A BRIEF HISTORY OF
TEMPLE LAND OWNERSHIP AND
MANAGEMENT
IN EAST TEXAS, 1893-2007

by Jonathan Gerland

In the last quarter of 2007 Temple-Inland sold 1.15 million acres of the Texas forest to a timber investment company and transferred another 57,000 acres of forestland in Texas to a spin-off real estate group. Although not unexpected, since intentions were announced in advance, the divestiture of so much East Texas land was nevertheless difficult to imagine.
For one hundred and fourteen years owning and managing forestlands in East Texas was fundamental to the operation of the Temple companies. Acquiring land, not just the timber on it, was what separated Temple from all the cut-out-and-get-out companies of a century ago, and experience soon taught that a growing forest would sustain the Company through good times and bad. The forest was “an invaluable reserve,” “a critical hedge against future market fluctuations,” and “our greatest asset,” according to persistent declarations in annual stockholder’s reports. One report of the 1950s affirmed the forest would “ensure faith in the future of our company and its ultimate destiny.”

As the title suggests, this very brief history, or chronicle, focuses on Temple land ownership and management in Texas, although Temple came to own forestlands in Louisiana, Georgia, and Alabama as well. Through various expansions, mergers, acquisitions, and spin-offs, Temple also came to be more than a forest products company, but the East Texas forest is where it all began.

1890s

In 1893 Thomas Lewis Latane Temple of Texarkana organized Southern Pine Lumber Company and began purchasing timberland in southern Angelina County. He founded the company town of Diboll, where he built a large sawmill on the tracks of the Houston East & West Texas Railway in 1894.

Temple prospered immediately due to a booming national economy demanding new supplies of softwood building materials and he invested heavily in additional land and timber as well as new manufacturing plants. In 1899 Temple helped organize Lufkin Land & Lumber Company, which operated a large sawmill just east of Lufkin, about 12 miles north of Diboll, primarily supplied by pine timber east of the mill in Angelina and San Augustine counties.

1900s

As his land holdings increased, Temple incorporated two short line railroads in 1900 to tap distant timber and provide advantageous outlets for finished forest products. The Texas Southeastern Railroad (still in business today) served the Diboll operation and the Texas & Louisiana Railroad served the Lufkin mill. In 1903 Temple sold his Lufkin interests and used the proceeds to acquire a one-third interest in Garrison-Norton Lumber Company at Pineland, in Sabine County, in 1906.

Temple also further developed the operations of Southern Pine Lumber Company at Diboll, continuing land and timber acquisition in a northwestwardly direction along the Neches River valley, owning 124,653 acres of fee simple lands and another 84,668 acres of timber rights in Angelina, Trinity, Cherokee, Houston, and Anderson counties by 1907. He upgraded Diboll’s pine sawmill in 1903, doubling its capacity, and added a hardwood mill three years later. Forest management practices were primarily selectively harvesting to allow for a second cutting.
1910s

During this decade Temple continued aggressive land acquisition in the Neches valley and added a third sawmill, another hardwood mill, at Diboll in 1912. At Pineland, Temple gained controlling interest in Garrison-Norton Lumber Company and changed its name to Temple Lumber Company in 1910.

To protect second growth pine timber on cutover lands in Trinity County from fire and other threats, Southern Pine Lumber Company General Manager L. D. Gilbert hired experienced cattlemen John Jones Ray (1868-1941) to graze cattle on a large company ranch known as Rayville and hired many Mexican immigrants to chop brush and deaden hardwoods to promote pine regeneration. In 1913 Ray began fencing and cross-fencing tens of thousand of acres, some with hog proof fencing, and hired armed “pasture riders” to keep trespassers out and protect company property. The ranch also addressed an important legal need to demonstrate title to the land, since devastating courthouse fires at two county seats in the 1870s had destroyed Trinity County records, causing title difficulties. Interestingly, the company’s longtime head of the land and timber department, Dave Kenley, was a cattlemen also, who grazed his own cattle on cutover company lands for several decades.

