

Minority Landowner

SPECIAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP EDITION

**Andrew
Taylor**

**Steward of the
Family Farm**





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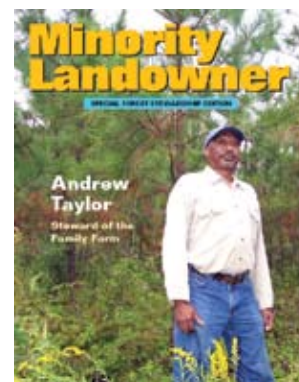
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

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Victor L. Harris
Registered Forester

For those of you who have been with us since our first issue, you may recall that I have strong affection for the forestry profession. After completing the forestry program at Tuskegee University, I earned my Bachelor of Science degree in forestry from North Carolina State University. And I worked nearly 20 years with state forestry agencies in Virginia and North Carolina. So, forestry runs deep in my veins.

I'm excited to team with Karl Dalla Rosa, Forest Stewardship program manager with USDA Forest Service in Washington to produce this Special Forest Stewardship Edition. They provide funding and guidance to state forestry agencies to implement the Forest Stewardship Program.

But before I get too far ahead of myself, I must take a moment to look back on our 2009 Farmers of the Year.

Farmers of the Year

"Stellar!" That's how one reader described the Farmers of the Year issue. We received feedback from every corner of the country, and overwhelmingly, you loved it.

Aside from the farmers across America who dedicate themselves to their work, the Farmers of the Year issue would not be possible without the agencies and organizations that support them. Even with your hectic schedules, you took the time to do one more thing. That is, to share your successful farmers, ranchers and forest landowners with the rest of us. That took time and effort, and not only do I appreciate it, but those who you serve daily, appreciate it too. You helped make the Farmers of the Year issue one of our best yet.

Forest Stewardship Program

Each state has a state forestry agency. As a service, they provide, usually at no cost, technical advice to landowners on how to manage their forestland to meet the landowner's objectives. There are private forestry consultants who will do so as well, though usually at a fee.

As a successful farmer, you do everything you can to maxi-

mize the value of the commodity you produce. Whether it's crops, poultry or cattle, you are intimately aware of what can be the difference between success and failure, profit and loss. But do you also manage your forestland as a cash crop, just as you do your corn and soybeans?

At a minimum, you should have a forest management plan that provides detailed information on the species, age and health of your forest, as well as recommendations on what you can do to improve productivity. The forest management plan is designed to help you meet your objectives for owning forestland.

The Forest Stewardship Program takes the forest management plan a step further. Administered locally by state forestry agencies, the centerpiece of the Forest Stewardship Program is multiple use management. That is, resource professionals from several agencies work together to assess timber, soil and water quality, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat and management on your property. The result is a more comprehensive approach to forest and natural resource management.

If you've never considered your forest as another cash crop, then you probably have a source of revenue that has gone untapped. And I'm not just talking about selling timber. A well managed forest protects water quality resulting in streams and ponds that can provide recreational fishing and revenue. Forests can be managed to attract wildlife creating opportunities for hunting leases. All of these possibilities, and more, can be explored through the Forest Stewardship Program.

In this issue you'll meet landowners with certified Stewardship Forests, and landowners who are working with their state forestry agency to achieve certification. You should have a forest management plan, but also contact your state forestry agency to learn more about Forest Stewardship plans and stewardship certification. A comprehensive multiple use forest management strategy is not just good for you today, but it will help ensure a healthy and productive forest resource for future generations.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V. Harris".

ccpublishing@earthlink.net



VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

County Committee ELECTIONS 2009

June 15, 2009 Nomination period begins. Forms are available from your local FSA Office and online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

August 3, 2009 Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA Office

November 6, 2009 Ballots mailed to eligible voters

December 7, 2009 Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office

January 1, 2010 Elected committee members and alternates take office

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Forest Stewardship Program

Helping Private Forest Landowners Sustainably Manage their Forest



Approximately forty-five percent of all forestland in the United States, or 354 million acres, is under non-industrial private ownership, contributing significantly to America's clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreational resources and timber supplies. The Forest Stewardship Program provides technical assistance through state forestry agency partners, to non-industrial private forest owners to encourage and enable active long-term forest management. A primary focus of the Forest Stewardship Program is the development of comprehensive, multi-resource management plans that provide landowners with the information they need to manage their forests for a variety of products and services.

Forest Stewardship plans lay out strategies for achieving unique landowner objectives and sustaining forest health and vigor. Actively managed forests provide timber, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, recreational opportunities and many other benefits for landowners and society. Forest Stewardship plans motivate landowners to become more active in planning and managing their forests, greatly increasing the likelihood that their forests will remain intact, productive and healthy, and that the social, economic and environmental benefits of these lands will be sustained for future generations.

Participation in the Forest Stewardship Program is open to any non-industrial private forest landowners who are committed to the active management and stewardship of their forested properties for at least 10 years. The Forest Stewardship Program is not a cost-share program. Cost-share assistance for plan implementation may be available through other state and USDA cost-share programs such as the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The Forest Stewardship Program provides targeted technical and planning assistance to enable active, long-term forest management on important private forest landscapes. Landowners who implement Forest Stewardship management plans are in a much better position to participate in certification programs and access emerging markets, such as those for ecosystem services and carbon credits. Since being authorized

by the 1990 Farm Bill, the Forest Stewardship Program has:

- Served as the primary, most extensive (in reach and scope) private forest owner assistance program in the U.S.
- Successfully created and helped sustain a vast, effective network of forestry technical assistance providers and programs.
- Provided more than 300,000 comprehensive management plans covering about 34 million acres nationwide. In fiscal year 2008 alone, the program reached nearly 900,000 forest landowners through various education and assistance programs.
- Established strong and effective partnerships with State Foresters, Conservation Districts and many other partners to provide for broader forest landowner participation in USDA conservation programs.

