

NC Forest Stewardship News



North Carolina Forest Service—A Division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Steve Troxler, Commissioner



Bluebirds and Forest Stewardship — What's the Connection? (A Success Story)

By Aimee Tomcho and Les Hunter

Everyone likes seeing bluebirds while driving by farms and fields. There was a time they were not as common as they are now. Theirs is a story of being brought back from near-extinction in the mid-1950's by natural resource professionals. They had a profound vision of bringing back the Eastern bluebird and involving others to initiate positive changes in law and habitat management. The North Carolina Forest Service Stewardship Program fell in step with promoting the bluebirds when it began in 1990.



Over 834 Outstanding Woodland Stewards (OWLS) have been certified by N.C. Forest Service foresters in the Forest Stewardship Program. These OWLS have demonstrated exemplary forest management practices by following their Forest Stewardship plan.

For that accomplishment they are awarded a post and a Forest Stewardship sign, a certificate of recognition and a bluebird house. That's over 834 bluebird houses distributed across North Carolina to OWLS actively engaged in stewardship principles of the program, such as promoting improved wildlife habitat.

Photo by: Rhonda Phillips Allison, Huntersville, NC

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species and wildlife are two standards that are addressed in every Forest Stewardship plan. Good forest management will give rise to good wildlife management.

Silvicultural activities create openings in the forest that provide habitat for a variety of bird species. A search is conducted for T&E species on a landowner's property before the plan is written so they will know how to apply recommended forest management practices in accordance with laws that protect them.

We're all likely familiar with our crafty Carolina Wrens who seem to always find the shoe we left on the front porch as their favorite new nest site and before we realize it, we've given up a pair of shoes for a few weeks until these feathered friends have raised a handful of babies!

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Stewardship Coordinator's Corner:

By Les Hunter

A Message from The Forest Stewardship Coordinator

The sunsets have been brilliant here the past several days. They remind me I need to get out more on my kayak and celebrate this season while I can and hunt the flowers I enjoy identifying while they are in bloom. There's nothing like slipping up a slough and finding my favorite, Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), with its brilliant red in contrast against the summer green. Recently, North Carolina was the focus of interesting environmental news this spring when the oldest bald cypress tree at 2,624 years old was discovered along the Black River. This giant tree was found while research was being conducted on climate change and its effects on local ecosystems. Read more about this amazing discovery [HERE](#). Fascinating! I've added seeing this to my bucket list of places to experience.



Cardinal Flower
(*Lobelia cardinalis*)



Forest Stewardship and ecosystem management go hand in hand. All these things come together on a simple summer kayaking trip. Breathe the fresh air that trees and plants provide. Enjoy recreating on clean water filtered by well managed forests. It has a therapeutic effect. Kids should be more involved in outdoor and forest activities, so they will be ready to be the next generation of forest stewards. This is a good time of year to do it. Make it fun so they will want to work at it later. Go with your favorite people to your favorite places and enjoy the season's activities.

Consider attending this year's Forest Stewardship Annual Landowner meeting Saturday, August 3rd. To register to attend, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-nc-forest-stewardship-program-annual-meeting-recognition-event-tickets-63885072973>

Enjoy the season and this issue of Forest Stewardship News!

In The News:

By Les Hunter



Kidwell Family Attains Forest Stewardship Recognition

The N.C. Forest Service Currituck County staff and Service Forester Josh Powell, recently met with the Kidwell Family to present them with their Forest Stewardship sign, bird box and plaque for commendable implementation of their Forest Stewardship plan.

The Kidwell family were very excited to receive these items of recognition and took the staff on a tour of the property to see how their property has progressed with the recommended projects outlined in their Forest Stewardship Plan. They have made great progress managing their woodland and are actively working to improve their property for multiple objectives.

Congratulations to the Kidwell family and the N.C. Forest Service staff on a job well done!