Also during the 1910s Temple began using steam skidders in both the Diboll and Pineland logging operations. Although the Temple companies began steam skidding a little later than most of their competitors, the practice remained highly controversial, since the massive 4-line cables were destructive to young growth timber. Temple continued the use of steam skidders well into the 1920s but experienced its ill effects for years following. In 1940 General Manager Henry G. Temple described steam skidded tracts near Fastrill, in Cherokee County, as “practically waste land.”

1920s

In the early 1920s, Southern Pine Lumber Company General Manager L. D. Gilbert advocated state and federal acquisition of cutover lands in Texas for the purpose of reforestation, claiming the existing forest tax laws made growing trees unprofitable to private capital. Meanwhile the Temple companies actively worked with the newly organized Texas Forest Service in forest conservation projects, especially forest fire prevention.

In Trinity County it was discovered that the protection given to timber and cattle a decade earlier incidentally conserved wild game, which previously had been hunted to near extinction in the area, especially deer. With deer herds restored within about 35,000 acres of the fenced ranch, T. L. L. Temple built a Company hunting club house on Boggy Slough in 1922, where customers, county commissioners, legislators, insurance officials, and other business associates were entertained. Some Company executives began building personal clubhouses nearby.
a few years later. As game continued to increase, so did the number of trespassers, and Temple began to lease lands to individuals and sportsman organizations who agreed to protect the timber as well as the game. Also, between 1926 and 1936, about 20,000 acres in Trinity and Houston counties were leased to the Texas Game & Fish Commission as a wildlife preserve. Still, trespassing remained a troublesome issue until tougher trespassing laws were enacted in the 1930s and 1940s.

Meanwhile, near Pineland in 1921, Temple acquired a large sawmill at Hemphill (Knox Lumber Company), another short line railroad (Lufkin, Hemphill & Gulf), and more than 7,500 acres of timberland in Sabine and San Augustine counties. In 1928 Temple purchased another 9,000 acres of timberland to supply the Hemphill mill.

The Temple companies continued to acquire and harvest merchantable hardwood saw timber throughout the decade. In 1927, Southern Pine Lumber Company acquired hardwood timber in San Jacinto County and built an impressive steel railroad bridge across the Trinity River near Goodrich to reach it and haul it to the Diboll mills, no small feat for a Texas lumber company at the time.

1930s

The 1930s witnessed both retrenchment and continued investment in the forests. Despite nationally depressed economic conditions which began at the end of the previous decade, the Temple companies continued to acquire additional land and timber through 1932. In 1930 Temple Lumber Company purchased a new heavy
steam logging locomotive, possibly the last new steam locomotive ordered by a lumber company anywhere in the South. In 1934 Southern Pine Lumber Company began investing in a fleet of new company motor trucks to haul logs. Since available timber had become sparse, using trucks over public roads and highways, especially when tapping outside timber, was often more practical than constructing and maintaining company railroads. Still, railroad logging would continue into the early 1960s. During the 1930s, the Diboll mainline logging railroad stretched 70 miles up the Neches River to points several miles north of the Texas State Railroad, between Rusk and Palestine, in Cherokee and Anderson counties. At Pineland timber traveled over the Santa Fe railroad through the 1950s.

In early 1933 Arthur Temple Sr. urged State Senator John S. Redditt of Lufkin to sponsor legislation that would enable the federal government to purchase cutover forest lands in Texas. Company officials advised it would be beneficial to sell cutover lands and have the government absorb the expense of reforestation. Redditt sponsored an enabling bill that was passed by the Texas legislature in May 1933, and Temple offered to sell considerable acreage in Sabine, Newton, and Trinity counties. In 1935 the federal government agreed to buy only 80,196 acres in Sabine County and 5,187 acres in Trinity County at $2.50 an acre, among the lowest prices paid to any of the eleven lumber companies selling land. Temple wanted to sell significantly more acreage, but also wanted more money per acre. Furthermore, title requirements by the government seem to have prevented the sale of some lands, especially in Trinity County. In the end, Temple sold some 77,806 acres, all in Sabine County, except for very small stretches into Jasper and Shelby counties, for $194,514, reserving for 5 years all the remaining pine and hardwood timber on about 40,000 acres. The Temple lands made up a large portion of the Sabine National Forest, officially declared in 1936.