The Forest Stewardship Program provides cutting-edge assistance to partners, forestry professionals, and communities to enhance private forest management and conservation.

- *Reforestation, Nursery, and Genetic Resources Program (RNGR)*: Supporting RNGR, which provides assistance in native plant seed and seedling production to states, Tribes, communities, and forestry professionals.
- *USDA National Agroforestry Center (NAC)*: Supporting NAC, in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. NAC accelerates the application of agroforestry through a national network of partners.
- *Peer-to-Peer Networks*: Investing in efforts to develop and expand peer-to-peer landowner networks within landscape focus areas. This will result in the long-term management of significant landscapes – such as priority watersheds - and the conservation of strategically located and connected open spaces.

The program is increasingly serving as a gateway through which landowners can gain access to a variety of assistance and programs including USDA cost-share, state tax abatement, forest certification, and emerging ecosystem service and renewable energy markets. Demand for Forest Stewardship planning assistance is expected to increase significantly because the 2008 Farm Bill expanded eligibility for many USDA conservation programs to include private forest landowners.

To learn how you can participate in the Forest Stewardship Program offered by your state, contact your State Forester's office. For a list of State Foresters call (202) 624-5415, or visit www.stateforesters.org.



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Dolores Williams



TREASURE Forest Nearly in Hand, Stewardship Forest within Reach

By Elishia Ballentine

Alabama Forestry Commission

Once in a great while you meet someone so strong and courageous, it makes you say, “I wish I could be more like that.” Someone with a vibrant attitude about life who has overcome the odds. They make such a positive impression that when you part company you feel that somehow your life is better for having met them. Dolores Williams is such a person. She has an indomitable yet sweet spirit about her. She’s worked hard all her life and doesn’t have any plans of slowing down.

Born and raised in the Franklin community of Macon County, Alabama, her property adjoins the land where she lived as a child. She recalls many wonderful memories from those

early years in the country. She always had a love of the outdoors, and especially enjoyed learning about nature as a young girl in the Girl Scouts. Her family had the good fortune of a natural spring, and everybody in the area would come there to get water when their wells went dry. She fondly remembers that her grandfather kept a dipper hanging on a tree beside the spring, and how delicious the cool water tasted.

After finishing high school she earned a nursing degree at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University), married, and started a family. It was around this time in the late ‘50s that she and her husband purchased the house and land. When a divorce a few years later left her to raise three young children alone, she sometimes juggled three jobs to make ends meet. While working at the Veterans Administration Hospital, she joined the military. After 10 years in the reserve forces, she went into active duty. As an Army nurse, she traveled the world and was stationed at various posts across the U.S. However, through it all, she held on to

her home and property back in Alabama. Finally in 1999, after 25 years of service, she retired.

Her children, now grown and successful, live in other regions of the country with children of their own. She has one sister who lives in Los Angeles and another in Boston. Occasionally, these family members try to persuade her to leave the “country” and move near them, but she has no intention of leaving her beloved home and forest. She said that when she was in the military, no matter where she was, she always wanted to come home, back to Macon County. “There’s nothing like the peace and quiet of the country, and there’s nowhere like Alabama in the whole world.”

Ever a hands-on landowner, she loves getting involved in all facets of the work to be done around her place. In fact, she helped build the pond 40 years ago, operating a D7 bulldozer. She says she can also ride a Harley and drive an 18-wheeler. And alas, it was her age – not her lack of determination – that denied her of her desire to learn to fly a helicopter! Nowadays, she still mows her own grass, and thinks nothing of throwing her little pickup truck into four-wheel drive, taking off to the far corners of her property. She recently “rescued” and transplanted a few young longleaf pines that were inadvertently uprooted when fire lanes were installed.

Ultimately, she is working toward her farm being certified as both an Alabama TREASURE Forest and a National Stewardship Forest. Both programs, promoted and administered

through the Alabama Forestry Commission, are voluntary, and seek to promote sound and sustainable, multiple-use forest management. This type of management encourages landowners to use their forests wisely to meet their own needs, while at the same time protecting and enhancing the environment. The two certification designations are earned by private landowners who display their commitment to the TREASURE Forest and/or Stewardship ethic through the physical management that takes place on their land. These landowners actively manage their forest for timber production, wildlife, aesthetics, water quality, recreation, and environmental education.

Totaling approximately 80 acres in two different sections, Mrs. Williams has a large stand of natural longleaf as well as an assortment of pear and other fruit trees, pecans, and walnuts. She has initiated a prescribed burning program in addition to the fire lanes. The Alabama Forestry Commission’s (AFC) Macon County staff (County Manager Bob Montgomery, Forestry Specialists Jesse Fitzpatrick and Charles Baldwin) conducted a burn on her land in early spring of 2007. As usual, she was right out there with them in the middle of it, as much as they would allow. She laughingly says that when she started asking County Manager Montgomery for her own uniform and hard hat, he politely asked her to go inside out of the smoke. She states that she learns something new about forestry every time she works with the AFC crew, and she’s very appreciative of the assistance she’s received from all of the agencies. A few years back, Michele Cole, formerly with the AFC and now with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, wrote her forest management plan, and Gwen Lewis with the Natural Resources Conservation Service directed her toward cost-share programs to help with both fire lanes and prescribed burns.

