

Farm Family of the Year

Southern Forestry Consultants' Vice President, Dave Lewis, and his family were recently selected as Jefferson County, Florida's 2006 Outstanding Farm Family of the Year. Dave and his wife, Mona, son Jacob, and daughter Abby were honored along with other counties' Outstanding Farm Families from north Florida at a banquet in Tallahassee on November 4th. The recognition of the farm families is sponsored each year by the North Florida Fair. Dave and his family, including his mother, Dorothy, and brother, John, and his family, raise beef cattle and timber on their farm in the Aucilla community. Michael Dooner Elected

Michael Dooner Elected

Southern Forestry Consultants' President Michael J. Dooner was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Florida Forestry Association, as Treasurer, and Member of the Executive Committee of Florida Farm Bureau Federation in Gainesville, Florida, and to the Board of Directors of Southern Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company in Jackson, Mississippi.

Brent Williams, Alabama Real Estate Agent



Southern Forestry Realty, Inc. welcomes Brent Williams to its team of real estate sales professionals serving the Alabama area. For the past 14 years Brent was a forester with Southern Forestry Consultants and was involved in numerous real estate transactions during his career as a consultant. As a licensed Alabama real estate agent, he will now be concentrating his efforts full time as a realty professional who is also an Alabama registered forester and a Certified Forester. As you would expect, he is very knowledgeable of the south Alabama market and looks forward to serving our realty clients and customers. Brent can be reached at 334-389-7868. When you think of real estate, think Southern Forestry Realty!



www.soforest.com

Timber Talk

SFC Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter for Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.
Clients & Customers

Winter 2006

Merry Christmas

From the President's Desk

Each year we dedicate this edition of our newsletter for the purpose of expressing our most sincere gratitude to you for allowing us the opportunity to be of service to you, and to wish you the very best this Holiday Season. On behalf of all the staff at Southern Forestry Consultants, The Wildlife Company, Southern Forestry Realty, and Southern Development Group, please accept those feelings and wishes again this year from us.

We are all so very fortunate, us as providers of services you desire and we enjoy providing, and you as owners of land that can be enjoyed in so many ways. I hope you will take additional opportunities this Season to (re)connect with nature through the use of your land. Whether it be through a solitary deer hunt or walk in the woods, or whether it be through a more social gathering around a hunting camp or bonfire, I encourage you to seek out opportunities to enjoy

the bounty your land has to offer. You will not be disappointed.

In the Thanksgiving Season that began with Pilgrims giving thanks for their "New World", I encourage you also to share your natural world with others, especially children and young adults. We need to instill in the hearts and minds of today's youth that nature is special and that it can be fun and entertaining. Too many youth are learning the "New World" is in a shopping mall, an Ipod, or a computer. Help them understand and appreciate the blessings that are "natural" and all around us. Our world will be much improved if their world includes more of nature with you in it.

Once again, from all of us to all of you—Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Michael J. Dooner, President

LAND FOR SALE – GEORGIA

Riverwoods Plantation – S. Grady County – 15 min. south of Cairo and 30 min. north of Tallahassee – 14 "country living" lots remain ranging in size from 5± acres to 12± acres – all estates share an 1,100 foot Common Area that provides access to the Ochlocknee River. \$63,720 to \$186,800. Call Wheat Kirbo at 229-254-0348.

333± Acres – Mitchell County – 766 acres in cultivation – 416 acres of woodlands – 29 acres in pecans – 5 ponds. \$3000/ac. Call Bud Holleman 229-416-5607.

LAND FOR SALE – FLORIDA

83± Acres – Jefferson County – One large pond – 4 small ponds – 15-20 acres 16-yr old planted pines, paved road frontage.

232± Acres – Jefferson County – 6 ponds full of fish – natural upland pines and hardwoods – deer, turkey & duck hunting – great road system – 30 minutes to Tallahassee. Call Rob Langford at 850-556-7575.

