Congratulations Jeff and Melody Scott, 2013 Florida Tree Farmers of the Year

By Brian Cobble, Florida Forest Service and Chris Demers, UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation

Jeff and Melody received the Florida Tree Farmers of the Year Award for exemplary stewardship of their Suwannee County property, "Adventure Plantation". Jeff has been involved in the Scott family Tree Farm for over 25 years with his father; T. A. Scott who has been involved in the American Tree Farm system since 1977. With seven children all interested and involved in land management at the farm, this Tree Farm is truly a family-run enterprise.

Adventure Plantation is a certified Tree Farm and Stewardship Forest.

The whole family is involved with activities at Adventure Plantation.

Adventure Plantation contains a diverse mix of forest habitats including cypress and bay swamps, natural hardwood areas, pine flatwoods, upland pine, longleaf pine sand-hill, as well as planted slash pines in a mix of age classes.

Timber resources are actively managed through thinning, understory shrub removal, prescribed fire and fire line maintenance. In addition to timber, wildlife habitat is an important objective. Prescribed fire and mechanical shrub reduction maintains the pine communities and provides habitat for a variety of birds and mammals. Mast producing trees and supplemental food plots are planted and maintained as wildlife food sources.

Water is also an important resource on the property. There are several creeks, intermittent streams, and ponds on the property that are protected through the use of Best Management Practices. There are also unique and important aquifer recharge points, where water flows underground.

Recreation and aesthetics are important objectives for the Scott family.

Continued on page 2
A “camp house” is being built on the property for the use of the family and their friends. There are a number of hunting stands used for both gun and archery hunting in the fall and winter, as well as habitats maintained for wild turkey hunting in the spring. ATV trails are found throughout the property, well named and labeled with custom road signs.

Special sites on the property include several old wood frame homesteads (now abandoned) found throughout the woods of the Scott Tract. The Seaboard Coastline Railroad (also abandoned) forms the western boundary of the tract. The old railroad right-of-way was purchased by the previous owner, and is utilized as an access road on the tract.

Bear-Proof Your Wildlife Feeders

By David Telesco and Mikala Randich, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Since July 1, 1985, it has been legal to hunt deer with the aid of supplemental feeders on private property throughout the year in Florida. For this reason, many hunters along with wildlife enthusiasts set up wildlife feeders to attract deer and other animals. However, wildlife feeders attract many different wildlife species, not just those people are hoping will visit.

Wildlife feeders are highly attractive to Florida black bears. Black bears will take advantage of any easily accessible or readily available food source. Eighty percent of a black bears’ diet is vegetation, such as fruits, nuts, and even grasses, so most items commonly stocked in a supplemental feeder for deer and other wildlife are also attractive to black bears. In the fall, black bears go into a sort of ‘feeding frenzy’, where they are trying to pack on the pounds before the lean season of winter. Black bears switch from consuming 5,000 calories a day in the summer to up to 20,000 calories a day in the fall. Therefore, when a bear finds a stocked wildlife feeder, their instinct is to eat everything they can get out of it, even if this means breaking into the feeder to do so. When black bears access a wildlife feeder and consume the feed they may damage the feeder in the process. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Bear Management Program wants to prevent this type of damage. FWC recognizes these interactions are not beneficial for humans or bears, and has advice on how to reduce the chances of attracting bears when feeding other wildlife.

Planting and maintaining wildlife foods like clover in food plots is an ideal way to attract wildlife without necessarily concentrating bears in one particular location. If a food plot is not feasible, try switching the type of feed stocked in a feeder. Corn is highly preferred by bears and so switching from corn to soybeans or rice bran can reduce bear visits to your feeder.

Also, solar powered electric fencing can be setup around wildlife feeders to deter bears; deer will be able to jump the fence, while bears cannot make their way over or under the wires without receiving a shock.