She also says she’s learned a good bit about forest management since being appointed to the AFC’s Outreach Advisory Council in July 2001. She has attended meetings and traveled around the state and Southeast, viewing forest stewardship practices. She particularly enjoyed observing logging operations carried out with horses at St. Helena Island, South Carolina, at a meeting of the National Network of Forest Practitioners.

It’s that energetic attitude and willingness to keep learning that illustrates her heart and character. Never one to sit around with idle hands, she is constantly industrious. She works outside every evening until darkness falls, then goes in the house and gets busy with needlepoint or baking. She’s always entertaining family and friends from other parts of the country, sharing her love of the country life, making her guests comfortable almost to the point of not wanting to leave. But that probably has something to do with her Southern hospitality and home cooking. It is no surprise to learn that she still keeps in touch with the friends she made back in Basic Training.

Dolores Williams has had her share of ups and downs in life, but she never gave up. A self-proclaimed “fighter,” she firmly believes that there’s nothing she cannot accomplish, with the Good Lord’s help and guidance.



Alabama Forestry Commission forestry specialist Charles Baldwin inspects trees with Dolores Williams.

Ho'oulu 'Aina

A Forest Stewardship Program in Kalihi Valley

By Taylor Rock, Puni Freitas, Sheri Mann, and M. Irene Sprecher

Kalihi Valley is one of the most diverse valleys on Oahu and is home to the Ho'oulu 'Aina, stewards of 100-acres in the heart of urban Honolulu. This Forest Stewardship Program project incorporates traditional agricultural areas, archeological sites, natural springs and the remains of a native Koa (*Acacia koa*) mesic forest.



A view of Kalihi Uku and Ho'oulu 'Aina Nature Preserve.

Photo by Doug Hamasaki

There are four interwoven programs at Ho'oulu 'Aina: 1) *Koa Aina* - native reforestation, 2) *Mahi Aina* - gardening, local food and medicinal plant production, 3) *Lohe Aina* - listening to the land and cultural preservation, and 4) *Hoa Aina* - safe access for the community. Through these programs the community participates in the revitalization of the 100 acres; offering healthy spiritual and physical activity, native plant reforestation, local food and medicinal production with a food sovereignty focus, and a wide diversity of hands-on educational opportunities. As the land is restored to health and productivity, the healing is reciprocal and a healthy, resilient community develops.



A Halau Lokahi Charter School student holds the kalo (taro) she just learned to harvest.

Photo by Doug Hamasaki

The 100 acres is held in a public-private partnership with Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services (KKV), who holds a 20-year lease from the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). KKV supports Ho'oulu 'Aina with further collaboration with DLNR's Forest Stewardship Program through a 10-year agreement and a one year federal Urban & Community Forestry Program grant.

The Hawai'i Forest Stewardship Program provides technical and financial assistance to promote the stewardship, enhance-

ment, conservation, and restoration of Hawaii's forest resources. As required under the program, KKV assembled a detailed long term management plan for review and approval from the state's Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee. Once approved, KKV's project was eligible for cost-share assist from the state to implement their management goals. The Urban and Community Forestry Program (locally known as Kaulunani) furthers the KKV project through assistance with urban forestry education and outreach to the surrounding communities.

Stewardship of the land occurs from a small but dedicated KKV staff including Puni Freitas, Solomon Enos, Casey Jackson and Doug Hamasaki. Reforestation work is supported by a large and diverse group of volunteers and students from Halau Lokahi Public Charter School, Dole Intermediate, and Farrington High. Ho'oulu 'Aina provides classroom space for students engaged in 'aina work days that involves environmental education, compost creation, mulching the forest, planting native food crops (such as kalo and 'ulu) and medicinal plants (such as mamake and laukahi), weeding, removal of invasive plants, and planting various hardwood timber species.

The Ho'oulu 'Aina project calls for the removal of many of the large invasive albizia (*Falcataria moluccana*) trees on the property. The removal of these large trees in this urban forest environment requires skilled technicians, and the Ho'oulu 'Aina area proves an excellent place to train arborists, staff and the community on proper techniques of tree care, maintenance, and removal. Following the albizia removal, students helped choose an appropriate tree that holds a wa'a (canoe) to be carved. The carving of a wa'a from an invasive tree helps restore the natural balance to the once native forest of Kalihi and provides a strong metaphor through the continued practice of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island traditions. Things that are harmful to us can be transformed through cultural practice and nurture of the natural environment.

Some of the diverse cultures providing unique insights and perspectives to this project are from Tonga, Samoa, Philippines, Chuuk, Pohnpei and many others. The contribution of their traditional knowledge and labor while honoring the host Hawaiian culture makes this a very special project. For example, traditional medicinal plants and food crops from the Pacific are used as cover crops and understory in the reforestation efforts. Through the creative partnerships with KKV and the Hawaii Forest Stewardship and Urban and Community Forestry Programs, a diverse community is engaged and breathing life into this unique project.

Forest* A* Syst

Forest Landowner's Assessment Guide

// Tools to Protect, Enhance and Manage Private Forestland. //



www.forestasyst.org



This **dynamic** and **interactive** website **helps forest landowners** identify their ownership objectives and establish communication with local natural resource professionals who can provide technical assistance to implement best management practices for a variety of uses — timber, wildlife, recreation, soil and water quality, and environmental sustainability. This web-based tool is **free** and **easy to use**.

