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Between the Lines
By Jeff Doran

Audubon of Florida
A Natural Connection to Florida’s Working Forests
By Eric Draper

Keeping Forests in Forests
By Lynetta Usher Griner

Working Forests Work for Florida!

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40 UNDER 40
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When leaders from timber, conservation, the landowner community and state and federal government agencies sat together this spring to begin a dialogue about the pressures on our private forest land base, a resounding conclusion was exclaimed by all involved—the importance of working together to maintain working forests on our landscape. Although diverse in the approaches to protect and prosper the working forests, we left Florida’s first Conversation on Conservation Roundtable with a commitment from growers, users and regulators to embrace the challenge to keep our forests in forests.

One of the leaders in the effort to assemble the Roundtable was Eric Draper, executive director, Audubon of Florida. Preserving a landscape for clean water and clean air, biological diversity of plant and animal species and outdoor recreational opportunities would not be here without preserved land and active growing timberland. Audubon of Florida recognizes the value of both in our feature article on page 6.

Perhaps the most inspiring story from the meeting March 16 was from a legacy forest owner whose family has owned and managed land for more than 100 years. Lynetta Usher Griner shares her Florida story on page 9. As a landowner and timber producer, she gets to the heart of growing trees and generating value from every acre on the land. Her story is a must-read!

With growing interest in climate change, the environment and energy security, there is more attention on wood biomass as a renewable energy source. The release of a recent legislative study on woody biomass paints a promising picture for Florida’s renewable energy future. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Florida Department of Environmental Protection are commended for their efforts to analyze and recommend a sustainable woody biomass mix, which could be supported by current and future wood supply with minimal impact on existing forest products industry. Jim Karels, state forester and director of Florida Division of Forestry, summarizes the report for our members on page 13.

Energy, done right, offers a real solution to some of the most pressing environmental, energy and economic challenges of today and tomorrow. Florida’s working forests can and should be part of the answer. The Association’s position on woody biomass is included on page 15. By using a combination of wood sources and a vigorous reforestation and afforestation effort, conditions should remain favorable to produce electric power, keep existing wood-using companies in the region and Florida’s working forests healthy and vibrant.

And speaking of our future, few things are as important to the Association as who will lead us forward. Our Class IV 40UNDER40 young leaders are presented on page 16. They all participated in our Working Forests Initiative this spring and will be engaged as we begin to grow this program.

The photo at the bottom of this page is symbolic. It is a marriage ceremony of the “tree-huggers” and “tree-lovers” with the governor and Cabinet to officially announce the Florida Working Forests Initiative. As I challenged the governor and Cabinet, I also challenge you as a member of this Association: 1) Help us raise awareness of the value of our forest. (A handy detachable brochure depicting our green worth is included in the centerfold); 2) Help keep our vital green infrastructure working for Florida; and 3) Remind Floridians every chance you get of the wonderful forest experiences that make our state special!

It’s all about the TREES!

By Jeff Doran
About 12 years ago, I was talking to one of the state’s largest landowners about putting a conservation easement on his ranch. He reminded me that the reason I was interested in the land is because his family had taken good care of it, and he said that if I really wanted to help, I should suggest ways that they could still maintain an income from the ranch while continuing their historic stewardship standards.

That conversation started a shift in my thinking, and indirectly led to a new direction for Florida Audubon’s approach to conservation. Along with proposing preservation under state, federal and local public land acquisition programs, supporting private land management could achieve similar results. This was and is a particularly useful approach for forest lands.

It seems a bit obvious that Audubon and forests go together. It is hard to think of birds without thinking of trees. And Florida Audubon, an organization devoted to protecting birds and other wildlife and the habitats on which they depend, has long been an advocate of healthy forests.

That is why Audubon is working with the Florida Forestry Association to encourage working forests. Along with public and private land conservation initiatives, forestry holds great promise for the future of Florida’s wildlife. We see in many forest managers the caretakers of important elements of the state’s biological diversity.

Audubon is a solution-oriented and science-based conservation group. Our goals, which are organized around protecting water resources, preserving land and adapting to the impacts of climate change, depend on cooperative relationships with landowners. We recognize that foresters, ranchers and other private land managers are likely to be more cooperative with our goals if we are open to and supportive of their primary interest. We know that forestry is a business and can only survive as a business with markets, labor and workable rules. So even as we advocate for clean water and protecting rare wildlife, we must be ever aware of the needs of the people who own and manage the forested watersheds that collect rainfall and sustain clean and ample water supplies to springs, rivers and wetlands.