FWC offers is a bear-proof wildlife feeder design that uses a pole and cable winch system to elevate the feeder out of the bear’s reach. While the design is effective at reducing bear damage, it is not mobile and so may not be the best option for everyone wishing to feed wildlife in bear country.

To help identify additional options, FWC launched the “Bear-Proof Your Feeder Competition” for the public to submit their bear-proof wildlife feeder designs. Florida Wildlife and Woods ‘N Water magazines graciously donated full page advertisements for the contest, and FWC promoted the contest at various events and news outlets and added information on the FWC webpage to further publicize the contest. FWC anticipated the contest would bring different cost-effective and feasible options for bear-proofing wildlife feeders.

The contest resulted in ten field-tested submissions with effective yet varied features and design strategies for bear-proofing wildlife feeders. Many entries were similar to the design already posted on the FWC website, reinforcing the idea that FWC’s
Current design is an effective way to bear-proof wildlife feeders. FWC used a panel of staff to judge the entries based on cost and effort to construct as well as overall confidence in its ability to protect the feeder from bear damage. Grand prize, second place, and third place winners were selected. In addition, all entries were eligible to be selected at random to win a ‘lottery’ prize.

The grand prize was awarded to Donald Pierce. Pierce’s design is a feeder attached to skids allowing it to be pulled by a truck or ATV to a location of the owner’s choice. This setup was unique because all of the other design submissions needed to be firmly or permanently secured to the ground. The feed in this design is contained in a large barrel and released from the bottom by a timed feeder mechanism. To prevent bears or other wildlife from damaging the feeder device, metal caging is welded around all the sides and the bottom of the feeder.

**Bear Safety**

When you’re in the woods, most wild black bears will be long gone before you have a chance to get close. However, if you do come up on a bear at close range:

- Remain standing upright
- Speak to the bear in a calm, assertive voice
- Back up slowly toward a secure area; be sure you are leaving the bear a clear escape route
- Avoid direct eye contact, bears and other animals may view this as aggressive behavior
- Stop and hold your ground if your movement away seems to irritate instead of calm the bear

DO NOT:

- Make any sudden or abrupt movements
- Run; it can trigger a chase instinct, and bears can sprint up to 35 mph
- Play dead; black bears eat things that play dead or are dead
- Climb a tree; black bears can climb 100 feet up a tree in 30 seconds

Pay close attention to the bear’s behavior. When wildlife feels threatened by people, they typically try to tell us to back off in their own way. For example, a rattlesnake rattles its tail and an alligator opens its mouth and hisses. If a bear feels threatened, they may clack their teeth together, moan, blow, huff, or stomp the ground. They may bluff charge (run toward you and then stop before reaching you). These are all ways the bear is showing you it is as uncomfortable with the situation and it wants you to give it some space. These actions are meant to scare you, but they are NOT indications of aggressive intent or an imminent attack. Actually, a black bear that intends to attack in a predatory or aggressive manner is eerily silent since they do not want to warn you.

Bears are wild animals and must be respected. Even though they are typically quiet and shy animals, they have the potential to seriously harm humans. Do not take unnecessary risks! While there have been no predatory bear attacks on people in Florida, people have been bitten and scratched by bears. In all cases, bears were defending themselves, cubs, or food sources. If a bear has become used to feeding from your wildlife feeder, it may not be willing to leave the site when you approach. Bears can become defensive over what they perceive is their food source.

In the rare event that a black bear attacks you, fight back aggressively. People have successfully fended off black bear attacks using rocks, sticks, or even their bare hands. If a bear is threatening the safety of humans, pets or livestock, or causing property damage, contact FWC.

**Report Bear Sightings**

Please report your sightings of bears using FWC’s new web survey tool! The FWC’s goal is to update and refine its existing map of where black bears live in Florida, and people are encouraged to post their bear sightings online at https://public.myfwc.com/fwri/blackbear/. Participants can pinpoint on a map where they saw a bear or bear tracks, with the option of sharing photos, but please DO NOT approach bears to take photos of them. Photos from installed game cameras are welcome. The web page is for sightings only, to report a conflict or seek assistance with bears, please continue to contact one of the five FWC Regional Offices nearest you.