If you're a landowner and interested in becoming recognized, contact your local county ranger for assistance. A list of key agency contacts can be found at https://www.ncforestservice.gov/contacts_contacts_main.htm



Pictured (Left to Right): Josh Powell, Service Forester; Erik Alnes, Currituck County Ranger; with Forest Landowners Dorothy Kidwell, Doug J. Kidwell and J.D. Kidwell

Bluebirds Continued:

By Aimee Tomcho and Les Hunter

Bluebirds and Forest Stewardship—What's the Connection?

Yet it's often the species we may consider to be common that can benefit most from our help. In addition to the Eastern Bluebird and Carolina Wren, birds who nest in the cavities of dead and decaying trees are increasingly having difficulty finding places to raise their young. Standing dead trees or snags, are frequently removed to provide safety for humans. Many of our forests are not old enough to provide snags through the natural degradation of standing trees.

Of the 31 cavity-nesting birds we have in North Carolina (more than a third of all U.S. cavity nesting bird species), only 13 of them are primary cavity nesters, or those who excavate wood. Most are secondary cavity-nesters, or those who cannot create their own cavity and must seek out holes made by primary cavity nesting birds or other creatures. Do you know which birds listed below are primary excavators?

List of Cavity-nesting Birds in N.C.

Wood Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	White-breasted Nuthatch
American Kestrel	Hairy Woodpecker	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Barn Owl	Downy Woodpecker	Brown Creeper
Eastern Screech Owl	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	House Wren
Barred Owl	Great-crested Flycatcher	Winter Wren
Saw-whet Owl	Tree Swallow	Eastern Bluebird
Chimney Swift	Purple Martin	European Starling
Northern Flicker	Black-capped Chickadee	Prothonotary Warbler
Pileated Woodpecker	Carolina Chickadee	House Sparrow
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Tufted Titmouse	

The year of 2018 was declared the “Year of the Bird” by Audubon, National Geographic, Birdlife International, and The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Therefore, it is particularly appropriate that Forest Stewardship OWLS now have the opportunity to receive either an Eastern Bluebird nest box or a Brown-headed Nuthatch nest box as a part of their stewardship accomplishment award. The difference between these nesting boxes is the diameter of the entrance hole. An Eastern Bluebird likes 1.5-inch holes, whereas a Brown-headed Nuthatch, a priority species in North Carolina, prefers a 1-inch entrance hole.

Brown-headed Nuthatches are interesting birds! Often recognized by their squeaky toy sounding calls, they can be found year-round in all but the highest mountains of North Carolina. For more information about these birds, check out <http://nc.audubon.org/conservation/make-little-room-brown-headed-nuthatch>.

For those of you who may wish to encourage and create nature’s nest boxes, or snags, on your land, Audubon North Carolina may be able to help you cover associated costs if approved through their Forest Landbird Legacy Program. Check out <http://nc.audubon.org/conservation/working-lands> for more information. Even if that Carolina Wren still prefers your unattended shoe, the other 30 cavity-nesting bird species in North Carolina will thank you!

People:

By Les Hunter

Clint Barden, Technical Assistance Biologist for the North Carolina Mountain Region, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

Clint Barden recently joined the Forest Stewardship team as the Mountain Region Technical Assistance Biologist. FSP News shares some things about Clint and his stewardship journey.

FSP News: Clint, what is your stewardship history?

CB: I grew up on a farm in rural Union County, with both agriculture and wildlife being major land management objectives. I spent as much time hunting, fishing, working the land, and otherwise enjoying the outdoors as possible.

My father was my tour guide on this learning experience and taught me many valuable lessons over the years regarding stewardship of the land. One of the most basic, and yet powerful, skills he taught me was the ability to look beyond the present state of an area, envision the end result you'd like to see, and then make a plan on the steps required to get there.

FSP News: Tell us about some of your work experience?

