



Timber Talk

SFC Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter for Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.
Clients & Customers
Spring 2006

www.soforest.com

From the Presidents Desk:

Greetings from all of us at Southern Forestry Consultants, The Wildlife Company, and Southern Forestry Realty. What a glorious time to be connected to our natural resources as spring flowers bloom everywhere, birds chirp, and the world “wakes up.” I hope you have time to enjoy this season in the woods.

I am sure you have noticed lately how much growth has occurred and is being planned for in North Florida, Southwest Georgia, and Southeast Alabama. The “redneck Riviera” has been discovered by young and old, and is quickly becoming a destination for industry, commercial and residential developers, and second home recreational users of land. This obviously has been great for investors in real estate, but those who have a core desire to preserve or even conserve the area described above need to take note. In my 26 years as a consulting forester, land manager, and real estate agent, I have never witnessed the magnitude of change equal to that which has occurred in the past few years. Forget evolution, this is a quantum leap. Fewer and fewer of you (landowners) are interested in traditional forestry, unless it is a means to another end, and nearly all of you “see a bigger picture.” Is that bad? Absolutely not. It is just different than it was 26 years ago. Today landowners (might) get criticized for “developing their land” when the question 26 years ago was “why are they clear-cutting their timber?” The demands of society often drive the vehicle of option that owners of real estate have; it just seems like today we’re driving a red Ferrari instead of a Model T.

With that being said and in the context of “rapid change,” it is with great pleasure I announce to you our formation of a new company, Southern Development Group, LLC, to assist our clients who want to include higher intensity land use in the plans for their property. We are not necessarily getting into the “curb and gutter” business, but developments of a rural and conservation nature are of great interest to us. Over the years we have helped many of you transform your properties into beautiful tracts of land, and it makes good sense for you and us to continue our relationship if you choose to change your focus. Rest assured, this is not a quantum leap or a change in overall focus for us, rather it is an additional service we will now offer to help you maximize your return and attain your goals for your land (asset). Our current real estate staff will initially spearhead this venture, but very soon we will have additional experts on staff to respond to your needs.

We hope you see this extension of our range of services as a way to further our relationship with you and your land, while in no way marginalizing our other core services. We commit to you that each of our services will continue to be professional and complete. As always we appreciate the opportunity to be of service to you in any way we can.

Michael J. Dooner, President

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Timber Market Report

Most timber markets held steady or slightly increased through the winter and early spring with no major increases or decreases in prices. However, dry weather in March is beginning to weaken prices in some areas. Most pulpwood outlets were generally full of wood and putting producers on quota in early March. This situation has put more pressure on other products due to the tight pulpwood quotas, which is creating good spot markets for solid wood products, but could cause quotas to be imposed on all products if dry weather persists. If wildfires occur this could dump salvage timber on the market.

Hardwood markets appear to be getting softer, especially for hardwood logs. Foreign imports of hardwood chips and other hardwood products are taking their toll. Much of this competition is coming from South American countries such as Brazil and Chile. Also, local supplies of hardwood have become scarce in some areas partly due to more intensive pine management on much of the private land and partly from development and hunting pressures.

The situation concerning a shortage of logging contractors that was noted in our last issue appears to be correcting itself throughout the market place. Mostly this correction is coming from existing loggers adding more capacity by putting on additional crews or ramping up production from existing crews. Most wood products companies have initiated either higher cut and haul rates or added fuel surcharges for their logging contractors to account for the dramatic increase in diesel prices last year.

Generally speaking, the outlet for timber prices appears to be good in the near future as housing starts have remained strong and the U. S. economy continues to chug along at a respectable clip. Please let us use our years of experience and intimate knowledge of local markets to help you secure the best markets for your timber.

THE PRESERVES AT WILLACOOCHEE CREEK

If you love the woods and the fields and the enjoyment that can be found there; feel strongly about the short drive to a shopping center and your favorite restaurants; AND you know that a little extra elbow room is well worth the effort, then **THE PRESERVES AT WILLACOOCHEE CREEK** may be just what you have been dreaming about for a getaway. This 406-acre tract has been divided into twelve smaller tracts ranging in size from 25 to 73 acres, each providing enough land for hunting, horseback riding, or just enjoying nature all around your home.

