



Northeast Texas Forest Landowners Association Newsletter

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A Tale of My Forest

- Michael Murphrey, Staff Forester II, Texas Forest Service, Lufkin, TX

“Yes, your mother and I bought the forty acres in Camp County in 1994 but it’s our forest,” I thought; though the kids don’t understand. About eight months ago I brought the understanding to my daughter, Melanie, of how this forty acres is “our” forest.

A beautiful blue bird day in February, 2011 the entire Murphrey Clan took a day trip up to Pittsburg to visit our neighbors Bill & Leslie Tucker and to check on the logging job that was taking place. The loggers had thinned about 80% of the forty acre tract located up near Lake Bob Sandlin in Camp County, Texas. I wanted to see the progress they had been making and demonstrate to the kids (Nicholaus and Melanie) why we (Tree Farmers) do what we do with our forests. We walked the tract checking out all the down rows and logging roads scattered through the tract and looking at the trees that were left. In forestry terms we call these trees residual timber; in Tree Farmer terms we call them future logs now that the poorer quality pulpwood had been removed. The tract was thinned very well. Every fifth row was removed and they thinned within the remaining four rows. It was thinned back to about a 75-80 sq. ft. basal area leaving nothing but the best trees to grow. The spacing was excellent in the remaining four rows which were thinned using a logging method called “Crown Friction.” While walking through the unthinned part of the stand we discussed the density of the plantation and what was going on with all the trees that were having to compete for moisture, nutrients and sunlight.

The discussion was fabulous (in my mind) as I explained growth rates and what competition does to a tree by using the unthinned stand as example; while looking at the rings on a stump in a down row. We talked about the logging roads, water bars, erosion and why you keep water clean and how good logging and good management are beneficial to the environment and to our property. I thought (again, in my mind) I was doing a bang up job of teaching my children stewardship of the land and management of forest to improve the health of the residual trees. Until my “Baby”, who was 25, said “Daddy, why did you bring me up here?”

It dawned on me that I was not communicating on a sub-

ject that she was interested in learning about. I looked into her face to see a beautiful young lady looking so confused back at me. It was then that I realized how to help her understand. All the education in the world is worthless unless you want to learn. And she didn’t. Don’t get me wrong she was grateful we went up there and she paid attention and listened well and was generally pleased with our walk in the woods but she just didn’t understand why? Why did we drive 140 miles, one way, to walk in these woods?

So I had to think, what could I use to drive my point home on the benefits to what was taking place on “our” property; and help her understand that this land, this 40 acres, is ours?

Finally it came to me. I said, “Melanie you see that row of stumps, we call it a down row. It is created by harvesting the trees to allow access into the stand of timber for the equipment and provide access to thin the rows of residual timber on each side.” I asked her, “What do you think they did with trees they removed?” She replied, “Took them to the mill to make paper.” “Excellent answer,” I replied. “And what did I get in return?” I asked her. She said, “Money.” “That is right!” I replied. “So you see that down row - that paid for your wedding dress; that one paid for the wedding cake; that one was the catered dinner” and so on and so forth through the freshly thinned plantation we went. Now I had her attention and we could begin discussing the benefits and reasons for thinning a forest. She now knows that the forty acres in Camp County is ours and that you manage timber to pay for a wedding and for all the science and reasoning behind it. We had a wonderful walk on the property and fantastic day of education.

We teach our children to walk and talk. We teach them the difference between right and wrong. If we want them to be “Stewards” of OUR land, then we will have to help them understand that the land belongs to all of us. And to keep it healthy we’ll need to manage it. This doesn’t happen overnight. So good luck and have fun with the many trips you will be taking to “y’all’s forest”.

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FROM THE FOREST



Welcome to the start of a new year in the Northeast Texas Forest Landowners Association. Let me begin by reminding you of things that need to be done at the beginning of each calendar year.

Our constitution states that "the membership dues shall be \$15.00 per calendar year (or any part of a calendar year) and shall be payable at the first regular meeting of the year". If you have not yet paid your 2012 membership dues, please plan to pay the \$15.00 dues at the February 11 meeting, or mail your check to NETFLA, PO Box 642, Mt. Vernon, TX 75457.