As the executive director of Florida Audubon, I follow in the footsteps and carry the inheritance of an organization that has worked to protect Florida’s birds and wildlife for 110 years. A hallmark of Audubon’s efforts has been helping to educate people about the biological treasures of our beautiful and varied state and encouraging their wise stewardship.

On March 2, 1900, a small group of citizens gathered in Maitland, Florida for the first meeting of Florida Audubon Society. At the time, Florida was at the center...
of one of the nation’s first conservation campaigns—banning the slaughter of plumage birds. The state’s vast bird colonies were being systematically plundered to support the fashion of the day, the wearing of feathers or even whole birds on women’s hats. Entire colonies along both coasts and in the Everglades were shot out. In some areas, certain species of wading birds disappeared altogether.

Those early Audubon leaders passed laws to protect migratory birds and hired wardens to patrol lands and confront illegal hunting. This was before Florida even had the predecessor of the wildlife management agency now known as the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. They were successful in protecting the birds from one threat but had no idea of the threats that were to come with population growth and development.

Yet the tradition that began then still holds today as groups of volunteer conservation leaders get together to educate their neighbors and take responsibility for the birds, wildlife and habitats of Florida. That is the Audubon tradition and model. And today in 44 communities, Audubon chapters hold programs, organize field trips and work with local governments on policies to protect special places. Those 44 chapters are the foundation of a state organization that manages sanctuaries and centers, employs field researchers in science programs and has one of the most robust state conservation advocacy programs in the nation.

In February, I stood in front of 200 people at Audubon’s Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary to accept the formal designation of that magical place as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar is the global treaty committing all nations to protecting special wetlands). As I addressed the audience during the ceremony, I asked them to look to the east and see a fine example of native pine flatwoods. Then I asked them to look south to see the towering old growth cypress trees that make Corkscrew Swamp, a notable remnant of historical Florida wetland forests, such a special place.

More than 60 years ago, in one of the first private efforts to save a large and special place, children from around the nation sent their pennies and dimes to National Audubon Society to help preserve the last uncut cypress forest in Southwest Florida. It was and is more than a virgin forest. It represented the beginning of our collective efforts in Florida to change the way we were treating the landscape.

Now Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary plays host to 100,000 visitors a year. As people follow the boardwalk (built with sustainably-grown wood) 2.5 miles through the swamp, they are treated to a cathedral of towering cypress and other swamp trees. That great chapel of green leaves and grey bark is alive with rare orchids and more species of birds than one is likely to see in any one place in Florida.

Preservation of Corkscrew Swamp, along with the creation of Everglades National Park, helped jumpstart the state’s efforts to protect its special places. Land conservation has become the top priority of Florida environmental groups. Preservation 2000, Florida Forever and Everglades Restoration Plan have led to millions of acres being set aside in state and federal parks, forests and wildlife areas.

Land conservation, and especially maintaining Florida’s forests, has an obvious appeal. But there are tangible benefits for people and the economy. Sustainable forests help to protect both water quality and water supply. Of all agricultural uses of land, forestry has the most beneficial impact on water. And when managed well by FFA forest-owning members and public land managers, these forests are an ecologically sustainable and economically beneficial land use for our state’s future. So too are the benefits to the global environment as Florida’s forests, the soils they grow in and the products produced store billions of tons of carbon.

Privately managed forests are helping to recover the Florida Panther and Florida Black Bear. Those large fauna though are just part of a complex web of life that includes ants, butterfly and moth caterpillars, skinks, lizards, snakes and turtles along with small mammals, and of course, hundreds of species of birds.

One of my favorite forest birds is the Swallow-tailed Kite. Most people in Florida don’t know that our state is part of one of nature’s amazing events—the spring and fall migration of tens of millions of birds. Florida is the jumping-off point and destination for overwater fliers.

One of my favorite forest birds is the Swallow-tailed Kite. Most people in Florida don’t know that our state is part of one of nature’s amazing events—the spring and fall migration of tens of millions of birds. Florida is the jumping-off point and destination for overwater fliers.
One major benefit of Florida’s forests is that they provide the green space that makes Florida’s growth management laws work. Many people take privately owned rural lands for granted. Audubon and some other conservation groups have recognized that forest landowners cannot afford to get locked into open space land uses. Some flexibility to shift and use development rights protects the only appreciable value most rural land has.

Conservation groups need to work with forest landowners to make sure that property rights are protected and that tax hungry local governments don’t abuse greenbelt. That is why Audubon worked so hard to implement programs such as the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act, the Rural Lands Stewardship Program and 2008 Conservation Lands Amendment. These programs have the effect of compensating landowners for environmental attributes, thereby allowing the public to help leverage the benefits we all receive.