Donald Pierce’s bear-proof feeder design won first place.
FWC Youth Hunting Program

Jeff Lawlor, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Are you aware of how the hunting heritage is being passed on to future Florida generations by Youth Hunting Program of Florida (YHPF) Section of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and how you can be involved?

The Youth Hunting Program of Florida offers youth graduates from the Hunter Safety Course a mentored first time hunting and conservation experience that is: fun, safe, ethical, legal, educational, affordable and memorable. With the graciousness of private landowners like you, YHPF conducts over 70 youth hunts annually for boys and girls between the ages of 12 to 17. First time youth hunters are introduced to the experience that they will recall for their lifetimes. Yet, there is a great need, for even more hunts and additional properties to hunt on!

These closely-supervised hunts can be for a variety of game including: hogs, deer (antlerless or bucks), turkeys, coyotes, varmints, doves or ducks. You decide what they hunt, the dates, and what portion of your acreage to hunt. The hunts typically are held for three days over weekends. FWC can select the youth hunters from an on-going registration database or you can select them. We are blessed with the support of dedicated, highly trained and experienced volunteers that help the limited staff make these hunts become reality.

For the landowners, there is no cost involved; FWC carries all the liability insurance to completely safeguard you. You can be as involved, or as uninvolved, as you desire. Most landowners enjoy these hunts so much that they are not only heavily involved but can hardly wait to hold another hunt!

YHPF continues passing on our hunting heritage to future Florida generations and to help ‘give back’ in the field of conservation. If you are interested in learning more, please feel free to contact YHPF Coordinator, Jeff Lawlor at: 352.398.3259 or at: Jeff.Lawlor@MyFWC.com. Information is also available online at IHuntFlorida.com/ or MyFWC.com. We’ll be more than pleased to discuss this most rewarding YHPF with you and to meet with you. Give us a call today!

FWC Imperiled Species Management Plan

By Claire Sunquist Blunden and Diane Hirth, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission adopted its new conservation model in September 2010 to evaluate the status of species listed as state-threatened or species of special concern. The process started with Biological Status Reviews, a health checkup for each species.

With that assessment step done, the next focus is to draft plans to manage these species through specific objectives and actions. In 2013 FWC introduced draft species action plans, followed by an Imperiled Species Management Plan that will be the blueprint for conserving 60 species on Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species list.

The species action plans will identify needed conservation actions, how to accomplish these actions and who will be involved. Following development of the species action plans, staff will look across all of the plans for common elements in order to develop more comprehensive conservation strategies. This step will help us identify priority needs and beneficial management for multiple species and habitats.

You are invited to be part of the process and learn about these birds, fish, frogs, invertebrates, mammals and reptiles that contribute to keeping Florida’s natural areas functioning and alive. You will be able to read and comment on the draft species action plans for each species, as well as the imperiled species management plan. See http://www.myfwc.com/Imperiled to learn more and participate.

Something Bugging Your Trees?

By Jiri Hulcr, Forest Entomologist, UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation

Do you have pests or a disease in your trees? Leaves or needles wilting, and you don’t know why? Sawdust falling out of your trees, and you don’t know how to save them? There is help: contact the new Forest Health Diagnostics service at the UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation: http://sfrc.ufl.edu/treehealth/index.shtml

We are a group of forest health specialists at the University of Florida/IFAS. We guarantee fast and the most accurate forest pest and disease diagnostics available in the State of Florida. For a modest fee of $8, we can help you save your stand that’s worth thousands.
The Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative, or PFLCC, is a public-private partnership (cooperative) facilitating planning, design, and implementation of conservation strategies for fish and wildlife species at the landscape level (i.e., at a large scale that can include large numbers of landowners or parcels).