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

- **print** aerial photos of ANY tract of land
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For more information about Forest *A* Syst contact:

Kris Irwin

706.542.7412

kirwin@uga.edu

Multiple Use for Multiple Generations

Forest Management on New Mexico's Lower Gallinas Land Grant

Land Grant member Luis Martinez tells stories about working as a kid in the logging industry in the 1940s.



Photos by Shannon Atencio

By Shannon Atencio

*Timber Management Officer
New Mexico State Forestry*

When Luis Martinez started working in the woods at the age of eight, his first job was to lift hand-hewn railroad ties onto his shoulder and drag them to piles where they would then be loaded on wagons. Just a little kid, he would get tired. To perk him up, the men would share their chewing tobacco with the hard-working youngster. It was the 1940s, and these men were producing railroad ties in Gallinas Canyon, outside of Las Vegas, New Mexico.

The crews would hand fall trees with cross cut saws and skid logs out with horses and mules. Martinez said they would make an average of eight railroad ties per day. The logs were hand-hewn with axes. He says, "Their axes were so sharp, those guys could drop them into a piece of wood, and the axe heads would sink in four inches or more." Martinez thinks back and appreciates the care and precision of maintaining the choice tool of those days. The wagons that hauled the ties to town (to the rail stop) would hold 24 ties. It took the guys three days to produce one wagon-load. During those days, high quality timber was plentiful and demand was high. Although eight railroad ties per day may not sound like much today, it was a respectable number for their small operation.

The history of Land Grants

The history of land use in northern New Mexico is a story of the families that have lived here and worked on the land throughout many generations. Some families still work the land and many more have moved on to find a living in the cities.

Martinez's story is just one of many. He is a resident of Gallinas Canyon and a member of the local Lower Gallinas Land Grant (LGLG). The people of these small northern New Mexico communities have a deep relationship with Land Grants. I've had the fortune to work closely with some of the Land Grants around Las Vegas, New Mexico. As a forester today working on the Lower Gallinas Land Grant, hearing Martinez's stories sharpens my understanding of the forestry history of this landscape. My agency, New Mexico State Forestry, started working with the LGLG in 1999. They wanted assistance creating a forest management plan based on clear land management objectives.

The land now known as "Spanish Land Grants" was once inhabited by indigenous people of the North American Continent, then colonized by Spain in the late 1400s. While in Spanish control, the King of Spain granted land to the early Spanish settlers. Mexico declared independence from Spain in 1810 and Spain recognized that independence in 1821. In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war between the United States and Mexico and incorporated the northern states of Mexico and the residing citizens into the United States. New Mexico did not achieve full statehood until 1912. Throughout this history, the sovereign rights of Land Grants have persisted.

Land Grants have a rich history of development, and a complicated land management history. They are communal lands, and fall somewhere between public and private ownership. The responsibility for Land Grants belongs to a specifically identified group of people, and they are not open to the entire public. Some have been adopted as sub-divisions of the State of New Mexico, so they have a somewhat governmental status. They are intended to be managed to serve the community. Often times, when the community cannot agree on what is the best form of management, the land lies largely untreated and therefore does not provide the best benefit to the people.

Since Land Grants typically do not generate income for the organization, they lack the funding to support large-scale, costly management activities on the land. Typical land use includes



Photos by Shannon Atencio

This is a view of Hermit's Peak from Lower Gallinas Land Grant.

grazing, fuel wood collection, hunting and recreation. Most Land Grants have not been fully surveyed and they can't afford to have a complete survey. Such is the case with the LGLG. Although the historical boundaries are known by the elders, there are no fences or modern survey markers on the LGLG. Boundaries are distinguished with metes and bounds markers- piles of rocks and blaze marks on trees. Where bordering properties have been surveyed, there may be fences; but boundary delineation is just one of the challenges for managing the grant's timber resources.

Practicing forest management

A key element for practicing forestry on Land Grants is to understand their history. It's a story about the people of northern New Mexico and their relationship with the land. This story starts with Fidel Ortega and Felipe Blea who in 1952 petitioned the Trustees of the Las Vegas Land Grant Board to break out approximately 3,600 acres in the Las Gallinas area from the greater Las Vegas Land Grant (LVLG) to form the Lower Gallinas Land Grant. Throughout the 1950s the Lower Gallinas Land Grant was governed by the Justice of the Peace. In the late 1950s the office of the Justice of the Peace was abolished and the grant adopted a democratic system of governance, with elected officers. The organization then began to invite (recruit) residents to join the grant.

In 1997, the Las Vegas Land Grant reissued the deed of land to the Lower Gallinas Land Grant. At this time the LVLG and the District Judge who currently oversees the LVLG, approved the Organizational Management Plan for the Land Grant. The centerpiece of the Management Plan is the Mission Statement which declares:

“The Lower Gallinas Land Grant has been organized to protect, defend and preserve the sovereign rights of its membership; To hold in trust land, water, natural resources and all interest of the Land Grant, in order to preserve, protect and enhance the natural and/or the productive attributes of the land and its resources for current and future generations of members.”

Formal involvement with the New Mexico Forest Stewardship Program started in 2007. As the district timber management officer for New Mexico State Forestry, I recognize the unique opportunity to work with the Lower Gallinas Land Grant to provide assistance with forest management. The Stewardship Program allows the Land Grant to accomplish treatment activities on a scale that they would not have been able to afford on their own. It has enabled the members to realize some of their management goals. The forestry activity is an investment in the health of the property.