Private landowners can work to benefit birds by learning what type of resident and migrating birds use their land. Maintaining a healthy understory and diversity of native trees and shrubs invites birds to linger and perhaps nest. Most songbirds are voracious bug and spider eaters. Our native woods produced thousands of different caterpillars, fly larvae, ants and spiders. These are a smorgasbord for small birds.

Audubon has been so impressed with the efforts of landowners that a Sustainable Forestry Award is presented at the annual meeting of the Florida Forestry Association. Our hope is that by recognizing landowners’ good work that we can encourage others to do the same while increasing public awareness of the efforts many foresters have undertaken to protect water and wildlife.

What members of the Florida Forestry Association and members of Florida Audubon Society have in common is a long-term view and a commitment to do what is necessary to take care of our community. On behalf of our members and the millions of Floridians who watch birds, we are grateful to the people who keep nearly a third of Florida in trees. That is why I was glad last month to put on the “Working Forests Work” shirt and work with members of the Florida Forestry Association to educate landowners and elected officials about the importance of our state’s privately managed forests—the millions of other conservation acres that we must not take for granted.

Eric Draper is the executive director of Audubon of Florida.
Good morning! I was asked to be here today as a representative of two vanishing breeds—the private landowner and the wood supplier, affectionately known as the logger.

My family has worked the forest for almost 100 years. My grandfather was in the turpentine and naval stores business. My father built a logging business that evolved from a short-wood pulpwood truck and a chainsaw to multiple crews with tractor/trailer rigs using computerized equipment. My husband Ken and I have been involved for the last 20 years and have seen the logging business continue to change with the times.

Being a forest landowner family, we've also seen many changes.

We are forest landowners for a variety of reasons—the first is economic. Timber produces income but it costs money to own land for the long haul so we HAVE TO generate an income from the land to help with the numerous expenses incurred—property taxes, road maintenance, fireline plowing, invasive species control, payroll and other management-related activities.

But landownership also provides other tangible and intangible benefits—recreating, hunting, wildlife viewing, the option to engage in other agricultural endeavors such as we do with beef cattle, and just the pleasure of enjoying a natural place of scenic beauty free from the distractions of our fast-paced, modern life. We have friends and family who call quite often wanting to come to our place, just because it offers a place away from the hustle and bustle. A 13-year-old friend from Ohio recently wrote an essay about her favorite place on Earth and she wrote about Usher Farm. But high on the list of intangibles for my family is the desire to leave a family legacy.

The condition of the land when it is passed on to the next generation is one of the most honest character testimonials that heirs can receive. The blood, sweat, toil and tears invested in the land through the practice of conservation forestry sets a very, very high bar for those who follow.

The challenges that we face as landowners and loggers today are, at times, overwhelming. The greatest threat that agricultural families face is the federal inheritance tax, often referred to as the death tax. Most agricultural wealth is a reflection of the land value not cash on hand and being forced to sell some or all of the land to pay the tax has converted many essential ag lands...
We need to enhance the current Reforestation Tax Credit, fine-tune the Biomass Crop Assistance Program, reduce the capital gains tax for standing timber sales, and modify the Conservation Reserve Program and Forestry Incentives Program.

Family forest landowners are uniquely positioned to influence how future generations will experience the state’s natural heritage. The survival of many plant and wildlife species that are native to Florida are dependent upon the active forest management carried out by private landowners. Those conservation practices provide a social benefit that is invaluable, but expenses incurred by the landowner must be recognized.

We need to enhance the current Reforestation Tax Credit, fine-tune the Biomass Crop Assistance Program, reduce the capital gains tax for standing timber sales, and modify the Conservation Reserve Program and Forestry Incentives Program so that the landowner can plant the tree species and planting density of his choice as long as the trees are used for commercial biomass or timber production.

Owning forest land means you have to work, and it’s not a 9 to 5 job. Every day that we go to work is a tribute to our forefathers and their dreams of making a better life for their families. It’s in my blood. You WANT to sustain the essential qualities of the land and timber. To achieve that goal there has to be a commitment to thoughtful stewardship of the resources and assets of the land. There must be constant improvement by identifying opportunities for growth and change.

Engaging in the sharing of ideas as we’re doing today and the courage to experiment with innovative techniques help us evolve with our ever-changing business environment. Our ultimate goal will always be to capture the most value from every acre.

