



Value of Managed Timber Utilizing Quality Vegetation Management™ (QVM™) Advisors

► *A Non-Industrial Private Forest Landowners Conference Recap*
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These comments were made during Beck Ag, Inc. TelePanels™ in August 2006. Quality Vegetation Management™ (QVM™) professionals and non-industrial private forest landowners from across the country joined to discussed strategies for effectively managing pine forest stands and the benefits utilizing a QVM Advisor offer the stand, its productivity and the environment.

Managing Pine Forests with Quality Vegetative Management

“It’s important to manage your forest land just like you manage your investments. I think you need a good advisor to help you with that.” That’s according to John Monroe, a Quality Vegetative Management™ (QVM™) Certified Advisor from Raleigh, North Carolina.

Monroe made those comments during a recent Beck Ag TelePanel, where non-industrial private forest landowners and specialists from across the south joined via telephone in discussions on enhancing both the environmental, ecological and economic advantages resulting from actively managing pine forest land. In addition, participants discussed how forestry consultants can work with landowners to develop a strategy to maximize the value of your land while your timber reaches maturity for harvest.



Matt Nespeca, a Project Director with The Nature Conservancy said, “One of the scary statistics we have in the U.S. is that in many states, as few as eight percent of forest landowners have a written forest management plan. I think that’s the kind of statistic that should really kick us all into action. We really need to think about ways that we can improve

our planning on our properties and improve the ways that we look at our properties, as a business. It’s a business of increasing wildlife and growing trees and enjoying the property. Landowners should think about managing your property with the professionals you need to help you manage that property appropriately.”

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“The old saying is the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago,” said Monroe. “Today, with proper management, you may see two or three harvests during your lifetime. Timber is a long term investment, but with proper management, it’s pretty exciting to see the benefits many times over.”

Quality Vegetative Management Defined

Quality Vegetation Management (QVM) is a set of principles that creates and sustains healthy habitats through professional, ethical and responsible practices. Participants explained that it’s a way of thinking, a way of acting, and a core set of beliefs that guide vegetation management professionals.

“Forests really respond well to intervention through good management,” Monroe said. “If you manage your timber like it needs to be managed, it’s going to provide a lot of additional benefits beyond just timber such as wildlife habitat, recreation, etc. As with a garden, you buy the seed, fertilize, plant and get it going, but without proper weed management, you can’t get a good crop.”

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 Quality Vegetative Management Certified Advisor,
 Raleigh, North Carolina

Monroe is a QVM™ Certified Advisor, meaning he's participated in training offered through BASF to certify forestry consultants as QVM Advisors.

Quality Vegetative Management Certified Providers are Professional Foresters that Help Landowners:

- ✓ Restore and improve plant, animal and human habitats
- ✓ Seek out and support professional certification and technical training
- ✓ Strive to always make a positive environmental change
- ✓ Apply herbicide responsibly, using the appropriate amount to achieve the desired results
- ✓ Protect threatened and endangered species
- ✓ Support industry research and development

QVM professionals participate in a two-day field and classroom training program where they talk about application techniques, return on investments, wildlife habitat enhancements and cost sharing. Monroe said, "At the end, we took an exam. I was very impressed with the program and learned a lot. It's definitely a good thing – one more thing I can offer my clients that I didn't have before."

Monroe said, "I was really impressed with the training and the consultants. We looked at demonstration plots and an excellent training program. The goal is to help restore and improve forest habitats and to make sure that when you give advice, it's good advice." He said the herbicide training was substantive and helped him learn how to advise better. "As far as herbicides, it's good to know what you need to know. For landowners, they get good advice from someone who knows how to go about it in a responsible manner."

Where A QVM Advisor Fits

A QVM Certified Advisor can help landowners increase the value of their timber land asset by recommending ways to improve wildlife habitat, in getting the best value when selling timber and in developing long-range management plans to insure that a forest is meeting its income potential.

Monroe told participants it is important for landowners to understand their goals and objectives with their pine forest, then to establish priorities and goals. He said, "I always first recommend we do a forest management plan for the land that they own," He added, "I ask the client to indicate the use of the property, the history of it and any practices that have been performed in the past and how. I ask what their objectives are and then, we prepare a 10-year plan so that it helps me understand what the landowner wants and their objectives. Then we incorporate their objectives into the plan so they can see where they're headed and the steps that they'll need to take over time.

Some states or counties have requirements on forestland for tax purposes. Monroe stated, "In North Carolina, a lot of the counties ask that a forest

management plan be turned into the tax assessor's office in order to lower your taxes." He said that using a QVM Certified Advisor helps in this instance. "You can document your forest management, so that satisfies that requirement."

