

# FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ◇ Wildlife ◇ Water Quality ◇ Soil Conservation ◇ Best Management Practices ◇ Recreation ◇ Aesthetics

## STATE OF THE TEXAS FOREST

by Ed Barron, former Texas Forest Service Associate Director, College Station, TX

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=1226>
- For updated economic impact data, go to [http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/uploadedfiles/sustainable/econdev/economic\\_impact2004.pdf](http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/uploadedfiles/sustainable/econdev/economic_impact2004.pdf)

Texas Forest Service completed the data collection of the 2003 Forest Inventory and Analysis in June 2003. The Southern Research Station of the USDA Forest Service provided compiled data and tables in 2005. These data provide information on forest area, volumes, ownership, forest types, growth, removals and mortality.

In 2003, the volume of softwood growing stock in East Texas was 9.3 billion cubic feet; hardwood volume was 6.4 billion cubic feet. East Texas had 11.9 million acres of timberland, an increase of over 100,000 acres since 1992. Total land area in the 43-county survey area is 21.5 million acres.

Timberland ownership changed from the historic trend of 63% family forest owner, 29% forest industry, and 8% public. Industrial ownership decreased to 16% in 2004, and to 9.7% in 2006. The remaining former industrial lands are now owned by Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMOs), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), and other investment groups. East Texas has approximately 198,000 family forest owners. Approximately 87,000 of these landowners own 327,000 acres in parcels of 1 to 9 acres, indicating the extent of forest fragmentation.

In 2003, pine forests totaled 5.6 million acres, an increase of 30% since 1992, while upland hardwood acres decreased by 45% to 1.8 million acres.

East Texas sawmills increased output by 8% in 2004 to 1.9 billion board feet, while paper and paperboard production in-

creased 6% to 2.56 million tons. Structural panel production increased by 5% over 2003 to 2.86 billion square feet. Hardwood lumber production increased 13% over 2003 to 325 million board feet in 2004.

Globally, the forest products markets have been affected by the opening of China to capitalism, foreign investment and trade as well as the collapse of the former Soviet Union. While world timber demand is expected to rise over the next 20 years, the timber supply forecast is still expected to be only 77% of demand by 2020.

Between 1992 and 2003, annual removals of softwood on family forest lands exceeded growth by 20%. Conversely, on industrial lands, removals were only 78% of growth during this period. Hardwood growing stock removals are only 82% of growth.

Infestations of southern pine beetle have been low- to non-existent in East Texas since 1997. However, imported pest organisms, Sudden Oak Death, and invasives like Giant Asian Dodder are of concern. In addition, Hurricane Rita made landfall on September 24, 2005, and affected an estimated 967 million cubic feet of East Texas growing stock.

The forest-based economy in 2004 produced \$17.5 billion of direct economic impact in Texas, employing 75,846 workers and paying \$2.7 billion in wages, salaries and benefits. The direct economic impact of the forest sector in East Texas was \$6.8 billion for goods and services.

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## LANDOWNERS AND THE ESA

from "Endangered Species Act-What Landowners Should Know" by Charles E. Gilliland, Research Economist with the Real Estate Center, TAMU, College Station, TX

For more information:

- <http://recenter.tamu.edu/TGrande/vol9-4/>
- <http://recenter.tamu.edu/pdf/1648.pdf>
- <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/EndangeredSpecies/lists/>
- <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/endang/index.phtml>

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 enshrined species protection as the ultimate societal objective. Species preservation trumped all other considerations, even existing social and economic programs. The incidental take permit, which resulted from 1983 revisions to the ESA, opened the door to development even in the presence of endangered species.

In view of continued opposition, policy makers continue to search for regulations that can preserve endangered species while accommodating reasonable land uses. Consequently, the ESA regulatory framework now includes an array of measures designed to facilitate landowners' plans and protect endangered species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) administer ESA for both land- and marine-based species.

To comply with the ESA and maximize property potential, landowners must understand what the act does and does not allow. Taking an endangered species violates the law, according to section 9(a)(1)(B) of ESA. Most people interpret "take" to mean capturing or killing an endangered plant or animal. However, the ESA

defines take as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." Also included are actions "significantly impairing essential wildlife behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering." Activity that adversely impacts existing habitat qualifies as take as well.

Planned activities that will result in a take, such as land development, generally require a permit from either the FWS or the NMFS. Landowners and prospective buyers must identify which activities are prohibited by the ESA. The FWS and NMFS can assist in determining which, if any, proposed actions are likely to result in a take. The FWS and the NMFS have created mechanisms to allow private landowners to comply with the ESA while making profitable use of their property. These include:

- Candidate Conservation Agreements
- Safe Harbor Agreements
- Habitat Conservation Plans

The prudent landowner should consider engaging experts with experience in filing applications for the various permits available to them, and with knowledge of the various programs available.

## INTERACTIVE WEBSITE ON FORESTS & TREES

from International Paper's "Tree Lines" newsletter, fourth quarter 2006

For more information:

- <http://www.abundantforests.org>
- <http://knowyourtrees.org>
- [TheTreeFarmer.org](http://TheTreeFarmer.org)

How do you increase awareness and appreciation of paper and wood products as a natural, renewable resource to tech-savvy kids? You launch an informative, interactive and creative website called KnowYourTrees.org.