Our Association has historically used slightly over one-half of your dues to pay expenses for Newsletter postage, maintaining our website and program meeting room rental. The remainder has been donated to Texas Forestry Association to cover the registration for two teachers to attend the Teachers Conservation Institute (TCI), and to support the scholarship program for the winner of the State Woodland Clinic competition.

Julie Malewska, one of the teachers that NETFLA sponsored to attend TCI in 2011, joined us for our November Meeting and gave a firsthand report of her week at TCI and how it inspired her. Your Board of Directors will recommend at the February Meeting that membership approve a donation not to exceed \$450 to support three teachers to attend TCI in 2012. Our goal will be to support two local teachers and one from outside the area. If we cannot recruit two local teachers, we will donate \$300 to support two teachers from anywhere in the state.

Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts conduct clinics where youth from 4-H clubs and FFA compete in forestry related activities. Winners of local clinics advance to compete at the state level, and TFA awards a college scholarship to the winner of the state competition. Your Board of Directors will recommend that membership approve a donation of \$100 to support this scholarship program in 2012.

The December and early January rainfall was wonderful. Forecasts that I have seen though predict another dry spring. The Board of Directors thought it timely to have a program addressing drought and fire, and how landowners should manage under these conditions. Come to the February Meeting for a program by Consulting Forester/Broker Gary Price and learn how some landowners have been impacted and what they are doing.

Glenn Weiss



Program and Meeting Notes

We'll meet once again at the Pittsburg Pizza Inn at 10:00 AM. After the voting matters and any other business, our speaker will be Gary Price, a consulting forester with many years of experience here in Texas. His subject will be the recent drought, what we might expect in the future, and what, if anything, we might do to minimize further damage.

Take a look at the shots of hypoxylon canker on oaks. You will probably see some, or a lot, of this in your woods. Note that trees killed this way lose their strength rapidly. If they are in your yard or could damage critical structures, get them down now before green up. All the tree services will be snowed under after leaf out because of the drought.

Bring your stories and questions; it should be an interesting meeting.

On another note, the lead article by neighbor Mike is interesting. Mike was the TFS District Forester when we bought this place in 1993, taught us how to use diameter tape and clinometer, to figure logs and board feet, and to become better informed about timber values. He "made" us join the Four County Forest Landowners Association and the Texas Forestry Association at the same time, using the powerful arguments that you've seen in this letter several times, as well as the standard Murphrey bulldozer technique. We've known the Murphreys since then and had a lot of fun. His advice about having some serious conversations with your kids is well taken. My visit with the kids a few years ago turned up the fact that growing up on this place was fun, but neither one really wanted to own it. Daughter-in-law's asthma precludes, and daughter likes Tyler accountancy more than the woods. Meantime, Mike's pines are doing great, thanks to all the topsoil washed down to his valley from my ridge (grin)... Thinning both places when we did had to help, as well.

2012 PROGRAM CALENDAR

Saturday, Feb 11, 10:00 AM
Drought — What To Do Now
Gary Price, Consulting Forester
Pizza Inn
Pittsburg, Texas