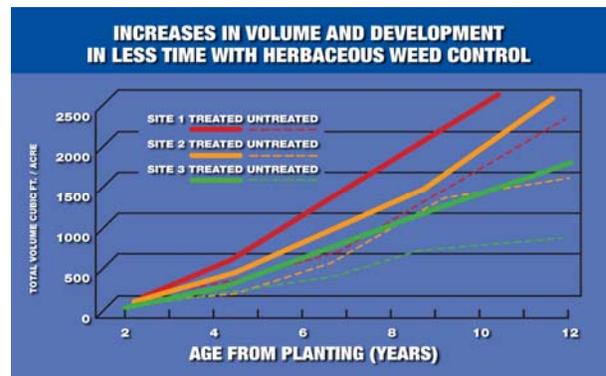
Alton Cobb, a non-industrial private forest landowner from Jackson, Mississippi said he's been working with a QVM Certified Advisor for a couple of years. "He has helped me look at managing in a whole different way than just selling a stack of timber here and there. It is a more comprehensive look."

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Cobb added that his QVM Certified Advisor assists him in managing in several ways. "He helps me in terms of purchasing the trees, contracting for the planting, supervising the planting, choosing the contractors for the herbicide application. I pay him some money but he saves me money, too. Because he's a good sized consultant, he gets better prices than I could get. I feel comfortable with him." In addition, Cobb added, "The final reason is that I'm growing older and I want to have continuity of this land for my children and grandchildren. I think this particular company and group will provide that."

Using Low-Volume Herbicides

While there are many challenges to managing weeds and controlling grasses in pine forests, Nespeca stated, "Really, the main culprit and the biggest problem with newly planted seedlings are panemics and some of these really early annual grasses." He stressed that inadequate early pine stand management is very detrimental. "With good management, research shows you can gain enough growth on a volume basis to actually take a year off of the rotation of a pine stand."



Source: Glover, Creighton, Gjerstad J. Forestry, 1989 and other research.

Nespeca added, "An additional benefit of working with a QVM professional is that they not only can advise you about herbaceous weed control, but about what mix of Arsenal® herbicide Applicator's Concentrate (Arsenal AC) or other products are needed in the tank to give you the greatest survival

and growth of that pine stand within those first two years.”

Participants cited Arsenal AC as a low-volume herbicide case in point. They noted that Arsenal AC provided broad-spectrum activity on brush and select mid-story tree species. Cobb explained, “On a Conservation Reserve Project plantation, after thinning we sprayed with Arsenal AC in the fall. We’d had a lot of brush in that land.” Cobb said he was pleased with the results. “We had terrific control with the Arsenal AC. We have a lot more plant material available to wildlife just by having managed the thick brush.”

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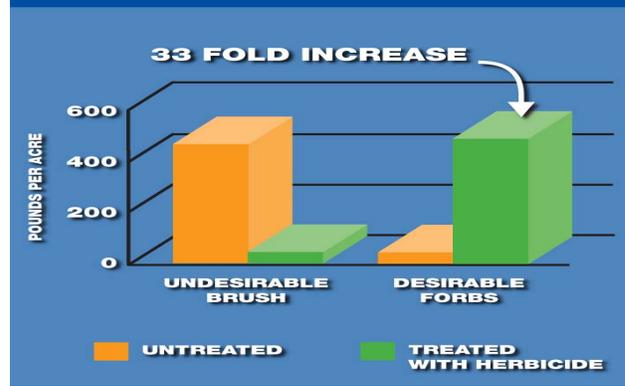
Monroe added, “I wouldn’t recommend really any reforestation without the use of herbicides.” He said the benefits are proven through time and at many levels. “With the use of genetically improved seedlings and herbicides and proper management, I really believe it offers great returns.”

Better Wildlife Habitats Result with Management

While many people believe letting nature take its course is best, Bryan Burhans, Director of Land Management with the National Wild Turkey Federation said, “What’s ironic is we’ve *stopped* nature from taking its best course by putting up infrastructure of roads, communities, etc. So bringing back the diversity of many types of plants and animals in that forest is critical. An actively managed forest provides a great deal of diversity. It provides many types of plant species where wild turkeys, quail, deer and other wildlife feed. That’s really critical. An unmanaged forest will not provide the diversity of plants or wildlife.”

Nespeca added, “In working with landowners that are actively managing with quality vegetation management strategies, they’re controlling unwanted brush and getting the right plants established for game species. But there’s also an amazing benefit with the amount of other ground birds and neo-tropical songbirds that return to those properties through the same management techniques.”

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Source: Hurst, G.A., 1987. Proceedings of the Southern Weed Science Soc.