The Abundant Forests Alliance recently launched KnowYourTrees.org as a way to reach out to kids and others with important messages and facts about the health of forests and to help strengthen positive associations with paper and wood products and their many valuable uses.

The animated site allows visitors to learn about 10 tree species and contains interesting information about numerous wood and paper products. For example, did you know that there are more than 5,000 products made from trees; or that every day U.S. paper makers recycle enough paper to fill a 15-mile-long train of boxcars?

Important facts about the abundance of North America's forests are weaved throughout the site to counterbalance misinformation and erroneous perceptions about North America's forests.

## AMERICAN FORESTS EXPANDING

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) is pleased that the National Academy of Sciences confirms that America's forests are being maintained in the face of rapid population growth and are providing important products and jobs to households nationwide. Despite widespread, erroneous media reports of deforestation, America's forests are healthy and are expanding.

According to a National Academy of Sciences study on reforestation published November 14, 2006, America's forests "gained growing stock during 1990-2005 while harvesting much round wood and some fuel."

The study also concluded that population growth, sprawl and poor economic conditions are the leading causes of deforestation noting that "it is not forest industries

themselves but rather a high density of population in combination with poverty that tends to drive deforestation."

"The American forest products industry employs some 1.3 million people and is among the top ten employers in 42 states," said AF&PA President and CEO Juanita D. Duggan. "These hard working men and women provide us with products we depend on, and they ensure that our woodlands remain green and vibrant by planting 1.7 million trees every day."

Duggan also noted that the study provides "grounds for optimism" about the prospects for the continuation of vibrant reforestation. "We have more trees now than we did 70 years ago and this important study provides information and insight that will help us build on that legacy."

*from American Forest & Paper Association website*

*For more information:*

- <http://www.afandpa.org>
- Charles Lardner, AF&PA, [charles\\_lardner@afandpa.org](mailto:charles_lardner@afandpa.org)

## TIMBER INCOME AND TAX SEMINAR

The Texas Forest Service, USDA Forest Service, and Montgomery-Harris County Forest Landowners Association are sponsoring a timber income, property and estate tax seminar on January 26, 2007.

The seminar is to be held at Montgomery College in Conroe/The Woodlands, Texas. Cost is \$50 per person and \$25 per additional family member. A workbook is included, one per family. Lunch and refreshments are also provided. Continuing Educational Credits are available for foresters, loggers and CPAs.

This 5-hour tax workshop will provide:

- Information about timber-related tax incentives (this information is unfamiliar even to most tax professionals).
- Practice applying tax rules using actual detailed examples.
- Guidance on how to avoid pitfalls and maximize benefits relating to timber, property and estate taxes.

- Answers by the experts to your specific questions.

The instructors are Dr. Linda Wang, Tax Specialist, USDA Forest Service, Atlanta, Georgia; and Dr. John Greene, Forest Economist, USDA Forest Service, New Orleans, Louisiana.

To download a brochure with a registration form, go to the web address in the sidebar.

You can also contact Robin Baxter for registration information at (936) 273-2261 or [rbaxter@tfs.tamu.edu](mailto:rbaxter@tfs.tamu.edu). For information on the seminar itself, contact John Warner, Texas Forest Service Urban District Forester at the same number or at [jwarner@tfs.tamu.edu](mailto:jwarner@tfs.tamu.edu).

Spaces are guaranteed for the first 75 people to register. The seminar runs from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

*For more information:*

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=1230>

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#### Editorial Board

- Rusty Wood, TPWD, Nacogdoches, Texas
- Joe Pase, TFS, Lufkin, Texas

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- HOUSTON ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION - **January 27, 2007**. Help plant 20,000 trees in one day! Contact Dallas Singleton, Texas Forest Service Urban Forester, at (936) 546-1570.
- COASTAL BEND TREE HEALTH CONFERENCE - **January 30, 2007**. Flint Hills Resources, 1925 Tuloso Midway Rd., Corpus Christi, TX. Guest speaker: John Worrell, Bartlett Tree Experts. For more information, contact Karen Woodard at (936) 546-3129 or [kwoodard@tfs.tamu.edu](mailto:kwoodard@tfs.tamu.edu); or Michael Potter at (361) 767-5217 or [MPotter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:MPotter@ag.tamu.edu).
- ECOSYSTEM SERVICE MARKETS: EVERYONE'S BUSINESS - **February 27, 2007**, at the Westin Galleria, 5060 West Alabama, Houston, TX. Open to all. Time: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. For more information and to register, go to <http://tfsregister.tamu.edu>.
- NATIONAL OAK WILT SYMPOSIUM - **June 4-7, 2007**, at the Hilton Austin in Austin, TX. Registration before April 1, 2007, is \$295; \$350 after. Space is limited. For more information and to register, visit the Texas oak wilt web page at <http://www.texasoakwilt.org> or call Mike Waltersheidt at (512) 587-7515.



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