Traditionally, environmentalists are perceived as wanting to prevent logging. We’ve often referred to them as “tree huggers.” Just last month, we planted 130,000 trees because of the economic incentive to grow timber. We’re “tree lovers.” To me it is obvious that those who want to protect the trees should be the most ardent and vocal allies and supporters of sustainable forestry. Our goals seem complementary to me.

When all is said and done, it’s all about the trees—for the landowners, the loggers, the mills, the wildlife, and the consumers and society as a whole.

I think that maybe the Indians had it right in their belief that land could not truly be owned, but only held and cherished in trust for generations to come and for the spirit of the land itself.

If it’s good for the forest—it will be good for Florida!

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Florida has over 15 million acres, or 25 thousand square miles of forests. This represents nearly half of the state's land area.

How much of it?

Who owns it?

Where it's at?
Florida is made up of nearly 15.9 million acres of timberland, of which approximately 10.1 million acres are held by private forest landowners. More than $16 billion of economic return is generated annually by the management and utilization of our state’s forest.

In 2008, the Florida Legislature passed legislation requiring the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, to conduct an economic impact analysis on the effects of granting financial incentives to energy producers who use woody biomass as fuel, including an analysis of the effects on wood supply and prices and impacts on current markets and forest resource sustainability. This report was a statewide biomass study and did not look at individual regions of the state.

The University of Florida’s School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC) and the Food and Resource Economics Department (FRED) were contracted to complete the needed analyses and prepare detailed technical reports. A public forum was held April 14, 2009, in order to allow conservation groups, forest industry, land managers and other stakeholders to provide input on the methodology for the studies proposed by the UF researchers. These two studies focused on the use of woody biomass fuels for electrical generation and evaluated the potential for Florida’s private timberland contributions to supplying biomass feedstocks under varying scenarios. Private lands were chosen due to individual landowners’ ability to quickly adapt their management practices to meet market changes.

The study conducted by FRED analyzed the economic impacts in the state from expanded use of woody biomass as a feedstock for energy production under selected policies and incentives. This study concluded that financial incentives such as renewable energy production tax credits and subsidies for forestry biomass producers could increase state Gross Domestic Product by $2 billion, the forest sector output (logging, timber, etc.) could increase by 69 percent and forest manufacturing could decrease by 6.7 percent while reducing fossil fuel imports, provided feedstock availability can be secured. The existing wood products manufacturing sector would face higher competition for timber products resulting in higher prices for raw material, while timberland owners would benefit from higher timber prices.

The study conducted by the SFRC utilized the Sub-regional Timber Supply (SRTS) model to analyze woody biomass demand, supply and timber prices resulting from implementation of a hypothetical renewable portfolio standard (RPS) in Florida. Currently in Florida, electricity generation from wood and wood waste contributes 0.6 percent of total capacity. To sustainably achieve 1 percent to 3 percent of electricity production from wood sources, logging residues and urban wood waste have to be utilized in addition to merchantable timber along with an enhanced reforestation program. Reforestation must at least keep pace with forest harvest removals. Beyond 3 percent of electricity generation from wood sources, short rotation energy crops need to make up a larger share of the fuel mix in addition to all other feedstock sources mentioned above. The study concluded that a 7 percent RPS (equivalent of 1 percent to 3 percent electricity production from wood sources over time) would have little impact to the existing forest products industry and Florida’s forest would remain sustainable.

Therefore, it appears that a 7 percent RPS as modeled in the SFRC study would be both feasible without much disruption of timber supply to existing forest products industry, and economically beneficial to the economy of the state, and especially to timber producers and forestry in general. A modest mandate of this kind would facilitate increases in stumpage timber prices landowners receive for their products and increase chances of keeping “forests in forest.” Any clean portfolio standard or RPS mandate should also incentivize tree planting including short rotation energy crops establishment on acreage proportional to the magnitude of the mandate. With increased reforestation, afforestation and planting of high-yielding short rotation woody crops on up to 15 percent of non-forested lands, a 12 percent and higher RPS could be achieved without depletion of the forest resources of the state, or significant impacts to the existing forest industries.

Jim Karels is director of the Florida Division of Forestry.
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Florida Forests 14 Spring/Summer 2010
The Use of Florida’s Forests for Woody Biomass

The Florida Forestry Association supports sustainable forestry and the practices that provide well-managed, sustainable forests, which meet today’s demands for forest products without jeopardizing the needs of the future.

