



**SHORTLEAF PINE**

The Texas A&M Forest Service thinned a mature shortleaf pine stand on the State Forest, leaving trees about 70 feet apart on a grid pattern to produce natural regeneration. The demonstration forest provides an alternative to the more costly artificial regeneration. While shortleaf has slower growth than loblolly pine, it is less susceptible to freezing rain that tends to snap loblolly’s branches. Its wood is also denser than that of loblolly pine.

Shortleaf, however, doesn’t self-prune as well as loblolly, but prescribed burning can encourage natural pruning and shortleaf is more fire tolerant than loblolly. Its columnar crown is less spreading than loblolly, allowing more light to reach the ground to produce more under-story vegetation, serving as natural food plots.

Properly maintained shortleaf forests can produce good habitat for song birds, turkeys, deer, and other wildlife. Even when they die, the dead trees can provide dwelling cavities for wildlife. So shortleaf can be a viable alternative to loblolly pine for both timber production and wildlife management. The key, I believe, is to match the tree species to the site qualities. Check your soil survey!

**SOUTHERN TIMBER PROJECTION**

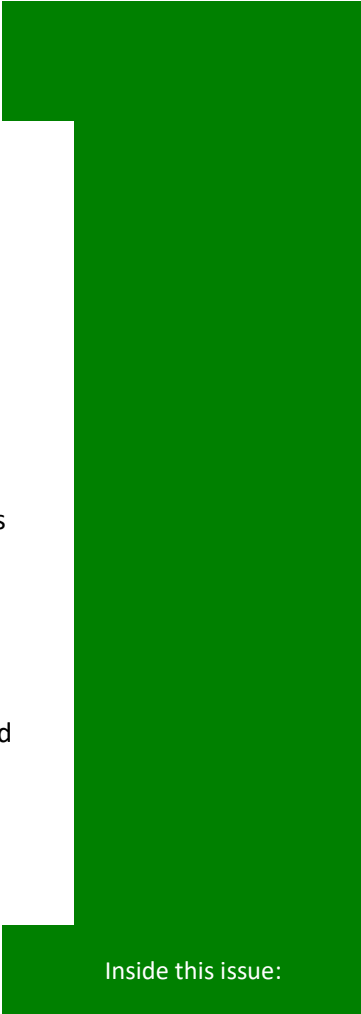
The U.S.D.A. Forest Service’s recent publication, Markets: An Analysis to Support the Southern Forest Outlook (2024), projects that the South will continue to be a net exporter of forests products, and wood pellet production will most likely expand. While wood pellets and mass timber offer some potential markets for small-diameter wood, the assessment found that these products are not likely to compensate for a declining pulpwood market.

**GCP PAPER USA INC. in NEW CANEY**

GCP Paper USA INC. held a groundbreaking ceremony on June 28 for the business’ upcoming facility in New Caney, Texas in Montgomery County. The 38.3 million facility will contain about 566,000 square feet to house the production and distribution of the company’s toilet paper, napkins, kitchen towels, facial napkins and special papers. The project is expected to create about 250 jobs, once completed.

**SUMITOMO FORESTRY ACQUIRES LA. MILL**

Sumitomo Forestry Co. has become the majority owner of Teal Jones Louisiana Holdings. The mill provides lumber and other material for residential house construction and Sumitomo plans to sell timber as well. The plant’s sale area includes Dallas, Texas.

