



ALABAMA TREASURE FOREST *Association Newsletter*

In partnership with the Alabama Farmers Federation

April 2020

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

ATFA Members:

I hope everyone has had a successful start to the new decade. Last October's Alabama Landowners Conference was great, and plans are proceeding for this year's event. We look forward to another opportunity to share information and spread the word about the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA).

Our board recently met, discussed our mission and set goals. We want to build on the momentum from 2019. It is important for ATFA members to relay ideas and needs to board members or Executive Director William Green. Your input solidifies our grassroots efforts.

Several years ago, a fund began for an ATFA scholarship program, and donations have accumulated for that purpose. Presently, the association funds four scholarships from the yearly budget. The board voted to set aside \$50,000 as an endowment to fund future scholarships. Next year, ATFA will use interest from this account to fund two new scholarships. We will provide six total scholarships – four at Auburn University and two at Lurlene B. Wallace Community College in Andalusia.

The last few years, we have secured an educational grant from the Alabama Legislature, which has funded outreach programs. Join me in thanking legislators for including this funding in the state budget. We again plan to host regional training events using these resources.

The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) is updating the TREASURE Forest certification database. Certified TREASURE Forests must be recertified every 10 years — and many are out of date. The AFC has made an effort to contact all certified TREASURE Forest owners to set up appointments for recertification. Several hundred landowners have not responded. If you have leads on any in your area, please contact your local AFC office. Additionally, contact AFC if TREASURE Forest certification signs in your area need replacing.

The board of directors is committed to responsibly serving the ATFA and appreciates your support. If we can help with events in your area, please let us know.

Don't forget to visit TREASUREForest.org to confirm county contact information is valid. It's important we have correct information to keep all updated and involved.

Thanks for all you do for the ATFA,

Gary Cole
ATFA President

Scholarship Fund Honors Former ATFA President



John H. Dorrill Jr.

In memory of John H. Dorrill Jr., a past president of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) and honorary board member, scholarship funds were received this spring. Dorrill died Jan. 28. He was 90.

The scholarships will support students at Auburn University who are pursuing degrees in forestry and wildlife sciences. To donate to the ATFA scholarship fund, visit TREASUREForest.org/support/scholarship.

Dorrill was the Alabama Farmers Federation's former executive director. He served as Alabama Forestry Council president, Pike County Farmers Federation president and Pike County Soil & Water Conservation District supervisor.

He enjoyed spending time with his family and hosting events at their farm in Pike County, which includes a certified TREASURE Forest. Dorrill, who received the Federation's Special Service To Agriculture Award, was also a Bill Moody Award recipient, which honors forest landowners for multiple-use stewardship. Additionally, he received the Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award.

Dorrill is survived by his wife, Carol Anderson Dorrill; sons John H. Dorrill III (Sonjua) and Lee A. Dorrill (Lynn); daughter Rachel Dorrill Batrez; and grandchildren Haylee, Chloe, Cameron, Collin, Clay and Anna Claire.

ATFA Board Members Meet



The Alabama TREASURE Forest Association board of directors met Feb. 20 at the Alabama Farmers Federation home office in Montgomery to discuss goals for the coming year. From left are Don Mann, Madison County; Wyatt Hendry, Washington County; Steve Lloyd, Monroe County; and Elliott Poole, Sumter County.

Visit www.TREASUREForest.org to join the ATFA.

Best Practices For Planting Pines

Select the “right” species – Ensure the best growth and yield of a pine stand by choosing the right species. Let the site dictate species selection. Planting the wrong species on a site will result in a low yield, low survival rates and poor growth.

Timing – Planting pines is time sensitive. An ideal planting season is from late December to mid-February, but Alabama weather tends to extend the season. If planted too early, seedlings can be killed by cold weather if not properly acclimated. If improperly stored, seedlings can dry out and die before being planted.

