



# Timber Talk

## SFC Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter for Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.  
Clients & Customers  
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[www.soforest.com](http://www.soforest.com)

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### From the Vice President's Desk:

Oil, black gold, Texas tea. Call it what you want, but it is the lifeblood of our nation and its economy. Without petroleum, everything grinds to a halt. With gasoline and diesel prices hovering in the neighborhood of \$3.00 per gallon, it's an issue that now has everyone's attention. Availability is also becoming a problem in many areas in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's wrath. One thing is for sure: The shock of dramatic increases in fuel prices will reverberate down through every American household and business, filtering into every nook and cranny of our economy. High fuel costs are not new for much of the world, but it is a relatively new problem for Americans. Much of the transportation of our country, including timber (see Timber Market Report), is by truck, and "just in time" inventory has become the rule rather than the exception for many businesses. In addition, most of our power plants, factories, businesses, and homes are energy dependent on petroleum products, a non-renewable resource. Businesses are now feeling the negative effects of these higher fuel costs.

So, what does this have to do with timber and forest landowners? Well, in the long run, for forest landowners there could be a silver lining hidden in the cloud of higher petroleum prices. For many years, we have proclaimed the slogan "Wood is Good" to the public, but it has fallen on mostly deaf ears. Now, as everyone looks around for alternative energy sources, preferably renewable ones, wood could be the Cinderella who has been hanging around for decades just waiting for someone to place the glass slipper on its foot but always upstaged by its uglier, cheaper stepsister: Oil.

Study after study has shown the potential for wood to be used much more extensively and effectively as a source of fuel. Many wood products manufacturers, including paper mills, already fuel their boilers primarily with wood and its by-products. It has already been proven that wood, given the right economic environment, can be used to effectively generate electricity and supplement the grid. Wood has many advantages over other sources of energy as outlined in this publication (see Woody Biomass), but its most attractive feature is that it is indeed renewable.

In the short run, the current fuel crisis is likely to be very painful for all of us. But, hopefully, out of this pain will come some new opportunities for landowners to market wood products as well as increased options for managing their forests. These opportunities are most likely to appear in the form of increased wood fuel chipping, which is already taking place but at only a fraction of its capacity. We may also begin to see more practical opportunities for selling carbon credits. In the meantime, let's all try to do our part to help conserve fuel and energy.

David S. Lewis, Vice President

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## **Timber Market Report**

This summer's heavy and frequent rains have boosted demand for virtually all timber products. Many area mills are fighting to retain safe inventories of wood in the face of nearly daily rains. Pine pulpwood prices, although still nowhere near the 1997/98 historical highs, have continued to edge up and are now at their highest level in several years. This is the result of several factors: A wet spring and summer, a decreased standing pulpwood supply, a shortage of logging contractors, and new emerging markets (see below). The glut of salvage timber from Hurricane Ivan last year has worked its way through the system, although much of the wood was not able to be salvaged.

Pine chip-n-saw markets have gained traction too, spurred by a red hot housing market and a log supply limited by wet weather. Prices for other pine "high grade" products such as sawtimber, plywood logs, and poles have also increased in recent months and are all currently trending upward. The devastation from Hurricane Katrina will likely cause an additional surge in demand for lumber and plywood products, which could push stumpage prices up even further.

Hardwood products, both pulpwood and logs have also recovered and are at or near historical highs in some areas. Again, wet weather has contributed heavily to these increases.

Georgia-Pacific's new oriented strand board (OSB) plant near Hosford, Florida, finally opened in May and has been receiving 100+ loads per day of pine pulpwood since then. This has opened up new opportunities for selling pulpwood in the Big Bend area of Florida, particularly west and south of Tallahassee. It has also created a "domino" effect on mills in other areas, forcing them to raise their delivered prices.

In other good news for landowners, Langboard's OSB plant at Quitman, Georgia, which has traditionally used exclusively soft hardwood, has completed renovations that will allow them to use a much higher percentage of pine pulpwood. Also, Suncoast Bedding is planning to increase their capacity, possibly doubling production, at their Thomasville, Georgia, plant. Suncoast prefers loblolly pine due to loblolly's lack of pitch.