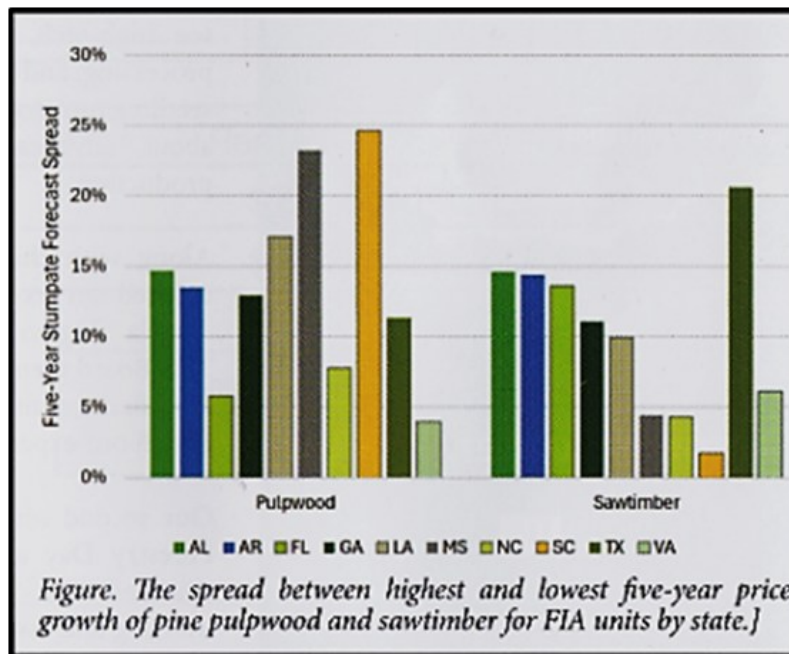


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### PINE PRICE FORECAST

Forisk analyzed timber stumpage prices in 10 southern states, utilizing U.S. Forest Service Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data in order to produce a 5-year forecast spread. The Texas pine sawtimber price growth showed about a 20% spread between the highest and lowest 5-year price growth. The forecast was above 10% for pine pulpwood.



### LOWER DENSITY PLANTING

While we historically thought that tree height in our pine plantations was independent of the planting density, recent research by the Texas A&M Forest Service (TAMFS) seems to indicate otherwise at low density spacing. So although tree height is unaffected by high densities between 700 or 800 trees per acre, the TAMFS found that the tree height was influenced by the spacing when they compared their data from plantings varying from 300 to 500 plus trees per acre.

The TAMFS planted four densities of control mass pollinator (both parent tree sources are known) loblolly pine at Fairchild State Forest in 2018: 360 (10' X 12'), 435 (10' X 10'), 545 (10' X 8') and 726 (10' X 6') trees per acre. While the 435 and 726 densities had a total height of about 27-28' in 2024, the 545 spacing had a total height of over 29' and the 360 spacing had a total height of a bit over 30'. The research results, however, were influenced by a large volume of volunteer pines that seeded in from the adjoining natural stand.

While further research is needed to duplicate these studies, this project is opening a discussion regarding whether our standard 726 trees per acre plantings are excessive. The average diameter at breast height (dbh) was greater at the lower densities, but total volume per acre is dependent on survival and survival is most crucial in the lower density plantings. So will the TAMFS lower their planting density recommendations in the future. Time (and more research) will tell!