The PFLCC is one of 22 such cooperatives (LCCs) nationwide. While it is underwritten by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the cooperatives are self-governing with few limitations on composition and structure. The LCCs set their own priorities and basic rules of the road.

Florida is blessed with numerous public conservation programs and private conservation efforts, excellent scientific data upon which to base decisions, and several local, regional, and even statewide plans for conservation. There are literally thousands of Floridians that dedicate much of their professional and private lives to conservation of our natural resources. There are species conservation initiatives, habitat conservation initiatives, watershed conservation initiatives, and conservation education initiatives. There are programs to control invasive species, manage hunting and fishing, promote sustainability, promote best management practices and compatible land uses, provide opportunities to observe wildlife, and reestablish native flora and fauna.

What Florida and other states don’t have is consensus on a single plan or venue that incorporates and accounts for all of these things...and this is where the LCCs fit in. The LCCs don't ask anyone to change their values, priorities, or mission. What they are designed to do is develop and gain consensus on a common vision for renewable natural resources and inform people how they can contribute to this vision. What habitats are needed to maintain viability of imperiled species? What corridors are needed to allow species to adapt to changing future conditions? What are the scientific questions that still need to be answered? What new tools do we need to improve on-the-ground, so-called “conservation delivery,” efforts?

The LCC is a forum where all of this can occur; where the agencies, landowners, scientists, advocates, and even the guy on the street can all contribute their ideas. Check us out at http://peninsularfloridalcc.org/ and join in the conversation. It’s free; it’s painless; and no one will cold-call you asking for a donation.

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COYOTES NEEDED!

The University of Florida is conducting a study of coyote dietary habits in Florida and needs YOU to donate your catch! We are especially interested in how coyotes are affecting white-tailed deer, turkeys, bobwhite quail, livestock, and pets!

YOUR help is needed to obtain legally acquired coyote carcasses, with or without pelts. We will also accept coyote stomachs and intestines if you cannot store the whole carcass. Carcasses or stomachs and intestines should be frozen in a suitable bag or container, and include the name of contributor, animal weight/sex, date harvested/obtained, and location harvested/obtained.

Arrangements can be made to get carcasses from you at the University or combine your animals with others in your area for a pickup. **We have obtained a permit** from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for this project, and will keep information provided by you for this project anonymous to the extent possible by law. We greatly appreciate your help with this valuable study! Contact Lauren N. Watine & Bill Giuliano, LNWATINE@UFL.EDU, (352) 846-0575.

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Get Email Updates!

Don’t miss out on upcoming events and news! Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the Stewardship listserv. Updates are sent weekly.
TIMBER PRICE UPDATE

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

Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the 3rd Quarter 2013 Timber Mart-South report were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Florida Stumpage Prices</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pine pulpwood: $40/cord ($15/ton), ↑ from 2nd Qtr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pine C-N-S: $55/cord ($20/ton), ~ same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine sawtimber: $76/cord ($28/ton), ↑</td>
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Trend Report

Average stumpage prices for all products in Florida continued their increase this quarter, with average pulpwood prices reaching a level not seen since 1999. Despite some improvements in construction markets, a continued excess supply of chip-n-saw and sawtimber material is keeping those prices on a slower recovery relative to pulpwood.

Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida
1st Qtr 1998 through 3rd Qtr 2013

Timber Mart-South is compiled and produced at the Center for Forest Business, Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, under contract with the Frank W. Norris Foundation, a non-profit corporation serving the forest products industry. See http://www.tmart-south.com/ for information on subscriptions.
These landowners have a current Forest Stewardship and/or Tree Farm management plan for their property and have demonstrated excellent stewardship of their land resources.

