Northeast Texas Forest Landowners Association Newsletter

Quarter II 2017

Next Meeting

Date: ***Saturday September 9, 2017***

Time: ***10 am***

Place: ***Pizza Inn Pittsburg***

Inside

Management Tip

Don't forget to pre-order your seedlings for this winter

Resilient Federal Forests Act Would Benefit Forests and Communities

Forest2Market

www.forest2market.com

Earlier this month, Congressman Bruce Westerman (R-AR)—the only forester currently serving in congress—re-introduced H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. (Rep. Westerman previously introduced The Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015 [H.R. 2647] over two years ago. It moved quickly through the House and passed by a 262-167 vote that included the support of 21 Democrats who crossed the aisle, but it was not considered in the Senate). The new bill cleared its first hurdle in the House Natural Resources committee earlier this week on a 23-12 party line vote, and the House is expected to vote on it next month.

Much like the 2015 version, the new bill would serve to protect the national forest system by implementing proactive management standards intended to diminish the threat of wildfires and other risks, which couldn't come at a more opportune time.

In recent weeks, wildfires have spread across Arizona, California, Utah, Washington and Idaho forcing residents out of their homes. In Arizona, more than 500 firefighters have been fighting a fire that has burned 32 square miles, and crews in Washington are battling fires near Wenatchee covering roughly 37 square miles. Snowpack in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) was above average last winter but despite its ability to curb the effects of massive wildfire damage, this added moisture can only do so much amid millions of dead trees—ideal fuel for wildfires in the summer heat.

Colorado alone has an estimated 834 million dead trees due to the ongoing mountain pine beetle and spruce beetle outbreaks, and the problem is rampant across most Western states. Rep. Westerman continues to draw attention to the fact that these devastating fires also consume a huge chunk of the federal Forest Service budget. Over the last 10 years, the Forest Service has spent an average of $1.13 billion on annual suppression operations and the agency has been forced to leverage funds from other land management programs to assist in this effort. Fires are responsible for these exorbitant costs as well as the potential for loss of life, destruction of millions of acres and the displacement of wildlife, and the agency has asked Congress for help in addressing the problem of wildfire funding.

If passed, H.R. 2936 would:

- Enable federal officials to quickly implement salvage operations and reforestation efforts in the case of a disaster, bypassing lengthy environmental studies and reviews that are typically required.
    - The legislation would expand the forested area that could be thinned with less rigorous environmental reviews from 3,000 acres to 10,000 acres. This higher limit would apply to areas at risk of wildfire because of disease or recent fires.
    - In cases where various agencies and local authorities are collaborating on forest management projects, the area eligible for "categorical exclusions" could be up to 30,000 acres.

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Habitat Tips for Small Acreages

Most if not all landowners enjoy seeing wildlife on their property. The management actions or non-actions taken by a landowner can directly impact game and non-game wildlife species. While small acreages may not sustain wildlife species with larger home ranges such as whitetail deer and wild turkey they can however provide certain habitat or niche requirements needed during the year. Small acreages however can support and sustain an array of small game and non-game species. Whether you own just a few acres or thousands there are things that can be done to increase your opportunity to host a variety of wildlife species on your property.

1) Have a Plan – Develop a plan that incorporates the wildlife species you would like manage for along with its habitat requirements. This plan can be combined with your overall management plan for the property so that all management activities provide mutual benefit and compliment the other in order to achieve your goals and maintain the health and productivity of your property.

2) Have a Budget – Determine how much you are willing to spend to support wildlife on your property. Include costs for supplies, equipment, fuel, labor or professional services.

3) Go Native – Wildlife are adapted to using a variety of plants throughout the year. Managing for a diversity of native plants offers many advantages over non-natives. Native plants are adapted to the local climatic conditions and are equipped to survive the stresses of drought and temperature extremes.

4) Use of Prescribed Fire – Prescribed burning is an effective tool for maintaining healthy and productive forests, woodlands and plant communities which benefit many wildlife species. For small acreages, prescribed burning may not be feasible because of costs, liability, and proximity to residences but if you feel that burning is an option for your property contact a professional who can safely conduct the operation.