May Tour
Date not set
Tour a Tree Farm

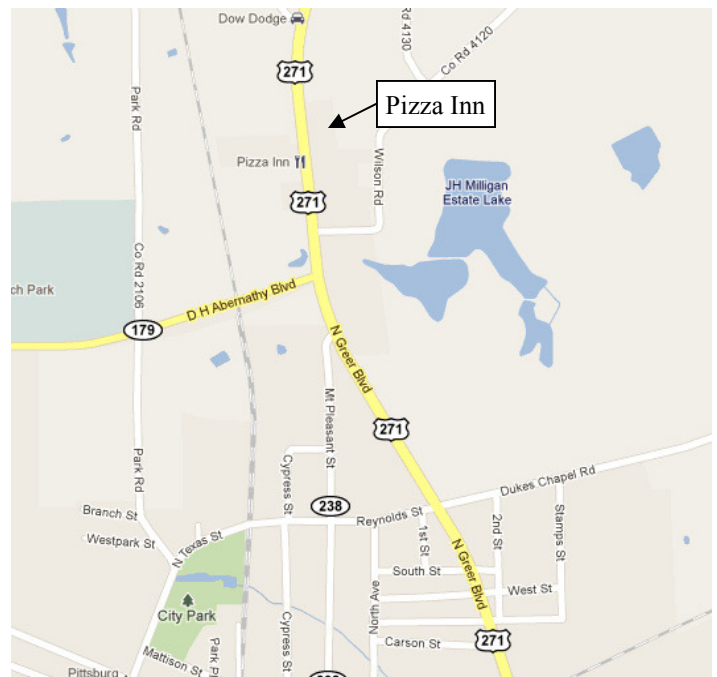
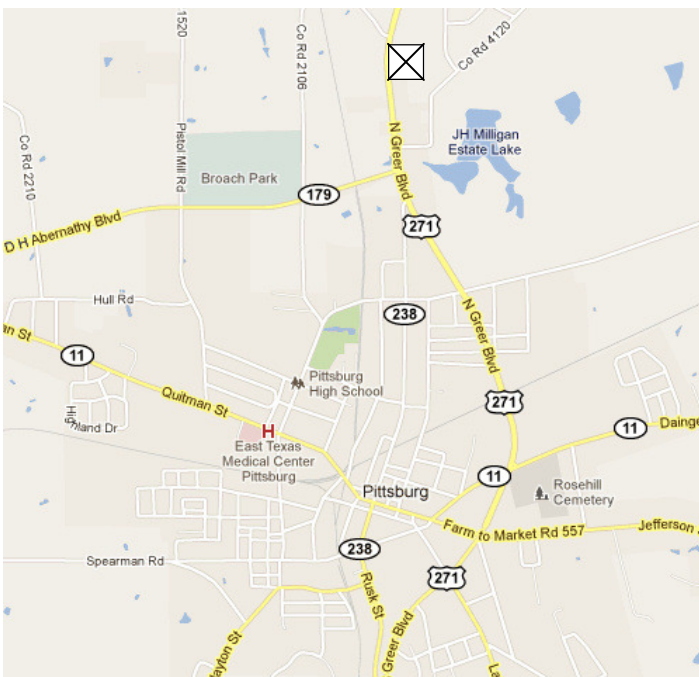
2012 DUES PAYABLE NOW

**Financial mailing address for
\$15 annual dues and other
questions is:**

**NETFLA
PO Box 642
Mt. Vernon, TX 75457**

**Contact Blanche Handy-
Sparks
(903) 860-2507
bhandy@peoplescom.net**

**Please do not send cash. Your
check is your receipt for mailed
funds. Make checks payable to
NETFLA, and THANKS!**



Hypoxylon Canker

From the Texas Forest Service

Hypoxylon canker is a fungus that causes cankers and death of oak and other hardwood trees. The disease is common in East Texas and all across the southern United States. Relatively healthy trees are not invaded by the fungus, but the hypoxylon fungus will readily infect the sapwood of a tree that has been damaged, stressed, or weakened. Natural and man-caused factors that can weaken a tree include defoliation by insects or leaf fungi, saturated soil, fill dirt, soil compaction, excavation in the root zone of the tree, removal of top soil under the tree, disease, herbicide injury, drought, heat, nutrient deficiencies, competition or overcrowding, and other factors. The hypoxylon fungus is considered a weak pathogen in that it is not aggressive enough to invade healthy trees. In addition to the hypoxylon fungus, weakened and stressed trees may become susceptible to a host of other insect and disease pests.

Hypoxylon canker activity usually increases when prolonged drought occurs. When drought stresses trees, the fungus is able to take advantage of these weakened trees. The moisture content of living wood in live, healthy trees is typically 120% - 160%. It is difficult for hypoxylon canker to develop in wood that has a normal moisture content. However, any of the factors listed above could weaken or stress trees causing the moisture content of the wood to reach levels low enough for the hypoxylon fungus to develop. When this happens, the fungus becomes active in the tree and invades and decays the sapwood causing the tree to die. Once hypoxylon actively infects a tree, the tree will likely die.

