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Timber Tales

No. 135 News and Ideas for Forest Landowners from Ricky Kilpatrick, Area Forestry Agent 1st Quarter 2011

Ten Handy Items for the Forest Landowner

1. Prism With a prism, a landowner can quickly determine stand density. This is handy as a thinning guide.
2. D-Tape A diameter tape, or d-tape, is nice to have to take the guess work out of diameter measurements. Remember to measure tree diameters at 4.5 feet above the groundline (diameter at breast height or dbh).
3. Backpack Sprayer This is great for treating smaller areas with herbicides and also good to have full of water when burning brush piles, etc.
4. Chainsaw If you have roads in the woods, you need a chainsaw!
5. Machete If you have roads in the woods, you need a machete!
6. Compass I have a pretty good sense of direction...that is, until I have a compass in my hand. And the compass is usually right!
7. GPS The handiest new tool around! Now you can mark corners, boundaries, deer stands, map out your property, determine area sizes and do much more. As I learn more about this, I'll try to pass it on.
8. Record Book When tax time comes around, this will be your best friend! Be sure to keep records.
9. Maps and Satellite Photos Nothing beats a good picture of your property. Aerial photos make a great addition to your management plan. Seeing your property from this perspective will help you make better management decisions.

For additional information, call Area Code 318 and . . .					
BIENVILLE	263-7400	BOSSIER	965-2326	CADDO	226-6805
CLAIBORNE	927-3110	DESOTO	872-0533	NATCHITOCHES	357-2224
RED RIVER	932-4342	SABINE	256-3406	WEBSTER	371-1317

10.A Whistle This one is for emergencies. If you step in a hole, turn an ankle, or get hurt and incapacitated in some way, you can signal for help. The whistle will carry much further than yelling. Of course, you could take your cell phone, but if reception is bad, your battery is low or the phone gets wet, you're up a creek!

Also, you should always let someone know when you're going to the woods and in what area you'll be (another good use for the satellite image).

Feral Pigs Could Infect Hunters with Brucellosis

Although Louisiana's domestic swine are free of brucellosis, the feral swine population is not. Hunters should take precautions when handling their quarry.

"Feral pigs can be infected with *Brucella suis*, which is contagious to people and other animals," said Dr. Christine Navarre, extension veterinarian for the LSU AgCenter. The blood and reproductive organs of infected pigs can be contaminated with the infectious organism and lead to brucellosis infection in hunters exposed during field dressing of infected pigs. "Infected pigs may not show any signs of infection, but they can still pass on the disease," Navarre said.

Brucellosis in people can cause a serious flu-like symptom, which is a high intermittent fever that usually occurs at night and lasts for months to years if not treated properly.

Brucellosis is known for causing abortion in livestock species and illness in other animals. Hunting dogs should not be allowed to eat parts of feral swine carcasses. Carcasses should be properly disposed of to prevent this infection from spreading.

Navarre said proper disposal is deep burial or incineration, but she suggests consulting the Natural Resources Conservation Service about the best method of disposal for the part of the state where the pig was killed. The high water table in many sectors of Louisiana prevents burial.

"Hunters and meat processors should take precautions when field dressing or slaughtering feral pigs," she said. At a minimum, disposable rubber or latex gloves should be worn. Disposable surgical or dust masks and safety glasses offer further protection against exposure to the dangerous germ.

The meat of pigs infected with brucellosis is safe to eat once it is cooked. "However, raw meat should also be handled with disposable latex or rubber gloves," Navarre said.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) does not have exact figures on the brucellosis infection rate in feral swine in Louisiana. APHIS Wildlife Services and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries are in the process of screening feral swine killed through a population reduction effort in the Sabine Wildlife Refuge and other various wildlife habitats, Navarre said.

The first nine feral swine sampled in the Sabine Wildlife Reserve were negative for brucellosis, but three of them were positive for pseudorabies, a viral disease.

Pond Management Tips

Here are a few key tips from aquaculture specialist Greg Lutz about pond management:

One acre is about the smallest size for effectively managing bass and bream together. If you have a pond smaller than one acre, catfish and copper nose bluegill will be the best combination.

When stocking your pond with bagged fingerlings, follow this procedure. Float the bag in the pond edge for about 30 minutes to equalize the temperature. Then dump the bag of fingerlings in the pond as fast as possible. When the bag is opened, carbon dioxide comes out of the water in the bag very quickly, and the ammonia in the water becomes very toxic, very quickly, so the quick dump will disperse the toxin. It is better to add the fish in the evening.

Ponds do not need to be more than 10 feet deep. (If a pond is too deep, other problems can arise related to water temperature, oxygen levels, etc.)

Ponds need an overflow drain or a swell ditch, more edge is better, more fish habitat (add peninsulas, etc.), brush areas or a stake reef can be helpful to facilitate reproduction, add sand or pea gravel (3 to 4 inches deep) to spawn areas.

Eight to ten feet deep is an ideal depth for a pond. If the pond is too deep, low oxygen levels can become a problem. If you have an oxygen problem in a deep pond, you may need to aerate the pond. Be sure to set the suction for the aerator as shallow as possible. You **do not** want to pull water from the bottom, as that just intensifies the problem.