For more information about becoming a Certified Forest Steward or Tree Farmer, contact your Florida Forest Service County Forester, consultant or learn about it at:

http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/For-Landowners/Programs/Forest-Stewardship-Program

or

http://www.floridaforest.org/tree_farm.php

Nancy and Paul Pettie with Brian Cobble (L), Suwannee County

Palmer Yergey (center) with Joe Gocsik (L) and Chris Otremba (R), Lake County

Bill Kerstein (L) with Brian Cobble, Suwannee County

Claude Crapps with Jackie Dove, Suwannee County. Claude is also recognized by the Florida Forest Service for his service of 42 years on the State Forestry Council and 29 years on the Board of the Florida Forestry Arson Alert Association.

Offie Macks (R) with Henry Thompson, Escambia County
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event, Location, Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 14</td>
<td><strong>Forest Stewardship Tour at George C. Owens Farm</strong>, 8:30 am to 2 pm CT, meet at UF/IFAS Extension Washington County Office. Join us to learn the many benefits of silvopasture – combining livestock and timber. $10 covers lunch and materials. Details and registration at <a href="http://fsp-tour111413.eventbrite.com/">http://fsp-tour111413.eventbrite.com/</a> or call UF/IFAS Extension Washington County at (850) 638-6180 to register.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 21</td>
<td><strong>Forest Stewardship Tour at Kent-Carroll Forests</strong>, 9 am to 2 pm CT, UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County. Details to Come. Join us to learn about this multi-enterprise property of forests, blueberries, ponds and wildlife. $10 covers lunch and materials. Details and registration at <a href="http://fsp-tour112113.eventbrite.com/">http://fsp-tour112113.eventbrite.com/</a> or call UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County at (850) 547-1108 to register.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 22</td>
<td><strong>32nd Annual Volusia County Farm Tour</strong>, For more information contact David Griffis, UF/IFAS Volusia Extension County at <a href="mailto:dgriffis@ufl.edu">dgriffis@ufl.edu</a>, (386) 822-5778</td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td><strong>Landowner Field Tour</strong>, Alachua County. Presented by Florida Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. For information contact Joe Vaughn, (352) 955-2241, <a href="mailto:Joseph.Vaughn@MyFWC.com">Joseph.Vaughn@MyFWC.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td><strong>Forest Certification Workshop</strong>, UF/IFAS Extension Walton County Office, DeFuniak Springs, FL. Topics include certification systems and process, product chain of custody and more. For details, contact Rose Godfrey, <a href="mailto:rosa23@ufl.edu">rosa23@ufl.edu</a>, (352) 219-8717.</td>
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<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td><strong>Forest Certification Workshop</strong>, UF/IFAS Extension Jackson County Office, Marianna, FL. Topics include certification systems and process, product chain of custody and more. For details, contact Rose Godfrey, <a href="mailto:rosa23@ufl.edu">rosa23@ufl.edu</a>, (352) 219-8717.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 14</td>
<td><strong>Cogongrass Workshop</strong>, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, UF/IFAS North FL Research and Education Center, 155 Research Road, Quincy, FL 32351. To be broadcast via Polycom to 6 other Florida locations. For information contact the NFREC at (850) 875-7101</td>
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<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td><strong>Forest Certification Workshop</strong>, UF/IFAS Extension Madison County Office, Madison, FL. Topics include certification systems and process, product chain of custody and more. For details, contact Rose Godfrey, <a href="mailto:rosa23@ufl.edu">rosa23@ufl.edu</a>, (352) 219-8717.</td>
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<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td><strong>Forest Certification Workshop</strong>, UF/IFAS Extension Suwannee County Office, Live Oak, FL. Topics include certification systems and process, product chain of custody and more. For details, contact Rose Godfrey, <a href="mailto:rosa23@ufl.edu">rosa23@ufl.edu</a>, (352) 219-8717.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td><strong>Forest Certification Workshop</strong>, UF/IFAS Extension Putnam County Office, East Palatka, FL. Topics include certification systems and process, product chain of custody and more. For details, contact Rose Godfrey, <a href="mailto:rosa23@ufl.edu">rosa23@ufl.edu</a>, (352) 219-8717.</td>
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For many more events and information see: [floridalandsteward.org](http://floridalandsteward.org)