



Forestry And Beekeeping Are A Natural Match



Beekeeping is an increasingly popular activity that landowners can tap into in order to glean more dollars per acre.

Honeybees are incredibly important to agricultural systems across the world. They naturally dwell in forests, making many Alabama forestry projects an ideal circumstance for honeybees and beekeeping.

Experts at the Alabama Cooperative Extension System say beekeeping is a sweet opportunity for landowners looking to capitalize on their land investments and glean more dollars per acre. Timberland occupies over 23 million acres in Alabama, and forestry has an annual economic impact exceeding \$21 billion annually.

Forestry often co-exists with agriculture and tourism throughout the state. Think agroforestry, silvopasture and outdoor recreation like hunting and fishing, which all bring in extra income and help drive local economies. These projects could easily be maintained for pollinators. Hunting preserves in forestry projects already do this with food plots.

Beekeeping

Like caring for forestland, honeybees require only intermittent care to insure health. The forest ecosystem also makes certain aspects of beekeeping easy. The hives are in rural areas where theft or vandalism is unlikely. Additionally, isolation from other apiaries will assist in parasite and disease

issues, which are more problematic in areas with more honeybees per acre.

Honey

The main money-making prospect of beekeeping in forest projects is honey, particularly varietal honey. The nectar that honeybees collect gives flavor and aroma to the final product. Varietal honeys are mostly made from nectar of specific plants.



Landowner tours tout the benefits of beekeeping in forests — including sweet end results like honey that can be used by family and friends or sold.

Tupelo, sourwood and linden honeys are common varieties that are more valuable per pound than other honeys. They are used for eating, brewing and cooking unique products. Forestry plantations are in a unique position; since their ecosystems are more controlled, it's easier to produce these varietal honeys. This is particularly true of riparian buffer zones where particular species may be planted and maintained, even after the timber is harvested.

Bees

Beekeeping is big business. Bees themselves are almost always in short supply. Bees are generally sold as queens, packaged bees, and nucs or nucleus hives.

Prices range widely.

More Information

Watch the Alabama Extension beekeeping team's Stay-at-Home Beekeeping Series, a biweekly online webinar for beginning and longtime beekeepers.

Find more information at aces.edu.

Source: Alabama Cooperative Extension System



Isolation from other bees — and thus disease — is a plus to housing honeybee hives in forests or mounted on trees.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

ATFA Members:

The Alabama Landowners Conference scheduled for Oct. 14-15 in Shelby County has been cancelled. The conference is a joint venture between the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA), the Alabama Tree Farm Committee and the Alabama Natural Resources Council. After a lengthy discussion, we felt it was in the best interests of our speakers, tour hosts, exhibitors, attendees and organizations to cancel the 2020 event and focus on a return to Shelby County in 2021. We will announce the new date as soon as it is finalized.

In a normal year, the middle months are extremely busy for our Association. The end of the spring semester brings Classroom in the Forest, landowner tours and regional meetings to your farms. The state board of directors is usually busy planning our conference and working with partners to advance stewardship goals.

However, this year has been anything but normal. Distance learning, social distancing, Zoom calls, suspended activities — the past few months have been hectic and challenging. On behalf of the ATFA board, I hope each of you are healthy and well. We have worked with our partners and stakeholders to ensure the wellbeing of our members stays a top priority. Unfortunately, this priority means some of our educational programming has been suspended.

These interesting times have presented a great opportunity for the Association to grow and change how it serves its members. We have been busy updating our programs and publications to ensure we have the best information available. I encourage you to use this time of social distancing to spend more time on your property — maybe even dust off that old management plan!

I appreciate what each of you brings to this organization; together we will continue to promote, educate and improve. If you have questions or suggestions about past or future educational programs, liability insurance or the TREASURE Forest Certification process, please contact your local director or me at (334) 612-5235.

William Green
Executive Director



Commission Fights Mobile Wildfire

In May, the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) put boots on the ground in Mobile County, where staffers fought a 1,000-acre blaze for seven days. Scattered rainfall eventually delivered much-needed relief to a potentially dangerous situation.

Dry conditions, gusting winds and low humidity contributed to the growth of a large wildfire in Mobile that started May 12. Forestry Commission wildland firefighters and partnering emergency responders battled this fire for seven days. The fire was finally controlled late May 19 after burning almost 1,100 acres. Besides AFC hometown crews of Mobile and Baldwin counties, additional assistance was required from within the agency with firefighters arriving from Butler, Covington, Hale, Marengo and Wilcox counties.

"We are truly thankful for our partners," said State Forester Rick Oates. "Without the on-the-ground assistance of numerous local volunteer fire departments (VFDs), along with air support from the Alabama National Guard and Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), the outcome of this wildfire could have been much worse. We extend our thanks to Gov. Kay Ivey and Emergency Management Agency Director Brian Hastings for expediting our requests for the Guard and ALEA helicopters.