There is a scenic stream that runs along or through nine of the twelve tracts of **THE PRESERVES AT WILLACOOCHEE CREEK**. Majestic old oaks and mature pines add a sense of true country living. With all this waiting for you, your hardest task may be agreeing on which spot is just the right place to build your dream home. And, if all that is not enticing enough, there is public access to beautiful Lake Seminole only ten minutes from your doorstep.

Thinking of buying some land for a first or second home? This is just the right neck of the woods. Contact Bud Holleman with Southern Forestry Realty at 229-416-5607 for a private tour of **THE PRESERVES AT WILLACOOCHEE CREEK**.

Growing, Growing, Gone

Dave Lewis

It's getting to be that time of year again – herbicide spraying season. A weed scientist (yes, there is such a thing) once told me that the first rule of weed science is, "Something will occupy the site and it will either be something you want or something you don't want." That is especially true here in the deep south, where daily summer rains can turn a park into a jungle in a few short weeks. Let's take a few minutes to review some of the basics in the use of herbicides.

There are two major categories of herbicides: soil active and non-soil active. Soil active herbicides are those that can be taken up by the roots of plants once the herbicide comes in contact with soil.

These sometimes require rainfall to dissolve and/or activate them. They include herbicides used in forestry such as hexazinone (Velpar, U.L.W., Pronone), Oust (sulfometaron methyl), Oustar, Escort, Tordon, Atrazine, and Arsenal (imazapyr).

Non-soil active or foliar active herbicides are those that affect only those plants where the herbicide comes into contact with the foliage or stem. These herbicides cannot be taken up via the roots of plants and can be "washed off" if applied immediately before a rain. They include Garlon 4, glyphosate (RoundUp, Accord, etc.), and surfactants. A surfactant is a "sticker" or chemical that is added to the spray mix to enhance the herbicides ability to adhere to the plant and thus increases its efficacy.

Some herbicides are both soil active and foliar active, such as Arsenal (a.k.a. Chopper). They enter the plant through the foliage but are also taken up through the soil by plant roots. In forestry applications, we are often combining or "tank mixing" two or more herbicides to take advantage of the strengths (or make up for the weaknesses) of the herbicides being used in order to broaden the spectrum of control. An example of this would be adding a small amount of Escort to a site prep application of Chopper to control wild cherry.

In addition, some herbicides are labeled for use in or around wetlands and some are not. Also, some herbicides, such as Garlon, can volatilize (turn into a gas) in hot weather. And some herbicides, such as Tordon, are highly soil active and can move off site through the soil.

Not knowing your herbicides can sometimes have disastrous or disappointing results. An example of this is the landowner who sprayed Arsenal underneath a grove of large live oaks to kill brush, not realizing the soil activity of the herbicide would kill his beautiful live oaks too! At Southern Forestry Consultants and The Wildlife Company, we have Certified Pesticide Applicators to evaluate your herbicide needs and the knowledge and experience to apply them properly. Please feel free to call on us to put our knowledge and experience to work for you on your property.

QDMA Launches REACH Program

Bogart, Ga. – The Quality Deer Management Association has launched REACH – an aggressive national education and outreach program that will benefit hunters, landowners and deer managers in several ways.

"REACH is the acronym for Research, Educate, Advocate, Certify and Hunt," said QDMA Executive Director Brian Murphy. "The program specifically addresses all of QDMA's core mission elements.

"We developed REACH with input from QDMA members, state agency personnel, conservation leaders and QDMA National Board members," Murphy said. "Our goals for 2006 are ambitious, and they will directly benefit all QDMA members." Here are a few of those goals:

Research – Fund a minimum of three whitetail research projects related to Quality Deer Management.

Educate – Expand educational activities for QDMA members and the general public.

Advocate – Increase QDMA's involvement in whitetail hunting and management issues.

Certify – Launch QDMA's individual and property QDMA certification programs by late 2006.

Hunt – Launch QDMA's National Youth Mentoring and Hunting program in 2006.

"We are adding two significant positions to the QDMA national staff," said Murphy, "and the individuals we hire will be responsible for managing and implementing REACH. We have announced that former Northeast Regional Director Kip Adams has become Director of Conservation and Outreach Programs for the Northern Region, and we are actively screening candidates for the Southern Region director's position.

"Every element of REACH is very exciting," Murphy said, "and all of them are extremely important. From funding research that will improve our knowledge of whitetails to creating a national mentoring program for young hunters, this program will strengthen QDMA's position as the nation's leading whitetail conservation organization."