Are there any ominous clouds in the future of timber prices? Yes. Higher fuel costs have greatly impacted the trucking end of the logging industry. Many loggers use independent contract truckers to transport their wood to the mills and some of these truckers are going out of business or parking trucks due to the dramatic increases in diesel fuel. Loggers themselves are also feeling the pinch of higher fuel costs to operate their equipment. Sooner or later, these fuel increases must be passed along in the economy and will result in either higher delivered wood costs or reduced stumpage prices, or possibly both.

### **Did You Grow Weeds In Your Food Plots This Summer?**

Jason D. Sellers, Wildlife Biologist

THE WILDLIFE COMPANY, a *division of Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.*

Spurred by the abundance of rain and good growing conditions we have had this summer, many food plot farmers can be seen scratching their heads as the weeds have really waged war against them. Farmers without a herbicide program are suffering crop losses due to weed competition – a truly frustrating situation. You try to do everything right: Collect soil samples, get soil test results, apply proper amounts of lime and fertilizer, prepare a good seed bed, distribute the proper rate of seed and *Voilà* – WEEDS!

In some cases, the missing link here is the proper use of herbicides designed to give your crops the jump on weed competition. As I write this article I am staring at a four-inch thick book called the *Crop Protection Reference*, which is a reference book regarding thousands of herbicides used in agriculture. An attempt to try to understand all the herbicidal options for all the crops and all weed species encountered in food plots would be like trying to drink water from a fire hose. There is just absolutely too much information. Furthermore, in some instances there is not a herbicidal solution to certain combinations of crops and weeds within the crops.

For example, if you have a legume crop (e.g., peas or lab lab) with a coffee weed (sicklepod) infestation, you have a real problem because both the crop and the weed are legumes.

There are a couple of ways to use herbicides to manage weeds in food plots. The ideal scenario is using a pre-emergent herbicide at the time of planting and not giving weeds a chance to get started. A pre-emergent herbicide would be sprayed on the soil after harrowing and then incorporated by another pass or two of harrowing just before planting to control competitive weeds as they germinate. This allows the crop seed to germinate with limited competition. Some pre-emergent herbicides can be applied to fertilizer (impregnated) at the local co-op or feed store. This eliminates the need for spraying and incorporates what would be two jobs (spraying and fertilization) into one, a really efficient system that cuts down on time and equipment needs. So, pre-emergent herbicides are a good option in your potential herbicide program.

Post-emergent herbicides are another option for controlling weeds. These herbicides are used after crops and weeds have germinated. Post-emergent herbicides must be selected carefully to make sure they are tolerant of your crops. In other words they will kill the weeds (or slow their progress) while not affecting the growth of what you planted. There is a plethora of these herbicides out there as well. Many folks are not aware there are herbicides that only affect certain types of plants, while not affecting others. I call this the “Roundup® Phenomenon.” People use Roundup® at home and see that it pretty much kills what ever you spray it on. Many are unaware of other selective herbicides commonly used in agriculture that are not available at the local lawn and garden center.



Roundup® (active ingredient is glyphosate) is a non-selective herbicide which also has uses in food plot programs as well. These non-selective herbicides can be used to manage weed problems while crops are not present in a plot. A common use for these herbicides is to “burn down” weeds before harrowing which makes them easier to harrow and incorporate into the soil. Because glyphosate is only effective when it gets on the leaves of plants there is no effect when it gets into the soil. If sprayed at the right time, weed seed production can be eliminated, which helps alleviate competition in the years to come. If weeds in plots not used in the summer are allowed to produce seed then you are guaranteed another crop of weeds the following summer when you may be interested in planting the plot to warm season forage. Monsanto has developed Roundup Ready® corn and soybeans, which are tolerant to Roundup®. In using these seeds, Roundup® can be sprayed over the top of the corn and soybeans (post-emergence) to manage weed problems. Roundup Ready® soybeans might be the solution for those of you who have coffee weed problems in your warm season legume plots.

