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# The Florida Forest Steward



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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***Inside: Challenges of Reforestation***  
*photo by Tyler Jones, UF-IFAS*

## The Year of Forests

By Chris Demers

As we head into the final quarter of 2011, the "Year of Forests", a look ahead is in order. With a crippled economy and stumpage prices for many forest products in a long-term slump, this has been among the most difficult years to encourage landowners to plant trees. Of course there is no shortage of great reasons to plant trees: for wildlife habitat, air quality, carbon sequestration, soil and water conservation, aesthetic beauty and recreation. However, for many landowners, until these values are coupled with some return on investment, they may not be adequate to justify establishing or regenerating forest stands when stumpage prices are low for an indefinite period of time.

The big question now is can these benefits – environmental benefits – somehow be factored into the market equation. What are the real economic values of these benefits and, more importantly, how can landowners be paid for the air, water, soil and wildlife benefits that their forests provide? Faculty and graduate students at the UF-IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation are working toward answering these questions. They have



started with determining what these values are for Forest Stewardship properties in Florida. We look forward to sharing some of these findings and ideas in future editions of this publication and Stewardship events.

## **Challenges of Reforestation**

By Jon Gould and Chris Demers

If you have recently harvested, or will soon harvest, a pine stand there is a long list of decisions to be made about what will happen next on the harvested site. This article will help you sort through the details and hopefully help you make informed decisions. The variables to consider include soil type and moisture, competing vegetation, groundwater level, weather (rainfall and temperature) during and after planting, topography, how you will regenerate the site, and site preparation (mechanical, herbicide application, burn, none, etc.). You must also consider the planting season, method (mechanical or hand), tree species (loblolly, slash, longleaf, etc.), tree genetics, and type of seedling (bareroot or container seedlings, or natural regeneration).

### **Natural Regeneration vs. Planting**

If you have already clearcut harvested the site and you want to regenerate the stand, planting will be your only option and considerations for that are below. If you have not yet harvested, you can consider regenerating the stand with seed from a portion of the current growing stock. Using a seed tree or shelterwood method, you can provide the seed source for your stand of timber. This can minimize site preparation and planting costs but you will have less control over stocking and will likely need to do some precommercial

thinning to get desired tree density once the new stand is established.

## **Site Preparation**

In situations where herbaceous vegetation and hardwoods have become established on the cleared site, it will be necessary to prepare the site for the natural regeneration or planted seedlings. Site preparation usually involves some combination of mechanical, chemical and/or fire treatments.

### *Chemical and Mechanical site preparation*

If using mechanical site preparation alone, it is usually desirable to plant pine seedlings within the following several months of the treatment. Get the seedlings in the ground before herbaceous competition becomes established, and be prepared for some follow-up treatments to remove the competition that does take hold in the new stand.



Roller chopping can effectively prepare a site for planting by breaking down hardwoods and debris, but resprouting will often be an issue, photo by Chris Demers.

Effective chemical site preparation usually involves a broadcast herbicide treatment to control the herbaceous and hardwood competition before planting. Several commercial, broad-spectrum formulations are available for this. These

usually contain some combination of active ingredients such as imazapyr, glyphosate, sulfometuron methyl and several others. It is best to wait until the vegetation is at peak growth, usually late summer, before applying the herbicides. This will maximize the kill. Then burn the dead vegetation in the fall and plant in the winter, usually the sooner the better while there is typically good moisture in the ground.

### *Fire*

Fire is a very efficient and cost-effective site preparation method, especially for preparing the site for natural regeneration. However, fire must be used with caution. If you must hire someone to burn, it can be challenging finding a qualified, reliable, and, preferably, certified and insured burner that you can count on to burn your site at a reasonable cost. Burners are getting harder to find and most, especially the better ones, prefer to work on larger sites where they can make more money. Of course, finding a certified burner is not an issue if you are going to do it yourself.

The other big issue with burning is that it is highly weather dependent. If you are trying to burn in a rainy weather pattern, there will likely be too much moisture to get a fire hot enough to consume most of the dead material killed by herbicides and remaining harvest slash. Other weather conditions, such as humidity and wind speed and direction, are also a consideration. Likewise, an extended dry weather pattern or drought can pose an equally challenging problem in scheduling a burn. Many of you know from experience how hard it is to get a burn authorization from the state forestry agency during extended dry periods.

