

Good Stewardship

By Paul E. Hudgins, Butler County Manager, Alabama Forestry Commission

Managing forestland in Alabama can be a labor of love for those individuals or couples owning land. However, many factors play an important part in how and why we manage our forestlands . . . managing for future income, recreation, aesthetics, or even wildlife are just a few. Landowners have available to them a wealth of resource professionals, consultant foresters, and agency representatives, as well as numerous periodicals that can assist them with various aspects of managing their forests for multiple use. And, in this information age, the Internet is limitless with information on just about any natural resource issue.

For the Alabama landowner, special recognition can be achieved by having their property nominated for one of the landowner recognition programs admin-

istered in the state. Alabama is unique in that it has three landowner certification programs. The USDA Forest Service's *Stewardship Forest*, the American Forest Foundation's *Tree Farm* program, and the AFC's *TREASURE Forest* program all acknowledge landowners who manage their forestland for multiple use.

For many landowners, letting others know they are promoting good land stewardship by managing their property for a variety of uses, both social and economic, is always a positive element to the forest community. Utilizing a sign to designate the forestland as being well managed and conservation-driven helps to promote dialect between landowners. This dialect then fosters more interaction between landowners, thus improving the promotion of good stewardship. We as Alabama landowners must do what we can to self-promote the good stewardship

we are already performing and what the certification programs are all about. We must remember that good stewardship starts with us and should be passed on to future generations. Being recognized for doing the "right thing" is always a good thing.

Many Alabama landowners are already doing everything that needs to be done to be certified into one of these recognition programs, they just need to be acknowledged for all their hard work. Expecting *others* to instill good forest stewardship in today's generation is *not* what Alabama landowners need to be doing. The next generation is here and they will be setting policies that affect us all. Therefore, placing more signs on more acreage is just one way to promote good forest stewardship. ♣

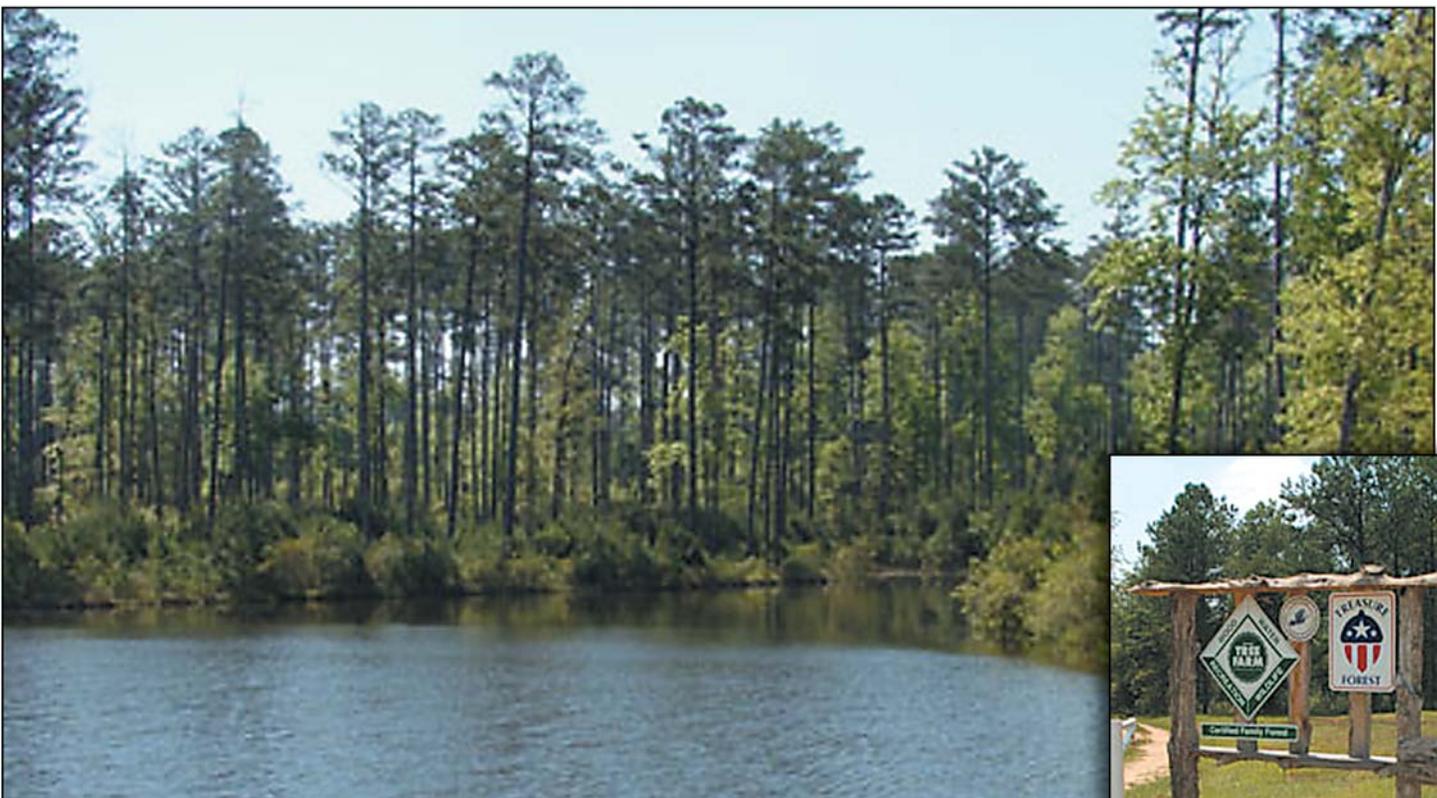


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