

HIDDEN



TREASURES

Keeping the Forest as a Forest

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Situated along the Pea River and located in central Coffee County is the property of Mike and Joan Newman. This 199-acre certified TREASURE Forest/Tree Farm consists of planted loblolly pines, mixed pine hardwood, bottom-land hardwoods, wildlife openings, planted hardwoods, and a dove field.

The Newmans take great pride in the appearance of their property, aggressively managing it to achieve multiple benefits. The excellent condition of the Newman property reflects countless hours of planning, dedication, and hard work, earning it the title of Alabama's 2014 Tree Farm of the Year.

Pine stands have been selectively thinned as needed, while prescribed burning and herbicides have been used to control undesirable competition and to enhance wildlife habitats. Hardwood stands have been excluded from timber harvest and prescribed burn activities in order to enhance the wildlife population and serve as a streamside management zone (SMZ) against erosion. Both hard and soft mast-producing trees have been planted throughout the property to provide an additional food source for wildlife. Several acres of wildlife food plots are planted and maintained annually as well.

A great conversation piece that intrigues visitors is the artificial power line Mike installed above a field of sunflowers, sesame, and corn to attract dove. Several miles of forest trails are maintained for leisure walks throughout the property, and a pavilion was constructed as a picnic area for family gatherings that provides a picturesque view overlooking the Pea River.

Mike and Joan share their property with members of the community in a variety of ways. Local Boy Scout troops visit to earn their forestry-related merit badges. The family hosts the First Baptist Church father/son camp-out and occasional Sunday School class gatherings. The Newmans also enjoy sponsoring deer and turkey hunts for local youth in the community. At least 11 girls and boys have harvested their first deer here, while two have harvested their first turkeys. As a fundraising event, the

Wiregrass United Way auctions a deer hunting trip to the Newman's property. It also provided the venue for a bonfire attended by helicopter flight students stationed at Fort Rucker military base.

In the fall of 2014, the Newmans hosted the South Alabama Regional Forestry Field Day which was attended by over 150 landowners and agency personnel, as well as special guest, the Honorable Martha Roby, U.S. Representative for Alabama's Second Congressional

District. Attendees enjoyed a catered lunch at the pavilion and participated in several tours throughout the property to gain information about hardwood management, wetland management, herbicide use in loblolly pine stands, and dove field management.

Believing their property is a gift from God, Mike and Joan Newman realize the importance of being good stewards of the land. In doing so, they strive to keep the forest 'as a forest,' and hope their land is a legacy that will be enjoyed for many future generations. ☝

