

# Forestry News by Tim Albritton

## Summer 2013

### Forest Improvement Practices Reviewed in NRCS West and North Team Areas

Forest stand improvement practices are not highly used in Alabama compared to other practices like site preparation and tree planting practices. We need to promote and highlight their use whenever we can.

Reviewing forest stand improvement practices was the primary focus of two training sessions in Jackson and Escambia Cos. Presenters included NRCS's Tim Albritton, Jeff Thurmond, Tracy Cole (North) and Charlie Ramsey (West); Jim Schrenkel from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; Mark Hinds and Ad Platt from the Longleaf Alliance; Gary Cole, Regional Forester from the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC); and Ron Tucker, U.S. Forest Service.

The North review was hosted by Jack McQuinn, TREASURE Forest landowner in Jackson Co, and the West event, a joint training session with the AFC, was at the Little River State Forest near Atmore.

The attendees visited thinned pine stands, planted and patch clear-cut hardwood sites, and more. They discussed thinning plans on some wildlife management area plantations and received information on live crown ratio and basal area measurements.

The West event attendees visited natural regenerated slash, loblolly, and longleaf pine stands, an artificially regenerated longleaf stand, and a mature longleaf stand that was recently prescribed burned. They were tutored in burn and chemically treated stands vs. untreated stands. They discussed trees

per acre, growth rates, thinning methods, when to burn, understory, and the chemical and mechanical treatment of undesirable plants, Gopher Tortoise habitat, and FSI (Forest Stand Improvement) options.

It was good to review and discuss practices and make recommendations in the field at both events. There were about 35 people at each of the events and they seemed to enjoy the days spent in the field and gained a lot of useful information.



Wildlife School presenters talk to group in the field.

### Wildlife School for Landowners

In August, AACD partnered with Fort Rucker to hold their annual Wildlife School for Landowners in Enterprise, AL.

On the first day indoor session, the group discussed various wildlife management topics. The second day was a field tour on some of the 62,000 acres owned and managed by Fort Rucker.

Many of the forest stand improvement practices discussed on the first day were included in the tour of Fort Rucker. They are thinning pine plantations and prescribed burning to improve wildlife habitat. They are converting some pine stands to longleaf pine. The timber and wildlife management activity level at Fort Rucker was more than many expected. It was good to see this!

With more pressure being placed on wildlife due to the urban sprawl and population growth, Fort Rucker forestry staff know that, more than ever, they need to protect and enhance valuable natural resources.

It is very important for Fort Rucker to partner with conservation agencies. The public needs to see and



Trainees use a wedge prism to determine basal area.



Wildlife School instructors show how a feral hog trap works.

be aware of the many ways the military is conserving the natural resources and managing the forest in a productive and useful way. The military is entrusted with a valuable resource and part of their responsibility is to show the public it is being managed wisely. Their partnership with groups that have private landowners in their membership is a good way to help accomplish this public education task.

Fort Rucker's forester, James Jennings, assisted with planning the field visits. Fort Rucker also provided two buses to transport the attendees to the various tour stops.

The attendees visited thinned pine stands, longleaf planted sites, managed food plots, wild hog traps, and more.

It is good to review and discuss forestry practices in the field and to see all of the management practices being implemented. Everyone enjoyed the day in the field and gained a lot of useful information.

## Land Judging Training Held at NRCS

In June, high school instructors and agency staff involved in promoting land judging contests met at the NRCS state office for training. Tim Albritton, coordinator of the training, said he received many positive comments after the workshop indicating the attendees really enjoyed the event.

"Jacob Davis, Education Specialist with Alabama Department of Education, is already asking if we can offer this again in a couple of years," said Tim. "This event is not quick and easy to set up and administer. The Alabama NRCS staff represented itself well and I appreciate everyone's help in making it a success."



## Coming - Prescribed Burn Workshop

Could you benefit from more controlled burning on your forest land? Learn why, how, and who can help you at the South AL Landowner Prescribed Burn Workshop, November 22, 2013, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Dixon Forestry Education Center on AL Highway 29 between Andalusia and Brewton.

Topics covered will include benefits of controlled burning, burn planning, and government programs and private sector resources that can help you get the job done. Learn how to overcome the barriers that keep you from prescribed burning your land. Registration is \$10 and includes lunch. SWCD/ NRCS folks, inform landowners who may be interested in attending. For more information, contact the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) office in Andalusia at 334-222-1125.



Learn how to do a prescribed burn at the November workshop.