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Feature Article

Long-Term Impacts of Extension Forestry Programs

Marc Measells, Extension Associate III

The Mississippi State University Forestry Extension program has successfully educated forest landowners and natural resource professionals for years. Those who have participated in Forestry Extension programs are familiar with the practice of filling out an evaluation at the end of the program. These evaluations provide immediate feedback on the knowledge impacts derived from the programs, and they will continue to be used as a monitor for program adjustments to match the needs of forest landowners. In addition to these evaluations, Forestry Extension started a new evaluation process in 2016 to determine the long-term impacts from programs. Data was collected at CFA meetings using a two page evaluation that could be completed in 3 to 5 minutes.

What is the purpose? Funding continues to be a major challenge for Extension, and both state and federal funding sources now require the demonstration of program impacts - i.e., what are they accomplishing. The justification of continued Forestry Extension programs and funding is partially based on implementation of practices conveyed in short courses, workshops, and field days - for example, new management activities, or a changed philosophy towards forestry practices. Documentation of both the immediate (post-program) and long-term impacts from Forestry Extension programs creates greater support for keeping them. In addition, this information will allow Forestry Extension to show the positive state-wide impacts our programs have on Mississippi natural resources and lands.

In summary, 1,034 individuals at 49 County Forestry Association meetings (representing 58 counties) completed the evaluations. The majority were landowners (n=896) and, on average, attended 2.2 Forestry Extension programs in the past year for a total of 2,156 programs. Of these, 387 individuals (37.4%) have implemented forestry practices since attending a program. The top three practices reported were prescribed burning (n=108), thinning (n=83), and reforestation (n=63). A total of 174,404 acres were impacted by these practices. In addition, 471 individuals (57%) indicated they plan to implement practices in the future at an appropriate time on 493,104 acres with the majority being implemented within the next five years (88.8%); more specifically 29.8% in the next year and an additional 30.0% in the next 1-2 years. The majority (n=586; 77.0%) estimated the programs helped them save and/or earn \$15,110,577 from their forestland. Participants (n=723; 85.7%) shared the information they learned with other family members or landowners who were not in attendance. Participants owned and/or managed 2,919,563 acres of forestland in 75 Mississippi counties in addition to counties outside Mississippi.

Long-term evaluations will continue to be collected as described. Please inform Marc Measells of upcoming CFA meetings by phone at 662-325-3550 or email mkm2@msstate.edu.

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See our blog at www.blogs.msucare.com/forestry



"Science underlies the forester's knowledge of the woods."

— Gifford Pinchot



Marshall County CFA Photo: MSU Forestry Extension



Lincoln County CFA Field Day Photo: MSU Forestry Extension



Cherrybark Oak (*Quercus pagoda*) Photo: Adam A. Agosta, School of Renewable Natural Resources, LSU



Cherrybark Oak (*Quercus pagoda*) Noxubee Wildlife Refuge Photo: Larry Tucei www.nativetreessociety.org

The Overstory

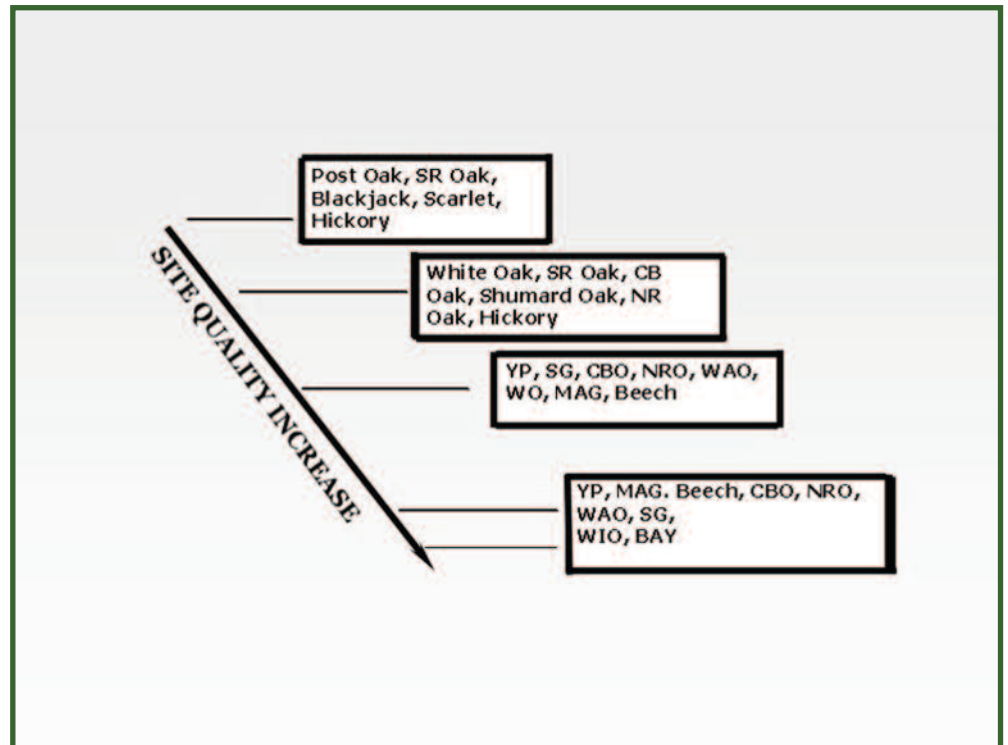
Delta Hardwood Notes: What about cherrybark?