In 1938 Southern Pine Lumber Company purchased 12,482 acres of timberland in Polk and Trinity counties from Wm. Cameron & Company and exchanged 47,000 acres of timberland in Angelina, Trinity, Polk, and Houston counties for stock in the new Southland Paper Mill in Lufkin. The previous year the large sawmill at Hemphill burned and
company officials chose not to rebuild, since timber resources in that area had dwindled considerably.

In 1939, working with the U.S. and Texas forest services, Temple inventoried some 239,000 acres of company timberlands to determine whether a new sustained yield program would be possible (operating so that harvest would not exceed growth). Four graduate foresters assisted in the project.

1940s

The 1940s began with significant efforts to develop and implement the new forest sustained yield policy to address decades of cutting timber “this way and that,” as expressed in 1940 by Henry Temple. Company leaders began to call for the hiring of full-time professional foresters “to cut our timber more intelligently,” and within a few years full-time graduate foresters were hired at both Pineland and Diboll.

Following World War II, Arthur Temple Sr. opposed the federal government’s dam projects on the Neches and Angelina rivers, saying they were “extravagant” and needlessly took out of production great amounts of timber-growing lands. He consented in 1948 that Dam B (authorized in 1945, built 1947-1953) might “be good in the long run” if proponents of dams would be satisfied enough to put aside plans for Rockland Dam (first suggested in the 1930s), a highly controversial proposal still today.

In 1941 Southern Pine Lumber Company closed Fastrill, in Cherokee County, due to meager timber supplies in the area. Timber from elsewhere supplemented the supply to the Diboll mills, some of it coming...
from as far away as Hardin and Liberty counties. For a time some company logging crews rode company work buses between Diboll and the woods, but contract logging became more economical and increased as the decade progressed.

Also in 1941 Southern Pine Lumber Company built a new Company hunting clubhouse near the former Rayville Ranch headquarters in Trinity County, replacing the earlier one on Boggy Slough itself built two decades earlier. The new clubhouse was larger and more accessible, especially in wet weather, and was a popular, some would say famous, site of Company meetings and entertainments until it was destroyed by fire in 1966 and not rebuilt. In 1948 Temple Lumber Company built its own hunting club house at Scrappin’ Valley in northern Newton County, which is still in use today by Temple-Inland.

Additionally in 1941 Southern Pine Lumber Company began using blue paint to mark land boundaries. In 1948 Southern Pine Lumber Company initiated a scholarship in the School of Forestry at Stephen F. Austin State University.

1950s

Forest improvement continued to be a high priority throughout the 1950s. Following the death of Arthur Temple Sr. in 1951, Arthur Jr. oversaw a complete reorganization of all company operations, which included heavy expenditures for timber stand improvement and additions to a rapidly developing modern forestry department. In annual reports to stockholders throughout the decade, the forest, despite its accompanying legal difficulties and tax burdens, was identified as the company’s “basic asset” in ensuring “faith in the future of our company and its ultimate destiny.”

The Temple companies bought significant amounts of timber on the open market during the decade, allowing their own valuable timber to grow and improve, especially at Pineland where it was needed the most. In some years, Temple bought more than 50 million board feet of timber from others.

In 1956 Southern Pine Lumber Company and Temple Lumber Company merged under the Southern Pine name, consolidating nearly 400,000 acres of timberlands.

(narrative continued on page 18)
Frank Rushing, a Rayville cowboy and pasture rider, in about 1928. Some company riders held commissions with the state as special rangers or special game wardens.
A cattle feedlot at Rayville in the 1920s. The company ranch supported about 5,000 head of native cattle bred with imported Brahma bulls. The ranch was phased out during the late 1920s and closed during the early 1930s. As a result of protecting about 35,000 acres of fenced and cross-fenced areas, dwindling herds of deer found a haven in the confines of the ranch, which was a state game preserve between 1926 and 1936. Today, much of the area is more commonly known as South Boggy Slough Hunting Club, named for the waterway Boggy Slough.

Corrals at the Rayville rail siding sometime in the 1920s. Note the railroad cattle car in the left background. The ranch was served by the Texas Southeastern Railroad, a Temple family line.
As part of the reorganization, Diboll became a pine milling operation only and Pineland began to mill only hardwoods.