An early indication that hypoxylon canker may be invading a tree is a noticeable thinning of the crown. Also, the crown may exhibit branch dieback. As the fungus develops, small sections of bark will slough from the trunk and

branches and collect at the base of the tree. Where the bark has sloughed off, tan, olive green, or reddish-brown, powdery spores can be seen. Different tree species that are infected with hypoxylon canker will produce the different colors of spores. By the time the spores become visible, the tree is dead. In four to eight weeks, these tan areas will turn dark brown to black and become hard. They have the appearance of solidified tar. After several months, the areas will become a silver-gray color.

Once the fungus invades the tree, the sapwood begins to rapidly decay. Dark decay lines can be seen running through the wood. Trees that have died from hypoxylon canker and are located in an area where they could fall on structures, roads, fences, powerlines, etc., should be removed as soon as possible. During removal, it is very dangerous to climb trees killed by hypoxylon canker. Because the fungus decays the wood so rapidly, the tree may not support the weight of a climber. Instead, use bucket trucks or other mechanical lift devices.



Certain species of oak trees are very susceptible to hypoxylon canker. Tan, powdery spores are shown on a water oak soon after the tree died in a Lufkin (TX) park (left). Typical tan hypoxylon spores on a water oak in a Tyler County, TX forest (right).

Probably all oak trees are susceptible to hypoxylon canker. In addition, elm, pecan, hickory, sycamore, maple, beech, and other trees may be infected. The fungus spreads by airborne spores that apparently infect trees of any age by colonizing the inner bark. The fungus is known to be present in many healthy trees and can survive for long periods of time in the inner bark without

invading the sapwood. As mentioned earlier, when a tree is weakened or stressed, the fungus may then invade the sapwood and become one of several factors that ultimately cause the tree to die.

There is no known control for hypoxylon canker other than maintaining tree vigor. Apparently the spores of this fungus are so common in most areas that removing trees infected with hypoxylon canker is of little value in controlling the spread of the disease. Also, infected fire wood is not considered to be a source of inoculation. The fungus does not kill groups of trees by spreading from tree to tree. There is usually little that can be done to avoid naturally occurring stress factors, but many man-caused stress factors can be avoided. During drought periods, supplemental watering is recommended, if the tree is near a water source. Damage to tree roots around construction areas commonly predisposes a tree to infection by hypoxylon canker.

The hypoxylon canker fungus will exhibit several different color phases after an infected tree has died. Here the fungus has taken on a silver-gray appearance on the bole (trunk) of a young water oak (Lufkin, TX).



Evidence of hypoxylon canker on oak trees can appear black and crusty, similar to dried tar. This stage of the fungus usually appears after the tree has been dead for several months. These black eruptions were found on a dead water oak (Lufkin, TX).



Sometimes several different color phases of hypoxylon canker can be found at the same time on a single tree. This water oak in Tyler County (TX) was a good example.



The hypoxylon canker fungus often causes part of the bark to separate from the tree. These ? bark chips? can be found on the ground at the base of the tree. A water oak in Lufkin, TX displays a classic example of this phenomenon.



Web Sites of Interest

Compass (quarterly science magazine) – Inside the Science, USDA FS, Southern Research Station, <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/compass/issue16/index.htm>

Southern Forests Future Project – explore data, maps and other information to highlight key features and trends for southern forests - <http://www.seesouthernforests.org/>

iTree – Urban forestry analysis and benefits assessments tool - <http://itreetools.org/>

Texas Water Resources Institute, Fall, 2011, *Tx H₂O* - <http://twri.tamu.edu/publications/txh2o/> - “Texas Drought: Now and Then”. A timeline of drought in Texas, re-water (reclaimed water), drought detective, etc.

