

Educational Events of the Past Year from Around the State

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When this “Hardwood Corner” series of articles was started, I made the statement that the purpose of my contribution would be to keep you updated on issues that involve hardwood silviculture and/or water quality from a forester-landowner perspective. Although it has been a while since we have presented any new information, the following is my attempt to do exactly that.

Hardwoods Management

As everyone in the state of Alabama (and the United States for that fact) is aware of the chronic budget situations, partnering with other agencies to spread the word is a must. Over the past year, the Alabama Forestry Commission was able to partner with numerous others to help provide hardwood training and new thoughts for forest landowners.

The first such training in April of 2012 was the “Upland Hardwood” Forestry Short Course, spearheaded by Tim Albritton, forester with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Tim organizes this meeting every two years so that interested parties can learn about the hot topics in dealing with upland hardwood management.

Sponsors and presenters were from the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC), the University of Tennessee (UT), the USDA Forest Service (USFS), and the NRCS. Curriculum included the following topics:

- Managing Upland Hardwood Stands – Dr. Callie Schweitzer, USFS
- Hardwood Habitat for Wildlife and Financial Assistance Programs for Hardwoods – Jeff Thurmond, NRCS
- Oak and American Chestnut Restoration: Challenges of Artificial Regeneration – Dr. Stacy Clark, USFS
- Intermediate Stand Treatments, Including Crop Tree Management and Corridor Thinnings – Dr. David Mercker, UT
- “And What About Fire in Upland Hardwood Forestry Systems?” – Dr. Daniel Dey, USFS
- Situational Assessments – “Using This Stuff on the Ground” – Lynn Washington, AFC
- Hardwood Silviculture – Dr. Ed Loewenstein, Auburn University
- Forest Industry Perspective on Growing Quality Hardwoods – Jonathan Lowery, The Westervelt Company
- Wildlife Considerations in Hardwood Management – Patrick Cook, ACES
- Forested Wetland Management Considerations – Jim Jeter, AFC

There was also a field trip with the following observations:

- Reforestation/Afforestation/Hardwood Planting – Drew Nix, ADCNR and Jim Jeter, AFC
- Controlling Undesirable Plant Species in Hardwood Stands – Tim Albritton, NRCS
- On-Site Specific Stand Prescriptions – Group discussion

Finally, the Southern Hardwood Research Group out of Stoneville, Mississippi held a meeting in February of this year with the main theme: “Mid-Rotation Management of Hardwood Stands.” This was another very educational event.

I tell you all of this so you can be aware that many opportunities exist to learn more about upland and bottomland hardwood management, and there are folks trying to stay up on the issues. If you have questions dealing with any of the aforementioned topics, feel free to contact me or any of the partners involved. Also, you are encouraged to visit our AFC website at www.forestry.alabama.gov.

Water Quality & Related Matters

Northwest Environmental Defense Center v. Lisa Jackson, EPA, (originally

A varied group was in attendance with a consultant forester and representatives from the AFC, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), the Alabama Wildlife Federation, the NRCS, and the U.S. Army Garrison Redstone. There was a field trip with some lively discussion that looked at a riparian zone restoration project, as well as a stop at Moss Lumber Mill.

As a counter to the meeting described above, Patrick Cook with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) organized a course on the management of “bottomland hardwood.” It had been roughly three years since the last Advanced Hardwood Management seminar, so this September meeting was well attended by consultant foresters and landowners.

Sponsors and partners included the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of the ADCNR, the AFC, the NRCS, and Dow AgroSciences, LLC. Topics covered included the following:

Decker v. Northwest Environmental Defense Center). In plain terms, we know it as the “9th Circuit Forest Road/Logging Road Case.” You may know by now that the U.S. Supreme Court heard this case. When the EPA issued a new rule just days before the case was heard, the justices were neither happy nor amused. A ruling of some sort should be made by this summer. In the meantime, the environmental group has filed suit against the EPA for the new ruling. Sadly, we will have to wait for the rest of this story. As of March 20, the Supreme Court overturned the 9th Circuit’s original ruling.

County road notification – The Alabama Loggers Council and the Alabama Forestry Association (AFA) has made progress in working with counties to modify their road notification processes. The major question is whether any single county is trying to go beyond the state notification law that was passed. To find out where your county stands on this issue, go to the AFA website (www.ala-forestry.org) – under the Programs tab, select Alabama Loggers Council – then select the County Issues tab to find your county on the map.

In a related matter, I have received several complaints about loggers tracking mud onto a paved road and/or mud entering a paved road after the logger has finished. This is usually not a water quality issue; however, it is a public safety issue for which liability can be incurred if an accident happens. Not to mention, it provides for negative public relations for timber harvesters as well as landowners.

“Driving home the point of clean water” . . . Also road related, the Black Warrior Clean Water Partnership, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, and the City of Northport Stormwater Management Program sponsored an “Alabama Dirt & Gravel Road Workshop” in February. Led by John Hopkins, LTAP Trainer, the workshop was well attended by a varied audience. Loggers can view the presentation for Professional Logging Manager (PLM) credit on the AFA website once it is posted.

Hopefully this workshop will be repeated in other areas of the state. If you get a chance to attend one, it will be well worth the time. It’s not just for government entities; the principles and techniques apply to private roads as well. ☎

