
FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ✪ Wildlife ✪ Water Quality ✪ Soil Conservation ✪ Best Management Practices ✪ Recreation ✪ Aesthetics

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Forestry Bills in Congress

Two bills have been introduced in the U.S. Congress that would be of interest to forest landowners.

Reforestation Tax Act (HR 1581) – reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Jennifer Dunn (R-WA). The bill amends the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify provisions relating to the treatment of forestry activities by reducing the capital gains tax paid on timber for individuals and corporations by 3% each year the timber is held, up to a maximum reduction of 50%. The bill also would allow the landowners to take a 10% Investment Tax Credit on the total amount of reforestation expenses (currently limited to \$10,000) and shortens the amortization period from 7 to 5 years.

Timber Tax Simplification Act (S 567 & HR 1341) – introduced by Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and Rep. Mac Collins (R-GA). This bill corrects an inequity in Section 631 (b) of the Internal Revenue Code. Under current law, private nonindustrial landowners who are occasional sellers of timber are often classified by the IRS as dealers, which ensures they must comply with the rules of the IRC 631 (b) in order to obtain capital gains treatment of income from the sale of timber. Section 631 (b) requires a seller to retain an economic interest in their timber until it is harvested. The bills introduced in the Congress would remove this requirement, allowing lump sum timber sales to qualify for capital gains treatment. ✪

For more information: www.house.gov/house/Legproc.html

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Outstanding Tree Farmers

William Mack “Bill” and Anita Runnels of Atlanta, Texas, have been named the 2001 Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year by the Texas Forestry Association. The Runnels’ original Tree Farm is located in Harrison County, but they also own timberland in Marion and Cass Counties for a total of 1,126 acres.

“A Tree Farm is living proof that a well-managed forest is a better forest,” said Ron Hufford, Executive Vice President of the Texas Forestry Association. “The Runnels deserve to be recognized for their many years of excellent forest management and their commitment to forest stewardship,” he said. The Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year competition recognizes private landowners for the exceptional job they are doing of enhancing the forest on their property. Winners are also chosen based on their efforts to foster and promote the practice of sustainable forestry to other landowners and the public. Bill and Anita Runnels were one of two regional nominees for the title, and were chosen by the Texas Tree Farm Committee for their outstanding accomplishments as tree farmers. The Runnels were nominated by their consulting forester, Gary Price, who has been involved in the Texas Tree Farm program for a number of years.

To be a Certified Tree Farmer, a landowner must manage his or her forest in an environmentally sound manner in accordance with the American Tree Farm System’s standards and guidelines. “Tree Farmers provide Americans with a renewable supply of essential timber and wood products,” Hufford said. “Their forests help clean the air we breathe, protect the watersheds we depend upon, and provide homes for wildlife. By constantly seeking expert advice on sustainable forestry practices, Tree Farmers like the Runnels make good decisions for their land that will sustain their forest for generations to come.” ✪

For more information: Texas Forestry Assoc., (936) 632-8733;
www.texasforestry.org/programs.htm

What is Carbon Sequestration?

Did you know that planting trees can actually help clean the pollutants from the atmosphere? Not only that, one day soon you might get paid to do it!

Because of the tremendous worldwide increase in the burning of fossil fuels to produce energy, approximately 6 billion tons of carbon dioxide is now released into the atmosphere each year.

During the process of measuring the amount of carbon dioxide leaving the earth's surface and then the concentration actually in the atmosphere, scientists came to a startling revelation: of the 6 billion tons of gas emitted into the air each year, only 3 to 4 billion tons actually amass there. Until recently, scientists were not sure where the "missing" gasses went. Studies by researchers at Princeton University, however, have revealed that carbon uptake by plants, primarily trees, accounts for a large majority of this absorption. This process is called carbon sequestration.

As they grow, trees absorb carbon dioxide from the

atmosphere at a rate that will slow as they mature. The cyclical renewing of our forest, therefore, is essential if we hope to continue the rate of sequestration we currently enjoy.

Proposals have been made to monetarily compensate farmers for each ton of carbon dioxide they can sequester. Other alternatives propose allowing the large, carbon-emitting companies to "hire" farmers to offset the emissions they cause, thus neutralizing their pollution. American Forests, based in Washington, DC, states that planting only 30 trees per year per person will negate the annual emissions caused by the average U.S. citizen.

Sequestering the carbon from the atmosphere is just one of the many reasons that foresters and forest landowners are some of the most significant environmental stewards in our society.★

For more information: *International Paper Nurseries & Orchards "Tree Lines."* E-mail: Supertree.supertree@ipaper.com

Hypoxylon Canker - Another Consequence of the Drought

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. The fungus does not invade relatively healthy trees, 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, removal of top soil under the tree, disease, herbicide, drought, heat, nutrient deficiencies, competition or overcrowding, and other factors.