### NEW TPWD WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

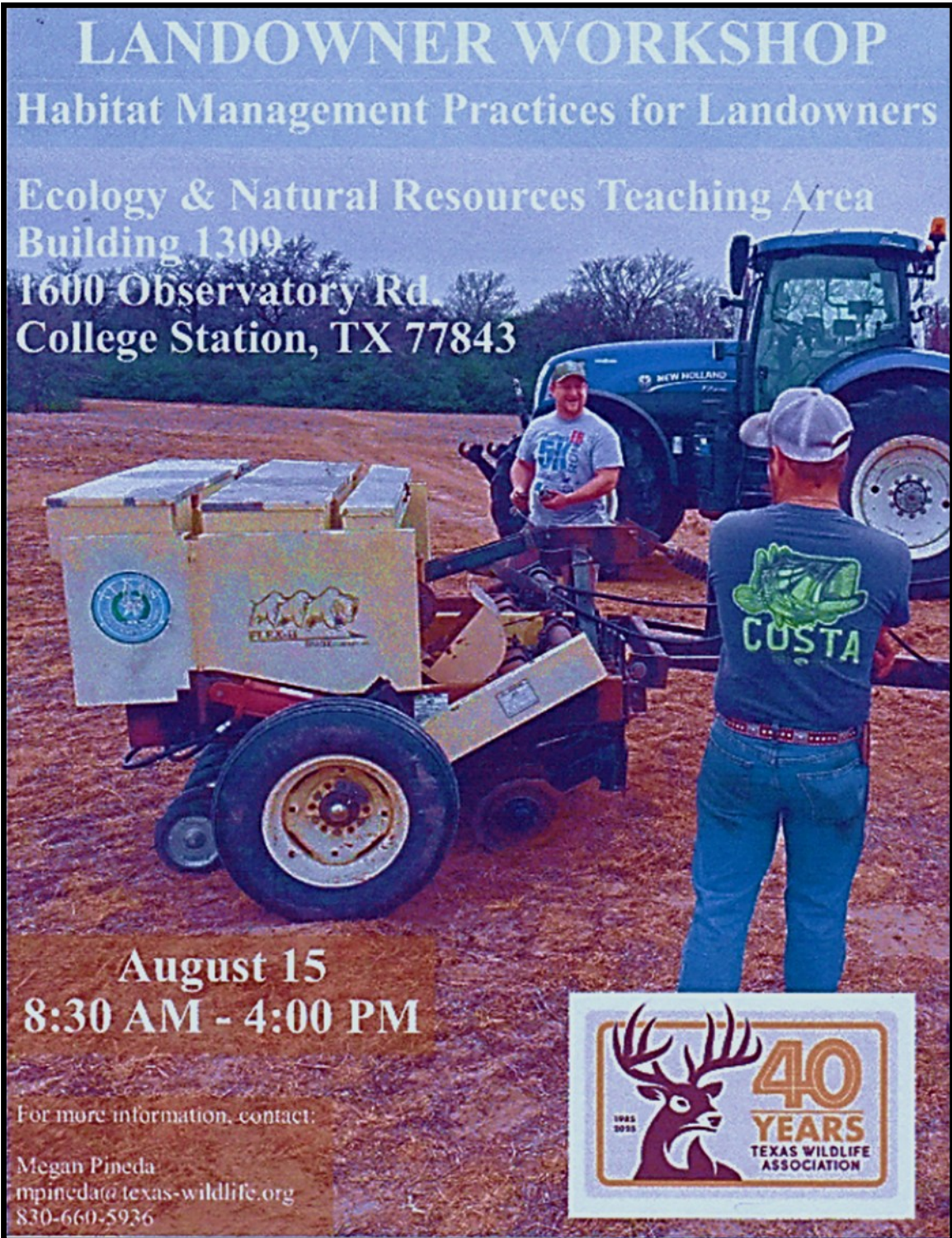
The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has acquired approximately 6,900 acres in Anderson County which will become the Trinity River Wildlife Management Area. This Wildlife Management Area (RWM) is an addition to the Middle Trinity River Ecosystem Project which includes Gus Engeling, Richland Creek, Big Lake Bottom, and Keechi Creek WMA's, together encompassing more than 38,000 acres in East Texas. The new purchase adds 11.3 miles of Trinity River frontage, giving a new total of 25 miles of frontage, providing an important corridor for migratory birds.

The purchase was financed primarily by a portion of the Texas state legislature's appropriation of \$10 million in Migratory Game Bird Stamp Funds and a grant to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation from the Knobloch Family Foundation, together as a match for a Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Wetland restoration and creation, along with rebuilding bottomland hardwood, is TPWD's top priority for the new acquisition. Prairie restoration will be implemented on the upland acres in the northern portion of the property and recreational opportunities – such as hunting, fishing, camping and bird watching – will be available to the public when appropriate.

### EAST TEXAS FORESTRY ECONOMY

According to the Texas Forest Landowners Council, there are 12.1 million acres of working forests in 43 counties in East Texas. They provide 70,000 direct jobs and \$41 billion (direct and indirect) to the state's economy. About 53% of these forests are private family forests, 19% are TIMO/REIT land, 20% are other private, and only 8% are publicly owned.






# LANDOWNER WORKSHOP

## Habitat Management Practices for Landowners

Ecology & Natural Resources Teaching Area  
Building 1309  
1600 Observatory Rd.  
College Station, TX 77843

**August 15**  
**8:30 AM - 4:00 PM**

For more information, contact:  
Megan Pineda  
mpineda@texas-wildlife.org  
830-660-5936



## NEWS FLASH

# Texas Game Wardens Uncover Illegal White-Tailed Deer Smuggling Operation

AUSTIN – Texas Game Wardens have concluded an investigation that led to the arrest and conviction of two individuals involved in illegally moving captive white-tailed deer.

