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From the Coordinator's Desk

Mississippi is blessed with abundant natural resources in the form of forests, streams, rivers, lakes, and wildlife. It is these forests, and the many benefits they provide, which are most often thought of when we think of forests. But there are other, just as important forests in our many cities and towns. These urban forests provide us with many of the same benefits as the traditional forests; clean water and air, a more pleasing landscape, and provide wildlife habitat. In addition, urban forests also provide shade, increase property values, reduce storm flow and runoff, and contribute positively to overall quality of life. Just like our traditional forests, our urban forests need to be managed, and cared for properly if they are to thrive.

This issue of The Overstory is dedicated to our urban forests. Here you will read about species and site selection for urban trees and tree planting tips. In addition, a new Extension Forestry initiative is discussed which deals with Urban and Community Forestry. I hope you find this newsletter beneficial to you, and helps you to look at our urban forests in a new and different light.

Dr. Andrew J. Londo
Extension Forestry Program Coordinator



MSU College of Forest Resources
SAF Student Chapter
Arbor Day 2-8-2013

Feature Article

Urban and Community Forestry

by Jason Gordon

Extension Community Forestry Specialist

As one of the strongest extension forestry programs in the United States, MSU Extension Forestry has a celebrated history of offering high quality, science-based educational opportunities in natural resources management to landowners, youth groups, and forestry and other natural resource professionals. We are tasked with addressing the needs of both rural and urban clientele, while responding to the changing characteristics of the state's landscape and population.

To this end, we are introducing a statewide effort entitled Urban and Community Forestry. Urban and community forests include urban parks and woodlands, street and yard trees, vacant lots, river and coastal natural areas, wetlands, and shelter belts of trees found in and around cities, suburbs, and rural towns. These are dynamic ecosystems that provide clean air and water, cool populated places, improve air quality, strengthen local economies, reduce storm water runoff, and improve social connections.

The goal of Urban and Community Extension Forestry is to foster learning that occurs through participatory environmental restoration and management activities by local residents wanting to make a difference in their community. The notion of community forestry draws from the conservation ethic of Aldo Leopold, who recognized "(t)hat humans are part of the landscape, have always been so, and that, if managed, do not have to be viewed as destructive agents." Community forestry clientele groups include local governments, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, community groups, educational institutions, and tribal governments. Some of the many possible educational programs and projects include: tree inventory training, instruction on tree care and maintenance, watershed education, volunteerism and leadership training, conservation planning, ecosystem restoration outreach, assistance in

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The Overstory

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crafting municipal tree ordinance, and calculating benefits of urban trees.

There are many examples of successful resident-led community forestry efforts in Mississippi. For example, citizens take it upon themselves to restore streams and wetland habitat through voluntary associations such as Ducks Unlimited; residents planted trees in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; non-profit organizations work to protect the Chunky River; and master urban foresters teach DeSoto County youth about urban green space. Such projects highlight learning as participation.

Rather than seeking to change behavior by teaching participants about watershed restoration, community forestry engages them in conservation practices. Learning is viewed not only as an individual phenomenon, but also in relation to the broader human and natural community.

MSU Forestry Extension is available to contribute research expertise, leadership, and technical instruction to support community forestry processes. For more information, please contact your local county extension office.

Preparing for the Next Generation of Forest Landowners

by Emily Vanderford, Graduate Student

Private forest landowners play an important role in the sustainability of Mississippi's forestland, and MSU Forestry Extension seeks to provide educational resources to help them as they manage their land. In order to better understand landowner needs, Extension Forestry conducted research in the form of focus groups across the state of Mississippi during the spring of 2012. Participants were invited through county extension offices.

Participants thought selling the land outright might prevent careless division of forestland by forced sale. This suggests that educational programs are needed to make landowners more aware of their options given profit motives and equally important emotional attachments.

During the focus groups, landowners stated a variety of reasons for land ownership including: family enjoyment, passing land to future generations, investment or income, wildlife, and recreation. Regardless of ownership goals, the majority of focus group participants showed strong attachments to their property.

Extension must reach out to busy landowners and bridge generational gaps through diverse channels of communication. Focus groups indicated the Internet as a popular tool used by forest landowners; therefore, email, web pages, posted videos, and webinars should more effectively be used in developing programs. Focus group participants believed this would be especially useful for younger generations of landowners and may even help promote their interest in forestry. Still, the Internet must be supplementary to face-to-face communication still appreciated by many landowners.