Hypoxylon canker activity usually increases when prolonged drought occurs. 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. 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. By the time the spores become visible, the tree is dead. In 4-8 weeks, these tan areas will turn dark brown to black and become hard, having the appearance of solidified tar. After several months, the areas will become a silver-gray color.

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.

There is no known control for hypoxylon canker other than maintaining tree vigor. Supplemental watering is recommended during drought periods. Also, avoid damaging tree roots in construction areas.★

For more information: Joe Pase, TFS, Pest Management, (936) 639-8170, or jpase@tfs.tamu.edu.

BITS · AND · PIECES

LANDOWNER MEETINGS DEALING WITH STEWARDSHIP ISSUES:

Houston County Forest Landowners Meeting

- July 28, 2001, in Crockett. For more information, call (936) 544-7798 (Texas Forest Service, Crockett).

21ST CENTURY TEXAS FORESTRY WORKSHOP

Timber Marketing and Harvesting

- July 20 & 21, 2001, from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm.

Locations: Beaumont, College Station, Commerce, Dallas, Nacogdoches, Overton, Texarkana, The Woodlands.

For more information, call Mike Murphrey, Texas Forest Service, at (903) 856-7181.

❖ Learn what you can do to prevent and control forest pests that affect pine trees in East Texas. Find the “Guideline for Managing Pine Pests” on the TFS website at <http://txforestservicetamu.edu>. Click on **Forestry Education**, then **Insects and Diseases**, then **Guidelines for Prevention and Control** . . .

❖ Established in 1941, the American Tree Farm System is the oldest and largest forest certification program in the United States. Today, more than 65,000 Certified Tree Farmers are managing 85 million acres of forest.

❖ There are over 3,000 Tree Farms in Texas that together encompass more than 4.2 million acres.

❖ Since its inception in 1996, a total of 117 youths have received training in the Bobwhite Brigade. The graduates of the first four Brigades presented 774 educational programs to local civic clubs, schools and landowner groups.

WE WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS QUARTER'S NEWSLETTER:

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Bobwhite Brigade

The East Texas Bobwhite Brigade is a conservation education program aimed at training high school youth (14-17 years old) in wildlife conservation and leadership skills. Cadets undergo extensive training in quail biology, ecology and human dimension aspects of wildlife conservation, as well as public speaking, critical thinking and program development.

The Bobwhite Brigade is a 5-day camp designed to teach participants about quail anatomy, biology, habitat management, population dynamics, conservation, and hunting techniques. They will also learn about photography, entomology, botany, firearm safety, and leadership skills. A major component of the Bobwhite Brigade involves the ability to communicate orally and in writing information learned at the camp. Graduating cadets will learn how to present educational programs pertaining to wildlife conservation and quail management.

. . . a classic example of cooperation among resource agencies, private conservation groups and grassroots supporters.

Following completion of the camp, all students will be expected to present a minimum of one educational program on wildlife conservation and/or quail management to each of the following audiences: elementary students, secondary school students and adults. The student who presents the most documented public presentations (speeches, interviews, written essays for newspapers and/or periodicals, etc.) during the 9 months following their camp experience receives a \$1,000 college scholarship; second place wins a \$500 college scholarship.

The Bobwhite Brigade has been a classic example of cooperation among resource agencies, private conservation groups and grassroots supporters. The human capital that is being developed by the Bobwhite Brigade will pay conservation dividends for many years to come.

The 6th Battalion of the Bobwhite Brigade will be held July 29-August 2, 2001 at the Pineywoods Conservation Center near Broadus, Texas.★

For more information and to request an application: Scotty Parsons, TPWD, (936) 569-1632, or e-mail scottyparsons@sfasu.edu

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America's Tree

The votes are in! The people have selected the oak as their choice for America's National Tree in the nationwide vote hosted by the National Arbor Day Foundation. From the first day of voting, the oak was the popular choice of the American people. Another magnificent American tree, the redwood, was second.

With nearly a half-million votes logged, the oak received over 100,000 votes. The top five trees – oak, redwood, dogwood, maple and pine – captured 67% of the vote, with 33% of the vote distributed among the other 16 tree candidates.

The National Arbor Day foundation wishes to thank everyone who voted or encouraged others to take part in this historic process, which marked the first time that the entire American public has been able to state their pick for a national emblem.★

For more information: www.arborday.org