A South Texas deer breeder and his business partner were caught attempting to smuggle seven deer from a licensed deer breeding facility in East Texas through Montgomery County to Brazoria and Duval counties, where they intended to illegally release the deer into the wild on private property.

The case unfolded when a Montgomery County Game Warden conducted a traffic stop and discovered the illegally possessed deer being transported without required documentation or identification. Further investigation uncovered significant violations of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) statutes and regulations, as well as criminal and traffic violations. Both individuals were arrested and booked into Montgomery County Jail.

The deer breeder faced 41 total charges: one traffic code violation, 11 penal code violations and 29 deer breeder violations under the Texas Administrative Code and Parks and Wildlife Code. He pleaded guilty to three penal code violations and 29 deer breeder violations. His business partner was charged with two penal code violations and 28 deer breeder violations, of which he was convicted.

Both men were convicted on multiple counts of violations committed with the intent to circumvent disease monitoring and testing requirements. Violations included failure to conduct ante-mortem chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing, failure to obtain valid transfer permits, removal of breeder deer without required identification and illegal possession of live game animals. Combined, they were convicted of a total of 57 deer breeder violations, one alcohol and two dangerous drug violations. They received a total \$12,060 in fines.

This case underscores the commitment of TPWD and Texas Game Wardens to protecting the state's natural resources and upholding wildlife regulations. The possession and movement of deer are regulated, among other reasons, to mitigate the spread of diseases like CWD and to ensure the health of both captive and free-ranging wildlife populations. Anytime a white-tailed deer leaves a breeding facility, it must be uniquely and permanently identified, no matter its age. Breeder deer that have not been properly identified or have had their identification hidden or illegally changed or removed are commonly referred to as "ghost deer."

"Flagrant violations, such as intentionally transferring deer without identifiers, hinder Texas' ability to identify the source of a deer in the event of a disease detection," said Col. Ronald VanderRoest, TPWD Law Enforcement Director. "This creates the potential for negative impacts to the health of both captive and free ranging deer populations, the deer breeder industry, landowners, hunters and Texas' outdoor and rural based economies, where white-tailed deer hunting has a \$9.6 billion annual economic contribution."

(Continued on P. 6)









(Deer Smuggling Operation continued)

"This case perfectly illustrates the dedication and hard work of Texas Game Wardens by not only uncovering the defendant's illegal operation but also highlighting the importance of protecting our state's natural resources," said Ann Kuykendall, Montgomery County assistant district attorney. "This prosecution sends a clear message: those who knowingly violate these laws will be held accountable."

With no available site for return, their unknown disease status and the unacceptable risks associated with their release into the wild, the "ghost deer" in this case were euthanized in accordance with protocols related to disease testing. The type of activity the suspects were participating in led TPWD to believe a heightened risk of disease exposure existed. Fortunately, the epidemiological investigation revealed no detection of CWD.

### NATURAL RESOURCE AGENCY CONTACTS

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	(800) 792-1112	<a href="https://tpwd.texas.gov">https://tpwd.texas.gov</a>
Texas Animal Health Commission	(800) 550-8242	<a href="https://tahc.texas.gov">https://tahc.texas.gov</a>
Texas Forest Service	(512) 339-4118	<a href="https://tfsweb.tamu.edu">https://tfsweb.tamu.edu</a>
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service	(979) 314-8200	<a href="https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu">https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu</a>
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Agency	(254) 742-9800	<a href="https://nrcs.usda.gov">https://nrcs.usda.gov</a>
USDA APHIS Texas Wildlife Services	(844) 820-2234	<a href="https://aphis.usda.gov">https://aphis.usda.gov</a>
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	(512) 239-1000	<a href="https://tceq.texas.gov">https://tceq.texas.gov</a>
Texas Department of Agriculture	(800) 835-5832	<a href="https://texasagriculture.gov">https://texasagriculture.gov</a>



310 North Fifth Street  
Crockett, TX 75835  
Phone: 936-544-3622  
936-544-7334



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[www.burnsforestry.com](http://www.burnsforestry.com)