The Florida Forestry Association is confident that Florida forests can play a significant role in supplying woody biomass for energy solutions. To sustainably achieve renewable energy production from wood sources, logging residues and urban wood waste have to be utilized along with an enhanced reforestation program. Reforestation must at least keep pace with forest harvest removals to keep Florida’s forests sustainable. Any government incentive for reforestation or afforestation should not exclude any private landowner.

We contend that free market forces should be the primary stimulant for the use of wood and wood waste as a renewable fuel source and for determining the optimum fuel choices for energy generation. Government should incite the research and development of technology and new tools to collect, harvest and transport logging residues and urban wood waste to help provide the necessary feedstock to fulfill any state or federal RPS mandate.

Where state or federal governments are instituting incentives or mandates for renewable energy, all companies producing woody biomass energy should be eligible for comparable incentives.

5.10
40 UNDER 40
Class IV - 2010

Allen

Berzinis

Ensinger

Ezekiel

Garcia

Hunt

Hunter

Lacasse

Marshall

O’Neal

Parrish

Ramirez
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One of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of timberland ownership is keeping your timberland maintained. We typically think of maintenance as the hands-on, physical labor put into the property. However, maintenance also includes selecting the right liability coverage and ensuring that the coverage keeps up with the changes to your timberland. When choosing a timberland liability policy, be sure to keep the following factors in mind.

**Insure for the right amount.** Timberland liability insurance is a vital component in protecting the health of your timberland. The amount of liability insurance you need is dynamic and dependant on many variables. The value of your total assets, your current financial and business status, lifestyle and any existing coverage are all relevant. Today, liability judgments can easily exceed your net worth resulting in a significant negative impact to future earnings and generations. Regularly assess your current circumstances along with your current liability coverage to determine if you have adequate limits in place.

**Anticipate and prepare for accidents.** One of the most important components of your liability policy is guaranteeing protection in the event an accident occurs on your timberland.

Imagine you’ve done everything right. You’ve removed the cable gates, repaired the damaged roads and stream crossings, marked the property boundaries, filled in the old wells, and followed every other risk management recommendation ever given to you. Yet, on a sunny Saturday afternoon, a few individuals on four-wheel all-terrain vehicles invite themselves onto your timberland for a trail ride. On a newly constructed woods road, one of the drivers loses control and runs off the road hitting an exposed culvert, ejecting a passenger from the vehicle. The passenger, who is a minor, sustains a life-threatening injury. The parents of the injured minor believe that you are at fault because you did not adequately mark or cover the exposed culvert. Even though it appears obvious that you are a victim of an involuntary trespass, you find yourself in a liability lawsuit. You have to incur the cost of hiring an attorney to defend yourself. Timberland liability coverage can provide the legal defense you need and will cover costs up to the policy limits.

**Consider buildings and other external structures.** If there are buildings on your property such as a camp house, barn, garage or shed, consider having them insured. Timberland liability policies are designed to insure your liability associated with the timberland ownership. If coverage for the property is desired, you likely will need to seek additional property and general liability coverage designed for rural property.

**Know the business operations exclusion.** Generally, business operations on your property—timber harvesting or other for-hire contracted services—are not covered by timberland liability insurance. As a timberland owner, request proof from any contractor working on your timberland that he or she has named you as an additional insured to their general liability and workers compensation policies. By being named as an additional insured, you not only will be sure that coverage is in place but also that you will be notified in the event the policy is cancelled.

Timberland liability insurance is a vital component in protecting the health of your timberland.

**Consider your carrier.** The financial crisis that erupted in the fall of 2008 has created significant uncertainty. Look for a carrier with a strong balance sheet, low risk investment strategy and excellent underwriting. Seek an admitted carrier for greater assurance that they will be there when you need them the most. Admitted carriers are filed with and subject to the laws and regulations in the states where they are admitted. In most business sectors, admitted carriers, when available, are strongly preferred over non-admitted. Investigate the benefits provided by an admitted carrier when purchasing timberland liability coverage.

**Revisit your policy.** A proper periodic review of your insurance coverage will guarantee the policy keeps up with the changes in your timberland. It is recommended to review your coverage at least once every three years or after any significant event that might have an affect on the policy, such as the acquisition of a new timberland tract or a significant change in your financial situation.

Before you make the commitment of acquiring timberland liability coverage, make sure you are familiar with the policy. Ask the right questions and get the right answers to make sure you have the right coverage in place.

*The Davis-Garvin Agency’s hunt club and timberland liability coverage are endorsed by the Florida Forestry Association. Tim Lowrimore is an account executive with Davis-Garvin Agency, Inc.*
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