

HARDWOOD CORNER

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The 61st Annual Southern Hardwood Forest Research Group conference was held on February 4, 2014, in Stoneville, Mississippi. This meeting provided an excellent opportunity for those interested in all aspects of hardwood management to gain more insight about southern hardwoods and to meet some of the staff housed at the Center for Bottomland Hardwoods Research.

Since I am not a research forester – in fact, far from it – some of the material covered is over my head at times. However, the presenters do an outstanding job of trying to reach down to my level. This year several topics were really appealing due to the fact that they dealt with hardwood markets and trends. Dan Meyer (Editor, Weekly Hardwood Review out of Charlotte, North Carolina) presented “Trends in Domestic and International Hardwood Lumber Markets.” Dr. Brooks Mendell (President, VP Research, Forisk Consulting LLC, out of Athens, Georgia) discussed “Trends in Current and Future Hardwood Pulpwood Markets.” Dr. David Jones (Associate Professor/Extension Specialist, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi) presented “Effects to Landowner of Changes in Hardwood Lumber Manufacturing in Our Operating Area.”

My take-home message from these three presentations would be the following:

1. Know your local markets and the products they produce as well as the type of raw material they need to produce that product. This may seem simple-minded but things change over time, and unless you keep up with what’s currently going on, you may not realize the changes in products or markets.
2. There is no economic reason not to be growing and managing Southern hardwoods on good hardwood sites . . . Who really knows what the future will bring?

For more information on Bottomland Hardwoods Research, write to Research Work Unit 4155, Center for Bottomland Hardwoods Research, Southern Hardwoods Lab, P. O. Box 227, 432 Stoneville Road, Stoneville, Mississippi 38776 or call (662) 686-3154.

BMP/Water Quality Issues

Changing gears and putting on another cap, I wanted to take the time to explain an issue that has come up several times in the last month or so:

Stormwater runoff (discharge) from Alabama construction sites is regulated under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act

(CWA). Section 402 outlines the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) permitting program requires owners or operators of construction sites that disturb one acre or greater, as well as sites less than one acre but part of a larger common plan of development or sale, to obtain authorization to release stormwater runoff from construction sites.

The rules and regulations associated with Alabama’s NPDES General Permit for Construction Activities are intended to protect the natural water resources of Alabama. Vital to the effort to protect and improve water quality within the state, these important regulations were framed in accordance with and subject to provisions of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, Alabama Water Pollution Control Act, and the Alabama Environmental Management Act.

Now why should all this be important to you? Over the past several months I have had calls from forestry operators who have been told they were out of compliance with the above regulations and that they needed to obtain an NPDES permit. This may or may not be the case, depending on the ultimate outcome or the reason the timber is being harvested. Normal silvicultural practices are exempt from this permitting system. However, if the reason or the ultimate outcome of the timber being harvested results in a land use change, i.e., from growing timber to some use other than a normal farming practice and one acre or more of land is bared, then a permit may be required.

Some examples would be:

- Building roads and stream crossings to harvest timber to build a housing development
- Building roads and harvesting timber to build a commercial site
- Building roads and harvesting timber, then advertising the land for sale as a commercial or development site

The best recommendation is to do a little planning and ask a few questions before this happens to you. Sometimes incorrect information may be transmitted to ADEM about what is really happening on the property. If this is the case and you need help in justifying your silviculture practice, please feel free to contact me and I will assist you or guide you through the process. Call (205) 339-0929, extension 19, or write James.Jeter@forestry.alabama.gov