

FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ◇ Wildlife ◇ Water ◇ Soil ◇ Best Management Practices ◇ Forest Health ◇ Recreation ◇ Aesthetics

RESTORING LOST PINES IN BASTROP

from a TFS, TPWD, Arbor Day Foundation news releases dated August 28 and November 26, 2012

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=16743>
- <http://www.arborday.org/Texas>

The most destructive wildfire in Texas history ravaged Bastrop County and its renowned Lost Pines ecosystem in September 2011. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Arbor Day Foundation, and Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) are appealing for help by launching the Lost Pines Forest Recovery Campaign, a multi-year public-private partnership to raise money to plant more than 4 million trees on public and private land.

The Arbor Day Foundation is leading forest recovery fundraising, while the state parks and forest agencies are serving as on-the-ground partners in the 5-year forest recovery effort. The foundation has already secured financial commitments from several corporate sponsors, including Mary Kay, Inc., FedEx, Chili's Grill and Bar, Nokia, and Apache Corporation.

Pine trees are already being planted in the fire-ravaged Lost Pines area, and it is quite a story on how they got there. For five years, the seeds sat on the top shelf in the very back of a refrigerated Brookshire Brothers warehouse in Lufkin, Texas. The drought-hardy loblolly pine seeds had been a focus of the Texas A&M Forest Service Western Gulf Forest Tree Improvement Program since its inception in 1951. But demand for the seeds declined over the decades, prompting geneticist to shelve the surplus indefinitely.

The seeds — 1,100 pounds of drought-hardy loblolly pine and 6,000 more of assorted varieties of the same species — had been stored so long, in fact, that in August 2011, geneticists began making plans to toss them into the landfill.

That plan changed the following month when the 32,400-acre fire destroyed more homes than any other in state history — 1,660 — and killed 1.5 million trees. It raged through 95 percent of the 6,600-acre Bastrop State Park, as well as surrounding private forest lands.

“After the fire, it was immediately obvious we were going to be doing a restoration project of one kind or another — and we had the seed,” said Tom Byram, a geneticist with the tree improvement program.

Tree experts in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma spent the next year nurturing the seeds, growing them into seedlings that could be used to reforest Bastrop State Park and surrounding private lands.

On November 27, 2012, the first shipment — 200,000 loblolly pine seedlings grown by ArborGen, a commercial nursery based in East Texas — arrived at Bastrop State Park. Another 200,000 seedlings grown by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry were delivered a few days later. Volunteers are planting the seedlings.

TFS's West Texas Nursery and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center also grew seedlings that will be delivered as needed to support various reforestation projects throughout the planting season.

A total of 550,000 seedlings will be planted in Bastrop over the next few months. Meanwhile, tree experts are continuing to grow seedlings with plans to plant 1.5 million next year and another million the year after that.

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AGROFORESTRY - DIVERSIFIED INCOME

from *The Center for Agroforestry website, University of Missouri; and "Profitable Farms and Woodlands—A Practical Guide in Agroforestry for Landowners, Farmers and Ranchers;" USDA National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, NE*

For more information:

- http://nac.unl.edu/profitable_farms.htm
- <http://www.centerforagroforestry.org/>

In simple terms, agroforestry is intensive land-use management combining trees and/or shrubs with crops and/or livestock. Agroforestry practices help landowners to diversify products, markets, and farm income; improve soil and water quality; and reduce erosion, non-point source pollution, and damage due to flooding.

There are five agroforestry practices:

Alley Cropping - planting rows of trees at wide spacings with a companion crop grown in the alleyways between the rows. Some examples: wheat, corn, soybeans, hay, sunflowers, or medicinal herbs.

Forest Farming - high-value specialty crops grown under the protection of a forest canopy. Some of the "crops" that can be produced in a forest include mushrooms, fruits and nuts, bee products, medicinal plants, and craft products.

Riparian Buffers - living filters comprised of trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses, including native plants. They protect the water quality of streams and lakes and are an effective tool for controlling erosion and providing food and cover for wildlife.

Silvopasture - the intentional combination of trees, forage, and livestock managed as a single integrated practice. Perennial grasses and/or grass-legume mixes are planted between rows of trees for livestock pasture. The trees provide the animals shade in the summer and a windbreak in the winter.

Windbreaks - planned and managed as part of a crop and/or livestock operation to enhance production, protect livestock and wind-sensitive crops, and control soil erosion. They can also provide excellent habitat for quail, turkey, songbirds, and other wildlife.

TREE TIPS - DEAD TREE LIABILITY?

from *Texas A&M Forest Service website*

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=15761>
- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=15340>
- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/uploadedFiles/FRD/Liability%20for%20Hazardous%20Trees.pdf>

A tree that falls in a lonely forest may not make a sound, but what about the tree that falls on your neighbor's house? The sound it makes? Cha-ching!

Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) is encouraging homeowners and landowners to remove fire- and drought-killed trees that are within falling distance of neighboring homes, roads, and pathways. Failure to do so, agency officials say, could make you liable for damages. "Be aware that your tree could fall onto someone else's property," TFS Central Texas Operations Department Head Jim Rooni said. "The rules vary from place to place, but generally the owner of the tree is responsible."

Rooni said foresters received an influx of calls following the deadly wildfire that ripped through Bastrop last September, destroying roughly 1.5 million trees. But the liability issue isn't limited to trees killed by fire, he said.

Texas is emerging from one of the most devastating droughts and one of the most unprecedented wildfire seasons in state history. Though there is no official count for the total number of trees killed by wildfire, foresters and analysts have estimated that as many as 500 million trees in rural forested areas and another 5.6 million trees in populated urban areas were killed as a result of the 2011 drought.

The sheer volume of dead trees - especially those standing in populated areas - poses a significant hazard, Rooni said. "Standing, dead trees are dangerous and unpredictable. If they fall, they can cause serious damage - and even death."

If your tree still has yet to sprout green leaves, forestry experts say it's most likely dead. If you have questions regarding liability on public land or rights-of-way, contact your local county sheriff's department or county commissioner's office.

REGIONAL BMP REPORT

In recent years, water planners have experienced first hand how increasing water demands caused by a rapidly growing population, expanding urbanization, and periodic drought can stress our water supply systems. Forests play a critical role in protecting these precious resources and sustaining them in the future, providing the cleanest water of any land use.

Improperly conducted forest operations can threaten this essential function. As such, the forest sector has embraced its responsibility to maintain clean water supplies by implementing forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs).

A recently released report by the Southern Group of State Foresters titled "Implementation of Forestry Best Management Practices: 2012 Southern Region Report," documents the substantial efforts the forest sector continues to make to ensure water quality protection during forest operations, and is a follow up to the initial report published in 2008.

After analyzing monitoring data collected by states across the south during 2007 - 2012, overall BMP implementation for the region was 92%, up from 87% in 2008.

"The improvement in BMP implementation across the region is a testament to the commitment of the forest sector to protecting our water resources. Even in tough economic times, BMPs are still being implemented at a high level," said Hughes Simpson, SGSF Water Resources Committee chairman.

Monitoring results were also reported for seven broad categories: Harvesting, Forest Roads, Stream Crossings, Streamside Management Zones, Site Preparation, Firebreaks, and Chemical Application.

Improvement over the 2008 levels was documented in each category, most notably in harvesting and firebreaks, where BMP implementation increased by seven and nine percentage points, respectively.

This regional report on forestry BMP implementation monitoring is the second in a planned series to be published every three to five years. The objective of the report is to provide information at a regional level, for the purpose of continuously improving monitoring methods and BMP implementation, and to promote consistency among states in the southern region for this activity.

For more information:

- <http://www.southernforests.org/>
- <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/BMP>

TEXAS TREE AND FOREST INFO ONLINE

Texas A&M Forest Service has unveiled a new web portal designed to showcase the benefits that trees and forests provide to the Lone Star State and drive economic development in the timber and wood products industry.

The Texas Forest Information Portal (TxFIP) — accessible online at www.texasforestinfo.com — lets users identify where different trees and forests are located across the state and see the environmental benefits they provide.

The portal serves as a clearinghouse for readily-available, easily-accessible infor-

mation about trees and forests in Texas. Currently, the site offers three applications: Timber Supply Analysis, Forest Distribution, and Forest Values, all of which can be customized by geographic area using data derived by the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program and other resources.

Timber Supply Analysis estimates the timberland area, as well as timber volume, growth and removals. Forest Distribution features tree distribution and biomass. Forest Values estimates the economic value attached to certain environmental benefits that forests and trees provide.

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=16731>
- <http://www.texasforestinfo.com>

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FORESTRY

Forests and Forestry in the Americas: An Encyclopedia is a web-based encyclopedia with entries contributed by forest and natural resource scholars and experts.

The audience for the encyclopedia includes persons not familiar with forestry, such as the general public and students through graduate work, teachers, journalists, and professionals who want a brief summary of a subject outside their area of expertise.

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) and the International Society of Tropical Foresters are sponsoring this encyclopedia through cooperation with their working groups and members. There currently are about 115 articles posted on this site, and about 40 more in preparation. They are still seeking authors for more subjects that have been identified. They do consider suggestions from those who want to contribute.

Go to www.encyclopediaofforestry.org to check it out. Click on a category on the home page. This leads you to a list of articles on this subject. Some of the topics include: Forest Biology and Ecology, Forest Measurements and Monitoring, Forest Management, Forest Products and Manufacturing, and Current and Historical Issues.



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