Participants said passing land to their heirs is one of the most important reasons for owning land. Some focus group participants were concerned that land transfer could break up their land and cause conflict in the family. They believed this could be due to heirs' lack of interest in the property as well as poor succession and estate planning. Other participants thought the financial benefits of selling forestland were more important than the family attachment to the land, especially in areas of intense development pressure.

Mississippi's private forest landowners influence the future of the state's forestland, and Extension is a valuable resource which can aid in the estate planning process and encourage succession planning. By continuing to pursue methods of effective outreach, MSU Forestry Extension can bridge generation gaps and promote interest in forest management for the next generation of forest landowners.

"If a tree dies, plant another in its place."

- Linnaeus



Forestry Merit Badges
Photo by
Susan Collins
MSU Ag Communications
msucare.com



Keesler AFB named a Tree City USA community for the 19th Year by The Arbor Day Foundation



MFC Public Lands Program
www.mfc.ms.gov



NMREC, ACF Chestnut Planting, 2007

Tree Selection and Planting at Home

by John D. Kushla

Extension Forestry Specialist, ISA Certified Arborist

Tree Selection: In the Spring, we celebrate Arbor Day across the United States. Americans love their trees. In the home and urban landscape, trees beautify our living spaces, enhance our property values, reduce noise and energy use. Here in the South, trees provide welcome shade during our hot summers. Whenever planting trees, it is wise to take stock of immediate surroundings to select “the right tree for the right place”.

First, identify soil properties: rooting depth, soil texture, internal drainage, and native fertility. Use a soil survey. These are available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, online at:

<http://www.mo15.nrcs.usda.gov/states/ms.html>.

A soil test from the planting site can determine soil pH and fertility.

Second, evaluate the growing space available for the tree. Trees grow all their lives. Know the full-grown size of a tree, not just when taken out of a 5-gallon pot. Space considerations include below-ground and above-ground, such as rooting volume and proximity to structures, pavement, or powerlines. Finding “the right tree for the right place” will save on future costs for maintenance, and extend the longevity of the planted tree.

Third, determine the amount of sunlight on a given site. Consider which side a hill faces. The southwestern side of a hill receives the most sunlight in a day. Also note the exposure to sunlight in relation to other plants or structures, that is, shade. Tree species vary in their tolerance to full sunlight or shade.

Fourth, now find the “right tree for the right place”. The University of Florida has online expert systems at:

<http://lyra.ifas.ufl.edu/FloridaTrees/>.

Choose the ‘Tree Selector’ link on the left-hand menu. Complete a site description, then the online prompts, and the system will generate a list of suitable planting material. Choose the ‘Tree

Selector’ link on the left-hand menu. Complete a site description, then the online prompts, and the system will generate a list of suitable planting material.

Tree Planting: Before digging, call 8-1-1. This is a free service in Mississippi to locate buried utilities on the planting site. Using this service will exempt homeowners or municipalities from liability for damages and injuries sustained if buried utilities are found when digging.

While it seems easy, tree planting is often done wrong. Find the root flare at the base of the stem. This is the depth to which the tree should be planted. The width of the hole should be two or three times the width of the root ball. This allows tree roots to readily expand into the surrounding soil.

To plant the tree, remove the root ball from the container or burlap. Examine the roots closely. Tree roots grow in the direction in which they are pointing. Cut all circling roots until the roots point outward. Backfill the hole with the same soil as removed. Changing soil textures can create an artificial environment that prevents the tree from properly adapting to the site. Also, water while backfilling. This encourages good contact of the roots with the soil, eliminating voids which could kill roots. Cover the root ball with soil up to the root flare.

After the tree is planted, keep the area surrounding the tree free of ground vegetation. The tree will more easily adapt to the site without competing vegetation. Apply 2-4 inches of mulch around the tree, but do not cover the root flare. Mulching provides many benefits such as warmth in winter, cooling in summer, and soil moisture conservation. Additional ground vegetation in the way of flowers may be planted a year later. By following these instructions you will have a tree to enjoy for many years to come!

Delta Hardwood Notes

by Brady Self

NWMS Extension Forestry Specialist

Historically, inhabitants of the Mississippi Delta utilized the forest in many ways. Like many areas of the nation, entire communities popped up and flourished near major logging operations. Often, after forests were cut, residents in these communities relocated or shifted their occupation towards agriculture. While lumber sawn from Delta forests was an extremely important commodity for both local and regional consumption, many commonplace uses of forest products have been forgotten. Many household items used daily were directly obtained from the forest. Some of the more frequently used products included structural timbers, lumber, tool handles, firewood, furniture, agricultural implements, hitching accessories and wagons, fence posts, etc. Wood products of this nature evoke images readily when traditional forest use is considered.

