

# Forest Landowner Briefings

Volume IV



## *Forest Landowners:*

*Last year, most of you received the third edition of this informational newsletter. We hope you learned a lot and found the information useful. In this edition, we give you a little more material on specific topics. Again, to really get the in-depth information, you need to follow the links provided. You can still access past editions of this newsletter at <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/water> under “Publications.”*



## *Other forestry agencies have law enforcement officers; what about the Texas A&M Forest Service?*

Since its inception in 1915, one of the primary missions of the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) has been to enforce all laws pertaining to the protection of forests and woodlands and prosecute violations of those laws. TFS employs law enforcement officers who are commissioned state peace officers licensed and certified by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education. One of the primary roles of a TFS law enforcement (LE) officer is to provide wildfire arson investigation and training as requested by TFS personnel, local fire departments, the State Fire Marshal’s Office, or other law enforcement agencies. There are also two K9 officers – bloodhounds named Dozer and Tracker – that assist in arson investigations and other duties.

LE officers also work felony and misdemeanor timber theft cases as well as serving as subject matter experts for other state or local law enforcement units. The agency maintains a Timber Theft Hotline to allow public reporting of suspected timber theft activity (see next article).

TFS LE officers also provide:

- K9 human tracking and search teams
- Security and investigation of activity on state forests and agency property
- Internal investigations, including missing property
- Missing property investigations for federal excess property assigned to fire departments
- Accident investigation on vehicles insured through the Volunteer Fire Department Vehicle Liability Insurance program

### **LINKS**

<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/TFSLawEnforcement> - TFS Law Enforcement

<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/TFSK9LawEnforcementOfficers> - TFS K9 Law Enforcement officers

<http://tfsarsondogs.tamu.edu> - Dozer and Tracker’s interactive page

**TFS Wildland Arson Hotline:** 1-800-364-3470



## ***What exactly is timber theft?***

Timber thieves will set up a harvest directly on your property or will move over on your property from an adjacent ownership. Although mistakes can happen to honest loggers, thieves will move onto a property with “evil intent.” Many timber theft cases involve absentee landowners such as yourselves who are more vulnerable because they are not around to keep an eye their property.

Another method of theft involves a buyer offering the landowner a much lower price for the trees than their current value, knowing that the landowner has no idea of the value. Also, the actual number of trees or volume of timber cut could be misreported after the job is done.

To help property owners avoid these and other timber theft tactics, the Texas A&M Forest Service offers the following advice:

- Have someone you know and trust report any cutting or trespassing on your land immediately.
- Have a Bill of Sale before any cutting begins and NEVER sign a contract without checking several references of the buyer.
- For the best price insist on getting bids for your timber.
- Mark all property lines to assure cutting on adjacent property does not encroach on yours.
- Most importantly, if the landowner does not know the timber business, find someone who does to help you determine volumes, current prices, and potential bidders.

### **LINKS**

<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/Timbertheft> - timber theft

<http://goo.gl/mWPKH0> - Timber Theft Laws in Texas

**TFS Timber Theft Hotline:** 1-800-364-3470

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## ***I'm not familiar with all the East Texas trees, so I need help in identifying what I actually have on my property when I go to visit there.***

The “Trees of Texas” website can help you learn what characteristics to examine to aid in identifying trees in Texas. Characteristics and other terms are defined and many are shown in beautiful color illustrations. There is also an extensive dictionary that defines many terms used in forestry, tree identification, tree biology, and other aspects of natural resource studies. An interactive tree leaf identification section guides you through clicking on descriptions and colored illustrations of leaves to end up at a tree identification and illustration of the tree and more details about the tree.

For you teachers, there are educator extensions listed at the bottom of the “How to I.D.,” “Leaf Collecting,” “How Trees Grow,” and “Aggressive Invaders” sections, showing Project Learning Tree activities that follow along with these tree topics.

### **LINK**

<http://texastreeid.tamu.edu> - Texas tree identification website



***I've heard of BMPs (Best Management Practices) for use in forestry, but I don't know what some of these actually look like "on the ground."***

There is now a pictorial directory of BMPs, developed by the Texas A&M Forest Service's Water Resources Program. This directory defines common BMP-related terms, displays a picture to illustrate the practice, lists its functions, and provides a link to the section of the BMP guidebook that gives even more details on the practice.

Also, you can take a virtual tour of some commonly implemented BMPs that have been installed on the W. G. Jones State Forest near Conroe. Photos and text help you understand the benefits of each practice and give you some details on their implementation.

### **LINKS**

<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/water> - click on "Publications" and you'll find the new pictorial directory of BMPs, as well as the *Texas Forestry Best Management Practices* handbook.

<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/Virtualtourofforestrybmps> - virtual tour of forestry BMPs

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***This newsletter is extremely helpful and provides a wealth of information. Are there other ways to stay updated in between newsletter issues?***

Yes. Even the forest sector has entered the social media world, in which people create, share, or exchange information and ideas over the internet. In fact, internet users spend more time on social media sites than any other website. Many entities that deal with natural resources have Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, blogs, and more. You can have information at your fingertips whenever you want and in a variety of formats. The Facebook platform allows users to "like" organizations, receiving updates that can include text, pictures, and weblinks, and also facilitates user comments to promote topical discussions. Twitter enables users to receive concise information by "following" organizations or searching for subject matter content through the use of hashtags (such as #txforests) and generally provides links to follow up with more information. Instagram focuses on providing information through the use of pictures. Check the links in the box below for starters.

### **LINKS**

<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu> - Texas A&M Forest Service website

<http://tfswater.blogspot.com> - TFS Water Resources program blog

<https://www.facebook.com/texasforests-service> - TFS Facebook page

<https://twitter.com/TXForestService> - TFS Twitter page

<http://www.youtube.com/user/TexasForestService> - TFS YouTube channel

<https://plus.google.com/113856967288486055833/posts> - TFS on Google+

<http://www.texasforestry.org> - Texas Forestry Association



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### *Where can I go for help?*

Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) has offices all over East Texas (and the rest of the state). Contact the TFS District Office serving the county where your property is located. Go to <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu> and click on “Contact Us,” then “County,” and then the county of your choice on the map. Click on “Landowner Assistance” to get contact information for that area.

*For more info on these and other topics, go to the TexasA&M Forest Service website at <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu>, or contact the TFS District Office closest to your property.*

#### **TFS District Offices:**

Carthage	(903) 693-6865	Kountze / Woodville	(409) 246-2484
Conroe	(936) 273-2261	Linden	(903) 756-5571
Crockett	(936) 544-7798	Livingston / Liberty	(936) 327-4832
Gilmer	(903) 734-7007	Marshall / Longview	(903) 938-8712
Henderson	(903) 657-0511	Nacogdoches	(936) 564-9276
Hudson (Lufkin)	(936) 875-4400	New Boston / Clarksville	(903) 628-2711
Huntsville	(936) 295-5688	Palestine	(903) 729-7738
Jacksonville	(903) 586-7545	Pittsburg	(903) 856-7181
Jasper / Kirbyville	(409) 384-9427	San Augustine	(936) 275-3438