

Inside Highlights:

The Road Most Traveled	2
Timber Markets Hot or Not	2
NRG Real Estate Listings	3

Quarterly Management Calendar

March:

- Only a few, if any, tracts should be left to plant
- Get ready for turkey season
- Corporate returns due by March 15th
- Start working on that tan

April:

- Herbaceous spraying

May:

- Herbaceous spraying
- Plant summer forage for wildlife

June:

- Great time to build roads
- Mark boundary lines
- Harvests of any sensitive or wet areas

Technology in the Woods

Unless you think about the business end of a chainsaw, forestry is not what comes to mind when you think cutting edge technology, but like most other industries, technology is integral to everything we do.

A few examples may surprise you: in a 12-hour day it is common to use satellite imagery, infrared imagery, and aerial photographs; LIDAR, LASAR, RADAR, GIS, and GPS; smart phones and hand-helds; matrix modeling and computer simulation; range finders and remote cameras. Surveys use GPS to get sub-millimeter accuracy, and helicopters are controlled by GIS and GPS. Scandinavians have long had harvesting machines controlled by computers that respond to changes in the market in real time. For example, if your mill needs more 14-foot logs cut to an 8-inch diameter, the computers on the harvesters are sent the message, and immediately change how they are cutting. Sometimes the operator doesn't even notice!

Perhaps the most exciting developments to be incorporated into the industry in the last ten years are drones. Don't think large airplane types that can fly for 24 hours and carry a payload; think suitcase-sized platforms that fly for 20 minutes or so and carry a camera.

What makes these so powerful is that you see on a screen what the camera sees in real time. The uses are almost endless! A forester can fly a drone over 250 acres in a matter of minutes, and check for insect and animal activity (think bugs and beavers), weather damage, flooding, and encroachments. They can be used to assess timber stands, planting survival, and road conditions. Software has been developed for them that can be used to estimate timber volumes.



The biggest impediment to the widespread use of drones is the FAA, which is trying to catch up with the technology. Their regulations were developed during the Iraqi war when drones meant bombs. Their challenge now is to draft reasonable regulations that protect public safety and privacy, while at the same time not getting in the way of the tremendous economic potential that this technology represents.

Timber Markets**Hot or Not?****Pine pulpwood (NOT)**

If you step outside of our corner of the world, pulpwood prices are reasonable, due in large part to seasonal, winter prices. Stay in this corner and expect prices to reflect the oversupply of wood – leftover effects from recent mill closings combined with a mild winter. Unless you are thinning your pine, or just tired of waiting, continue to wait.

Hardwood pulpwood (NOT)

Same as pine pulpwood, but not quite as much.

Pine sawtimber (NOT)

Even though housing numbers continue to impress, the tremendous supply of sawtimber is keeping stumpage prices low. The slowdown of China's economy has had a chilling effect as well because significant amounts of southern pine go to international markets.

Hardwood sawtimber (Cooling)

Low oil prices are putting a squeeze on the amount of this product making its way into the oil fields. The demand for cross ties has dropped as well. Most predictions are for significantly lower orders for hardwood sawtimber with prices reflecting this shift.

The Road Most Traveled

Nothing is more integral to the forest industry than roads. Travel the main highways and this infrastructure looks solid, but drive to the forests and it's quickly apparent that, on a local level, the roads are barely holding their own.

Most roads were improved in the 1950s and 60s, when Alabama and many of its neighbors had an intensive road building effort that emphasized farm-to-market roads as the backbone of the State's economy. In 1970 the legislature changed how much of the tax revenue went to the counties, which in effect ended the program.

Even though forestry is the second largest industry in Alabama, infrastructure in many cases has been frozen in time. Today the major source of funding for its roads is from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and local taxes. Money flows into ALDOT from the federal government and from taxes on fuel earmarked for the Department. Since little of ALDOT's money comes from the State's budget, there is little transparency as to how money is spent or allocated. Most oversight comes from the Governor who appoints the Department's Director. Governors past and present have become very adept at using this relationship to reward political allies and punish adversaries by directing the Director on where to spend or send money.