CB: After college, my career path meandered somewhat. I worked in construction as a self-employed carpenter and as an estimator for many years. I then pursued a career in Physical Therapy. While PT is an excellent career field, I came to realize it was not a good fit for me. At this point I refocused my career goals back to natural science. I began my career with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission at the Mills River Depot as a Conservation Technician, and later transferred to the same position at the Marion Depot. The job duties of a WRC Conservation Technician are diverse, including: habitat maintenance (prescribed burning, canopy gap creation, forestry mulching, mowing), food plot installation, electroshock fish sampling, and biological data collection (whitetail deer Chronic Wasting Disease sampling and jawbone aging, black bear premolar collection, Canada goose and dove banding) to name a few.

I learned many different skills as a Conservation Technician that add considerable knowledge to my current role as a Technical Assistance Biologist, which I began in September of 2018. Although my career path took many years to come full circle back to land management, I feel it gives me an excellent perspective to understand the goals and capabilities of a landowner, to which I can then apply the best science-based strategies to improve wildlife habitat on their property.

FSP News: Was that move tough on you or your family?



Clint Barden, Technical Assistance Biologist for North Carolina Mountain Region with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

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People Continued:

CB: Hitting the “reset” button multiple times on your career is never easy. Luckily my wife is a very patient woman and gave me the latitude to follow my passions, which enabled me to find my way back to the natural sciences.

FSP News: Where did you go to school?

CB: I graduated from the University of North Carolina at Asheville in 2004, where I completed my Bachelor’s in Environmental Studies with a focus on Ecology and Environmental Biology.

FSP News: Anything else landowners might want to know about you?

CB: No matter how much you learn about species and their habitats, there is always another layer to the onion. For this reason, I thoroughly enjoy learning new things about the highly dynamic nature of ecosystems. When I’m not at work I enjoy spending time with my family, working on my small farm, and hunting and fishing.

FSP News: Thanks Clint. How can landowners contact you?

CB: I can be contacted with questions or comments at:

Clint Barden

645 Fish Hatchery Rd

Marion, NC 28752

Office: **828-803-6055**

Cell: **828-803-8491**

clinton.barden@ncwildlife.org



NC Stewardship Key Wildlife Contacts:

Coastal Plain Region

Deanna Noble
Technical Assistance Biologist
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
4247 Daughety White Rd.
Kinston, NC 28501
252-526-1081

Piedmont Region

Kelly Douglass
Technical Assistance Biologist
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
1722 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699
919-621-3317

Mountain Region

Clint Barden
Technical Assistance Biologist
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
645 Fish Hatchery Rd.
Marion, NC 28752
828-803-6055



For Full List of Resources Available:

http://www.ncforestservic.gov/Managing_your_forest/pdf/NCWRCPPrivateLandsBrochure.pdf

Forest Health:

By Kelly Oten

Laurel Wilt Found in Lenoir County, NC

Big things come in small packages, and that is certainly true in the case of laurel wilt disease, though not in a good way. The tree-killing disease has already killed an estimated half a billion redbay trees across the Southeast. This big problem is caused by tiny culprits, a poppy seed-sized beetle and microscopic fungal spores it carries. And the disease continues to spread into new areas.