Managed habitat provides visibility and aesthetics of both the habitat and presence of the wildlife, Demarais added, “When you have a hardwood mid-story that you can’t see more than 10 feet in, you cannot see the deer in the habitat. By removing that mid-story brush canopy, you greatly increase the opportunity to see deer.” He notes that is a benefit to hunters. “If you create this food habitat under the pines, you’re creating deer habitat where deer live. You tend to see them from a deer stand much sooner in the day because they’re living in their habitat where they eat.”

Healthy Environment for Deer

Active vegetation management practices are proven in research and in practice to increase the availability of vegetation for wildlife species. Dr. Steve Demarais with Mississippi State University’s Department of Wildlife and Fisheries was involved in research conducted at Mississippi State University that estimated the ability of the habitat to supply nutrition for deer.

The late rotation study shows the number of deer days per acre, in managed versus unmanaged late rotation pine habitat. Demarais summarized, “Results showed that managed habitat supported almost 110 deer days per acre of foraging capacity as compared to about five days per acre on the unmanaged habitat. Another way to interpret the data is that roughly 3.5 acres would maintain a deer nutritionally for a year compared to over 70 acres.”

Economic, Safety Benefits

Research indicates managed forest land yield improved returns for non-industrial private landowners. Participants said their experience had shown significant economic and aesthetic value appreciation.

Panelists noted that economic return potential is greatly improved through vegetation management. Monroe said QVM Certified Advisors stay in touch with the mills and follow the market so they can accurately and readily give their landowners the most up to date information on the best time to sell. “We don’t work for industry, we work for our client. Buyers like working with the consultant because they know that we take care of a lot of the details. For example, when we sell timber we’ll show the volume so they can be assured of what they’re buying.”



Source: Adapted from: Yin and Sedjo, *Journal of Forestry*, Dec. 2001

Monroe added, “Studies show by using a consultant forester, the landowner typically nets anywhere from 20 to 40 percent more for their timber than what they’d get on their own.”

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Cobb agreed, “I know I certainly feel more comfortable knowing that I have a competent person whose managing these crews of timber and giving the volume estimates and sizes and quality and all those details that they prepare. I think the buyers are more attracted to come in and bid on the timber. We, generally, get 10 to 15 to 20 bids on our sales.”

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Monroe added, “I’ve read the studies that show that over time, timberland and timber is a very good investment. It’s a good hedge against inflation and it also is growing tax-free all those years. You know, there is a very slight risk too. You do have some risk of wind and fire and pine beetles but it’s relatively small – a very, very small percentage that’s affected in a year. So, compared to the stock market, I believe that by using the herbicides and proper management, you can certainly achieve, from what I’ve seen, at least 10 percent or more, average per year over the rotation. Plus, you get the benefits of the land appreciation over time, and of course, the enjoyment of owning land and hunting and viewing wildlife. It’s a good thing for your family to enjoy and to leave your children or grandchildren.

Value of QVM Professionals

Monroe added, “We talked a lot about vegetation management, and that’s obviously critical. But the value of the QVM Certified Advisor goes beyond that.” He added, “Many people think about using an advisor when it comes time to sell timber. It’s a critical step. You may do all the things right from reforestation, the burning, the herbicides, the thinning. But if you make a mistake at selling your timber, you may lose all the profits that you would have gained. So, not only can an advisor help you with the management of that forestland, but when it comes time to sell the timber, it’s going to get you a lot higher price and a better harvest. That’s true especially selling soft timber. That is where your real money is and that’s really what the goal generally is.”

Private forest landowners and specialists agreed that well managed forestland yields significant gains in aesthetic, economic and environmental conditions. The value a QVM Certified Advisor provides is an organized, orchestrated approach to managing the forestland in such a way it yields optimal benefits in each of those areas. Dr. Demarais said, “It takes a very planned effort to optimize the value of the land and the (habitat) for the wildlife.” He added it takes focused objectives and targeted actions to effectively meet those needs.

Burhans said, “Success is about being prepared and that’s what an actively managed forest does for you. It takes active management to get diversity of wildlife established and in order.” He said he’d encourage landowners to get the support they need to make that diversity happen. “You just can’t do it on your own. Find a professional that gets up every day and thinks, ‘What am I going to do today to learn about forests to do a better job?’ Find that forestry professional out there and you’ll get more wildlife and you’ll make more money off your timber.”

If you are interested in being contacted by a QVM Advisor, visit this site and enter your management goals: www.vmanswers.com/locateadvisor.

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Beck Ag offers professionals opportunities to learn about products, innovative technologies and business practices from their peers through interactive telephone conversations.

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