In this current legislative session there is considerable pressure to increase the tax on fuel, in fact it may have already been voted on by this printing, but the fact remains that raising taxes is a poor substitute for the hard work it would take to make our government accountable and more efficient.



Do we need a bridge over Mobile Bay, or a northern bypass around Birmingham? Perhaps. Do we have almost 1,000 bridges in the state that need to be replaced? Certainly. Do we have enough money in the system to pay for them? Who knows? The books are closed, and simply funneling more money into the works is – at best – misguided. There is total agreement that our roads need help, and probably almost total agreement that the current funding system is broken. All that is lacking is political will.

“The best friend on earth of man is the tree: when we use the tree respectfully and economically we have one of the greatest resources of the earth.” – Frank Lloyd Wright



Real Estate Listings

See more of our listings at www.naturalrg.com

TFI101west



**Colbert Co.,
Alabama**

**98 acres
\$2,400/acre**

**Beautiful
Views**

Look west down the TN River into MS and TN, north at the Sandfall Mountain crest, east over the city and valley farmland, or turn around and see the trees – massive oaks and hickories in the draw. Less than 10 min. from downtown Muscle Shoals. Perfect for your dream home.

TFI101north



**Colbert Co.,
Alabama**

**94 acres
\$2,100/acre**

**Beautiful
Views**

Incredible views looking east across the TN Valley, well stocked stands of pine and hardwood timber, thinned stands of pine plantations, beautiful rock ledges and bluffs. Less than 10 min. from downtown Muscle Shoals. Perfect for your dream home.

FOW28



**Alcorn Co.,
Mississippi**

**38 acres
\$2,625/acre**

**Pasture
Timber
Creek
Homesite**

Potential secluded homesite only 5 minutes from Corinth, MS. +/-15 ac. of open pasture land with +/-23 ac. of young hardwood timber. Brice Branch Creek will provide water for livestock and/or wildlife year round. Power and water are at the road.

**Colbert Co.,
Alabama**

**700 acres
\$1,538/acre**

**Well-managed
Hunting Land
Timberland**

Intensively managed for years for whitetail and wild turkey. Adjacent to thousands of acres of public hunting land. Rattlesnake Saloon / Seven Springs Lodge are less than 1.5 miles away. Excellent timber investment.



NRG104

**Alcorn Co.,
Mississippi**

**160 acres
\$1,475/acre**

**Multi-use
Timberland**

25 year old naturally regenerated pine timber on apx. 80% with hardwood/mixed timber in the hollows. Paved county road frontage, power and water near the property's entrance, and gentle topography lend to an excellent place for your homesite. This tract has wildlife openings, plenty of white tail deer, and wild turkey.



TDT01

**Tippah and
Alcorn Co.,
Mississippi**

**154 acres
\$1,495/acre**

**Timber
River
Creeks
Duckholes**

2 DUCK HOLES adjacent to the Hatchie River. Crum Creek & Panther Creek & the Hatchie River flow through this property. Fertile bottomland soils make this ideal for trophy wildlife and big timber. Frontage on 3 county roads – power and water just up the street – ideal location for a cabin/home.



RBV01

So... how much land do you have?



GROWING ASSETS™

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Who We Are

Growing Assets, LLC does just that. Your timberland is one of the best investments out there. We manage that investment to make it even better. If it needs to be done, we do it.

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Natural Resources Group, Inc. specializes in timberland real estate. We not only represent Sellers as their agent, but we just as often represent Buyers who are looking for timberland to purchase. Being foresters as well as real estate professionals, we are uniquely qualified to see the forest investment in the trees.

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NO, THIS ISN'T YOUR EASTER BUNNY

Ever heard of the Northern Long-Eared Bat? If not, you soon will. It is being affected by White Nose Syndrome (a disease that is caused by a fungus) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has listed it as threatened. That means that even though the disease is not caused by human activity, landowners will have to protect their habitat at certain times of the year so as not to add to the bat's stress. All of Tennessee and the northern halves of Alabama and Mississippi are affected.

