



HUNTING LEASE NEWS

Fall, 2005

A Management Success Story...

One thing that we have learned over the years is that white-tailed deer respond well and sometimes very quickly to good management practices. One recent example of management success is Baker County, Florida. This tract had been terribly over-hunted the year prior to coming under our management. Even finding a deer track was hard when we toured the property the first time with the new landowner, Design Timber.

We divided the property into three separate tracts and leased these to three different clubs, headed up by Mike Powell,



Nice velvet buck (and squirrel) caught on camera on one of these leases.

Hoppy Thornton, and Phil Bancroft. In total, these three clubs control about 5,000 acres.

The clubs' first management priority was to rebuild the deer numbers. They imposed very strict harvest restrictions to protect the deer they had and started a feeding program to attract more deer to their property.

These clubs have just completed their third year of management. Due to the strict harvest restrictions, the clubs have taken only a handful of bucks so far, but all were quality bucks. As the accompanying photos illustrate, the efforts are continuing to pay off with increased numbers of multiple point bucks moving into older age classes which will result in some truly quality deer in the future. These clubs are anticipating a very successful hunting season this year, with even better things to come in the future!



Two bucks on one of these leases caught at night on camera.



Bucks visiting feeder at night on one of the leases.

Dog-Hunting

The issue of dog-hunting for deer continues to be a contentious issue in the Southeast, and dog-hunting seems to be in rapid decline. The reasons for the decline are threefold: landowner liability concerns, hunters own preferences, and the urbanization of the Southeast.

In our hyper-litigious society where it seems a lawsuit is always lurking around the corner, landowners are keenly interested in limiting their liability exposure. Dog-hunting is perceived to be more dangerous and more likely to result in a lawsuit against the landowner. Remember too, that there doesn't have to be an accidental shooting or vehicle accident to trigger a lawsuit: recently a small landowner won a lawsuit against a timber company because dog hunters leasing the timber company lands were interfering with his "quiet enjoyment" of his property!

Changing hunter preferences seems to be playing into this as well. The proportion of hunters that prefer to hunt without dogs seems to be increasing every year. This has increased the instances of conflict between dog-hunters and still-hunters.

With the urbanization of the Southeast, there are fewer areas where dog-hunting can be done without risking conflict with residential areas. It is just a lot harder to "get away from it all" nowadays.

Both Georgia and Florida have passed or are considering new and more restrictive laws regarding the use of free running hunting dogs, and we think this trend will continue. Timberland owners, including timber companies, are continually evaluating the issue of dog hunting on their lands. We at NRPS will continue to work with the dog-hunting clubs we manage and will continue to do so as long as this activity fits with desires of the landowners and can be conducted within the state game laws.

INSIDE:

- BEARS AND FEEDERS
- HOW TO CALCULATE FOOD PLOT ACREAGE
- BRAGGIN' BOARD

Please don't feed the bears!?!

As anybody who has ever tried to maintain automatic feeders in bear country can tell you, Yogi and his friends will stop at almost nothing to get to the feed. And, once they have found out how to get it, they will hang around as long as somebody keeps replenishing the feed.

Of course, observing bears in the wild is a rare treat for most of us, but it can get to be too much of a good thing after a while. A bear tends to eat *ALL* of the feed instead of leaving some for the deer and turkeys, so you sometimes end up just feeding bears and nothing else. Also, they have the habit of tearing apart the feeders to make sure they have gotten every last kernel of corn.

Bears, however, are a fact of life for most of Florida and Georgia so we need to learn to live with them. They are legal game in some areas of Georgia, so hunting can be used to help discourage their marauding. There is no open season for bears in Florida so other methods might prove to be effective. A few suggestions:



A Florida black bear shakes an automatic feeder in Baker County, Florida.

- Make the feeders as bear-proof as possible by mounting them on steel poles sunk into concrete in the ground.
- Corn is highly attractive to bears so you might try alternate feeds such as soybeans.
- Try putting the feed in troughs instead of automatic feeders. Yes, the bear can get to the feed and eat all of it that way, but at least they won't have an expensive feeder to tear up.
- Suspend feeding for a while once a bear moves in. A bear travels a lot and if the food runs out, he may move on.
- Use more food plots as alternatives to feeders. Food plots are more beneficial to the deer and turkey (and other wildlife) in the long run, anyway.
- Finally, when all else fails, just enjoy the fact that you might get the opportunity to observe these beautiful creatures in the wild.

The largest black bear ever recorded in Florida weighed 624 pounds. It was struck and killed by a car in Collier County in 1988.



