



# TREE TALK

GRAHAM  
FORESTRY  
& APPRAISAL  
SERVICES

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APRIL 2017

## Southern Pine Beetles Threaten Alabama Forests

Nature naturally thins our forests in many ways: drought, fire, storms, wind, flood, insects, etc. Last year's record-setting drought, however, has state and federal forestry officials, as well as timberland owners, concerned that Southern pine beetles could have devastating affects this year on Alabama's wood product industry.

The beetles aren't usually seen until late spring and summer; but, are already being reported and in higher numbers around the state.

When a stand of trees begins to compete with each other for sunlight, water and nutrients, the trees become stressed. This is especially true with last year's severe drought issues. With the lack of water, trees don't make sap as well as healthy ones and that sticky sap is the tree's primary defense against beetles. In addition, trees damaged by recent storms are more susceptible as well.

A dying tree emits an odor that bark bee-

gles are attracted to. The beetles swarm to the unhealthy stand and begin their attack on the stressed and dying trees. Many times even healthy trees are attacked once it begins.

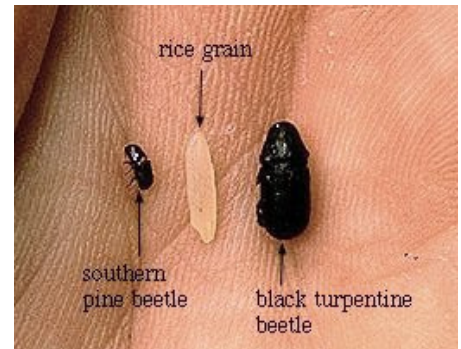
The Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) is considered the most destructive beetle; but, significant damage can also be done by the Ips Engraver Beetle and the Black Turpentine Beetle.

One of the most important techniques for managing beetles is forest health. If a stand of timber is very dense and overcrowded, it is more susceptible to beetles. The trees are so tightly packed, it is easy to see that the beetles can easily travel from tree to tree. Not to mention forest health is also diminished due to competition for water and nutrients. An open canopy is the opposite of what the SPB likes. So thinning is an important practice in maintaining forest health.

Another important tool is early detection. Once a dying tree or trees with charac-

teristics of beetle damage is found, action should be taken relatively quickly to prevent further damage. It is usually suggested to remove the infected trees along with those in the nearby surrounding area.

It should be noted that pines of various ages and sizes fall victim. Regardless of age or size, the best remedy for stopping the beetles is to cut down the affected trees along with a buffer around it.



Full grown, the devastating Southern pine beetle is still only half the size of a grain of rice. (US Forestry Service)



Suspected damage from Southern pine beetle infestations is shown via aerial photograph. (Alabama Forestry Commission)



Southern pine beetles carve distinctive winding tunnels or galleries like these under the bark of their host trees. (Ronald F. Billings, Texas A&M Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

# About Us

Graham Forestry & Appraisal Services is a full service forestry consulting and real property appraisal business. Located in Butler, (Choctaw County) Alabama, GF&A serves landowners and clients throughout Alabama and Mississippi. Owner, John L. Graham, Jr. (Johnny) is a forester registered in both Alabama and Mississippi as well as a Certified General Real Property appraiser; fully licensed and certified in both states.

He obtained his forestry degree from Mississippi State University in 1987 and achieved his license as a registered forester for Mississippi in 1987 and Alabama in 1991. Johnny became licensed as a Certified General Real Property Appraiser in both Alabama and Mississippi in 1993. Forestry consulting and management was the main focus when the business first opened in 1989. Now, however, appraisals account for at least 50% of the company's daily work.

Mr. Graham works hard to keep up with technology and takes pride in using the latest mapping and GIS equipment and software as well as the latest real property appraisal equipment and software. This has made a big difference in the information he can offer his clients and in the range of services he can provide.



Phantom 3 drone in flight. The drone is equipped with a video and still camera. (Copyright: alfonso detomas/123RF Stock Photo)

At the present time, he is studying and training to obtain a commercial license for the use of a drone. This little flying machine will be useful in many ways. He hopes it will be particularly helping to fight the pine beetle problem now facing many landowners.

Johnny grew up with his father and grandfather telling stories of buying and selling timberland, logging, and forestry. His middle son is now working with him as a forestry technician, making the

fourth generation of their family in the forestry business.

Johnny and his wife, Donette, have been married for 31 years. They have three sons, John (Sommer), Alex and Reed and one granddaughter, Georgia Ruth.

Although he enjoys all aspects of the business; his favorite part is still inspecting a tract for the first time and helping the landowner work out a management plan.

## Our Services

- Forestry Consulting
- Management Plan Development
- Pest Management
- Hunting Lease Management
- Reforestation
  - Mechanical Site Prep
  - Chemical Site Prep
  - Prescribed Burning
  - Trees & Planting
- Mapping & GIS
  - Assessment
  - Mapping the Property Analysis
- Inventory & Appraisal
  - Cruising the timber
  - Establishing Volumes & Values
  - Bare Land Valuation
  - Building/Improvement Valuation
- Timber Sales
- Residential Appraisals
- Commercial Appraisals
- Estate Appraisals
- Estate Planning

## Did You Know

- Timberland covers 23 million acres in Alabama & accounts for 69 percent of the state's total land area
- According to the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama forests generate \$21 billion in timber production & processing revenue
- Private citizens own 87% of Alabama forests, which provide over 122,000 jobs in production & processing



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