Remember the four-inch thick book I referred to earlier? I would love to get into the details about how to manage certain weed problems but time and space are limited. While we certainly do not have a solution to all herbicide problems, we can assist you in finding one. To have truly successful food plots, a good herbicide program should be as much a part of your food plot system as the tractor is. If you need help in developing your food plot herbicide program, give us a call.

### **Real Estate, in the Mind and Eye of the Beholder**

Are you currently involved in the real estate market or are you thinking about jumping in? What a great time to be part of the latest real estate boom in the South! People are moving into our area at a tremendous rate. Many want to escape the fast paced lifestyle of South Florida or want to retire to a warm climate. This fact, among other things, is part of the reason we find ourselves in such a seller’s market. Prices for land are at an all-time high in some areas and continue to rise. Some of the other factors affecting our prices are: low interest rates; demographics (baby boomers and younger generations are more willing to put their money at risk than their parents were); informed investors who discern that real estate is a safer investment than the stock market; the forecast for an improved timber market; and many buyers concluding that high real estate prices in our area are a bargain compared to other places in the southeast. We have seen prices jump in rural counties from \$1,500

per acre to over \$10,000 per acre in certain areas. Of course, land prices are dependent upon many things such as a tract's location and development potential, or how much of it is high and dry versus bottomlands.

There are many of our timber clients who are using the timber as a means to increase the value of their land, instead of relying solely on the timber itself as the investment. When a buyer who is not familiar with timber tracts sees an unthinned timber stand, they often think the land is unattractive because they cannot get a feel for the property. However, when the trees have been properly thinned and the buyer can see into the woods and appreciate the topography or wildlife habitat, they are more inclined to like the property. Of course, thinning has to be done in a fashion to improve the investment. Knowing when and how much timber to thin comes through working closely with your forester and real estate agent. There can be a fine line between a well thought out thinning that attracts a buyer versus "over thinning" a tract to the point no buyers are interested.

Many times spending a little money on your property will help increase its value as well as shorten the time to find a buyer. Without a doubt, location and timing are certainly two key elements to a successful sale, but tract knowledge and tract presentation can also be important factors in making the most of your investment. Simple things, such as an attractive entrance and road systems that are mowed and easily accessible can mean the difference between a good return and an excellent return on your property.

So, are you ready to sell your property? Our team of real estate agents, foresters, and wildlife biologists are prepared to assist you in making the most of your investment.



### **Are You Ready to Buy Land? What Should You Do?**

There are many types of real estate investments that will meet an investor's goals for financial return, as well as emotional rewards. Before investing in land, we suggest that you clearly define what you are looking for in a piece of property. Is it strictly an investment, or do you want to have a place to make memories with your family or friends? Are you a hunter, motocross racer, birder or wannabe farmer? Is it going to be a timber tract or one for future development? After you know what you want, it becomes much easier to find the right piece. Please realize that the piece of property you buy may look completely different than what you have described. Make sure you know the amount of money you have to invest, and if you must borrow money, it is always best to visit with your banker before you start looking. Now you're ready to begin your search!

Selling your land or finding the right piece of property can be a huge task and one that is easier if you have help. We at Southern Forestry Consultants Realty, Inc. specialize in recreational and timber tracts in northern Florida, southern Georgia and southern Alabama. We have licensed and knowledgeable real estate agents in all three states who are ready to help you with your property needs whether buying or selling. An advantage we have over the competition is we also have 18 foresters, wildlife biologists, and technicians in the field in all three states who also are ready to help you with your land management needs. These professionals can help you evaluate and establish a value for the property you are looking to buy or sell. Please call on us to help you accomplish the goals you have involving real estate.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: [WWW.SOFOREST.COM](http://WWW.SOFOREST.COM)

## **Woody Biomass**

By Frank Stewart, ACF/RF

As gasoline prices rise and the nation focuses on alternative sources of energy production, the use of renewable feedstock is getting attention. One of the energy sources being touted is woody biomass. Biomass, one of the most popular renewable energy sources, is plant material and animal waste used for energy, especially tree and grass crops, forestry (woody biomass), agricultural and urban wastes, and derives its power from the sun. Through the process of photosynthesis, chlorophyll in plants captures the sun's energy by converting carbon dioxide from the air and water from the ground into carbohydrates, complex compounds composed of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. When these carbohydrates are burned, they turn back into carbon dioxide and water, and release the sun's energy.