LAND FOR SALE – ALABAMA

123± Acres – Geneva County – 49 acres 23-year old planted pines – 19 acres 24-year old planted pines in quail hunting condition – plenty of food plots – great hunting tract.

40± Acres – Houston County – 35 acres 20-year old planted pines – great hunting tract with hunting camp – modular home – storage buildings – paved road frontage. \$5500 per acre. Call John Taylor at 334-797-9010.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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Why A "Comp" Is Not Always Comparable!

by Wheat Kirbo

As Realtors we often are asked or ask ourselves this question: What do the "comps" say or what is the selling price of "comps." The meaning of this question is simple: What was the selling price of properties with similar features, geographic location, and size?

This question can be answered in several different ways. The county courthouse can be a wealth of information that is a matter of public record. With just a bit of time, training, and effort, a searcher can find all of the properties that have sold recently with their locations, the acreage, the selling price, etc. One could log on to the local Multiple Listing Service, which our company subscribes to, and research all recent sales that were sold through MLS. More information about recent sales might be found here, such as whether there is a pond on the property, a house, timber, etc. Yet another way to gather information about "comparables" is through publications like the "The Crumpton Report." Here you find still more information about recent sales in the area. The point there are many different ways to gather information about recent sales, and there are many different factors that contribute to the final selling price of a property.

The fact of the matter is that the value of property is determined by what any given person is willing to pay for it at any given time. There are many unspoken factors that contribute to value; factors could that mean the world to one person and nothing at all to the next person. This could not ring more true than in the acreage market. For example, in a recent publication, Wiregrass Land and Living, "dry cultivated" land is reported to be valued between \$1,750 - \$2,715 per acre. To a farmer who would want to cultivate the land, this is probably accurate. However, there are "dry cultivated" tracts of land in Southwest Georgia that have sold for \$8,000 per acre and more. Who would pay such seemingly high prices? There are just about as many answers to that question as there are buyers. Remember, "One man's junk is another man's treasure."

People often assume "comparables" are the determining factor in the value of their property. While comparables often help determine approximate values and reasonable asking prices for properties, the fact is comparables are indicators of trends in the market. TRENDS! Nothing more, nothing less!



Properties for Sale

Florida

58± acres in Madison County. Great getaway with frontage on the Aucilla River. Beautiful live oaks and planted pines. \$5166 per acre.

119± acres in Gadsden County. Planted pines with hardwood bottoms and a beautiful creek. Great deer & turkey hunting. \$4250 per acre.

50± acres in Jefferson County. Great deer hunting tract with several ponds ready to stock & fish. County road frontage. \$3000 per acre.

105± acres in Jefferson County. 40 acres of planted pines ready to thin. Secluded tract with great hunting. \$5000 per acre.

24± acre platted subdivision located on the southern edge of Woodville that would make a great affordable housing development. \$300,000.

200± acres in Leon County. Rolling hills with old growth natural longleaf pine. Secluded tract would make an ideal hunting preserve. \$1,200,000.

111± acres in Jefferson County. Diverse tract with various aged planted pines, a cypress bottom and hardwoods. Dirt road frontage. \$5000 per acre.

Georgia

770± acres in Decatur County. 565 acres of 16-20 year old planted pines, food plots, full of game. Mosquito Creek borders tract, which fronts on Highway 97. \$3350 per acre.

“How Is The Timber Market These Days?”

by Dave Lewis

This is the question we as consulting foresters get asked more often than anything else. It is a difficult and somewhat dangerous question to answer because the timber market can vary dramatically from one geographic area to another, and is subject to change, literally, with the weather. In fact, the one factor that generally affects the timber market more than any other is the weather. During wet weather times, the price tends to rise because the availability of “dry” timber that can be logged is limited. During a prolonged dry period like we have experienced this year, prices tend to fall because almost all timber is accessible to logging.