When they started, the ponderosa pine/mixed conifer areas on the property were dense and lacked vigor. These areas were logged heavily in the late 1800s, when the railroad first came



Photo by Bobby Benavidez

Las Vegas District timber management officer Shannon Atencio, thinning contractor Michael Benjamin, and Land Grant president Tony Benavidez discuss details of a thinning project.

through New Mexico. The second growth forest developed without fire due to excessive grazing, removing forest fuels in the early 1900s, and later fire suppression. Without this natural thinning, dense trees remained small and mistletoe flourished. Areas that were once meadows are now filled with trees. The Land Grant members who have lived in the area their whole lives have watched wildlife activity decrease over time. Deer that were once plentiful were seldom seen. But since the thinning activities started in 2007, deer, attracted to the newly opened timber stands along the ridge top, are beginning to move through the Land Grant again.

The Land Grant is also working with New Mexico State Forestry to update the Stewardship Plan. This includes completing a more intensive forest inventory and updating the plan to reflect current treatments and changing management goals.

The management story today is much different than when eight year old Luis Martinez was dragging hand-hewn railroad ties to be loaded on a wagon.

With markets crashing and sawmills across the country closing, there is no demand for the quality of timber available on this land. Still, the Stewardship Program and government grants are enabling this organization to move forward with forest management. The recent thinning projects that have taken place incorporate utilization as part of the project



Photo by Shannon Atencio

Land Grant members enjoy a picnic before collecting firewood on the Lower Gallinas Land Grant.

goals. Some wood is made into vigas, the traditional roof timbers in Southwestern construction. The non-merchantable material is left on site and skidded into log decks so that the Land Grant members can easily access it for firewood. Wood is still the primary heat source of many northern New Mexico homes, and some families still use wood cook stoves. The current projects and planned land management are moving this Land Grant into a new era of forestry. The Land Grant is once again serving the needs of the people while improving the health of the land.

Winston County Self Help Cooperative Presents the 3rd Annual **Saving Rural America & Youth Conference** *"Opportunities in Changing Times"*

January 8, 9, & 10, 2010
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- Herd Management
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- Gospel Singing

Saturday's Workshops:

- Small Fruits Maintenance
- Backyard Gardening Techniques
- Managing Small Animals (Goats and Sheep)
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- USDA Update
- Marketing Vegetables

Saturday's Special Event:

- Tour of Philadelphia, MS – In 1964; the Slaying of the Three Young Civil Rights Workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner took place here.

Sunday's Workshop-Policy Forum:

- Creating Legislation for the 2012 Farm Bill

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\$10.00 registration fee for farmers includes meals and materials. USDA, extension, non-profits and foundation personnel \$20.00. Registration deadline December 20, 2009. Visit our website for more conference information www.wcshc.com or contact **Frank Taylor 601-291-2704**.

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Steward of the Family Farm

By **Brian Haines**

NC Forest Service

Andrew Taylor was like many landowners who are unsure of the best approach to take in managing their own forestland, until he discovered North Carolina's Forest Stewardship Program.

The Forest Stewardship program is designed to encourage and help those who want to manage their forestland for its natural beauty, wildlife habitat, recreation, or productive timber. The program is also intended to help landowners protect clean water through appropriate soil conservation practices. The program is open to any private landowner who has 10 acres or more of forestland.

Taylor and his siblings grew up on the farmland which has been in the family since 1892. However, little work had been done on the land for a long time, a situation Taylor wished to correct by becoming a good steward of his land. Taylor's journey into stewardship began when he decided to sell timber on 100 acres of the 320 acre family farm that he owns with his siblings. At the time, he didn't know the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) was available to help him.

After reading about a landowner meeting in the newspaper, Taylor decided to attend and was introduced to David Halley, a consulting forester, and discovered all the benefits of working with the NCFS and the Forest Stewardship Program. Part of the meeting involved a tour of properties that had been managed for forestry, and this was where Taylor learned a lot. He approached the consulting forester about his own property and later the two would tour the family farm where Halley made suggestions, including working with the NCFS. Taylor admits that he didn't know the services that were available to him until he met Halley.

"There is a lot of information I could've had before I planted, a lot of stuff I had done on my own, stuff that came naturally as an old farm boy but I still needed help, I was just asking the wrong people," Taylor said. "After I got involved with the (North Carolina) Forest Service things became productive."

Steve Thompson, Caswell County Ranger, wants people to



Andrew Taylor, left, and forest ranger Steve Thompson discuss plans for the Taylor farm.

know that there are services available to landowners through the NCFS.

"Ideally, we will write a management plan that works with the landowners objectives," Thompson said. "Some of Mr. Taylor's stands are not healthy enough to be productive so we're working with him on that. Some of what they are doing includes some site prep work on areas that he wants to plant. Mr. Taylor has an interest in the land and he's willing to do the work."

Taylor's other goals include planting back trees in harvested areas, thinning trees under the southern pine beetle program, and wildlife management. A hunt club leases the property and helps him keep the borders well marked.

The NCFS looks at the objectives of the landowner and works together with other agencies to help landowners achieve the goals outlined in their stewardship plan. Any good stewardship plan will incorporate a number of public agencies working together to assist landowners by providing educational, technical, and financial assistance, according to Thompson. These resource professionals help landowners realize the benefits of being good forest stewards.

Thompson says they get a lot of work through word of mouth, sometimes more than they can handle. In fact, while in the process of helping Taylor they were introduced to his neighbor who is now also receiving services from the NCFS and is engaged in Forest Stewardship activities as well.

Taylor wishes he had known about the opportunities the NCFS offered earlier, but says he is pleased to be able to move ahead with their assistance in the future. His main goal is to create a healthy stewardship property for all the children and grandchildren of his family so the Taylor family legacy will continue for generations to come.