Besides reducing dependence on traditional fuels with their finite availability, the production process and use of these energy products are an environmentally cleaner proposition than petroleum products. They are also renewable, abundant, and economically competitive. Even if none of the previous were fact, they address a national security concern – over-reliance on foreign sources of fuel – which has long been neglected. The formation of a new marketplace would help address the unhealthy reliance we have developed on foreign energy sources; viz, the U. S. produces two percent of the world's petroleum and uses twenty percent.

Because of the costs of developing the required infrastructure and cutting-edge technologies, many financial institutions and energy companies (potential and existing) are reluctant to make the necessary capital investments since the long-term future of alternative power is uncertain. To help guarantee a long-term market for woody biomass, incentives are recommended.

An incentive based approach working within our market system would create new opportunities for forest landowners as segments of the forest products industry trend toward an off-shore future. At this writing, nineteen states have enacted laws to require alternative energy feedstock. A national commitment to incentives for energy production from alternative feedstock would provide energy-production investors with the security of knowing that the renewable energy market will exist on a long-term basis, and provide a certain market and more reliable investment for private forest landowners throughout the nation.

Reprinted from the ACF Newsletter, Summer, 2005

### **ODMA Landowner Seminar**

The Wildlife Company, a division of Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc., will be co-hosting a deer management workshop in partnership with the Quality Deer Management Association. Among the topics to be discussed are “Enhancing Hunting Success Through Habitat Manipulation,” and “An Introduction to Quality Deer Management,” followed by a question and answer session. The seminar will be held in Monticello, Florida, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, at the First United Methodist Church fellowship hall. The church is located three blocks west of the courthouse off of U.S. 90. Dinner will be served and there will be a \$5.00 charge to cover the cost of the meal. If you would like to attend, please call our Monticello office at 850-997-6254 to reserve your spot.

**LAND FOR SALE – GEORGIA**

141± Acres – Decatur County – Beautiful quail hunting woods, majestic oaks, wood duck hunting. Paved and dirt road frontage. \$3300 per acre.

52± Acres – Grady County – 2200 square foot house with pool. Mature timber, pond with dam, loaded with game. \$380,000.

256± Acres – Thomas County – Recreational and development potential, level to gently rolling topography, cultivated fields and planted pines, two creeks, paved road frontage on two sides of the property – 10 miles north of Thomasville. \$3750 per acre.

Call Bud Holleman 229-246-9651

**LAND FOR SALE – FLORIDA**

35± Acres – Gadsden County – Two miles south of Chattahoochee, Florida, with gentle slope from front to back. 10 – 12 year old planted pines, paved road frontage. \$3300 per acre.

232± Acres – Gadsden County – Beautiful hunting and recreational tract, planted and natural pines, hardwood bottoms and high bluffs, Flat Creek and several feeder creeks, food plots. \$2750 per acre.

Call Rob Langford at 850-556-7575

**LAND FOR SALE – ALABAMA**

67± Acres – Houston County – Excellent getaway, creek, pond site. Close to Dothan and Eastgate Park. \$3150 per acre.

20± Acres – Houston County – In city limits of Cottonwood, residential development potential. Fronts on Highway 53, on Metcalf Street. \$5500 per acre.

31.9± Acres – Houston County – 10 minutes west of Dothan, residential development potential, 26 acres cultivated fields, 5.9 acres timberland, creek. \$4500 per acre.

Call Holmes Hendrickson at 334-393-7868

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