Meanwhile, beginning in March 1952 Southern Pine Lumber Company leased the site of the former Fastrill logging camp in Cherokee County to the Texas Forest Service for the home of a new tree improvement research program, the first of its kind in the South. Still active today, the site was named the Arthur Temple Sr. Research Area and has been fully occupied with progeny tests, scion banks, seed orchards, and breeding arboretums for the past 55 years.

In addition to rebuilding the sawmills, Temple added various new processing facilities at Diboll and Pineland, such as de-barkers and chippers as well as flooring, insulation, fiberboard, and wood preservation plants, to name just a few. By 1954 two-thirds of Southern Pine Lumber Company’s logging operations were performed by contract, with “substantial savings” resulting, according to the company’s 1954 annual report. A minerals division was also added during the decade.

The last annual stockholders’ report of the decade stressed the importance of continuing “to place major emphasis on timber stand improvement and perfection of land titles, a long range plan for the health of the forest asset from which our whole operations stems.”

1960s

The first half of the decade saw very little outside timber purchases, due to the relatively low cost of timber from the Company’s own lands realized by the management efforts of the previous decade. The Company’s focus during the first half of the 1960s was continuing to develop new processing facilities, such
as a pioneer plywood plant at Diboll and a particle board plant at Pineland, and increased involvement in mortgage lending and urban real estate development firms such as Scotch Investment Company and Lumberman’s Investment Corporation. Temple also acquired Texas Gypsum Company, adding it to a diversified mix of building products. The directors of Southern Pine Lumber Company changed the corporate name to Temple Industries in January 1964, saying the new name more appropriately described the varied activities of the rapidly expanding Company.

One of the more interesting events of this pivotal decade was the establishment of another subsidiary real estate company to develop certain timberlands in East Texas, which had a very low book value (or original purchase cost), into high value real estate. The directors of Southern Pine Lumber Company changed the corporate name to Temple Industries in January 1964, saying the new name more appropriately described the varied activities of the rapidly expanding Company.

One of the more interesting events of this pivotal decade was the establishment of another subsidiary real estate company to develop certain timberlands in East Texas, which had a very low book value (or original purchase cost), into high value real estate. Some timberlands near towns and cities and on lakes and highways had increased in value to such an extent it was no longer practical to consider those tracts as economic timber growing units. Examples included many dozens of miles of shoreline on the new lakes of Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend, also urban lands near developing cities such as Lufkin. Sabine Investment Company was organized to develop and sell these high value lands for commercial and recreational uses, with a portion of the profits reinvested in rural timberlands, replacing growing timber that was taken out of production.

By 1966 Temple returned to purchasing considerable amounts of timber on the open market to supplement timber from its own fee lands. It was the Company’s policy to purchase sufficient timber each year (some years up to 40% of needs) so that harvest from its own lands did not exceed growth. In 1966 a new stud sawmill was constructed at Pineland to mill only purchased pine.
timber. In 1967 Temple entered a long-term agreement with paper mills for the exchange of pine chips from low-grade trees for pine saw timber to supplement timber supplies from its own lands. In 1968 the Diboll sawmill was completely rebuilt and upgraded after a devastating fire, and a new fiberboard plant with double the capacity of the former one neared completion in 1969.

1968 and 1969 were record years for Temple Industries. 1969’s sales exceeded $50 million and net earnings were $5.5 million. Also in 1969, an additional 600,000 shares of stock were sold through a group of underwriters in May, and Temple stock was listed on the New York Stock Exchange in September. This public offering of stock resulted in more than 4,000 new shareholders in the company.

With record income, continued growth in manufacturing, and new investors, Temple returned to purchasing more land, closing the decade with ownership of more than 460,000 acres of the East Texas forest. (About 18,000 acres of this was owned by the subsidiary Sabine Investment Company).