Andrew Taylor is determined to be a good steward of his family farm.

Keeping Landownership Alive

Forest Stewardship in Western Tennessee

By Joshua Idassi, PhD

*Natural Resources Specialist
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University*

John Fenderson

*Environmental Affairs/Public Outreach Coordinator
Tennessee Division of Forestry*

Since 2005, the Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program in collaboration with Alabama A & M University's Center of Excellence in Forestry, the University of Tennessee Cooperative Extension Program, the Tennessee Division of Forestry, the U. S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, has hosted forest stewardship landowner workshops in several rural counties in western Tennessee. The locations included Hardeman and Haywood counties, which have the largest population of minority landowners. The theme was "Keeping Landownership Alive."

The Southwest Tennessee Landowners Interest Group is an outgrowth of a workshop conducted in April 2006 in Bolivar, Tennessee as part of a series of workshops for limited resource/underserved landowners held throughout the Southeast, sponsored in large part by Dr. Rory Fraser and Alabama A&M University. The group is comprised of landowners and persons in Hardeman and surrounding counties who have a mutual interest in landownership as it relates to farms and forestland. Their mission is:

- To attempt to meet the needs of landowners by establishing a network to exchange educational information and ideas on the retention and utilization of family farms
- To facilitate the production and distribution of food and fiber products
- To foster appreciation for land as a valuable family asset, and to foster an appreciation of family legacy

Many of the participants in these two-day workshops were retirees, senior citizens, widows and newcomers from other states. Most are nontraditional farmers who needed assistance in many ways. With the assistance of the area forester, Pete Moditz, some



Members of the Southwest Tennessee Landowners Interest Group

developed forest stewardship plans for their wooded properties. One of the most enthusiastic landowners was Monroe Woods.

"I want to start a medicinal plants project in my wooded area where white oaks are the dominant tree species," Woods said. "But I know I can not plant ginseng because my property is in the southern fringes of the ginseng growing zone. Are there any other medicinal plants we can grow?"

Dr. Joshua Idassi, who at the time was with Tennessee State University's Cooperative Extension Program, explained to Woods that goldenseals and shiitake mushroom production may be alternatives to enhance the income potential of his property.

Throughout the two-day workshop, Dr. Idassi emphasized to the participants that forest farming is a novel and rational practice to enhance the income and environmental benefits of their small acreage woodlands. Together with John Fenderson, outreach coordinator with the Tennessee Division of Forestry, the Southwest Tennessee Landowner Interest Group identified future workshop topics. They include an introduction to emerging information technology, wills and estate planning, gaining access to free legal assistance, and property ownership rights.

Many more workshops are planned for 2010 that will involve partners from the local, state and federal agencies. It will take a collaborative effort to ensure landowner needs continue to be met.

The American Tree Farm System

Sustaining forests, watersheds, and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship

Take a drive through your countryside, and chances are you will come across a woodlot or forested property displaying the familiar diamond-shaped green and white Tree Farm sign. If you own forestland, you may wonder what that sign means and how one goes about becoming a certified Tree Farmer.

The roots of the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) run deep – it is the oldest and largest conservation, certification, education, and advocacy program for private forest landowners in the United States. ATFS includes 91,000 certified Tree Farms who together own 24.3 million acres. ATFS is a program of the American Forest Foundation (www.forestfoundation.org), a nonprofit organization that strives to ensure the sustainability of America's family forests for present and future generations.

What does it mean when a private forest landowner proudly displays the Tree Farm sign? It means the landowner is committed to continual stewardship and sustainable management for wood, water, wildlife, and recreation. This commitment involves adhering to certain standards for forest sustainability including a plan for long-term management of their forestland.

Tree Farm properties are varied in nature across 44 states, and typically harbor many different habitats and forests, from seedlings to mature timber. Biodiversity is a critical component of a certified Tree Farm. For example, private forest landowners, who are members of the American Tree Farm System, follow best management practices when they harvest timber, take steps to provide wildlife habitat, and protect biodiversity. Tree Farmers reap not only the rewards of good forest management but also the benefits of belonging to ATFS.



Courtesy Georgia Forestry Commission

Josiah Phelps is a Tree Farmer in Georgia.

ATFS supports Tree Farmers through the direct involvement of State Tree Farm Committees that provide outreach, educational opportunities, field days, and recognition services. The state committees are supported with 4,400 volunteer inspecting foresters who also make themselves available to landowners. Every year ATFS recognizes four regional and one national Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year who have done exceptional forest management on their property and an exceptional job of promoting sustainable forestry.

While firmly rooted in its traditional education oriented role, some exciting changes have taken place in the American Tree Farm System during the past several years. In 2008, the American Tree Farm System was endorsed by the world's largest forest certification program, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC). The PEFC provides an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood and paper products that they are promoting the sustainable management of forests.

ATFS has strengthened its advocacy role in the policy arena. The 2008 Farm Bill was passed with significant opportunities for private forest landowners for forest conservation funding and the definition of biomass to include wood, wood waste, and residues.

Certified Tree Farmers are recognized with a certificate of participation, and the well recognized diamond-shaped green and white Tree Farm sign that is the sign of sustainable forestry to post on their woodlot. So the next time you drive past one of those green and white diamond signs, think about what's behind "the sign of good forestry."

To become a certified Tree Farmer, please visit the American Tree Farm System website: www.treefarmssystem.org, or call (202) 463-2462.



Courtesy NC Forestry Association

For Menominee Tribe Sustainability is a Cultural Value

By Glenn Rosenholm
USDA Forest Service

For some people, the term “sustainability” has a special meaning. For them it is not just a fad or a “*cause du jour*.” It is a way of life.

