in the photosynthesis process and convert it to oxygen. Trees provide shade that help cool us on a hot summer day. Trees not only benefit us, but they also benefit wildlife. Trees provide shelter and food for wildlife. Without trees our world would be a dreary place.

The children at Excelsior have celebrated Arbor Day for several years. Their campus now has two Crepe Myrtles and several dwarf conifer trees. The trees add beauty to their campus and constantly remind the students of the importance

of planting trees. Forest landowners realize the importance of reforestation and continue to plant millions of trees every year. Without replanting we would not be able support our nation's dependency on wood products.

Throughout the nation schools and businesses will partner together to celebrate Arbor Day between December and April. States may choose what day they celebrate Arbor Day based on their climate and tree planting season. The last Friday in April marks the date for National Arbor Day. If you missed South Carolina's Arbor Day there is still time to celebrate and plant a tree for National Arbor Day.

Weyerhaeuser Announces Intent to Sell Composite Panels Business

FEDERAL WAY, Wash. – To strengthen shareholder returns and sharpen the focus of its business portfolio, Weyerhaeuser Company announced it is seeking to sell its composite panels business.

The composite panels business has been a strong performer for Weyerhaeuser, but is a small component of the company's wood products business. The mills produce either medium density fiberboard (MDF) or particleboard and are located in Albany, Ore.; Bennettsville, S.C.; Eugene, Ore.; Malvern, Ark.; Simsboro, La.; and Clonmel, Ireland.

"As part of our review to align our resources, we have determined that the composite panels business is no longer a strategic fit for Weyerhaeuser," said Steven R. Rogel, chairman, president and chief executive officer. "We believe that the skilled employees at these highly competitive and efficient mills will provide greater value for a new owner who is more focused on this line of business products."

Weyerhaeuser will continue to operate the composite panels mills while it seeks new ownership. The North American mills have the capacity to produce a total of 1.1 billion square feet, while the Clonmel mill has a capacity of 230 million square feet. About 1,000 employees work in the mills.

In Bennettsville, the company employs 126 hourly and salary workers at the MDF plant and 130 at the particleboard plant.

Weyerhaeuser Company, one of the world's largest integrated forest products companies, was

incorporated in 1900. In 2004, sales were \$22.7 billion. It has offices or operations in 19 countries, with customers worldwide. Weyerhaeuser is principally engaged in the growing and harvesting of timber; the manufacture, distribution and sale of forest products; and real estate construction, development and related activities. Additional information about Weyerhaeuser's businesses, products and practices is available at <http://www.weyerhaeuser.com>.

Potential Timber Damage due to Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana

Prepared by USDA Forest Service, Forest Inventory & Analysis

Early estimates from forest inventories indicate potential timber losses from Hurricane Katrina amount to roughly 4.2 billion cubic feet of timber (15-19 billion board feet), spread over 5 million acres of light to heavily damaged forest land in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. One-third of the timber damaged was concentrated in 8 counties of southern Mississippi. Nearly 90 percent of all forests damaged were within 60 miles of the coast, predominantly in Mississippi. Nearly 60 percent of the damage occurred to softwoods predominantly pines—with the remainder of the damage occurring to hardwoods. According to the USDA Forest Service, down and damaged wood is sufficient to produce 800,000 single family homes and 25 million tons of paper and paperboard.

The impact of Katrina's winds resulted in the destruction of an average of 20 percent of the timber that was standing in the damaged area prior to the storm, with rates in areas near the coast as high as 35-40 percent. This compares to an average loss of about 11 percent for Hurricane Camille which followed an almost identical landfall in 1969 and Hurricane Andrew with a 10 percent loss in southern Louisiana in 1992.

Scientists at the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) unit of the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station have conducted systematic surveys of the region's forests for over 70 years. Data from historic FIA surveys were compared with Katrina's storm track data and FIA models based on historic hurricane damage to estimate the extent and amount of damage.

Upcoming Forestry Association Meetings

Abbeville: The Abbeville Forest Landowners Association will be meeting on February 20, 2006. The topic will be "Managing Today's Forest for Tomorrow's Market." American Forest Management to present program. Location is the Abbeville County Office Building. Contact the Abbeville County Extension office for more info at (864) 459-4106.

Anderson: The Anderson County Forest Landowners' Association will be meeting in a joint meeting with the Pickens County Forest Landowners' Association on January 31, 2006. Contact Howard Hiller at (864) 638-5889 Ext. 115 for more details.

Greenville: The Greenville County Forest Landowners' Association will be meeting in late January or early February. Call Walt McPhail at (864) 288-7618 for more information.

McCormick: The McCormick County Forest Landowners' Association will be meeting on February 6, 2006. The topic will be "Timberland Security." Speaker will be Wayne Stieffin with Holmes Timber. Location is Troy United Methodist Church, Troy, SC. Contact the McCormick County Extension office for more info at (864) 465-2112.

Newberry: The Newberry Forest Landowners Association will be meeting in February. Contact Darren Atkins at (803) 276-1091 Ext. 112 for more information.

Oconee: The Oconee Forest Landowners' Association will be meeting in February. Details will be announced later. Contact Howard Hiller at (864) 638-5889 Ext. 115 for more information.

Pickens: The Pickens County Forest Landowners' Association will be meeting in a joint meeting with the Anderson County Forest Landowners' Association on January 31, 2006. Contact Howard Hiller at (864) 638-5889 Ext. 115 for more details.

Union: The Union Forest Landowners Association will be meeting sometime in February or March. Contact Jeff Fellers at (864) 427-6259 Ext 115 for more information.

Dear Readers,

This newsletter is being distributed on a regional level every quarter. The columns will be composed and compiled by various experts with the Cooperative Extension Service as well as other agencies. Our intention is to provide landowners with useful and pertinent information. In order for this to be a success, we would like to ask our clientele to offer suggestions for the content of this newsletter. You can provide this by e-mail at caudill@clermson.edu or by phone, 864-638-5889 ext. 116. We hope you find this information informative.

Sincerely,

D. Jason Caudill
County Extension Agent
Natural Resources and 4-H Youth Development

Howard H. Hiller
County Extension Agent
Forestry and Agriculture

Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.