

Surf in Alabama's Forests!

WWW.PFMT.ORG

By **DR. GLENN R. GLOVER**, Extension Specialist and **JEANNIE DEAN**, Information Technology Specialist, Private Forest Management Team, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University

Have you YAHOOed? spouts a popular television advertisement. The World Wide Web (WWW) has sprung to the forefront as an information source for many people. People born digital, those who have adopted digital, and those drug into the digital age kicking and screaming are using the Web in growing numbers to access a myriad of information: everything from Airline flights to growing Zucchini's (if you can't grow zucchini's, don't bother with the rest of the garden).

The amount of information available on the Web is growing at a phenomenal rate. How much of it is *worthwhile information* is certainly debatable. Unlike most publications you receive containing technical information, material on the Web is not typically reviewed—that is, no one looks over a Webmaster's shoulder to ensure the information placed on a Web site is correct (or even true!).

The Private Forest Management Team (PFMT) was initiated in 1998 as an educational effort financially supported by the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University, the Sustainable Forestry InitiativeSM State Implementation Committee of the Alabama Forestry Association, Alabama River Woodlands and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Organizations such as the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association, the Alabama Forestry Commission, and the Association of Consulting Foresters partner with the PFMT to provide sound technical information to Alabama forest landowners.

The PFMT has several ongoing programs. One effort is a Web site (**WWW.PFMT.ORG**) being developed to provide online reference material and

technical information to Alabama forest landowners. Most state Extension Systems maintain a Web site of their publications. Some even have the option of downloading publications either in the web browser or as an Adobe PDF (Portable Document Format) file.

Easy Access to Information

What makes the PFMT Web site different? Have you ever attempted to search for a specific topic on the Web? A quick web search for "southern pine beetle" found only one reference on Yahoo (www.yahoo.com), 8,150 on Google (www.google.com) and 1306 on AltaVista (www.altavista.com), three common directories/search engines. Google and AltaVista provided some good links to useful information. Searches can be time consuming, however, and often return either too little or too much information. You may have to sift through many Web sites to find what you need. What you do find may or may not be applicable to Alabama forests.

The PFMT Web site provides landowners and stakeholders a place to find sound information that can be trusted. The Web site is organized to facilitate easy access to a vast array and variety of information that can assist forest landowners and managers. It is arranged similar to a book, with information organized in "chapters," with each chapter having sub-chapters or sub-headings. The site can be searched to quickly find information available on a particular subject of interest. A large volume of information has been added to the site, but there is still much to be done. Access to and development of **appropriate** content for the Web site is time-consuming. Now that the site is developed and being used by a variety of people, plans are to col-

laborate with industry participants, Alabama Forestry Commission specialists and foresters, ACES specialists and county agents, forestry consultants and others to augment development of content. There is substantial knowledge and written material available across Alabama that can be utilized in filling voids.

Let's look at some of the information available on WWW.PFMT.ORG. The HOME page links you to information ABOUT THE PFMT, supporting and cooperating organizations, a GLOSSARY OF TERMS, and to the Alabama Forest Owners Association and the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association's excellent event calendars. You can also find links to current or important topics of interest to forest landowners and to meetings. A very important link on the HOME page is CONTACT US. This automatically sends you to e-mail so you can make a comment about the website, request information, suggest a topic be added to the website or ask us a question. Let us hear from you!

You can access the Forest Masters website (WWW.PFMT.ORG/FM) by simply clicking on the gold Forest Masters icon on the HOME page. Here you can request certification of meetings or field trips, check for meetings that are already certified, look for speakers for your meetings, make an application to Forest Masters, submit service hours, and check your credits. If you are not a participant in Forest Masters, check it out! The "frame" at the bottom of page 13 is taken directly from the Web site and shows major topic areas ("chapters"). This frame stays on the screen no matter where you have surfed to in the site. Clicking on PLANNING brings you

information on multiple-use forestry and a two-hour online presentation (broken into 5-10 minute segments) on ESTATE PLANNING by Dr. Robert Tufts. This presentation requires RealPlayer, available free from a link on the PFMT site. Several other presentations, videos and slide shows on PFMT.ORG require RealPlayer, so it is a good idea to download and install it. The HARVESTING topic has information on Selling Your Timber, Timber Sale Contracts and will have descriptions of different harvesting methods.