Meet the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin.

It is an understatement to say that the Menominee Tribe knows how to sustainably manage forestland. That would be like saying Serena Williams knows how to hit a tennis ball, or Bill Gates knows how to build and market computer software.

The tribal operation represents an outstanding example of sustainable forest management on nearly any level. The Menominees have been managing a huge swath of forestland quite successfully for a very long time through their business entity, Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE).

The Menominee’s forest is one of the largest tracts of contiguous forestland in northern Wisconsin. Their reservation encompasses 235,523 acres of land in the northern part of the state. Altogether it covers an area nearly a quarter the size of Rhode Island.



Timber harvesting on the Menominee Reservation



Menominee white pine destined for ship mast restoration.

About 220,000 acres of the reservation is forested. Nearly all of their forestland, including tracts of hardwoods, pines and aspen, is actively managed. Some of their white pines are nearly 200 years old.

Today there are 8,618 Menominee Tribal Members. About half of them live on or near the reservation. Not only do the Menominee sustainably manage more forestland than all but a few private forest landowners in the United States, they’ve been doing so for thousands of years. The Menominees have been managing their forest acreage for active logging since 1856, when a treaty was signed between the tribe and the United States government.

Sustainable forestry is not so much a regulatory mandate for them, however, as it is a central part of their governing structure. “The constitution and bylaws require that all tribal forestland be managed on a sustained yield basis,” said Menominee Tribal Member Chris Caldwell. “Basically, that’s the general provision by the tribal government. It’s the will of the people,” he added.

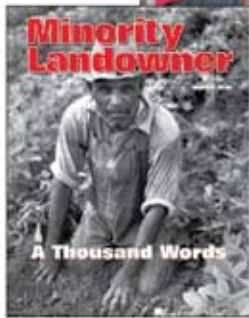
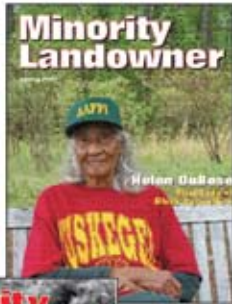
Caldwell is the Department of Trust Resources Director and Compliance Enforcement Officer for the tribe. He oversees administration of forest management contracts and assists the tribal government body in forest management related issues.

He said the work that is carried out follows a forest management plan. The management goal of the Menominee Tribe is to maximize the quantity and quality of saw timber grown under sustainable yield management principles, while maintaining the diversity of native species.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE COLLEGE OF MENOMINEE NATION

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE COLLEGE OF THE MENOMINEE NATION



Chris Caldwell leads a student tour.

Caldwell says MTE managers work to make sure the forest is managed sustainably and the forest products that are removed receive the highest value for the benefit of the tribe. "It's an integrated approach. At the end of the day there's a business side to it."

The MTE sawmill has been in operation for more than 100 years, and they recently celebrated its centennial earlier this year. It is one of the oldest active sawmills in the country.

"I would argue it's the oldest example of sustainably managed forest in the United States," said Mike Dockry, U.S. Forest Service liaison to the College of the Menominee Nation.

The tribe's history of sustainable forest management speaks for itself. "When you look at volume and grade, they have more volume today and higher quality than they had in 1856," Dockry added.

The enterprise has cut more than 2.25 billion board feet of lumber out of the forest since the treaty. Today, the forest represents \$100 million in revenue each year and provides 460 jobs. "They've harvested about 2 1/2 times their starting volume and they still have more now than they've started with," Dockry said.

The forest plays a major role in the tribe's economy, social life and culture, added Caldwell. "The (forest) industry has its influence on the community. Not many people can say they don't have friends or family members who work for MTE, either in logging, at the sawmill or at forestry. Another group of people rely on it for cultural resources."

"We are very fortunate. Everything we cut, we sell, and FSC certification adds more value to our lumber and wood products in the marketplace," said MTE President and CEO Adrian Miller in a press statement. MTE first received certification under the internationally recognized Forest Stewardship Council program in 1996.

He added, "The Menominee People have long recognized the need for balance between the environment, the community and economy."

Preserving a Family Legacy

By Robert Murphy
Cleveland County Forester
Arkansas Forestry Commission

Anytime you ask Garland Dowd about his childhood, he always speaks fondly of his memories of traveling to his grandfather's home place in rural Cleveland County in southeast Arkansas, where his grandfather and family grew timber and enough vegetables to provide for the family. Although the old house is long gone, the home place can still be found marked by the huge oak trees that were present in the yard along the side of an old wagon road. Dowd left Arkansas for greener pastures and now resides in Washington state, but his thoughts are never far from his family's historical home.

The Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) allows landowners to get help managing their property and encourages them to take a more holistic approach to management by including soil and water, wildlife, or recreation in their management regime. The program provides a platform for private landowners to contact and work with natural resource professionals. It will also help them meet their needs, while being good stewards of the land they manage.

In 2000, Dowd took over managing his family's property of about 250 acres that his great grandfather and grandfather acquired between 1891 and 1906. According to Dowd, he's currently using the FSP "to help restore the property to sustainable timber production." Through the FSP Dowd has enlisted the

help of professional foresters, getting advice and help in converting the property from unmanaged and low quality timber into high quality pine and hardwood production. He has implemented silvicultural practices, such as pre-commercial thinning, and has planted nearly 100,000 seedlings in the past nine years, utilizing numerous cost-share programs.