5) Brushpile Placement – A lack of cover is a limiting factor for many wildlife populations. With careful planning the placement of cove habitat can improve wildlife populations on your property. Locate brushpiles along field edges and draws where additional cover is nearby which helps provide travel lanes or escape from predators.

6) Thinning – Thinning is a valuable forest management tool that can greatly benefit wildlife species as well as crop trees. Removing the poorer quality trees helps the remaining crop trees increase their growth, increases tree and stand health and resiliency to environmental stressors. These removals also increase sunlight on the forest floor which promotes growth of forbes and native food sources which attract and help retain a variety of wildlife species.

7) When in Doubt, Ask – Utilize the services of natural resource professionals both private and state agency. These professionals can help you plan and execute management activities that will maintain the health of your trees but also increase your opportunity to see and enjoy a variety of wildlife on your property.

Websites of Interest

Texas A&M Forest Service Information Portal
http://www.texasforestinfo.com

Texas Parks and Wildlife
http://tpwd.texas.gov/

Southern Group of State Foresters
www.southernforests.org

Association of Consulting Foresters
www.acf-foresters.org/

Become a TFA Member Today!!!
http://texasforestry.org

SPB or Ips? Can you Tell the Difference?

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Increasing spring temperatures bring increasing insect problems. For tree farmers and others growing pine trees, bark beetles represent the biggest threat. Those producers who remember the disastrous southern pine beetle (SPB) infestations of the 1980s and 1990s where tens of thousands of acres of pine were lost to SPB may tremble when bark beetles are mentioned. Bark beetle activity is increasing in East Texas but there is no need to panic as not all species of bark beetles are equally destructive. There are five species of bark beetles native to Texas and they compete for the same resources; often at the same time in the same tree. This causes confusion which makes correct identification essential for proper management. Let me explain how to identify one bark beetle pest (the southern pine beetle) from the other, less destructive ones

First, let's look at the beetles; members of which fall into two major groups or genera. Engraver beetles are bark beetles belonging to the genus *Ips.* There are three engraver beetle species native to East Texas: the four-spined engraver beetle, *Ips avulsus*, the five-spined engraver beetle, *Ips grandicolis* and the six-spined engraver beetle, *Ips calligraphus*. The second genus is *Dendroctonus*, which contains the southern pine beetle (SPB), *Dendroctonus frontalis* and the black turpentine beetle (BTB), *Dendroctonus terebrans*,

All of the bark beetles are relatively small with the largest, the black turpentine beetle, being only 10 mm. long in the adult stage. In decreasing order, adults of the other bark beetles range in size from the six-spined engraver, to the five-spined engraver, the southern pine beetle and the four-spined engraver (Figure 1.). Identification of the beetles is made difficult by their small sizes but some physical differences are apparent under close inspection. The heads of *Ips* beetles cannot be seen from above while the heads of *Dendroctonus* beetles are visible from above (at least from an altitude of less than 3 feet). The rear ends (posterior end of the abdomen) of the engraver beetles are scooped out and lined with small spines.. *Dendroctonus* beetles have rounded rear ends with no spines.

It would be convenient to have beetles to identify when trying to determine the cause of tree mortality but that is rarely the case, as by the time tree damage/mortality is apparent, the beetles often have vacated the tree. Some clues are left behind, however. Pitch tubes are globules of sap, or pitch, that occur as the pine tree attempts to block bark beetle entry into the bark. The size and position on the tree of the pitch tubes offer clues as to what beetles are involved. Pitch tubes made by four- and five-spined engraver beetles are rarely seen during ground checking as they are concentrated in the upper bole and on larger limbs. Likewise, black turpentine beetles are easily identified by their large pitch tubes, often the size of a 50-cent piece, and their position – they are found only along the lower 10-12 feet of the tree trunk (bole). Six-spined engraver pitch tubes are found on the lower, middle and upper bole of the tree while SPB pitch tubes are located on the lower and middle bole. Both SPB and *Ips* pitch tubes are popcorn-sized but they can be differentiated by their location on the bark: SPB pitch tubes are usually found in the bark crevices while *Ips* pitch tubes occur both in bark crevices and on bark plates.