Muddy Water Problems

If your pond water stays muddy, do this test. Get a jar full of the pond water, put it in a dark closet without a lid. After 5 days, compare it to a new jar of pond water. If the first jar has cleared up, there is no need to add anything to the pond. Something is stirring the mud (ditch draining to the pond, other run-off sources, catfish, etc.). If the jar hasn't cleared, it may help to add 5 pounds of alum crystals per acre foot.

Pond pH

The pH of pond water varies thru the day and night. An ideal pH range is 6.5-9.0. Since the water pH varies so much, it is better to check the soil pH in the pond. With a coffee can on a broomstick, you can scoop up samples from within the pond (from at least five spots). Mix the samples and let them dry. You'd like to have at least a 6.5 pH of this soil. If you need to lime your pond, the fall or winter is the best time to do it.

Fertilizing Your Pond

If you want to fertilize your pond, don't just throw it out in the pond. This can lead to algae problems. If using liquid fertilizer, mix it with water before adding to the pond. If using granular fertilizer, place fertilizer (still in the sack) on a platform below the water so fertilizer can dissolve slowly. You can put fertilizer from February to September.

Fish Kills

If little fish are dying first, there is usually a chemical problem (toxic). If big fish are dying first, low oxygen is usually the culprit. Most fish kills are the result of oxygen depletions. Occasionally, exposure to some type of agricultural chemical may result in fish mortality too. If big fish are dying first, low oxygen level is the most likely cause but if little fish are dying first, some type of chemical poisoning might be the culprit. Fish disease organisms are constantly present in most aquatic environments, and recreational ponds are no exception. Under optimum conditions, healthy fish are able to fight off most forms of infectious diseases. Conversely, fish subjected to stress are often unable to maintain their natural defenses against diseases.

Trees

Don't plant trees on the levee and don't let sprouts grow into trees on your levees.

For more information on recreational pond management, check out the publication **Management of Recreational and Farm Ponds in Louisiana** at this website:

http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/crops_livestock/aquaculture/recreational_ponds/.

By the way, Dr. Lutz is in the process of updating this publication so as to create individual fact sheets for the different sections of the book. Then if someone wants information on a particular topic, he or she can just print out the fact sheet. The entire book will probably not be reprinted again after that due to printing costs. If you would like the current edition of the entire book, it may be a good idea to print it out now from the above website.

Look for Beavers!

This is a good time of year to check your land for beaver dams and water levels. If you have a new dam holding water on your timberland, you will want to get this water drained before spring. One spring growing season in standing water can kill a lot of trees. This is very damaging to your forest structure and can completely change the composition of a bottomland hardwood area. If it goes untreated for a couple of years, it can be very hard to reclaim this area back to its original condition. You also have to be concerned about an area being designated as a wetland if it stays in water most of the year, and then you are limited as to what can be done.

If you have areas that are hard to get to, check aerial photos. Google Earth photos are as current as 2009, but the NRCS has photos from the summer of 2010.

Events, Thoughts and Tidbits

*** The Ark-La-Tex Forestry Forum is set for Thursday, March 17, 2011, at the Holiday Inn Financial Plaza. Register by March 14 for \$20! (See details on last page.)

*** Be sure to sweep any pine needles or leaves off from your roof. They can hold moisture on your shingles and cause them to rot!! I've had first-hand experience, as I stepped through my dad's roof one time where pine needles had stayed too long!!

Sincerely,

Ricky Kilpatrick

Ricky Kilpatrick
Area Forestry Agent

It is the policy of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability. If you have a disability which requires special assistance for your participation in a meeting, please contact the Bossier Parish Extension Office at (318) 965-2326 three days prior to the meeting.

**27TH ANNUAL ARK-LA-TEX FORESTRY FORUM
THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2011
8:30 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.**

**HOLIDAY INN FINANCIAL PLAZA
5555 FINANCIAL PLAZA
SHREVEPORT, LA**

The program is currently being planned and speakers are being contacted. Planned topics include:

- How to get the latest aerial photos of your property
- Access to the best forestry information on the Internet
- Housing market and other forest products markets
- Wood pellets/biofuel...demand, outlook and management strategies
- Taxes
- Attracting forest production facilities to the region

Door prizes will be given by several exhibitors.

Come and enjoy an excellent forestry meeting, great lunch and the fellowship of others interested in forestry. If you pre-register by March 14th, the fee is \$20. After that date or at the door, registration will be \$25. Your fee includes lunch and a copy of program proceedings.

**ARK-LA-TEX FORESTRY FORUM
MARCH 17, 2011**

Name _____ Phone _____

Company/Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

This form may be duplicated. If more than one person shall be registered, please include names and addresses of the additional people.

_____ Number of people registered @ \$20 per person (\$25 after March 14th)

_____ Amount enclosed

Make check payable and mail to: **ARK-LA-TEX FORESTRY FORUM
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**News and Ideas for Forest Landowners from Ricky Kilpatrick, Area Forestry Agent, serving:
Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River and Webster Parishes**

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Dr. William B. Richardson, Chancellor
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Dr. Paul Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director
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