Topics on the Web Site

The GROWTH AND YIELD topic has the Pine Plantation Investment Calculator (PPIC) in the form of an EXCEL spreadsheet that can be downloaded to your computer or used online if you have a current version of MS Internet Explorer. This calculator helps you evaluate the economic return from intensive pine plantation management. There will soon be yield information available under this topic for a combination of silvicultural practices such as site preparation, herbaceous weed control, fertilization and thinning. The yield information can be used in the PPIC. You may want assistance from a professional forester to help you interpret these results.

Under RESOURCE INVENTORIES—TIMBER there are descriptions of how to properly measure trees to determine volume or weight and even board foot volume tables and weight tables available. This information can be valuable to FFA and 4-H Forestry Judging Teams.

The STAND MANAGEMENT topic will include a variety of information. You can now find out how to eradicate and manage kudzu under COMPETITION CONTROL and access the “bible” of prescribed burning in the South under PRESCRIBED FIRE. An online course is in development to prepare you or your

forester to become a certified prescribed burner in Alabama.

Clicking on FORESTERS provides definitions of different types of foresters and links to lists of consulting foresters, industry landowner assistance programs and management assistance programs in your county. There is also a paper by Dr. Stephen Jones, currently the director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, on “Managing Your Forest with the Help of a Consulting Forester.” Did you know that foresters had to be registered in Alabama? Information on the Alabama Board of Registration for Foresters can be found here, as well.

BMPs, or Best Management Practices, are very important to protecting water quality and Alabama’s environment. The state’s voluntary BMPs are included in this section, as well as links to forest industry BMPs for protecting water quality and stream crossings.

PESTS AND DISEASES gives you basic information and links you to Dr. Scott Enebak’s “Alabama Forest Disease and Insect Pests Database” to assist you in identifying potential pest and disease problems. There are two excellent links to Southern pine beetle information and control methods.

FOREST ROADS is an important area often overlooked by forest landowners. Most of the erosion in your forest can come not from harvesting, but from improperly designed and maintained roads. This section includes design of WATER DIVERSIONS and critical information on STREAM CROSSINGS.

Ever wonder what species of trees you have in your forest? DENDROLOGY includes a “Key to Common Trees of Alabama” and Dr. Lisa Samuelson’s colorful and informative website on “Trees of Alabama and the Southeast.” Wander through pictures of the leaves, twigs, fruits and bark to see if you can determine what is growing on your back forty or down on the creek.

In the AESTHETICS section there is the Aesthetics Guide, reproduced with

permission from the American Pulpwood Association (now the Forest Resources Association) and American Forest and Paper Association. This guide gives you excellent ideas on how to plan for aesthetics in all aspects of your forest operations. There is also a link here to expert Caroline Dean’s WILDFLOWER Web site depicting and describing Alabama’s bounty of beautiful wildflowers.

Do you have wetlands on your property, and if so, do you know how to manage them? Under ENVIRONMENT you will find a number of topics related to water quality, endangered species and a recent addition on “Understanding Wetlands: Assistance for Private Forest Landowners.”

Many landowners have a strong interest in managing game and non-game WILDLIFE. Clicking here brings you a variety of information from AU’s Extension wildlife publications to white-tail deer nutrition. You will also find a link to Rhett Johnson and Brett Wehrle’s, “Threatened and Endangered Species of Alabama: A Guide to Assist with Forestry Activities,” that provides a clickable Alabama map so you can discover which endangered species may occur in your county and how forestry operations can affect them.

COUNTY RESOURCES provides a wealth of information and contacts within your own Alabama county. You can easily access listings of PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS, CERTIFIED LOGGERS and ENDANGERED SPECIES and links to county service providers and ATFA county chapters.

VISIT MY FOREST offers a collection of videos and slide shows of outstanding private forest management in Alabama. Videos of the regional Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award winners and State Tree Farmers of the Year have been converted to RealPlayer format that can be viewed on a variety of Internet connections. For

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The navigation bar at the bottom of every screen shows what topics of information are available and allows for easy click-through to different subjects.