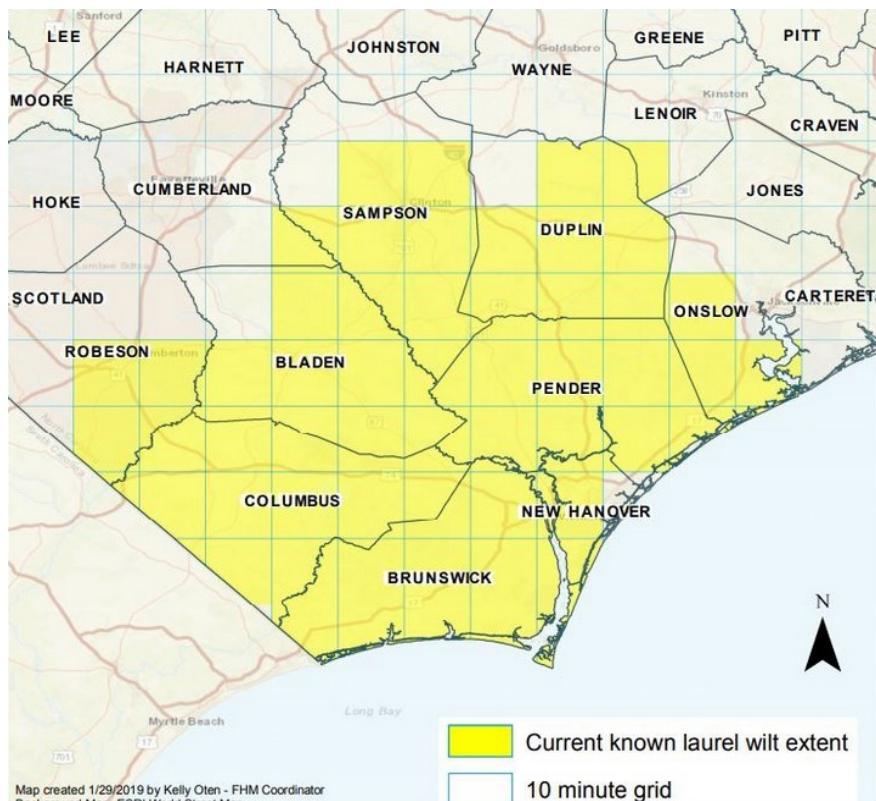
This month, laurel wilt was confirmed in Lenoir County for the first time, making it the 11th county in North Carolina to be positive for the tree-killing disease.

Laurel wilt is a devastating disease of redbay trees and other plants in the laurel family. The disease is caused by a fungus which is moved from tree to tree by the redbay ambrosia beetle. Native to southeastern Asia, the beetle was first detected in the U.S. near Savannah in the early 2000s. It has since spread to eight additional states, from Texas to North Carolina.

Each year, winter surveys are conducted to assess the spread of laurel wilt in North Carolina. In January 2019, forest health professionals detected the new site in Lenoir County during routine surveys. Samples were sent to N.C. State University's Plant Disease and Insect Clinic where the culprit was confirmed as laurel wilt.

Laurel wilt kills trees in just a few weeks. The fungus-toting beetle primarily attacks redbay and sassafras, but other lauraceous plants are also at risk. Last year, it was confirmed in sassafras in North Carolina for the first time. While redbay trees are not a high value timber species, they provide food and shelter to many animals, including songbirds, turkeys, quail, deer and bears. A couple of swallowtail butterflies rely almost exclusively on plants susceptible to laurel wilt, endangering their continued existence. There are also two rare plant species that are known to be susceptible to laurel wilt: pondspice and pondberry.

Currently, there is no reliable way to prevent or treat laurel wilt. Insecticides have not been effective in stopping beetle attacks, and fungicides are costly and need re-application. Our best weapon is slowing the spread, so please use local or treated firewood and notify your N.C. Forest Service county ranger if you suspect laurel wilt has invaded a new area.



The most up-to-date range map can be accessed on the N.C. Forest Service's website at https://www.ncforestservice.gov/forest_health/forest_health.htm

Map created on 1/29/2019 by Kelly Oten—FHM Coordinator

Forest Health Continued:

By Kelly Oten

Small but Mighty: Southern Pine Beetle Trapping Underway

Although it is smaller than a grain of rice, the southern pine beetle is dubbed the ‘most destructive forest pest in the South’. Each year, the N.C. Forest Service tries to predict if there will be an outbreak of this native tree-killer by comparing the number of active southern pine beetle to its predator, the checkered beetle. Knowing if there is an increased risk of outbreak maximizes the preparedness for forest management. When it comes to the southern pine beetle, a quick response is crucial to minimizing damage to forest stands.

But how do you search for an insect so small?

You have them come to you! Traps are set across the state that attract the beetles with a lure that smells like an unhealthy pine tree, the beetle’s favorite meal. This, combined with the tree-like silhouette of the trap, is irresistible to the southern pine beetle. Southern pine beetle and their predator fly into that trap and are trapped in a small cup at the bottom. From there, the beetles are counted and the numbers used to predict chances for an outbreak. Traps for this year are beginning to go up now.