So, how is the timber market these days? In a nutshell, not so good. Why? Well, after weather, the factor that affects the timber market the most is the selling price of manufactured goods. This makes sense, doesn't it? It's logical that if the price of lumber is up then timber prices should follow and vice versa. The same could be said for pulp prices. But this is not always necessarily the case. If the price of lumber goes up, a sawmill won't necessarily raise its log prices accordingly. The mill will only pay the price for logs that it needs to in order to keep an adequate inventory. Conversely, if the price of lumber goes down, a mill might not be able to lower its log prices to match that decrease without running out of logs.

Back to our “why” question: The wholesale prices for lumber, plywood, and oriented strand board have been in a free fall for several months. According to the highly respected lumber market reporting service, Random Lengths, southern yellow pine #2 two-by-fours that brought an average of \$412 per thousand board feet (m.b.f.) a year ago are now selling for \$270 per m.b.f. or about the delivered cost of most chip-n-saw mills. Random Lengths' Composite Price Index for Structural Panel material (plywood, OSB, etc.) is down from around \$520 per m.b.f. in the fourth quarter of 2005 to roughly half that price level in the fourth quarter of this year.

Given that picture of prices, it's not surprising that most sawmills and plywood mills have curtailed their hours, scheduled temporary shutdowns, or shut down indefinitely due to poor market conditions. Of course, lumber prices are tied closely to housing starts and those are down over 14% from 2005's record pace. Most analysts are expecting further declines in housing starts in 2007, despite relatively low home mortgage rates. This does not bode well for next year's timber market if they are correct.

The poor lumber market coupled with this year's prolonged dry weather has put downward pressure on pine sawtimber prices. Pine chip-n-saw and log prices have declined 10 to 20% in most areas. Ironically, many mills are in need of logs because lower timber prices have slowed the flow of timber into the marketplace. This has placed them squarely between “a rock and a hard place.”

If there is a bright spot in today's timber market, it is the former whipping boy, pine pulpwood, which has either gone up slightly, remained stable or declined slightly, depending on the geographic area. Some areas are now seeing the best pine pulpwood prices since early 1998 due to increased competition among existing and new mills. Hardwood pulpwood and hardwood log prices remain relatively low.

In our next issue, we will take a look back over the past decade or so to see how the timber market has treated landowners and investors. This will give us a better long term perspective of timber prices.

Squirrels and Kids – A Great Way to Get Started

by Joe McGlincy

Who hasn't, as a youngster, “barbershop poled” a squirrel around a tree and wondered how in the world the squirrel always knows what side you are on! This knowledge is something that many of us “educated” hunters sometimes take for granted. But who educated us? Who taught us how to get where you had a good view of the tree and then chunk a rock or a limb on the other side to get your potential target around to your side? Or maybe you used a string tied to a bush on the other side to accomplish the same thing. Regardless, I bet someone showed you one of these tricks and it was an outdoor lesson that lasts a lifetime.

Native Americans and early settlers used squirrels for food and, to some degree, for their fur. Gray squirrels and fox squirrels are both common across the south. Gray squirrels are by far the most common and the only species numerous enough to be managed for hunting. Female gray squirrels, called “sows,” (male squirrels are called “boars”) may produce two litters of young a year, if food is plentiful. Litter size can vary from one to six, but is usually between two and four. Gray squirrel pregnancy lasts about 44 days. The first litters are born in February after the winter breeding period, or in June or July after the spring and summer breeding season. At birth the young are hairless, about 4 ½ inches long, and weigh about ½ an ounce, roughly the weight of a 50-cent piece. Weaning of the young usually begins in the seventh week. At about the time gray squirrel are weaned in the fall, trees are producing acorns and dogwood fruit is plentiful. During the spring young squirrels readily eat swelling buds, an important food source for young squirrels.

Like most wildlife species, squirrels have a high mortality rate during their first year, with about 60 percent dying in the same year in which they were born. Those that survive the first year have the potential to live about six years in the wild. Predators of gray squirrels include rat snakes, hawks, owls, foxes, bobcats, raccoons, house cats and dogs. Weather may be the most limiting factor affecting populations, aside from man-caused habitat modification. Too little rainfall may severely reduce the production of valuable squirrel foods. Heavy rains, when litters are very young, may result in drowning of baby and juvenile squirrels. Cold weather during the early spring may reduce the food supply for squirrels by killing fragile buds that would normally have produced the fall mast crop.