Texas Wildfire Relief - <http://www.window.state.tx.us/comptrol/fnotes/fn1111/relief.php>

Timber Tax Seminar - <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=14811>

AF&PA Grow the Vote, hot forestry related issues on Capitol Hill - http://www.bipac.net/page.asp?g=afpa&content=hot_issues_on_Capitol_hill

List of public water systems limiting water usage to avoid shortages - <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/trot/droughtw.html>

New Best Management Practices Implementation Report Published

Texas Forest Service, Water Resources Program, Lufkin, TX.

Texas Forest Service recently completed the eighth round of Best Management Practices (BMP) Implementation Monitoring. This was done to measure the degree of implementation of BMP guidelines by the forestry community; in other words, how well BMPs are being used in the field. Forestry BMPs are common-sense practices that help reduce soil erosion and protect water quality.

Sites on which forestry operations had occurred were randomly selected and evaluated for the presence, where applicable, and functionality of BMPs. Sites that are monitored are only done with landowner consent.

Overall BMP implementation on sites monitored was 94.1%. This is an all time high since the program began in 1992. National Forest sites had an overall implementation of 98.3%, while industrial sites had a 97.7% implementation rating. Corporate lands (commercial landowners that do not have wood processing facilities) scored 96.7% overall, while family forest owners scored 88.0%.

Implementation of BMPs was statistically higher when:

- the landowner was familiar with BMPs
- the logging contractor had attended formal BMP training
- a forester was involved in the sale or activity
- BMPs were included in the timber sale contract the landowner had a forest management plan.

The use of BMPs in Texas is voluntary. Continued use of forestry BMPs is important to protect water, soil, and other natural resources of Texas.

For more information, please see <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/BMP>. Look under “Publications” for the latest implementation report and earlier reports.

Property Tax Code as It Relates to Natural Disasters and Drought

– from Texas Forestry Association’s “Texas Forestry”, November 2011

Governor Rick Perry has declared that every county in Texas is subject to a drought disaster. Property Tax Code Section 23.522 specifically permits a landowner to cease agricultural use of property during declared droughts without losing the land’s open-space appraisal designation if the landowner resumes the same use of the land to the same degree of intensity at the end of the drought. Wildfires have also devastated some portions of the state. Special appraisal of land designated as open-space does not necessarily cease because of its inability to be used for agricultural purposes after devastating fires. Consideration of the land’s qualification for five or seven years must be given, as well as possible reclassification of the land in order to determine its productivity.

Other sections relating to natural disasters and droughts include:

Section 6.053 – provision of information to emergency authorities from chief appraiser.

Section 11.135 – continuation of residence homestead exemption when a structure that is rendered uninhabitable or unusable is replaced. Replacement structure may be subject to tax increase.

Sections 11.26 and 11.261- continuation of school tax limitations for persons age 65 and older or disabled persons while a structure that was rendered uninhabitable or unusable by a casualty or by wind or water damage is replaced.

Section 23.02 – reappraisal of property damaged in a disaster.

Section 23.23 – continuation of the residential appraisal cap while a structure that was rendered uninhabitable or unusable by a casualty or by wind or water damage is replaced. If a new structure is larger or of higher quality, it will be considered an improvement and taxed accordingly.

Section 23.129 – Chief Appraisers and tax assessor-collectors are authorized to waive certain penalties for failure to file or to timely file a declaration or tax statement for motor vehicle, dealer’s heavy equipment or mobile home inventory. There is a 30 day deadline following the event to file the written application for this waiver.

Section 53.032 – relates to installment payments for taxes on certain properties damaged in a disaster area.

Save the Date - 2012 Texas Timber Tax Workshop - Dr. Yanshu Li, Forest Economist, Texas Forest Service, College Station, TX

Texas Forest Service will host three timber taxation workshops at the Lottie & Arthur Temple Civic Center, 601 Dennis St., Diboll, Texas, from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on **February 17, 2012**. The daylong workshop will provide an understanding of timber tax including the latest changes to tax laws and rules for 2011 income tax return preparations with a refresher on local timberland property tax incentives.

Our workshops have trained hundreds of foresters, landowners, tax preparers, attorneys, logging professionals, land trust managers, and financial advisors in East Texas.

