

Facilities

Construction of the pavilion was completed in 1999. Since then, it has been used extensively for Extension and teaching activities. This facility, which includes a kitchen and bathrooms, can easily accommodate more than 100 visitors.



The MOT also has a well-maintained network of roads allowing vehicle access to much of the 400-acre demonstration forest. More than five miles of trails and fire lines provide additional walking and hiking access to remote portions of the management area.



To learn more about Extension Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, visit www.aces.edu/natural-resources/forestry-wildlife/index.php

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**Mary Olive Thomas
Demonstration Forest**



**A 400-ACRE
CLASSROOM
FOR LANDOWNERS**

Welcome to the Mary Olive Thomas Demonstration Forest

Located along Moore's Mill Road just east of Auburn, Alabama, the Mary Olive Thomas (MOT) Demonstration Forest is a 400-acre forest used to show landowners forest and wildlife management practices to enhance their land.



Thanks to the generosity of Mary Olive Thomas, this forest has been used by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and the Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences since 1977 and was designated an Alabama Treasure Forest in 1979. In keeping with Ms. Thomas's wishes, this demonstration forest continues to be managed with the private landowner in mind, demonstrating many different management techniques.



Forests

Historic photos show that much of this site was in row crops in the late 1930s.



Today, southern pine forests of loblolly, shortleaf, and longleaf pine make up the majority of the upland wooded area on the forest. Upland and bottomland hardwood forests make up more than 20 percent of the forested area on the MOT.

Wildlife

Although work specifically for wildlife habitat enhancement has been limited, traditional forest management techniques, such as forest regeneration, thinning, and prescribed fire, have improved habitat for many wildlife species. White-tailed deer and wild turkey are often seen on the forest as well as many songbirds, bobwhite quail, and coyote. Bluebird boxes have also been maintained around forest openings.



Ecological Work

Controlling non-native invasive species, such as Chinese privet and cogongrass, has become a focus of land management across the Southeast, and the MOT has been no exception. For years, work has been done to eliminate invasive species, such as privet, autumn olive, and silverthorn, from roadsides and creek bottoms. When these non-native plants are removed, desirable native species such as switch cane can return.

Prescribed fire is another important land management tool used on the forest. Across the South, fire historically occurred at regular intervals. These regular but not necessarily annual fires helped maintain a native grass understory giving the forest a park-like appearance. Several burning demonstrations are located on the MOT. These are often completed with the help of the Alabama Forestry Commission or Auburn School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences students in the Forest Fire Management course.