1970s

Temple Industries began the decade of the 1970s as an aggressive publicly traded company on the rise. Targeting the many new shareholders, annual reports devoted much attention to forest management education. The Temple forests were “perpetual,” the 1970 report claimed, sustaining more than 2 billion board feet of growing timber despite doubling the harvest of a decade ago. The reports outlined and explained the importance of
environmental concerns, wildlife conservation, recreational opportunities, selective harvesting, replanting, insect and disease control, and maintaining a strong raw material base. Color photographs of people and wildlife enjoying healthy forests graced the covers and pages. The 1971 report closed with, “Although not reflected on the balance sheet, the raw material inventory on our forests is our greatest asset.” The 1972 report equated ownership of 13 shares of stock to indirect ownership of one acre of land.

With 1972 came public statements concerning clearcutting, or even-age management of the forest. The company’s 1971 annual report, issued in March 1972, spoke against clearcutting as a single tool management practice. Admitting some isolated areas required clearcutting, the report

Judge Robert Elmer Minton (1878-1968), early and longtime Southern Pine Lumber Company attorney, was an avid hunter and sportsman who aggressively prosecuted trespassing and illegal hunting on company lands. By his own recollection in the 1950s, he remembered having injunctions against some 300 persons in Trinity County, mostly during the 1920s and early 1930s. Coonskin-capped, he poses with a deer he killed with his muzzle-loading rifle in Trinity County in about 1930.
stressed an un-even age forest provided the best ecological balance. In a much publicized address to a meeting of the Southern Forest Products Association in New Orleans in April 1972, Arthur Temple Jr. said clearcutting was only “one string in our bow. Properly used, I think it’s great. But I object violently to the pat answers that say it is the concept of the future. I think that’s ridiculous!” He explained that trees, or their growth, had “covered up a lot of ignorance on our part over the years, fantastic mistakes that Mother Nature has recouped for us. No other resource-oriented industry can make that statement.” But clearcutting, he suggested, was a dangerous “fad” from which the industry might not recover. Besides, it was “visual pollution.”

The tide of even-age management, however, soon overwhelmed arguments against it. In 1973 Time, Inc. acquired Temple Industries and merged it with Eastex Pulp and Paper Company to form Temple-Eastex, a Time subsidiary. Temple brought approximately 450,000 acres of Texas timberland to the mix while Eastex, with a large paper mill at Evadale, brought about 670,000 acres. Following the acquisition, clearcutting became an increasingly used tool in a soon to be dominant pulpwood program. By 1976, about 23% of Temple-Eastex’s combined million acre East Texas forest was even-aged pine plantations, and the percentage would continue to grow, at the rate of more than 20,000 acres annually well into the 1980s.

The remaining years of the decade were filled with continued expansion of all operations, which required just under half of Temple-Eastex’s fiber needs be met by outside timber. The company’s timber policy continued to be one of harvesting less from its own lands than the annual growth of forest. (narrative continued on page 28)
Early management of the forests consisted of vigorously chopping, girdling, and poisoning unwanted hardwoods to promote pine regeneration. Kenneth Nelson, head of Southern Pine Lumber Company's land & timber department, poses with a poisoned hardwood tract in Cherokee County in 1949.

Southern Pine Lumber Company woods sawyers pose in the process of girdling a hardwood in 1951. Albert Mitchell, whose likeness served as a model for the “Working Man” statue erected on the grounds of Temple-Inland’s corporate office in Diboll in 1986, stands in the background.
Kenneth Nelson (far left) supervises the loading of hardwood pulpwood on Temple lands in the 1950s.

A diesel grader prepares a new road in a thick pine plantation in Trinity County in 1949.
Tree planting at the former Rayville Ranch (Boggy Slough), Trinity County, in January 1950.

Southern Pine Lumber Company crews perform a controlled burn on former ranch land in Trinity County before replanting with longleaf pine in January 1950. Note the planted pine stand in the right background.
Inauguration of Southern Pine Lumber Company’s mechanized tree planting in December 1950 consisted of a company forester riding a small modified plow behind a tractor, as seen here in Trinity County.

Above and opposite page:

The rarity of hardwood and cypress logs like these gave reason to pause for the camera in the late 1950s. These giants were cut on Southern Pine Lumber Company lands near Evadale in June 1958 and were carried by the Santa Fe railroad to Pineland for milling. The Diboll News-Bulletin reported the gum logs measured 800 to 1,000 board feet each, with some cypress logs measuring nearly 2,000 board feet.
Meanwhile, a company nursery was producing more than 13 million seedlings a year by 1975 and developed in 1977 a new genetically superior loblolly pine said to grow between 15% and 25% faster than the common loblolly. By 1975 roads on company forest lands exceeded 1,400 miles.