This tax workshop will help you:

- Learn special timber tax laws and rules that are not well understood by many tax professionals
- Apply the rules through examples that apply basic concepts
- Find answers to your top questions

Instructors will be:

Dr. Deborah Gaddis Gunter – She is a retired Mississippi State University Extension Tax Specialist in Forestry. A former industrial forester, Dr. Gunter has been teaching landowners, tax preparers and foresters about forest taxation since 1999. She is the author of the Timber Tax Fundamentals short course and numerous tax articles and publications. She has lectured across the United States on the subject of forest taxation. Currently she is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale Department of Forestry.

Dr. Yanshu Li – Forest Economist at Texas Forest Service, College Station, TX.

Who should attend:

Landowners, consulting foresters, public accountants, and loggers are encouraged to participate. The workshop qualifies for **continuing education credits**: CFE (foresters) 7.0 hours, CLE (loggers) 6.0 hours and CPE (CPAs) 8.0 hours.

How to register:

Contact Monica Jadowski (979) 458-6630 or go to <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=14811>.

Registration fee will be \$70 per participant (\$30 per additional family member). The registration fee includes the workbook, catered lunch, and refreshments. Space is limited.

Market Report – September — October, 2011

Product	Statewide Ave. Price		Previous Ave. Price		Price/Ton Difference
	Weight	Volume	Weight	Volume	
Pine-Sawlogs	\$24.81/ton	\$200.37/mbf	\$24.91/ton	\$191.05/mbf	0%
Pine-Pulpwood	\$5.43/ton	\$14.63/cord	\$5.49/ton	\$14.80/cord	-1%
Pine-Chip’n’Saw	\$8.02/ton	\$21.66/cord	\$8.99/ton	\$24.28/cord	-11%
Mixed Hardwood-Sawlogs	\$26.61/ton	\$234.64/mbf	\$26.34/ton	\$240.94/mbf	+1%
Hardwood-Pulpwood	\$5.68/ton	\$16.11/cord	\$5.96/ton	\$16.75/cord	-5%

Conversion factors between volume and weight vary from sale to sale, so the differences in volume prices above may not equal differences in weight prices. Stumpage price statistics include gatewood sales (estimated by subtracting cut-and-haul costs, other expenses and profits provided by reporter). Statewide data excludes U.S. Forest Service sales.

Price calculated from specific conversion factor reported for each sale if available; otherwise, average conversion factors listed on page 4 of *Texas Timber Price Trends* (<http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=145>) are used. MBF = thousand board feet. Doyle Scale used for board foot measurements.

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Northeast Texas Forest Landowners Association
P.O. Box 642
Mt. Vernon, TX 75457



Calendar of Events

- February 8, 2012 Drought Symposium, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Lottie and Arthur Temple Civic Center, 601 Dennis St., Diboll, TX. Lunch provided. Please RSVP by February 3 by calling or emailing: Shane Harrington, (936) 546 – 1470 / or sharrington@tfs.tamu.edu.
- February 17, 2012 Texas Timber Tax Workshop, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Lottie and Arthur Temple Civic Center, 601 Dennis St., Diboll, TX. For more information, contact Monica Jadowski at (979) 458-6630 or mjadowski@tfs.tamu.edu. Online registration available at <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=14811> .
- March 24, 2012 Texas Wildlife & Woodland Expo & Spring Fling, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Lone Star College, Montgomery, Texas. Drought and wildfire – how to protect your home and nourish the land on which you live. Clinics on plants, trees, water, wildlife & wildfire; family adventure zone; pictures with Smokey Bear. FREE. No charge to vendors. For more information, please call (936) 273-2261 or visit <http://expo.tamu.edu>.
- April 21, 2012 Spring Garden Gala Day – 9:00 a.m. starting gate at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center (PNPC), at 2900 Raguet Street, located between College Avenue and Austin. Parking can be found at Raguet Elementary and at the Early Childhood Research Center. Drop-off for people needing assistance at the PNPC is available as well as a shuttle service to and from the parking lots. http://sfagardens.sfasu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=13&Itemid=40. For more information, please contact Elyce Rodewald at erodewald@sfasu.edu or (936) 468-1832.