## **Planting**

The species you plant will depend on your site and your objectives. Your county forester, extension agent or a forestry consultant can help you with this choice. The timing of planting is controlled by several conditions. First is the availability of seedlings. Some types of seedlings are plentiful in some years, scarce in others. Containerized or genetically superior seedlings can fluctuate in availability, so it is wise to place your order at least 12 months ahead of when you expect to plant. If you are not going to do the planting yourself, it's a good idea to get your planter lined up well ahead of time. Otherwise, you may end up with a planter that is not your first choice or not get your seedlings in the ground until late in the planting season, which can be disastrous if there is a dry spring. It is best to get seedlings in the ground in the fall or winter if you possibly can.

Weather can be a game-changer and predicting weather patterns seems to be getting more difficult. If it is too wet to plant in the late fall and winter, planting may be delayed until spring or the next planting season. Delaying planting until the next season also creates a problem with what to do with the seedlings you have already ordered and committed to purchase. High seedling mortality can result when seedlings are planted late in the season, followed by several weeks of little or no rain.

Getting out of sequence with the site preparation process can also cause problems and delay planting. For example, if you can't get a burn in the fall or early winter following an herbicide site preparation, you may have to plant over the dead vegetation or delay planting

until the next year. If planting is delayed until the next planting season, herbaceous and woody competition can rebound and you may need another round of site prep treatments.

### **Best Management Practices**

Don't forget, if you are planning any silvicultural practices near a river, stream, lake or other water body, Silviculture Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be followed in order to protect water quality. See [http://www.fl-dof.com/forest\\_management/hydrology\\_index.html](http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/hydrology_index.html) for more information on BMPs.

### **Conclusion**

As you can see from the discussion above, much is involved in successful reforestation. The sequence and timing of the various steps is very important, as well as selecting the species and generation of seedling to plant, the type of site preparation, etc. Weather can also greatly affect reforestation, which you have no control over. However, you can avoid planting too early or late in the normal planting season, when it is more likely to be too wet or dry. Considering all of these variables and the difficulty of completing each task on schedule, it is usually a good idea to hire someone, like an experienced forester, to manage your reforestation.

Of course, foresters can also advise you on site preparation, seedling selection, herbicide treatments, etc. and may be able to obtain these services more economically than you could. Oftentimes, foresters work year in and year out with reforestation contractors, so they get to know those that provide the highest quality of services at the most economical prices. And the unit rates for some contractor services may be less because

the forester is giving the contractor a much greater volume of work from several landowners he works with, as opposed to just your reforestation acreage. Many foresters are also Certified Prescribed Burn Managers. For good advice on selecting a consulting forester, see <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fr125>.

In the next edition of the newsletter one of the authors will share his personal experiences where he made mistakes in several of the steps discussed above while reforesting a clearcut tract. The result was damaging - costly, years of growth lost, and permanent problems built into the reforested tract.

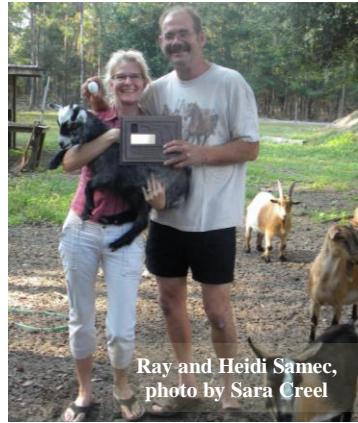
About the authors: Jon Gould, Tree Farmer and Chris Demers, Forest Stewardship Coordinator, University of Florida IFAS School of Forest Resources & Conservation.

## **The New Faces of Land Stewardship**

By Chris Demers

Since the Forest Stewardship Program began in 1990 we have seen some changes in the type of landowners that are getting involved in it and other land management assistance programs. While these Programs have served landowners with more traditional agricultural or forestry backgrounds, we've recently seen an increase in the number of new landowners enrolling, who have not owned land before and are new to land management. Many of these new owners don't know where to start thinking about how to manage the timber and natural resources on their land and they are hungry for information and eager to get started.