Brady Self, NWMS Extension Specialist

Cherrybark oak (*Quercus pagoda*) is our most highly valued species of red oak in Mississippi. The wood is strong, typically straight-grained, and due to the tendency of the species to self-prune early in the rotation, relatively free of knots. These characteristics result in a premium being placed on the species for veneer and lumber used in furniture, cabinetry, flooring, and interior trim. Consequently, many landowners desire planting cherrybark in their plantations.

Unfortunately cherrybark is an extremely site specific species. While some oak species can be successfully planted across a wide range of sites, cherrybark oak is adapted to grow best on loamy, well-drained sites on ridges and terraces found across bottomland sites. On some sites, elevational changes of a little as six inches may result in site conditions unsuitable for cherrybark oak. Unfavorable site conditions include: shallow soils and those with shallow topsoil layers, heavy clays, sand, water table depths of less than one foot or greater than ten feet, continual flooding or waterlogged conditions year round, and pH levels of less than 4.0 or greater than 7.5. In addition, compacted soils and those with inherent pans or artificially created plow pans are considered unsuitable unless some form of mechanical site preparation is used to correct this problem.

In short, when the site is appropriate, cherrybark oak is an excellent species to consider in your planting efforts. However, careful analysis of your planting site is necessary before planting this (or any other) hardwood species. For more information on species/site relationships, please read Mississippi State University Extension publication 2004 "Bottomland Hardwood Management: Species/Site Relationships."



Power Point Slide showing the relationship of species and site quality John D. Hodges, from Forestry Extension Bottomland Hardwood short course.



Mississippi Timber Price Report

1st Quarter 2017

The Mississippi Timber Price Report (MTPR) is a quarterly survey of stumpage timber prices in Mississippi. It is developed to provide a picture of timber market activity. The state average prices for common forest products are listed. Values given are offered as a guide to help individuals assess the fair market value of their timber. The average price should not be applied as the exact value for a particular tract. This report is updated quarterly and available at MSUCares.com/forestry, or by contacting your local county Extension office.

QUARTER'S PRICES: 1st Quarter 2017 Stumpage Prices/Ton (Source: Timber-Mart South)

Pine Sawtimber - \$23, Pine Chip-N-Saw - \$15, Pine Pulpwood - \$7, Mixed Hardwood Sawtimber - \$39, Hardwood Pulpwood - \$7

NOTE: Prices vary widely across the State; thus, average prices presented here may not reflect your local market.

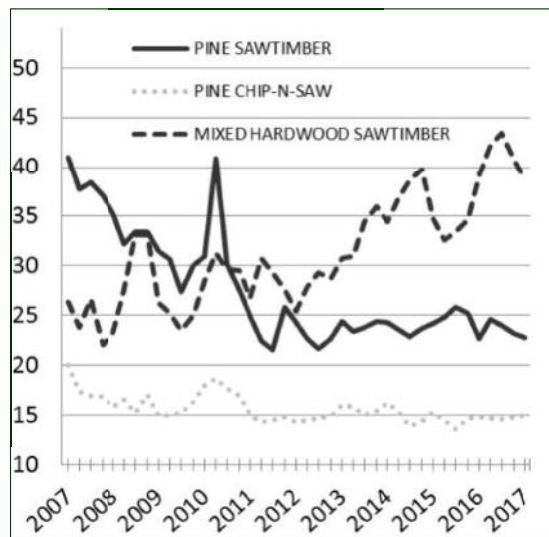
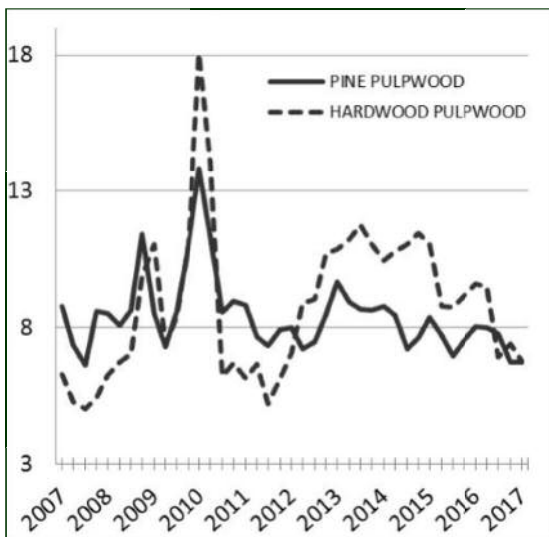
WHAT'S MOVING PRICES - TRENDS:

Prices for all products decreased during the 1st quarter with the exception of pine chip-n-saw which slightly increased while pine pulpwood remained flat.