A typical 80'x120' residential lot is about 1/4 acre.

A football field (not counting the endzones) is about 1.1 acres.

How big is that food plot?

Knowing the size of your food plots is important in order to apply the correct amount of fertilizer, lime, and seed. Fortunately, the acreage figure doesn't have to be exact and getting a good rough estimate can be done fairly easily.

First, you must know that an acre is comprised of 43,560 square feet. So if you know the number of square feet in the plot, just divide that number by 43,560 and you've got your acres.

To find out the number of square feet just measure the length and width of the plot (either with a tape, pacing it off, or using a laser range finder) and multiply those two

numbers together. As long as the plot is more or less square or rectangular this will give you a good enough estimate.

So, let's say that you have paced off a plot and found that it is about 100' by 300' and you want to put out fertilizer at a rate of 400 lbs. per acre. The calculation would be:

$$100' \times 300' = 30,000 \text{ square feet;}$$

$$\text{then } 30,000/43,560 = 0.69 \text{ acres;}$$

$$.69 \text{ acres} \times 400 \text{ lbs/acre} = 276 \text{ lbs fertilizer}$$

Seven 40-lb. bags will do it!

Braggin' Board

For some reason, the moon phases, timing of the rut, the weather, or whatever the 2004-2005 deer season was a tough one. Overall deer harvest in much of the Southeast was down, and trophy bucks were even tougher to come by than usual. However, our leaseholders did manage to bag their share of nice bucks last year.

Spring Gobbler season, on the other hand, was exceptional for most of our clubs. Birds were plentiful and the weather cooperated for most of the season.

Pictured here are some of our successful hunters with their trophies.

By the way, we would like to expand our "Braggin' Board" with more pictures of your trophies (deer turkeys, squirrels, whatever). Please send in photos (hard copy or email) and we will publish as many as we can.



Matt Edwards with a trophy buck taken in Hamilton Co., FL.



Justin Wallace with his first gobbler taken in Alachua Co. FL.



Dennis Harner with an exceptional handgun buck taken on one of our North Florida leases.



A black powder buck from one of our North Florida leases.

Through the year 2000, Georgia had 93 Bucks registered in the Boone & Crockett Record Book (66 typical, and 27 non-typical). This total is second only to Kentucky in the Southeast.

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Other Management Issues....

GATES—We continue to have a few issues with gates being left open, sometimes by hunting club members sometimes by others (loggers or other contractors working on the property). Please continue to keep the gates closed and locked at all times to prevent trespassing and poaching. However, do keep in mind that during ongoing logging operations, the gates the logging trucks are using can be left open during the daytime but they should be closed and locked at night. If you have any problems with cooperation from loggers or other contractors, please fill out a complaint form and send to the appropriate NRPS contact and office.

POSTED SIGNS—Most of our leases are well-posted, however there are a few that are not. Please make sure that your lease is posted on all public roads with a sign every 500' or less.

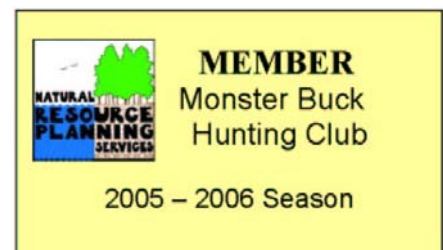
TIMBER HARVESTING—As the woods begin to dry from the wet weather this summer, most of you will start to see

an increase in logging activity on your leases. We realize this can be a problem (especially if they happen to start logging the specific block of timber where you had that big one scouted!), but please be patient with the logging and other timber management activities. And remember, the reason we have large blocks of timberland available to lease is because of their value as timber producing assets for the landowner.

MEMBERSHIP ID CARDS— All of our clubs were issued membership ID Cards this year. Please remember that ALL club members are required to carry an ID Card with them at all times while on the lease. Should you be asked by either the landowner, law enforcement agent, or NRPS personnel, you are required to produce the ID Card and photo identification. Anybody who cannot provide this information will be subject to expulsion from the property.

We expect full compliance from all of our

leaseholders in the use of the ID Cards and hope they all realize that controlling access to their leases helps to ensure them a higher quality and safer hunting experience.



NEW PROPERTY UNDER MGT.— We are pleased to announce that we have recently expanded our hunting lease management program in Northwest Florida with the addition of approximately 22,000 acres of Plum Creek Timberlands property. These properties are being managed out of our Lynn Haven, FL office. The NRPS contact for these properties is Shannon Brooks. He can be reached at 850/265-4882.