More conclusive identification can be achieved by looking at the galleries attacking adults produce beneath the bark. The adult galleries of five- and six-spined engraver beetles are "Y" or "H" shaped while four-spined engraver galleries are "I" shaped. Adult galleries of *Ips* beetles are predominately vertical in their orientation and and are usually not packed with boring dust (called frass). SPB galleries do not run vertically, are characteristically "S" shaped and are usually packed with frass. In turn, the black turpentine beetle carves out a large cavity, rather than a distinct gallery, under the bark to deposit its eggs.

It should be noted that currently SPB activity in Texas is non-existent with the last SPB infestation occurring in 1997. Texas A&M Forest Service's annual SPB trapping survey is currently ongoing with no SPB found to date. Currently, all trees killed by bark beetles in East Texas are due to one or more *Ips* species and/or the black turpentine beetle.

Resilient Federal Forests Act Cont.

- Speed up the regulatory process on forest management projects and make it more difficult for environmentalists to block them. Judges would no longer be allowed to issue restraining orders or preliminary injunctions to halt salvage operations or reforestation efforts after large fires or other catastrophic events.
- Provide the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management access to funds to fight fires from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (which coordinates responses to disasters like hurricanes) if their budgets for fighting wildfires are exhausted. Under the current system, the Forest Service often has to reallocate money budgeted for other programs to pay for wildfire costs, a practice referred to as "fire borrowing."

"For far too long, our nation's forests have been fighting a battle for survival. The conflict is not with logging but with the effects of reactive versus proactive management which has resulted in costly confrontations with wildfire, disease, and insects. In 2015, a record 10.1 million acres burned due to wildfires," Rep. Westerman said. "This bill would utilize tools already available to the U.S. Forest Service."

"This legislation will streamline the permitting process for proactive thinning projects while simultaneously ensuring reforestation activities," said Western Caucus Chairman and co-sponsor of the bill, Paul Gosar (R-AZ). "Inter-agency dysfunction and frivolous lawsuits from environmental extremist groups have plagued forest management long enough. This bipartisan bill will not only strengthen collaboration between the federal government and local stakeholders, but will also improve forest health for generations to come."

Despite opposition from environmental groups, largely over the perceived softening of environmental review procedures, Westerman believes the greatest challenge will be in convincing some Western Democratic senators to support the measure. "That's where I see the biggest obstacle," Westerman noted. "I really, really hope some of those Democratic senators out West will realize that this will be good for the environment, good for the economy, and they should really get on board and support this bill."

Due to decades of poor forest management and regulation, much of the Western US is now a tinderbox of pent up fuel for wildfire. Rather than just continuing to throw good money after bad, endangering the lives of thousands of firefighters and civilians alike, and depleting the Forest Service of its funding and resources, it's time to address the root causes of the problem in the West. Rep. Westerman's Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017 will ultimately benefit America's forests, as well as the industries and communities that care for and depend on them.

Market Report, March/April, 2017

Product	Statewide Ave. Price		Previous Ave. Price		Price/Ton Difference
	Weight	Volume	Weight	Volume	
Pine-Sawlogs	**$25.54/ton**	**$203.33/mbf**	**$23.66/ton**	**$180.14/mbf**	**+8%**
Pine-Pulpwood	**$7.47/ton**	**$22.40/cord**	**$8.19/ton**	**$22.02/cord**	**-9%**
Pine-Chip'n'Saw	**$10.88/ton**	**$29.38/cord**	**$11.77/ton**	**$31.78/cord**	**-8%**
Mixed Hardwood-Sawlogs	**$26.64/ton**	**$252.82/mbf**	**$31.69/ton**	**$305.66/mbf**	**-16%**
Hardwood-Pulpwood	**$8.42/ton**	**$23.59/cord**	**$8.88/ton**	**$24.88/cord**	**-5%**

