

**Declaration Statement
By Pee Dee Land Trust**

Mission

The Pee Dee Land Trust's (PDLT) mission is to conserve, and to promote an appreciation of, the significant natural, agricultural, and historical resources of the Pee Dee Region of South Carolina.

The PDLT pursues its mission through education and direct land conservation in nine counties of northeastern South Carolina. While holding true to our broader mission, the PDLT does support efforts to educate landowners, the general public, and relevant stakeholders about the special characteristics of the longleaf pine ecosystems which were historically widespread and well-suited in the Pee Dee region. Furthermore, the PDLT promotes the conservation of land for agricultural and forestry uses and aids in the protection of sites having the potential to support endemic longleaf pine ecosystems.

Interests

The PDLT's interest in being a partner in *America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative* is based upon the Initiative's goal of beneficial stewardship of a native ecosystem. The re-establishment of longleaf pine communities provides a multitude of benefits such as habitat for unique plants and animals, a favorable stock of timber, and further economic and non-economic functions. The PDLT also supports the Initiative for its collaborative approach which is closely aligned to the Sandhills-Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership, centered upon the Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge and Sandhills State Forest, in which the PDLT is an active partner.

Contributions and Activities

1) Education – The PDLT will continue to educate its members, the public, and relevant stakeholders about the opportunities for establishing longleaf pines and further aspects of maintaining healthy longleaf pine ecosystems. Aspects of this broad undertaking include the distribution of written materials and the making of presentations on the full range of forestry, natural history, and other topics. The PDLT is already participating in the Sandhills-Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership, referenced above, which is currently planning a demonstration workshop. Likewise, the PDLT promotes networking, communication and partnership-building among like-minded landowners through all of its educational programs.

2) Conservation – The PDLT is capable of holding conservation easements and fee title to property and actively pursues such opportunities with willing landowners. While not all landowners are willing to establish longleaf pine communities on their property, the conservation of agricultural / timber lands clearly supports the perpetuation of the longleaf pine ecosystem by serving as wildlife/seed dispersal corridors and increasing the likelihood that prescribed fires can be utilized as a management tool for longleaf pine communities. With respect to the Sandhills-Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership, the PDLT can help to protect the public's investment in federal and state lands by working with adjacent private landowners to buffer the public lands within a matrix of compatible land uses.

Pee Dee Land Trust



Jennie Pez , Executive Director

March 16, 2011