Meet Ray and Heidi Samec. They ended up in Bronson by accident on their way home to St. Petersburg on a road trip.



Ray and Heidi Samec, photo by Sara Creel

It was during that accidental turn that they found what is lovingly now called “Flying Pig Ranch”, 121 acres of forest land. They purchased the land in 2002 and quickly discovered that they had few ideas about how to approach the management of the resources on their new piece of paradise. Having some experience with 4-H as a youngster, Heidi knew that goats would be an effective way to reduce the vegetation that was clogging the lower understory of their woods.



Flying Pig Ranch, photo by Chris Demers

After putting the goats to work they started their search for assistance with the rest of the property. They stopped in to the County Extension Office where they met their Florida Forest Service County Forester. The Forester paid them a visit and recommended they enroll in the Forest

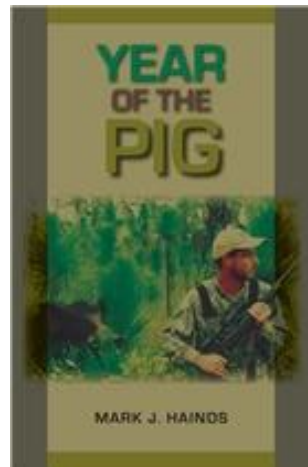
Stewardship Program, which would provide a management plan and access to a vast network of resources, professionals and educational opportunities.

They enrolled in the Program in 2004 and have made great progress on their timber, wildlife and recreational objectives.

Environmental stewards to the core, they also built an energy-efficient house on the property, powered primarily by photovoltaic solar panels.

The Forest Stewardship Program helped the Samecs define their land management goals and objectives. Heidi said the Program “gave us ideas and direction”. Attending a Forest Stewardship Tour and a Watermelon Pond Cooperative workshop “opened new doors to more possibilities” and connected them with more public and private forestry and natural resource professionals as well as other landowners who are managing forest land in their area.

Their story is similar to many who have recently purchased land and are finding assistance and opportunities through Florida’s Forest Stewardship Program and other land management programs and partners. If you have land and are looking for land management assistance, contact any of the editorial partners listed on the back of this newsletter to get connected.



**“Year of the Pig” a Great Read for Landowners, Managers and Outdoors Enthusiasts**  
By Chris Demers

Mark Hains has been a great resource for land stewardship in the southeast. Many of you have met Mark at Forest Stewardship and other outreach events related to longleaf pine regeneration and management. Mark’s latest project, *Year*

*of the Pig*, is a personal account of one avid hunter's pursuit of wild pigs over seventeen hunts in eleven states. He tied his mission to the Chinese calendar's Year of the Pig in 2007 and journeyed through southern pine forests, hardwood forests, cypress swamps, and Hawaii's wiliwili forests in search of his prey. He used a range of weapons - black-powder rifle, bow and arrow, knife, and high-powered rifle - and various methods to stalk his quarry through titi, saw palmetto, privet hedge, and blue palms.

The book reveals much about wild pigs, the habitats to which they've adapted over the centuries and the challenge of hunting them. It also reveals much about the author - his hunting skills and ethics developed over a lifetime pursuing the sport, his passion for the outdoors and land stewardship, as well as his patience and sense of humor. Appealing to hunters and adventure readers for its entertainment value, *Year of the Pig* will also be valuable to farmers, landowners, land managers, and environmentalists from all walks for its broad information and perspective on the topic. The "Year of the Pig" is available for sale at:

<http://www.uapress.ua.edu/product/Year-of-the-Pig,5161.aspx>

## **Report Fox Squirrel Sightings**

By Courtney Hooker, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The fox squirrel, named for its fox-like tail, is a charismatic mammal approximately twice the size of the common gray squirrel. The coloration of the fox squirrel is highly variable, ranging from a creamy tan to all black.

In Florida, the fox squirrel can be found in almost every county, but the distribution is patchy and not well understood.