Dowd has also benefited from other government assistance programs available to help protect water quality. He has installed concrete low water crossings on streams, and has widened streamside management zones by planting site specific hardwoods. Also, hunters are allowed to plant food plots in existing openings thus increasing the wildlife in the area.

The FSP has helped Dowd stay true to his family's legacy of timber production, while giving him the tools and education needed to help protect all natural resources for future generations. He is currently using contacts made through the FSP to help educate the next generation of forest landowners. This past March, Dowd hosted a field day demonstration where other minority landowners in attendance had the opportunity to look over his property and have a forester discuss facts about timber management and land stewardship.

The Arkansas Forestry Commission partners with other natural resource agencies to conduct regular outreach forestry workshops to explain the various programs and services that are available to landowners. To learn more about forest management and the Forest Stewardship Program in Arkansas, call (501) 296-1940, or visit the "Who do I call?" section of our website at www.arkansasforestry.org to find your local forestry representative.



Garland Dowd stands in front of a naturally regenerated pine stand.



AFC Forester Robert Murphy, (far right) leads a forest management workshop on the Dowd forest.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program, popularly known as EQIP and reauthorized in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill), is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) develops contracts with agricultural producers to implement conservation practices to address environmental natural resource problems. Payments are made to producers once conservation practices are completed according to NRCS requirements.

EQIP provides payments up to 75 percent of the incurred costs and loss of farm income due to installing certain conservation practices and activities. However, certain historically underserved producers (limited resource farmers/ranchers, beginning farmers/ranchers, socially disadvantaged producers) may be eligible for payments up to 90 percent of the estimated incurred costs and lost income. Additionally, it further allows these underserved producers to receive, in advance of installing and completing their conservation practices, up to 30 percent of the amount needed for purchasing materials or contracting. Farmers and ranchers may elect to use a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) for technical assistance needed for certain eligible activities and services. The Farm Bill established a new payment limitation for individuals or legal entity participants who may not receive, directly or indirectly, payments that, in the aggregate, exceed \$300,000 for all program contracts entered during any six year period. Projects determined as having special environmental significance may, with approval of the NRCS Chief, have the payment limitation raised to a maximum of \$450,000.

Persons engaged in livestock or agricultural production and owners of non-industrial private forestland are eligible for the program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, private non-industrial forestland, and other farm or ranch lands. Persons interested in entering into a cost-share agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for EQIP assistance may file an application at any time. Applicants must be an agricultural producer in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the Farm Bill; and develop an EQIP plan of operations.

NRCS works with the participant to develop the EQIP plan

of operations. This plan becomes the basis of the EQIP contract between NRCS and the participant. NRCS provides conservation practice payments to landowners under these contracts that can be up to 10 years in duration.



Ben Johnson participates in the EQIP program in South Carolina.

Ben Johnson of St. Helena Island, South Carolina worked with NRCS to apply for financial and technical assistance through EQIP. NRCS staff helped him with the program application process and explained the benefits that would result from his participation. Johnson's conservation plan included fencing, irrigation installation, planting cover crops, and implementing record keeping into his routine. Since joining the program, he has been a great advocate for conservation and EQIP and is spreading the word about the benefits to other small farmers in South Carolina's Lowcountry.

Nowadays, Johnson surveys his pastures with great pride, and smiles as he talks about watching his grandkids and how much they enjoy the farm. "This is the good life!" he exclaims. "I grow all my own food and provide for my family and friends." Johnson has it all figured out in terms of the good life and what makes him happy, but he admits, "It took me 47 years to figure out this is where I wanted to be." Now, the young man who left this farm back in 1956, determined not to return, loves the place with a passion and is proud to call it home.

For more information about EQIP and other NRCS programs, visit the NRCS website: www.nrcs.usda.gov; or contact the office of your State Conservationist. The telephone numbers for State Conservationists are available by calling, toll free, 1-800-880-4183.

Georgia Gets New Rural Development Director

By Jerry Pennick



Shirley Sherrod

“For Georgia Ms. Sherrod’s appointment represents a dramatic and long overdue change.”

Shirley Sherrod was recently named Georgia State Director for Rural Development (USDA) thus becoming the first African American to hold that position. It was indeed a historic appointment, not just because she is African American but also because her appointment was not political patronage. Ms. Sherrod has never been part of the “good old boy” network in Georgia. In fact, she has spent most of her life as a community organizer! She has a history of organizing farmers and rural communities in Georgia so that they could not only access services and resources they were entitled to, including USDA, but

also to be able to employ self-help strategies such as cooperatives that build sustainable businesses and communities.

More often than not, USDA appointees at the state level really have no interest in ensuring equity in the way their agencies operate. In fact, one of the criteria for their selection appears to be the ability to maintain the status quo. For Georgia Ms. Sherrod’s appointment represents a dramatic and long overdue change. She brings a unique perspective to the position – that of a customer of USDA because she has been one and represented others. She has also proven to be fair and objective in her approach. Even so, given Georgia’s history, her job will not be easy. The “good old boys” will try to impede change while pretending to work with her. Conversely, the “people” will expect her to change in one week a system that has been in place for decades.

Compliments to Secretary Vilsack and the Obama administration for breaking the mold as they try to bring about real change on the ground where it means the most. Hopefully, Georgia is the rule rather than the exception and USDA will be more representative of the people it is meant to serve.

Having known Shirley for nearly 25 years I believe she is up to the challenges she is sure to face, and when her tour is over she will leave Georgia a much better place.



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United States Department of Agriculture
Risk Management Agency



David Wiggins

National Program Manager

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Willie Harrison, Swine Producer
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