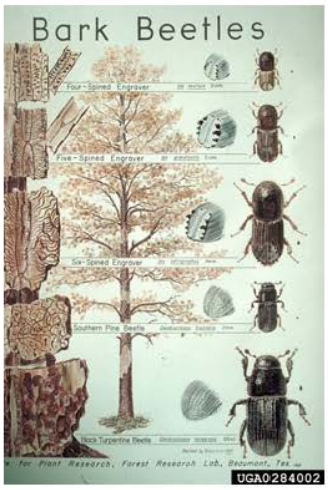
Texas Timber Price Trends is a bimonthly publication reporting average prices paid for standing timber in Texas. ***This report is intended only as a guide to general price levels.*** It should not be used to judge the fair market value of a specific timber sale, which may vary considerably due to many factors. It is recommended that you use the services of a professional consulting forester in managing any timber sale. Important factors affecting timber prices include the type, quality and volume of timber for sale, accessibility, distance to mills/markets, weather conditions, economy/market conditions, who is handling the sale or is buying the timber, and contract requirements by the landowner. The complete Texas Timber Price Trends can be viewed at http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/timberpricetrends.

SPB or Ips Cont.

Management for bark beetles should start with maintaining tree or stand health. Thinning should be delayed during periods of drought and care should be taken during logging operations to minimize damage to trees and roots. The amount of logging slash left after harvesting should be reduced and any storm- damaged trees should be harvested. Trees killed by *Ips* should be promptly salvaged if merchantable or at least removed from the stand to prevent further infestation. With the exception of single, scattered individuals, those infested trees that cannot be promptly harvested should be debarked, burned or chipped if feasible to prevent beetle emergence.

The mere presence of *Ips* beetles does not require a total tract harvest. Any cold calls or unsolicited contacts that encourage such a strategy should be greeted with skepticism. Contact your consulting forester or local TFS office before you agree to any timber sale. With proper identification of the cause of tree damage or death, the correct management strategy can be applied to reduce further stand losses and alleviate any panic that may arise with the mere mention of bark beetles. For further information, contact your local Texas A&M Forest Service office or Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Forest Health Coordinator, Allen Smith at lasmith@tfs.tamu.edu. Information is also available online at:http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/foresthealth/insects.

Figure 1. Size Comparison of Southern Bark Beetle



Phot by: Ronald F. Billings, Texas A&M Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Figure 2. Galleries of Ips beetles

Photo by: William M. Ciesla, Forest Health Management International, Bugwood.org

Figure 3. Southern Pine Beetle Gallery

Photo by: Ronald F. Billings, Texas A&M Forest Service , Bugwood.org

Calendar of Events

July 28, 2017 – Trinity County Landowners Association meeting with Representative Trent Ashby – The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. at Mickey's house in Trinity which is located at the corner of Main and Elm streets, across from the post office.

August 3, 2017 – Texas Forestry Museum's Feast in the Forest – Please call the museum at (936) 632-9535 for more information and to purchase tickets.

August 11, 2017 – Texas Forest Landowners Council Seminar, Forestry and Wildlife – Texas Forestry Association has developed an agenda that addresses wildlife management, both game and non-game, as well as an update on the national forests plan revision. The fee for the workshop is $25 with lunch provided and will be held at the TFA office in Lufkin. RSVP and preregistration is required which can be done online at www.texasforestry.org. Continuing education credits will be provided. For more information please call the TFA office or visit their website at www.texasforestry.org.

September 29 – October 22, 2017 – Texas State Fair, Dallas, TX – Mark your calendars for this year's Texas State Fair and make plans to volunteer at the Texas Forestry Association Booth. During this time thousands of attendees are able to learn about forest management and the role it plays in protecting our environment as well as Texas' economy. For information about this year's event and how to volunteer please contact Susan Stutts at the TFA office by emailing sstutts@texasforestry.org or by phone at (936) 632-8733.

October 25 – 27, 2017 – Texas Forestry Association Annual Meeting – This year's annual meeting will be held at the newly renovated Fredonia Hotel and Conference Center in Nacogdoches, TX. Watch your inbox for meeting information and details but mark your calendars now!!!

Officer/Director Elections

Officers and Directors will be elected for a two-year term at the November 2017 meeting. The primary duty of Officers and Directors is to select programs and speakers for our quarterly Association meetings that will encourage and assist landowners in the development of sound management practices of their forest resources. Titus County Director and Secretary-Treasurer will need to be filled. Would you consider serving as an Officer or Director? If so, please contact one of the Officers or Directors listed on Page 7 of this Newsletter.