Stumpage prices for pine sawtimber decreased by 1.8%, pine chip-n-saw increased slightly by 1.3%, and pine pulpwood increased by 0.1% from the previous quarter. Stumpage prices for mixed hardwood sawtimber decreased by 5.4% and hardwood pulpwood decreased by 8.7% from the previous quarter.

TIME SERIES:

**Average Mississippi Pine and Hardwood Stumpage Prices
1st Quarter 2007 through 1st Quarter 2017
(All prices in \$/TON)**



Timber-Mart South (TMS), Inc. has more detailed data available by subscription that contains values for other timber products not included in this report. TMS is compiled and produced at the Center for Forest Business, Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, under contract with the Frank W. Norris Foundation, a non-profit corporation serving the forest products industry. See <http://WWW.TMART-SOUTH.COM> for information on subscriptions.

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Changes to the Mississippi Logging Force - 1996 - 2016

Dr. John Auel, Extension Specialist

The Mississippi Professional Logging Manager (PLM) program provides training for Mississippi loggers. This training is required before the logger can deliver wood to Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certified mills. Most of the large forest products mills in the state are certified under SFI and therefore most of the loggers in the state need this qualification. The PLM program has been tracking these companies since 1996. There has been a substantial change to the logging force in the last twenty one years. The largest change occurred after the housing market crashed in 2009. The reduction in housing starts caused a severe reduction in the demand for harvested timber.

Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSUES) also tracks the volume of wood harvested from Mississippi on an annual basis through access to the Department of Revenue’s Severance Tax Report. These numbers are published in the MSUES publication Harvest of Forest Products each year. Comparing the volume of wood harvested to the number of loggers in the PLM program over a certain time period gives an indication of the changes to the logging force and how they have adapted to changes in the markets.

This comparison is between the number of logging companies in the PLM database in 2008 and the associated harvest volumes and the number of logging companies in the PLM database in 2016 and its associated harvest volumes. 2008 was just before the housing market crashed, and 2016 was well into a period of recovery. This eight year period demonstrates the volatility of the logging force as well its ability to adapt to changes.

The PLM program identified 2,477 separate logging firms in the year 2008. During that year the total harvest from Mississippi’s 82 counties totaled 27.4 million tons of wood products. This translates to roughly 1 million loads of wood travelling Mississippi’s roads. After the housing market crash and the reduction of demand the logging force started to lose companies. By 2016 there were only 1,579 companies operating in the state. That is a loss of almost 900 companies. However, the harvest during 2016 was substantially higher than it was in 2008, with a total of 35.1 million tons, or 1.3 million loads travelling the highways. Breaking it down further, in 2008 a single logging company averaged about 11,000 tons of production to meet the demand for forest products. In 2016, a single logging company averaged over 22,000 tons.

Logging company losses over the past 9 years were not solely due to the markets. There were some retirements and other causes. There is a strong correlation with the market, but there are also natural business cycles to consider. However the fact that the number of companies did not rebound like the volume harvested indicates that loggers in general are more efficient and produce higher volumes than they did in the recent past. Newer equipment and changes in business practices are allowing loggers to meet increasing demand with a smaller, concentrated workforce.

For more information about logging in Mississippi please contact your local extension office, or Dr. John B. Auel, 662-325-7948.



2016 Mid-South Forestry Equipment Show: examples of how technological advancements are driving some of the reduction in manpower necessary for logging operations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June & July 2017

- 06-16-2017:** Proactive Emerald Ash Borer Management: Maintaining Desirable Forest Landscapes, Attala County Extension, Kosciusko, MS. Click [HERE](#) for brochure.
- 06/29-30/2017:** Forest Regeneration for Hardwoods Short Course, Madison County Extension, Canton, MS. Click [HERE](#) for brochure.
- 07/27/2017:** Are My Pine Trees Ready To Thin Workshop, Alcorn County Extension, Corinth, MS. Click [HERE](#) for brochure.
- 07/28/2017:** Urban Forestry Summer School, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS, Sponsored by the Professional Arborists Association of Mississippi (PAAM) and MSU Forestry Extension. Click [HERE](#) flyer.



Drones in Forestry

Photo: Randy Rousseau, MSU Forestry Extension

Other Locations for Forestry Extension Information

<http://extension.msstate.edu/natural-resources/forestry-Events>
www.facebook.com/MississippiStateUniversityExtensionForestry
www.blogs.msucare.com/forestry, OR, twitter.com/MSUExtForestry

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MSU-ES Region Map