Murphy noted that REACH is being funded by private and corporate donations. "The success of this program will be a direct result of the support we receive from members and corporate donors around the country," he said. "Our members are responding enthusiastically to our initial calls for support."

Membership in QDMA is open to anyone interested in better deer and better deer hunting, and committed to ethical hunting, sound deer management and the preservation of the deer-hunting heritage. To learn more about REACH or to contribute to the Quality Deer Fund, call (800) 209-DEER [(800) 209-3337] or visit www.QDMA.com.



Nationally recognized as a leader in fire ecology, wildlife research and land management, Tall Timbers works with forest natural resource managers and landowners to manage properties for increased wildlife and healthy forests through proper habitat management and conservation. Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy is proud to have developed a healthy working relationship with Southern Forestry Consultants, Inc.

Tall Timbers is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting exemplary land stewardship through research, conservation and education. Upcoming events include Beadel House tours and the International Fire Ecology and Management Congress. To find out more about how you too can support Tall Timbers as a member, visit their website www.talltimber.org.

Final Moment Tips for Turkey Hunters

*By: Jeremy Poirier
International Paper
West Region Sustainable Forestry & Wildlife Habitat
Manager*

It is my opinion, that within the sport of hunting, there is nothing better than harvesting a mature gobbler. But on the other hand, there is nothing worse than missing your chance at a big old tom that was within gun range. Whether you spooked the bird by moving, watched him fly away after a

missed shot, or he simply just walked away; for many, these "so close" scenarios are played over time and time again every spring. However, there are those few turkey hunters that consistently bag several birds year after year and we seldom hear about their missed opportunities. Sure they usually have good places to hunt but that certainly can't be the whole story. What do they know that we don't? At one point, I even managed to convince myself they were good liars. Fortunately, over the last couple of years, I have had the privilege to hunt with some of these great turkey hunters. To say the least, I have learned some very valuable lessons. First and foremost, they weren't lying. I learned that great turkey hunters generally had 3 things in common. The first is an obvious one; they were good to excellent callers. Secondly, they were extremely persistent and patient hunters. Anyone can learn to call turkeys and most good hunters are by default patient and persistent individuals. It's this last lesson that I believe makes great turkey hunters "great". It's also arguably the most difficult lesson to understand and learn. Great turkey hunters know exactly what to do during the final moments of the hunt. They have mastered the art of camouflage, stealth, body and mind control, judging distances, and marksmanship. Although these type skills take years to perfect, the "final moment" tips below may just help determine the outcome of your next turkey hunt. Will you carry a bird home on your back or just go home empty handed?

Last Minute Moves

To move or not to move, that is the question. But what is the answer? Like most birds, the wild turkey has phenomenal eyesight (approximately 10 times greater than ours with 270 degrees of vision). Some say that if turkeys had the nose of a whitetail, they would practically be unhunttable.

Ideally, when a gobbler has committed and we know he's coming, we shouldn't move at all. Unfortunately, that is seldom (if ever) an option. Gobblers come in from different directions and angles, at wide varieties of speed, and in many cases extremely quietly. Having to make last minute adjustments to your setup is just an inevitable part of turkey hunting and great turkey hunters know not only when to move but also how to move. With that said, when a gobbler is coming, set up as quickly as possible and point your gun in the general direction where you think he will appear. If the bird approaches a considerable

distance off your center (either right or left), you may have to move yourself and/or your gun. If you do decide to move, either wait until the bird can't see you (i.e., behind a tree, facing away from you in full strut, etc.), or move extremely slowly. How slow is extremely slow you may ask? It should take minutes to shift 45 degrees. Remember, at this point in the hunt, the odds of harvesting the bird by not moving at all are extremely low. The key is to move correctly at the right time.

Stop Calling

If a gobbler is coming, 9 times out of 10 you don't need to continue calling. Calling when the bird is close only pinpoints your exact location. Not a good thing to do with an animal that can see 10 times better than you can. The only call you should be considering is a cluck to get the bird's head up for the shot.