However, often people do not realize just how deeply people of the Delta region relied on the forest for everyday items. Other, less commonly recalled, uses of forest products in everyday life included dining serve ware and utensils, toys and games, dyes, cooking staples such as flour, various fruits, syrup, chewing gum, and various medicinal derivatives.

If you are interested in learning more about the history of forestry and antiquated forest uses, contact your regional extension forestry specialist for more information.

Timber Market Outlook

by James E. Henderson, Forest Economics Specialist

The long awaited beginnings of a recovery in the markets for timber and timber products began to be apparent during 2012, and the prospects for 2013 are positive. As of the 4th quarter, average Mississippi 2012 standing timber prices (stumpage), as reported by Forest2Market, are higher than the same period in 2011 for most products. This indicates that demand is starting to improve.

Sawtimber prices for pine, high grade hardwood, and mixed hardwood are up 5.2%, 1.4%, and 11.2%, respectively. Pine chip-n-saw is up only 0.2%, pine pulpwood decreased 7.0%, and hardwood pulpwood increased by 43.2%. Timber price reports for Mississippi are available at: MSUCares.com/forestry.

Continued improvement for the more valuable timber products, such as sawtimber and chip-n-saw, depend largely on continued improvement in the U.S. housing market. Housing has shown much improvement over the course of 2012, and appears to be poised for continued gains over 2013.

Fueling the recent increase in new home construction are sharp declines in both newly constructed and existing home inventories. Inventories have decreased to lows not seen since prior to the housing bubble collapse. These are all very favorable signs that Mississippi’s timber markets should see improvement during 2013, and should intensify into 2014. Recovery efforts in New Jersey

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and New York from Super Storm Sandy will also help increase demand for building products. A recent housing construction forecast produced by the National Association of Home Builders indicates that U.S. housing starts will reach over 1 million units SAAR by 2014. Thus, the production of lumber and other wood building products will increase over 2013 and will continue into 2014.

Demand for pulpwood should also show improvement during 2013, as demand in the pulp market is correlated with GDP growth. Forecasts for GDP growth for the U.S. economy vary, but most favor maintaining growth around 2% over 2013. Demand for paper products used in advertising declined with the recession and has not rebounded well due to the increasing use of digital advertising. However, the demand for “fluff pulp” which is used in the manufacture of sanitary paper products such as tissue paper and diapers, is expected to grow over the next several years. This will benefit those pulping processes that can produce fluff pulp, including Mississippi pulpwood producers. Over the next 20 years, the size of the Asia-Pacific middle class in terms of spending is expected to grow from \$4.8 to \$32.6 trillion. Economic growth in countries with large populations and rapidly increasing economies will spur greater global demand for fluff pulp. Though this is not expected to translate into large price gains for pulpwood, it should keep and improve viable markets for Mississippi pulpwood.

The recent fiscal cliff deal struck in Washington D.C. will have implications for timber sales. In 2013, Bush era long-term capital

gains tax rates of 15% will remain in effect for timber sales income not exceeding \$400,000 for singles and \$450,000 for couples. However, as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2012, there will be a Medicare surtax on capital gains of 3.8% on income over \$200,000 for singles and \$250,000 for couples. So taxes on timber sales will be higher in 2013, but only for transactions above the thresholds described. Even so, the outlook for the 2013 timber market is the brightest since before the housing bubble collapse and the corresponding recent recession.

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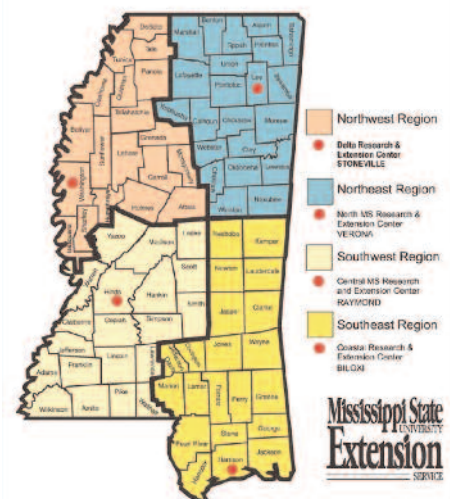
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MSU-ES Region Map



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