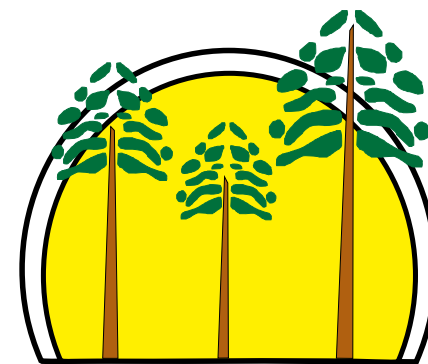




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Timber Talk

SFC Newsletter

Newsletter for Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.
Clients & Customers

Winter 2011

www.soforest.com

Wintertime Management Activities

- Soil test food plots and agricultural fields to determine lime and fertilizer needs.
- Apply lime as recommended by soil analysis in late winter to food plots and fallow weed fields.
- Disk fallow fields, perimeter firelines, and plots to promote beneficial weed establishment for quail and turkey brood habitat.
- Make prescribe burning plans. Burn high fuel and sensitive first burn stands.
- Service wood duck nest boxes. Remove wasp nests and replace nesting material. Make sure predator guards are in good shape.
- Plant mast-producing trees to attract wildlife.
- Prune established sawtooth oaks and other mast-producing trees.
- Conduct post-season deer census.
- Start providing supplement minerals for deer in late winter.
- Bait and trap wild hogs.

Notes From the Broker Lincoln's Ten Guidelines

- You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
- You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.
- You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
- You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.
- You cannot help the poor man by destroying the rich.
- You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.
- You cannot further brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.
- You cannot establish security on borrowed money.
- You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.
- You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

(Written by Rev. William John Henry Boetcker in 1916, but often attributed to Abraham Lincoln)

From the President's Desk

Wow, it doesn't seem possible that another year has gone by. The turmoil surrounding our personal economic status, our professional careers, and this country is unlike anything most of us have ever seen. Yet we persevere. We forge ahead. We continue to work hard, raise our families well, make investments of time and money, and most importantly we hopefully rediscover what matters most.

Those of you who know me, or who have read my newsletter articles over the years, may remember that Thanksgiving is by far my favorite Holiday of the year. It seems we forget our problems, if even for a day, and we reload our lives with good memories, good times, good fellowship, and a renewed sense of what Gratitude is all about. Thanksgiving is great because it makes us feel grateful and it inspires us to be great (or at least good). We realize that no matter how bad life may seem to us, there are many in this world whose sufferings are far greater and far more hopeless. We hope for better returns on investments, better yields on our stock portfolios, and certainly better timber prices. We rarely hope for something to eat or for a roof over our heads. We rarely long to be warm on a cold winter night. We rarely hope for a job that will just return to us the dignity of self-sufficiency. Think about that when times seem tough, then think about what you can do to make a difference. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Let us remember that, as much as has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as well as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds."

As we always do at this time of year, let us offer to you, our trusted clients, our most heartfelt thank you for allowing us to continue to serve your natural resource management needs. We cherish the opportunity and strive to perform at unparalleled standards such that your expectations are properly managed and your goals are met without regret. Southern Forestry Consultants, Southern Forestry Realty, and The Wildlife Company are truly blessed to be engaged in professions that mix landowners like you with opportunities to manage our wonderful natural resources. We again thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your continued trust in us, and we hope that at this time of year you will "reload your life" with some well-deserved time in the woods to enjoy the natural beauty, inspect the investments you have made and grown, or just to chase the wildlife that lives there. We hope your Holiday Season is the best ever and we sincerely hope your 2012 is better in every way than 2011. We fully expect that better times are on the way, especially if we all do the good deeds we know need doing. Pledge to make a difference in 2012. Then the good feelings we have at Thanksgiving and Christmas won't be relegated to just a single day and the Holiday Season won't seem so different than the rest of the year.

Happy Holidays to all of you,

Michael J. Dooner, President
Certified Forester
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Dave Lewis Elected to S.A.F. Council

Southern Forestry Consultants' Vice President, Dave Lewis, was recently elected to a 3 year term as one of eleven Council representatives for the Society of American Foresters. Lewis will represent over 1,300 S.A.F. members in District 10, which encompasses all of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Council is the governing body of S.A.F., which is the professional society for foresters in the U.S. Lewis has filled many roles in S.A.F. in the past, including Chapter Chair, Florida Society Chair, and the Southeastern Society Chair, and he was selected as a Fellow of S.A.F. in 2008.

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Timber Market Report

By: Dave Lewis, RF, CF
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Timber prices in general have continued to be hampered by persistent drought and lack of construction activity brought on by the downtrodden U.S. housing market. Prolonged dry weather has increased supply by virtually eliminating weather related downtime for logging crews and by making normally wet tracts capable of being logged. The stagnant economy, particularly the housing sector, has resulted in lower demand for lumber, plywood, and oriented strand board, while utility pole prices have held up better.

Pine pulpwood has become the flag bearer for the beleaguered timber market and continues to be the one market that has held up well in the last few years. This is primarily due to two factors: (1) the weak dollar which makes U.S. exports more attractive on the world market and (2) a growing shortage of available pulpwood stumpage. In addition, more markets for small diameter pine are coming on line throughout the South, mostly in the form of wood pellet mills that are supplying European customers. The new massive pellet mill in Waycross, Georgia is now operational, although it is not running at full capacity. And ground has been broken on a new biomass power plant near Gainesville, Florida that will almost certainly end up using some pine and hardwood pulpwood to stay operational.