The southern pine beetle is considered the worst of the worst when it comes to forest insects. During attack, pine needles fade from green to yellow to red and dead. When an outbreak occurs, the beetles attack tree after tree, causing large patches of dead pines, called “spots.” The southern pine beetle can easily cause damages going into the billions of dollars. Not only do they quickly kill economically-valuable pine trees, but they are expensive to control.

Landowners and forest managers are encouraged to stay vigilant and reduce stand susceptibility to southern pine beetle by maintaining good stocking levels. Overstocked pine stands are more susceptible to beetle attack. By thinning a stand, one can reduce the likelihood that an outbreak will occur.

The Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program is a cost-share program that provides financial assistance to landowners interested in pre-commercially thinning young, overstocked pine stands.

So, although this forest pest is small, the southern pine beetle carries a big bite. Stay tuned for trapping results!



Image: Kelly Oten, NCFS

Funnel traps are used to trap southern pine beetle each spring. By analyzing SPB captures in traps, predictions can be made about what the population levels may be like for the coming year.

Outstanding Woodland Stewards (OWLS): July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Landowners who are recognized as "Outstanding Woodland Stewards" are actively managing their woodland and implementing activities as outlined in their stewardship plan. A completed certification request form is submitted to the NCFS on behalf of the landowner. Landowner recognition includes a certificate and a Forest Stewardship sign with post and a birdhouse to be erected on the property to promote Forest Stewardship program awareness.

Clarence L. Cross	Gates County	Coastal Region
Joseph F. Massey	Pender County	Coastal Region
Marc & Suzanne Goldberg Property	Granville County	Piedmont Region
Trading Ford Forest	Davidson County	Piedmont Region
TBCM Investment Group, LLC	Forsyth County	Piedmont Region

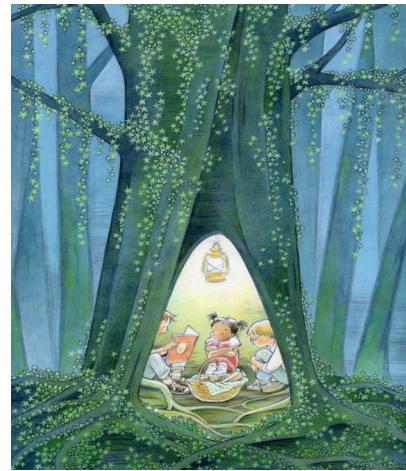
Congratulations are in Order!

2019 Outstanding Woodland Stewards Award Recipients

Award recipients will be recognized for their achievements at our [Forest Stewardship Annual Meeting on 8/03/2019](#)

Coastal Region -Thomas J. Livingston of Craven County

Nominated by Craven County Ranger, Greg Riggs



Piedmont Region - John and Linda Sigmon of Granville County

Nominated by NC Wildlife Resources Technical Assistance Biologist, Kelly Douglass, Granville County Ranger Rob Montague and Tim Harris of Headwaters Forestry

Mountain Region - James and John Phillips of Avery County

Nominated by Service Forester, Joe Franklin

Rob Roberson, District 11 Service Forester - NCFS Outstanding Woodland Steward

Nominated by Wake County Ranger, Chris Frey and District Forester, Jennifer Roach

Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) – Forest Stewardship Agency Partner of the Year

Nominated by Durham/Orange County Ranger, Christian Hirni

Upcoming Events:

Click on a event below for more information:

Silvopasture Workshop	July 25, 2019	Goldsboro, NC
Duff Workshop — Prescribed Burning	August 1, 2019	Southern Pines, NC
Forest Stewardship Annual Meeting and Recognition Event	August 3, 2019	Pittsboro, NC
Tree Farm Inspector Training Workshop	August 6, 2019	Fayetteville, NC
ForestHerNC Workshop: Getting to Know Your Land	August 8, 2019	Pittsboro, NC
ForestHerNC Workshop: Getting to Know Your Land	August 22, 2019	Kinston, NC
ForestHerNC Workshop: Getting to Know Your Land	August 29, 2019	Morganton, NC