Fox Squirrel, Joy Viola, Northeastern University, Bugwood.org

A new research project aimed at better understand fox squirrel distribution is being conducted by the University of Florida - IFAS Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Members of the public across the state are asked to report their fox squirrel sightings at the following website:

<https://public.myfwc.com/hsc/foxsquirrel/GetLatLong.aspx>

Questions? Please Contact Courtney Hooker [foxsquirrel@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:foxsquirrel@ifas.ufl.edu)

## **Get Email Updates!**

Don't miss out on upcoming events and news! Send an email to [cdemers@ufl.edu](mailto:cdemers@ufl.edu) to be added to the Stewardship listserv. Updates are sent weekly and include a link to the current and back issues of the Florida Forest Steward.

## Timber Price Update

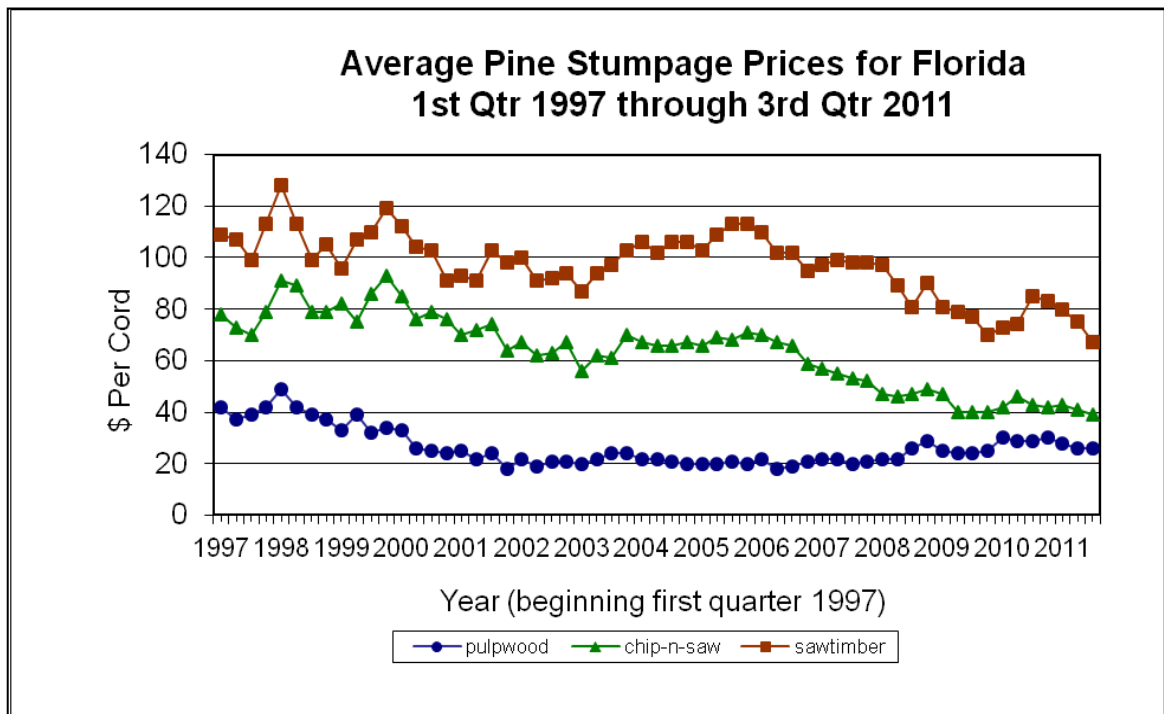
The timber pricing information below is useful for observing trends over time, but does not necessarily reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale are advised to solicit the services of a consulting forester to obtain current local market conditions. A note about the biomass price omission in the report: given the very scattered and variable nature of biomass markets across the region, the specific type of product and prices reflected in that report were not relevant to most Florida landowners. For those reasons it was omitted.

Florida stumpage price ranges reported in the **3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2011** Timber Mart-South (TMS) report were:

- 
- Pine pulpwood: \$17 - \$33/cord (\$6 - \$12/ton), ↑ from 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2011
  - Pine C-N-S: \$27 - \$48/cord (\$10 - \$18/ton), ↓
  - Pine sawtimber: \$46 - \$86/cord (\$17 - \$32/ton), ↓
  - Pine plylogs: \$58 - \$81/cord (\$21 - \$30/ton), ↓
  - Pine power poles: \$120 - \$153/cord (\$45 - \$57/ton), ↑
  - Hardwood pulpwood: \$14 - \$25/cord (\$5 - \$9/ton), ↓
- 

## Trend Report

There are not many changes to report this quarter. Average stumpage prices for most products remain weak across Florida and the Southeast region. Prices decreased for all products with the exception of pine pulpwood and power poles, which held relatively steady across the region. Although not reflected in this report, the September 9<sup>th</sup> closing of Georgia-Pacific's plywood mill in Hawthorn is very unfortunate news. This will likely impact plylog stumpage prices negatively in coming quarters.