Surf

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slower modems, utilize the slide shows that maintain the audio, but use selected frames from the videos. All forest landowners, school students and anyone interested in Alabama's forests should view these excellent presentations. They exhibit the strong beliefs in stewardship and love for the forest held by many active forest landowners in the state.

There is an extensive list of FORESTRY LINKS to whisk you off into forestry cyberspace. These links are organized into several categories to assist you in finding what you need. If you know an appropriate link that you think other landowners would benefit from,

feel free to send it to us by using the CONTACT US button on the HOME page.

The PFMT is coordinating certain website information and services with the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association's Web site (WWW.ATFA.NET). An online speaker's database, providing state and county organizations easy access to speakers by subject, is being developed in conjunction with the ATFA. This database resides on the PFMT server and is accessed by both Web sites.

Conclusion

This is a brief overview of the PFMT Web site. There are many sections of the Web site that are yet to be completed.

Developing this Web site is akin to writing a book. As time and resources are available, additional portions of the website will be completed. This Web site is designed for you—the forest landowner. If you have information that you think might be useful or know a resource provider that could assist with providing technical material, please contact us from the PFMT HOME page (CONTACT US). Your feedback is always welcome.

SURF'S UP—take a wild ride on the new wave in forestry—just watch out for the hickories, they can do a lot of damage to your surfboard!

Contact the Private Forest Management Team at: pfmt@auburn.edu or visit the Web site at www.pfmt.org. 

Alabama Wildlife Federation Offers \$5,000 Operation GameWatch Reward

The Alabama Wildlife Federation, through its Operation GameWatch Program, is offering a \$5,000 reward for information resulting in the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the illegal shooting of a bear being monitored in the Alabama Black Bear Alliance's (ABBA) research project and conservation initiative.

On October 9, 2000, a 220-pound male black bear (bear #11), fitted with a telemetry collar as part of the ABBA effort, was found dead in north Mobile County from multiple gunshot wounds. At this time, investigations are ongoing to apprehend and prosecute the person(s) responsible for this criminal act.

The AWF is encouraging anyone with information regarding this careless act to call the Operation GameWatch hotline at 1-800-272-GAME. Conservation Enforcement Officers are ready to follow all useful leads as they work to apprehend the criminals who killed black bear #11.

"Through the efforts of the Alabama Black Bear Alliance and private landowners in southwest Alabama, we have made significant strides in elevating among the local public the desire to protect and conserve black bear in Mobile and Washington counties. We are taking

steps today to help ensure that those productive efforts are not squandered by poachers," said Tim Gothard, Executive Director of the Alabama Wildlife Federation.

Corky Pugh, director of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, says, "We have assigned an investigator to this case who I am certain can bring the individual or individuals responsible for this heinous act to justice. If there is an investigator alive who can track these individuals down, this is the man. A combination of his work, along with the expert knowledge of the local area and its inhabitants on the part of our uniformed officers, bolstered by the Alabama Wildlife Federation's Operation GameWatch reward, will surely result in the apprehension of the person or persons responsible for this serious game law violation."

Established in 1983, Operation GameWatch is a program of the Alabama Wildlife Federation that provides a toll-free hotline (1-800-272-GAME) direct to the Law Enforcement Section of ADCNR, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries for reporting poachers. Callers can identify themselves

or remain anonymous. The program also pays cash rewards to individuals who provide information that makes the difference and results in the arrest and conviction of poachers. Operation GameWatch is supported by AWF members and hunting enthusiasts and was created for the specific purpose of protecting our game resources and to distinguish between responsible hunters who adhere to and respect our game laws versus poachers.

The mission of the Alabama Black Bear Alliance is to promote restoration of the black bear into its former range through research, habitat management and education. The estimated number of black bears in southwest Alabama ranges from as few as 50 to as many as several hundred. The AWF and The Nature Conservancy of Alabama established the Alabama Black Bear Alliance in 1997. Participants also include private landowners, forest industry, state and federal agencies, and other conservation groups.

The Alabama Wildlife Federation is the state's oldest and largest citizens' conservation organization. To learn more about the AWF, contact the AWF at 1-800-822-WILD or stop by online at www.alawild.org. 