Site prep – Site preparation reduces competition for seedlings, removes debris from previous logging activities and prepares soil to promote growth for new seedlings. Site preparation depends on location and specifics but can include any combination of mechanical or chemical preparation methods.

Planting – Plant seedlings in moist soil at a depth at least as deep as the root collar. Depending on site location, both machine- and hand-planting methods can be used. Machine-planting is ideal for larger tracts with few impediments, and hand-planting is best suited for smaller or irregularly shaped properties.

Contracts – Before planting occurs, a valid contract between the landowner and consultant or contractor is recommended. This protects all parties and should clearly outline objectives and job requirements. Always consult an attorney before entering any legal agreement.

For more information, contact local Alabama Cooperative Extension System or Alabama Forestry Commission representatives.

Sources: Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Mississippi State Extension



2020 Lumber Trends

Since peaking in 2018, world lumber markets have been sliding, creating confusion on how a strong industry could move downhill so quickly. The easiest answer is one of the first things taught in a basic economics course — low demand and high supply create low costs.

Sawtimber prices in the U.S. have remained low, due largely to the amount of standing sawtimber but also due to lack of competition. The 2019 market also dealt with several other factors causing complications to those looking to sell their lumber — the U.S. and China tariff standoff; U.S. and Canada lumber wars; European beetle outbreaks; and Great Britain's exit from the European Union.

The good news is the outlook for 2020 is more favorable, particularly to Southeastern landowners. Alabama has almost 668 million tons of softwood growing stock volume. Fifty percent of that stock is classified in the sawtimber size range. While that may seem like an astronomical supply of standing timber, Alabama has done a good job increasing that mill-to-mill competition and creating new outlets for that wood. In 2018, there was a \$1.3 billion investment to a timber industry that is already \$21.4 billion-strong and employs 41,700 people.

The stumpage price will rely on a few key factors. The domestic economy continues to improve, the housing market is increasing, and new and existing mills are beginning to compete for the wood — which bodes well for 2020. Additionally, phase one of a new trade deal with China was signed in January, which calls for the purchase of \$50 billion in agricultural products, including hardwood lumber.

Alabama's timber industry is strong and will continue to be strong. Despite an aging workforce in the logging industry and a large surplus of standing timber, demand continues to rise for forest products. Additionally, developing new products such as cross-laminated timber will be key in the future of the market.





Wildlife Trends

with Andy Whitaker



TIPS FOR SPRING PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Photo By Dave Edwards

Obtain An Updated Aerial Photograph

Updated aerial photographs are invaluable in land and wildlife management. In fact, it's the first thing I want to see when asked to help improve property for wildlife or create a management plan.

I prefer aerial photographs taken during the dormant season when deciduous trees have lost leaves (late winter or early spring before green up). The differences in pine or evergreen habitats and hardwoods are more distinct then. Infrared images taken during the growing season can do this as well, but I prefer color photos taken during winter.

An aerial photo puts everything into perspective, making various habitats and their location across the property more obvious. While this may sound odd, you can also see habitat diversity and the layout of neighboring property, which may play a role in your management. For example, if your goal was to manage for turkeys and you see on an aerial that your neighbor's property is primarily mature timber, increasing your nesting habitat will likely attract nesting hens (and gobblers) in the spring.

Aerial photographs often become a drawing board when devising plans to improve a property. With a map of the entire property in front of me, I can visualize how hunters, deer or other wildlife use the property. I can also see how to improve the property to ensure quality habitat is provided across the landscape and to note where habitat management can direct wildlife to areas for improved hunting.

Many companies specialize in taking aerial photographs, adding geographic features (roads, property lines, habitats, etc.) and providing a custom aerial map

to the customer's specifications. While using these companies is more expensive than searching for your property on Google Earth, the resulting map and photo will be high quality, up to date and customized — and can be uploaded into GIS programs allowing you to pull information about your property (such as the number of acres of each habitat type) and create detailed habitat management plans.