Hunting these small game animals is done a variety of ways. Taking a seat next to a large oak or hickory with a lot of squirrel sign, such as practically eaten acorns or hickory nut cutting, in the area and waiting for the squirrels to start feeding is probably one of the most popular methods used. The key to this method with kids is to find a place where the action will come quickly and chance for success is high. An eight year old's attention span or rear-end tolerance are neither very long! Building a small blind around the base of the tree will allow the young hunter to move around some without being detected.

Still hunting or stalking squirrels is an excellent way for a young hunter to improve his or her hunting skills (it won't hurt Mom or Dad to practice this every now and then also). Try to select days when the leaves are damp following a rain. It will make stalking much easier. If it is dry try to find a small creek that you can slip along in. Squirrels will also be coming to these areas in search of water.

Squirrel hunting with a trained squirrel dog is something that every kid should get to experience at least once. Folks with squirrel dogs are not as easy to find as they once were but there are still some around. If you can't find a good squirrel dog to hunt with another exciting method is “pullin' vines.” The key to this method is finding the right habitat. The vines to pull are usually wild muscadine vines that are plentiful in most hardwood bottomland habitats. Try to find a vine that is intertwined with other vines or may lead to a nest. Station your shooters so they can watch the entire tree, being careful that they know where everybody is and where the safe shooting lanes are. When everyone is in position, one person grabs the vine and starts pulling. The goal is to create enough ruckus to make the squirrels move around the tree or start running to other trees. Trust me, this can get pretty exciting when two or three squirrels take off after a good pull.

Most young squirrel hunters start out with a small-bore shotgun such as a .410 or 20 gauge. As their experience level increases, many switch to a .22 caliber rifle. Becoming proficient with a .22 is an excellent way to build skills for larger rifles later on. As with most hunting, good camouflage helps but there were many a squirrel killed before all the new patterns were introduced.

Fall is fast approaching and the opportunity to take a youngster to the squirrel woods will be here before you know it. Squirrel hunting with kids is a great way to introduce them to the woods, teach proper gun handling techniques, sharpen their shooting skills and maybe pass along a little “education” to them. Do you remember the first squirrel you killed? I know I do. Help create that memory for a kid this fall. If you do, I bet you won't forget that either. Be safe and good hunting! 🐿️

Properties for Sale

... continued

395± acres in Thomas County. Rolling topography with 3 small ponds. 243 acres in cropland, 110 acres in woodlands, 40 acres in CRP. Great hunting. Paved and dirt road frontage. \$3400 per acre.

424± acres in Mitchell County. 90 acres of 15-20 year old planted pines, 190 acres of woodlands. Rolling topography with paved & dirt road frontage. \$3450 per acre.

289± acres in Brooks County. Various aged planted pines with creek fed ponds. Prime recreational property. \$3500 per acre.

105± acres in Mitchell County. 30 acre pecan grove, 26 acres in cultivated fields with a pond site. 5 minutes to Meigs. \$3800 per acre.

239± acres in Grady County. 68 acres in cultivated fields, 111 acres of planted pines, and 56 acres of natural hardwoods. Excellent development opportunity. \$10,000 per acre.

Alabama

40± acres in Geneva County. Potential horse or cattle farm with open land & timberland. There is a creek that has a potential pond site. \$2475 per acre.

98± acres in Coffee County. Ideal hunting preserve with a pond, pastures, food plots, planted pines and mature hardwoods. \$3469 per acre.

40± acres in Geneva County. Beautiful hardwoods and planted pines with a creek flowing through the property. TREASURE FOREST. \$3485 per acre.

394± acres in Henry County. High hills with beautiful views. Outdoorsman's paradise with fields & food plots where deer & turkey abound. \$2975 per acre.