Beginning in 1973 and continuing for several years following, Temple-Eastex sold about 27,000 acres of timber land to the newly established Big Thicket National Preserve and refrained from harvesting the lands while governmental delays stalled completion of the transaction. By 1978 Temple-Eastex had purchased more than 35,000 acres of forest land to replace the 27,000 acres sold to the federal government. In 1977 Temple-Eastex donated 2,138 acres of ecologically important arid sandyland to the Nature Conservancy, naming it the Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary in honor of Time, Inc.’s vice chairman, Roy E. Larsen, a lifelong conservationist.

In 1978 Time Inc. acquired Inland Container Corporation, which in addition to owning more than two dozen containerboard and corrugated container plants nationwide, owned half interest in the Georgia Kraft Company, whose assets included a sawmill, a plywood mill, several linerboard mills, and 925,000 acres of forest land in Georgia and Alabama.

The 1970s consisted of several watershed events. Temple Industries’ acquisition by Time, Inc. and subsequent merger with Eastex Pulp and Paper Company was significant, and redefined Temple’s forest management decisions. Time, Inc.’s subsequent acquisition of Inland Container Corporation, heavily influenced by Arthur Temple’s direction on the board, was equally important. In only a few short years, Time, Inc. had become a fully integrated and diversified forest products company owning a vast assortment of conversion facilities and extensive Southern forest lands in Texas, Georgia, and Alabama. However, the majority of those lands, 1.1 million acres, were located in Texas.

1980s

The 1980s were similarly eventful. By 1980 Temple-Eastex, still a Time Inc. subsidiary, was planting about 30 million pine seedlings annually in Texas and had developed a 35-year forest rotation plan, which included initial pulpwood harvests at 15 to 20 years and a quality sawtimber harvest at 30 to 35 years. Harvest management was computer
guided and cutting schedules were prepared to the year 2012. A land improvement strategy defined goals of consolidating ownerships into more efficient management units, the selling or trading of tracts too valuable for timber production, and the acquisition of properties within 40 miles of production facilities. Wildlife management, a continuing Temple concern, was redefined during early 1980s with the hiring of fulltime wildlife biologists. Also, foresters began to research the hardwood forestlands looking to regeneration techniques and management options which would be implemented in the early 1990s.

A new company, Temple-Inland Inc., began operations on January 1, 1984, following Time Inc.’s spin-off of its forest products operations. The new company consisted of the former Temple Industries, Eastex Pulp and Paper, and Inland Container companies plus subsidiaries. From the Temple perspective, the old company that was sold in 1973 reemerged a decade later larger and stronger than could have been imagined, and ownership of the Texas forest more than doubled.
In Temple-Inland’s first annual report, issued in February 1984 for the year 1983, the Texas timberlands returned to prominence. Temple-Inland was Texas’ largest industrial land owner, and employed some seventy professional foresters to manage 1.1 million acres of the East Texas forest. Because most of the land purchases occurred during the early 1900s, they carried a company book value of less than $100 an acre, the report stated. The goal of the new company was continued management of the forest for maximum profitability while maintaining its long-term productivity. An even-age management plan also continued, and by 1984, 400,000 acres of Temple-Inland’s Texas forest had been converted to pine plantations.

The 1986 annual shareholders’ report continued to feature the forest prominently, declaring timberlands were “historically a principal source of value for the Company.” Since studies had shown most company lands were best suited for pine stands, the report explained the need for conversion of the natural forest to “fast growing pine plantations,” claiming “growth rates in many plantations are twice that which is historically experienced in natural timber stands, and we plan to continue to convert additional acres to plantations each year.” Also in 1986, Temple-Inland purchased a containerboard mill at Orange, Texas, along with 260,000 acres of forest lands in Texas and Louisiana and a short-line railroad (Sabine Valley & Northern) from Owens-Illinois, Inc.. The following year Temple-Inland completed a new state-of-the-art sawmill and woodchip facility at Buna, near Orange, which was designed to efficiently convert logs of all diameters to a wide range of lumber sizes and grades and
produce up to 185,000 tons of chips which could be shipped over the newly acquired rail line to the nearby company paper mills at Evadale and Orange.