While I prefer professionally flown custom maps, I do use free online satellite imagery such as Google Earth Pro. These programs are fast and easy to use, but the downside is images are often outdated, particularly if you are actively managing habitats.

Initiate Late Winter Or Early Spring Strip Disking

Strip disking is an excellent, inexpensive management practice that can produce exceptional food and cover for various wildlife. If you have a tractor and disk, the only expenses of strip disking are fuel and time once you find a relatively open habitat that needs work.

The tractor operator should pay attention to avoid stumps or other obstacles to prevent damaging the tractor or disks. The goal is to stir the soil to promote seed germination. Generally, just one pass is needed.

Disking can be done along roadsides, in or around old fields, and within thinned pine plantations or mature longleaf stands. Disking strips 10-30 feet wide in late winter and early spring stimulates growth of desirable native quail food plants such as partridge pea and beggarweed. The new, succulent vegetation in the strips will also attract insects.

Late winter to early spring disking also promotes high-quality deer browse through broadleaf weed growth. These areas can be managed by re-disking every other year. Time of year will influence the types of plants that colonize. For example, winter disking produces heavy-seeded quail foods such as partridge pea and ragweed, while disking in April increases production of important seed-producing grasses such as panic grass. Disking in June favors grasses and green vegetation that attracts insects and major seed plants that turkeys and quail readily feed upon in the fall.

Mow Early Or Wait Until Summer

If your property needs mowing, take action before turkey nesting season (March-May in most of the Southeast) to prevent destroying nests. However, I recommend leaving roadsides, fields and other openings un-mowed to provide additional nesting habitat for turkeys and other birds. Research shows these areas are valuable and heavily used for nesting by hen turkeys. Even if turkeys do not use all of the un-mowed places, these areas will host an alternate food source such as rats, mice and rabbits for potential turkey nest predators. Having this extra habitat reduces predator success in finding turkeys and their nests, giving turkeys a better chance to produce a nest and survive. This strategy is more valuable for landowners whose property has limited nesting habitat.

SAVE THE DATE

Alabama Landowners Conference
Oct. 14-15
Columbiana at the 4-H Center

Spring County Meetings



The Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee held its annual meeting Feb. 18. Over 70 attendees heard updates from Andrew Green of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, who discussed TREASURE Forest certification, and the Alabama Forestry Commission's Dana Stone, who discussed forest pests.



The Pike County Chapter of the Alabama Treasure Forest Association (ATFA) held its annual meeting Feb. 28 in Troy. The meeting honored the late state and county ATFA president John Dorrill Jr., including a contribution to the ATFA scholarship fund in his memory. Pike County ATFA member Deborah Davis, left, presented a memorial plaque to Dorrill's wife, Carol, who also accepted a white oak sapling to be planted on the Dorrill's farm in his memory.

Cash In On Support From The ATFA

County TREASURE Forest chapters benefit from support at the state office. Take advantage of these opportunities, courtesy of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association.

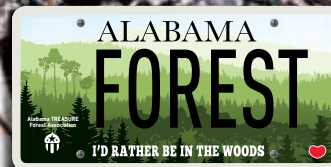
- Free liability insurance for county events
- Free advertising for events on website, in newsletters and through email blasts
- \$500 reimbursements for Classroom In The Forest events
- Sponsorship opportunities for adult landowner education
- Opportunity to receive \$5 per member in each county

Contact William Green at wmgreen@alfafarmers.org for more information.

Building a TREASURE for tomorrow.

Timber, Recreation, Environment, and Aesthetics for a Sustainable, Usable Resource (TREASURE) are the ideals that guide the Alabama TREASURE Forest Program and the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association — like-minded individuals who know that owning land means more than just acreage. It is a passion to make the land better for the next generation. You can be a part of that effort.

Purchase a tag and support education and outreach efforts to raise awareness about the wonderful possibilities of sustainable land management.



TREASUREforest.org

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THE ALABAMA TREASURE FOREST

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