Many mills and timber suppliers have begun to really worry about their lack of standing timber inventory. These low stumpage inventories are primarily the result of the lack of timber that has been on the market. This situation has resulted in a lot of variability in timber prices and has created a few good spot markets with improved prices for quality tracts of timber that meet a specific buyer's needs and terms. Also, now may be a good time to sell/cut a stand of timber that is normally too wet to log. Now more than ever, we recommend that you consult with your SFC forester to determine the best method and timing to sell your particular situation.

Harper Hanway Receives Award

Harper Hanway, Associate Forester at our SFC Monticello office, recently received the Florida Society of American Forester's Young Forester of the Year Award at the Society's Fall Symposium in Gainesville, Florida. The award is given annually to a member of S.A.F.'s Florida Society who is 35 years old or younger and has exhibited outstanding leadership and service to the profession of forestry.

Harper is a native of Tallahassee, and received his Bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Montana. While in the West, he worked for the Idaho Department of Lands and also worked with the Pacific Yew Extraction Program. Upon returning to Florida in 2003, Harper worked for the Florida Division of Forestry in their state-wide forest inventory program and also in land management at Tate's Hell State Forest in Carrabelle. He has been with SFC in our Monticello office since 2005.

Since joining SFC, Harper has become a Candidate Member in the Association of Consulting Foresters and has become a member of the Steering Committee of the North Florida Prescribed Fire Council, as well as a Certified Burner in both Florida and Georgia. He is the current Chair-elect of the Big Bend Chapter of the Florida S.A.F., and is wrapping up a two-year term as the Chapter's Secretary/Treasurer. He has taken a leadership role in the Chapter's service project at the Barksdale Foundation farm for special needs children in Madison County, Florida. Harper and his wife, Erica, enjoy all things outdoors, especially hiking and fishing. They reside in rural Jefferson County with their two Labrador retrievers, and where they attend First United Methodist Church.



Do You Have a Wild Hog Problem?

By: Joe McGlincy, Certified Wildlife Biologist
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Today, wild hogs are both numerous and widespread throughout much of the United States, with populations in at least 45 states. Hog populations have spread by natural expansion and illegal translocation by pig-hunting enthusiasts. Pigs possess many biological and behavioral traits that enable them to live just about anywhere and quickly populate new areas. Wild pigs are habitat generalists, meaning that they are highly adaptive and live in many different habitat types throughout a landscape or region. Wild pigs are opportunistic omnivores. They eat mostly plant matter and invertebrate animals such as worms, insects, and insect larvae. When the opportunity presents itself, wild pigs will eat small mammals, the young of larger mammals, and the eggs and young of ground-nesting birds and reptiles. Wild pigs have a high reproductive potential. They reach sexual maturity as early as 6 months of age. Litter size averages about six piglets but range from 3 to 8 piglets. Females can have 2 litters a year. Wild pigs have low natural mortality. They are most vulnerable to predation when they are young. Once pigs reach about 40 pounds, few predators pose a serious threat.

Hogs are impacting deer populations in three ways:

1. Competition for native mast, such as acorns, wild grapes and persimmons.
2. Competition for supplemental feeds, like shelled corn and planted food plots.
3. Temporary displacement of deer given that, behaviorally, deer do not want to be anywhere near feral hogs.



Sounder-Based Hog Control Strategy

Family groups of hogs are referred to as a sounder. A sounder-based control strategy is centered on removing the entire sounder. An important fundamental aspect of any control program is an understanding of the reproductive unit. If we have 100 pigs in an area, and they are found at a sex ratio of 1:1, then we have 50 females and 50 males. The only pigs we should be interested in are the females because they're the ones that will produce more pigs. By removing only one female (2% of the population), you will have more impact on the pig population than if you had removed 49 males (98% of the population). In short, males don't matter. While males contribute to agricultural and habitat damage, possibly on a greater scale than females due to their greater size, male hogs are a distraction to any serious discussions about population control. And, because it requires such great effort to successfully reduce a pig population, we cannot afford to expend effort at controlling males. By focusing our efforts on females, we will have a greater impact on pig damage in the long run.

The first, and probably the most important step in a sounder-based removal strategy is to understand how many pigs you have and where they are located. The success of a sounder-based removal strategy is to remove all the pigs in a sounder. It is critical that 100% be removed, and this requires knowing precisely how many individuals are in each sounder that are targeted for removal.

Pre-baiting is probably the most important component to successful pig trapping and perhaps the most overlooked by trappers. The goal of pre-baiting is to attract pigs to the trap site, and more importantly, to get the entire sounder conditioned to entering and leaving the trap unharmed. Pigs are intelligent animals, and if the trap is set too soon, members of the sounder that you do not catch will become educated and will be much more difficult, if not impossible, to capture later. When bait sites begin to get regular use, set up game cameras to document the number of hogs using the site. It's critical that you know exactly how many adults and juveniles are in each sounder. Once you have that information, then you can begin the trapping process. Keep in mind that this is not a race. It's not a problem if it takes you 3 months or longer to determine the location and composition of sounders. Research data suggests that this is the most important aspect of the entire process, so don't rush it.

Once the composition of the sounders has been accurately identified and the pigs are comfortable entering the trap, the trapping process can begin. Once the trap is set and pigs are caught it is critical that you identify all the pigs in the trap. Did you catch the entire sounder? If so, kill 'em all. If not, open the door and let them go. Remember, if only a portion of the sounder has been caught and killed in the trap, the remaining pigs have just been educated and will be much more difficult to catch or kill. But, if you let them go, you increase your chances of getting them all.

I can't over emphasize the importance of catching the entire sounder and not just an occasional hog every now and then. This occasional capture only serves to make the remaining pigs harder to catch. Let's do it right and get a handle on the hog problem.

Happy Holidays