By the end of the decade, more than half of the Company’s East Texas forestlands were converted pine plantations, supplying 75% of all the company’s sawtimber needs and 57% of pulpwood needs. A new tree nursery near Jasper, named for longtime Temple employee Clyde Thompson, opened in 1989. The year 1989 was also Temple-Inland’s third consecutive record year, with revenues of $2.1 billion and earnings per share of $3.75.

1990s

Along with other industry leaders, Temple-Inland redefined forest management during the 1990s. Public opinion and new market expectations concerning the environment led most of the forest products industry and forest landowners to adopt voluntary standards, or best management practices, in 1990. Temple-Inland’s customized approach culminated in 1995 with the adoption of Forestry Principles, which stated management practices would maintain all forestlands as a “multiple resource asset.” Included with fiber production was consideration for wildlife, plant life, water quality, air quality, and aesthetics. In 1996 the position of Special Use Forester was created to manage the benefits of natural forests and in 1999 Special Use merged with Hardwood Management to form the Natural Forest Management Group.

The decade also saw the beginnings of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, designed by the American Forestry and Paper Association in 1994 as a code of conduct for the forest products industry in the United States, and the International Standards Organization’s 1996 environmental management standard known as ISO 14001. Temple-Inland foresters worked throughout the late 1990s to develop management processes to be third-party certified to these new environmental standards, and in 1998 received the
Environmental Protection Agency’s Environmental Excellence Award.


2000s

By 2001 all of Temple-Inland’s timberlands received SFI and ISO 14001 certification, and the company was re-certified annually by audits. In 2005 Temple-Inland earned the Secretary of the Interior’s Conservation Service Award for contributions to the management and conservation of natural resources on Company lands.

In February 2007 Temple-Inland celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first private corporate nursery in Texas to grow tree seedlings with a ceremonial “lifting” of the Company’s billionth seedling. The event marked the beginning of Southwestern Settlement and Development Company’s Stillman Nursery (named for Time, Inc. officer Charles Stillman) in Newton County in the 1950s, which was replaced by the Thompson Nursery in Jasper County in 1989 (named for longtime Temple employee Clyde Thompson).

Also in February 2007 Temple-Inland announced a transformation plan “to maximize shareholder value” by separating Temple-Inland into three focused, stand-alone, public companies and selling its “strategic timberlands.” In October 2007 Temple-Inland sold 1.55 million acres of timberland for $2.38 billion to an investment entity affiliated with The Campbell Group, LLC. The acreage sold consisted of 1.38 million acres of land owned in fee and leases covering another 175,000 acres. The resulting separate companies to be effective by January 2008 were Temple-Inland (manufacturers of corrugated packaging and building products), Guaranty Financial Group (financial services), and Forestar Real Estate Group (real estate operations).
Also included in the land sale were long-term wood fiber agreements to supply the various Temple-Inland mills.

Most of the land sold to The Campbell Group was in Texas, about 1.15 million acres, or about 83% of the total fee lands sold. In addition, Temple-Inland spun off another 57,000 acres of Texas lands to Forestar Real Estate Group and retained about 45,000 acres, which included 12,000 acres known as South Boggy Slough, 8,000 acres known as North Boggy Slough, 11,000 acres known as Scrappin’ Valley, and 14,000 acres for future expansion of converting facilities and other uses. At the time, the Temple million-plus acres of Texas forest was identified as 62% planted pine, 22% natural pine and hardwood mix, 9% hardwood, and 7% non-productive or non-managed. The merchantable timber inventory was identified as 54% pulpwood (40% pine, 14% hardwood) and 46% sawtimber (35% pine, 11% hardwood).

Included in the sale, and offered as a management tool, was a forest conservation analysis that identified more than 213,000 acres of Temple-Inland’s lands in Texas as designated conservation lands having special cultural, historical, and ecological value. The Texas acreage was identified and described in 26 conservation sale blocks, mostly along the Neches River, detailing biological assessments, plant and animal species surveys, and wildlife habitat studies.