Distance

Trying to shoot a turkey that is out of range probably accounts for more misses than any other factor. Although today's guns, chokes, and loads allow hunters to "reach out" to distances of 50 yards or greater, most successful turkey hunters rarely shoot outside of 40 yards. To help with judging distances, identify natural landmarks (e.g., trees, shrubs, downed logs, etc.) that are within 35-40 yards before you sit down. When the bird reaches one of your landmarks you will know its approximate range. This is definitely easier said than done, especially when hunting open habitats. Having to wait for a bird that is coming across a field can truly test one's patience and self control. Shooting birds at long distances also raises significant safety and ethical concerns. It is a well known fact that turkey hunters have higher rates of

shooting-related injuries than hunters of other species. Furthermore, as with any type of hunting, we should always strive to make good clean shots. Ideally, wait until the bird is within 30 yards to take your shot and always positively identify your target before you pull the trigger.

Don't forget to Aim

I will never forget what my hunting partner told me in the truck on the way to my first turkey hunt. "Now remember, if we get a bird close enough to shoot, don't forget to aim." "Aim?" I answered rather defensively. "Yes, aim," he replied again, "Make sure you look straight down your barrel before you shoot." Well, to make a long story

short, I did aim correctly that morning and harvested my first longbeard. Sounds easy enough, doesn't it? But put a 20-pound strutting/spitting/gobbling longbeard 25 yards away and correctly aiming your gun can become a challenge. During moments like these, if your adrenalin is not pouring from your ears, you've either just suffered some form of cardiac arrest or you don't need to be turkey hunting. In terms of properly aiming a shotgun, one of the most common shooting mistakes is improper head position. Proper head position ensures your shooting eye is "looking" down the gun barrel. If your turkey gun is not equipped with a rear site and/or scope, I highly recommend purchasing one. A single bead site at the end of the gun barrel is not enough. Single bead sites are intended for wing shooting and do not help prevent improper head placement. Personally, I prefer open sites to scopes but both will help with your shooting accuracy and the more accurate you are, the more pellets will go where you are aiming. Also, adding a rear site to your gun won't drain your wallet. Most turkey sites on the market today are sold as brightly colored fiber optic dots or rods (a real plus in poor light conditions) and can be purchased for about \$10-\$20.

Another point to consider is when to aim. Looking down your barrel too early and getting "tunnel vision" can create problems. Two years ago I guided a first time turkey hunter and even though we had a strutting gobbler 20 yards in front of us, he couldn't see the bird. He had closed his left eye and started aiming his gun too early. As a result, his narrow field of vision hindered him from seeing the bird that was just off to his left. When a gobbler approaches, either keep both eyes open until you decide to aim and shoot or keep your head a few inches off your barrel until the bird is within range. Then **very slowly** lower your head, aim, and squeeze the trigger. Remember also to squeeze correctly. Like shooting your rifle, pull slowly and steadily until the gun discharges. If done correctly, the shot should "surprise" you.

Every spring we spend countless hours scouting and hunting the elusive wild turkey. When that big longbeard finally does decide to walk your way, the last thing you want to do is blow your chance. Remember what you need to do in those final moments of the hunt. Mastering them will undoubtedly make you a more successful turkey hunter.

LAND FOR SALE – GEORGIA

Riverwoods Plantation – southern Grady County – 15 minutes south of Cairo and 30 minutes 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.

253± Acres – Decatur County – 15 minutes from Bainbridge and 45 minutes from Tallahassee – cultivated fields with 12” deep well supplying water to underground drip irrigation – rolling topography with county dirt road frontage on two sides of the property – 2 small ponds. \$3300 per acre.

Call Bud Holleman 229-416-5607

LAND FOR SALE – FLORIDA

520± Acres – Jefferson County – 125 acres CRP longleaf planted in strips – 260 acres pasture – 200 acres wetlands/hardwood bottoms, 12-acre stocked pond, barns – 2 lodges.

291± Acres – 3 miles southeast of Marianna, FL – 50 acres pasture, 20 acres cultivated fields, 150 acres planted pines, Rocky Creek runs through property – 25-acre cypress pond. \$5500 per acre.

Call Rob Langford at 850-556-7575

LAND FOR SALE – ALABAMA

394± Acres – Henry County – Excellent turkey and deer hunting – stocked 10-acre lake – rolling hills – pine timber – hardwood bottoms – excellent road system – good quail woods with proper management. \$3100 per acre.

160± Acres – Houston County – Pine plantation – can be subdivided – 2300 sq. ft. home with 3 bedrooms and 2 baths – Rehobeth school district – paved road frontage.

Call John Taylor at 334-797-9010

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