"We also appreciate that the AFC team leading the fight had the experience and expertise with this sort of difficult wildfire to prevent it from becoming an even greater disaster," Oates continued. "The vegetation was highly combustible, but some of the terrain was inaccessible for our heavy AFC equipment due to bogs; that's why we needed air support. All total, the Guard Blackhawks and ALEA Bell and Huey helicopters dropped approximately 150,000 gallons of water on the flames. Their seamless operations protected equipment and firefighters on the ground on more than one occasion when the fire was burning intensely and moving fast. Meanwhile, the VFDs were tasked with protecting homes that were threatened."



Benji Elmore, AFC's Southwest Region forester, was incident commander for the fire.

"This wildfire will go down as one of my top 10 most memorable in the 35 years I've been fighting forest fires," Elmore said. "Flame heights reached 80-100 feet at times with a high rate of spread and spotting occurring a quarter mile ahead of the flame front. Each day, the fire made runs at our containment lines and many times jumped them. It's remarkable that with an incident this complex and dangerous, no one was hurt, and no homes were lost."



Wildlife Trends

with Andy Whitaker



SUMMER STRATEGIES FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Control Feral Hog Populations

“Control” may be too lofty of a goal, but working toward control of wild hogs is a great management objective. Although removing hogs could be on your calendar throughout the year, summer is a good time to exert extra effort and resources.

Hog populations are rapidly growing in many areas and cause significant damage to wildlife habitat, food plots, roads, etc. wherever they exist. One reason it’s difficult to control hog populations is their intense reproduction cycle; they could have up to three litters of young per year.

The most effective way to remove hogs is through trapping. Conduct thorough research before simply throwing a few traps out. Specific trapping techniques have proven more effective than baiting a trap and catching a hog or two each time.

Since converting to using corral-type traps with remote user-deployed gates, I have stopped using old-school single traps. The corral traps are effective and efficient.



Plant Chufa For Turkeys

Adding chufa to your planting program can be rewarding if you like to see or hunt turkeys. Chufa, a sedge with tubers that turkeys target for food, can be planted in May or June in the Southeast, but most plantings occur when summer rains start.

Turkeys primarily utilize chufa in the fall, winter and spring once the tubers have developed. If turkeys have never seen chufa, you may need to lightly disk a strip through the patch in late winter to expose tubers. Once turkeys find the tubers, it’s nearly impossible to keep turkeys out of the field.

A word of caution: Raccoons and hogs like chufas, too, and can pose problems in some areas. I do not recommend planting chufa if you have hogs. They often demolish the area once they find a tuber.

Chufa patches can often be regenerated the following spring by lightly disking the areas. There has to be adequate chufa seed remaining to regenerate an adequate stand. (There’s often more left than you think) To regenerate the stand, lightly disk the plots once in April, again in May and once more in June. The key is to continue disking each month regardless of how nice the plot is growing.

Rotate your chufa patches every two to three years

to avoid nematode problems. Monitor chufa plots for competing grasses and weeds after planting; apply weed suppressants accordingly.



Chufa is a sedge that grows into tubers that turkeys crave. Unfortunately, wild hogs also flock to chufa.

Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Class And Workshop

What is the difference between the Course and Workshop?

Anyone interested in using prescribed wildland fire as a management tool and who is seeking their initial certification should attend the full Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Class Course. The workshop is designed for current Alabama Certified Prescribed Burn Managers who need continuing education credits for recertification.

Make sure you are a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager in good standing before signing up for the recertification workshop. Check your expiration date by contacting the Alabama Forestry Commission.

- ▶ **Pre-registration is required at forestry.alabama.gov.**
- ▶ **Seating is limited to 50 students for each event.**
- ▶ **Only attendees who have paid will be allowed to participate.**
- ▶ **For more information, contact Marti Davis at (334) 240-9332.**

Recertification Workshop / Aug. 10

Sign-in starts at 8 a.m.; class starts at 8:30 a.m.

Registration Fee: \$100

Certification Course / Aug. 11-14

Sign-in starts at 7:30 a.m.; class starts at 8 a.m.

Registration Fee: \$150

Workshop & Course Location: Alabama Fire College, 2501 Phoenix Drive, Tuscaloosa

Parking: Park at the western end of the fire college facility; sign-in is at the building where class will be held.

Lodging: You must make your own lodging arrangements.

Breaks and Lunch: Provided for all courses and workshops at no additional cost to participants.

To learn more about the Alabama Forestry Commission's Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Program, or to register and pay for the workshop or course, visit forestry.alabama.gov.

Certified Prescribed Burn Manager courses and workshops are sponsored by:



Recent Landowner Certifications



The McMillan brothers, who have 12 separate tracts of certified timber in north Baldwin County, were part of a handful of landowners who recently achieved TREASURE Forest Certification. Landowners who achieve the certification and display a commitment to multiple-use forest management receive signs to mount on their property. From left are Alabama Cooperative Extension System Regional Agent Ryan Mitchell; Alabama Rep. Steve McMillan, R-Bay Minette; Phillip McMillan, retired vice president of Neal Land & Timber Co.; State Treasurer John McMillan, former commissioner of the Department of Agriculture & Industries; and Alabama Forestry Commission Forester Rickey Fields.

The McMillan Brothers, Baldwin County
Sherman Woods, Lamar County
Rodney Sizemore, Lamar County
Wiley Lott, Pike County
David & Charlotte Stewart, Pike County

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