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### Upcoming Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
November 8-9	<b>2011 School of Forest Resources &amp; Conservation / Society of American Foresters Fall Symposium: "Managing Public Lands and Waters - Doing More with Less"</b> , Paramount Plaza Hotel, 2900 SW 13th Street, Gainesville, FL 32608. CFEs offered. Details and registration information at link on event title. Contact Dr. Pat Minogue, (850) 875-7142, <a href="mailto:pminogue@ufl.edu">pminogue@ufl.edu</a> for information. Register online: <a href="http://fallsymposiumuf.eventbrite.com/">http://fallsymposiumuf.eventbrite.com/</a>
November 17	<b>Forest Stewardship Workshop: Invasive Exotic Plant ID and Control</b> , 9 am - 3 pm, Circle B Bar Preserve, 4399 Winter Lake Road (SR 540), Lakeland, FL 33803. Registration fee of \$10 covers lunch and materials. This is <b>approved for DOACS pesticide applicator CEUs and SAF CFEs</b> . Details and registration info on flyer linked above and on-line: <a href="http://fsp-workshop111711.eventbrite.com/">http://fsp-workshop111711.eventbrite.com/</a> . Contact Polk County Extension at (863) 519-8677 Ext. 102 to register.
November 28	<b>Integrating Land &amp; Wildlife Management: Quail and Timber</b> , 5:30 - 7:30 pm ET. Levy County Extension, 625 N. Hathaway Ave. (Alt. 27), Bronson, FL. \$5 registration fee (dinner included). To register please call (352) 486-5131.
November 30	<b>Forest Stewardship Workshop: Invasive Exotic Plant ID and Control</b> , 9 am - 3 pm, UF-IFAS Alachua County Extension Office, 2800 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32609. Registration fee of \$10 covers lunch and materials. This is <b>approved for DOACS pesticide applicator CEUs and SAF CFEs</b> . Details and registration at: <a href="http://fsp-workshop113011.eventbrite.com/">http://fsp-workshop113011.eventbrite.com/</a> . Call Chris Demers, (352) 836-2375, <a href="mailto:cdemers@ufl.edu">cdemers@ufl.edu</a> to register
December 14	<b>Forest Stewardship Polycom Workshop: Plan for the Future of Your Land</b> , 1 - 4 pm ET, broadcast via Polycom to Extension facilities across Florida. Guidance on succession planning, estate planning tips and conservation planning options and associated tax benefits. CFEs <b>pending</b> . Details and registration info online: <a href="http://fsp-videoconference121411.eventbrite.com/">http://fsp-videoconference121411.eventbrite.com/</a> . Contact Chris Demers, (352) 836-2375, <a href="mailto:cdemers@ufl.edu">cdemers@ufl.edu</a> for info
January 11 2012	<b>Forest Stewardship Workshop: Invasive Exotic Plant ID and Control</b> , 9 am - 3 pm, UF-IFAS Okaloosa County Extension Office, 5479 Old Bethel Road, Crestview, FL 32536-5512. Registration fee of \$10 covers lunch and materials. <b>DOACS pesticide applicator CEUs and SAF CFEs pending</b> . Contact Okaloosa County Extension at (850) 689-5850.
January 19	<b>Forest Stewardship Tour, Pine Ridge Sanctuary, Property of Barbara and Terry Glancy, Miami-Dade County</b> , 9 am - 1 pm. \$10 fee covers lunch and materials. Details and Registration online: <a href="http://fsp-tour011912.eventbrite.com/">http://fsp-tour011912.eventbrite.com/</a>

For many more events and Forest Stewardship Program information see: [sfrc.ufl.edu/forest\\_stewardship](http://sfrc.ufl.edu/forest_stewardship)

The Florida Forest Steward is a University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Florida Division of Forestry and Florida Tree Farm joint project:

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