

Declaration of Partnership for Longleaf Conservation
The Nature Conservancy
December 8, 2010

MISSION: The Nature Conservancy is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

INTERESTS: The Nature Conservancy works to advance its conservation mission by working cooperatively with forestland owners, managers and partners at all scales, using proven science-based methodologies in a spirit of broad collaboration. Conservation of the Longleaf Pine ecosystem, arguably the most diverse coniferous forest system in the world, is central to our mission in the Southeast. More than 30 plant and animal species associated with longleaf pine ecosystems are threatened or endangered, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise and Eastern indigo snake. Remnants of remaining longleaf pine forest and associated bottomland forests harbor an amazing 300 species of birds and 2,500 species of plants.

For decades The Nature Conservancy has been dedicated to conserving and restoring these forests, contributing to the protection of over 700,000 acres in the region. To ensure the most benefit for both people and nature, we have focused on protecting, preserving and restoring large landscapes with potential for long-term maintenance as functional longleaf pine forests. The Conservancy has worked with partners to accelerate progress in longleaf conservation, delineated specific strategies within each southern state, and participated in the creation of the Rangewide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine.

Recently the Conservancy launched a new Longleaf Pine “Integrated Landscape Project” to build on local action and strengthen capacity at a regional scale. Integrated Landscapes are a construct within the Conservancy used to describe multi-state units that capture ecological systems at a large scale, and which form the platform for catalytic action – as such, they represent the highest level of visionary conservation and partner engagement by TNC. The Longleaf Pine Integrated Landscape project will provide focus for conservation impact and encompass proving grounds for methodology and strategies.


CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Through the actions of its state-based chapters, the Longleaf Pine Integrated Landscape, and its national organization, The Nature Conservancy intends to leverage and advance goals that closely reflect those of the Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine. Specifically, the Conservancy hopes to work with partners to:

- Protect large tracts and critical public lands in-holdings that will contribute significantly to the ownership and effective management of longleaf pine forestlands
- Maintain forest conditions that reflect both the forest canopy and understory conditions that provide ecosystem functions for the plants and animals that comprise the full biological diversity of the ecosystem
- Participate in the improvement and restoration of both public and private lands

- Further develop partnerships with regional entities engaged in related work, including USDA, USDOJ, DOD, as well as NGOs and state agencies.
- Integrate the longleaf-related strategies of each TNC state chapter to maximize the scale of conservation accomplishment
- Participate in the coordination of strategies and the implementation of programs across the region, including local Implementation Teams in areas of TNC interest.
- Seek opportunities to capitalize on historical relationships with both private landowners and public agencies to advance transformational land protection projects
- Ensure the sharing of knowledge relevant to longleaf pine management and restoration, and work to export methodologies that could advance longleaf system conservation
- Monitor and engage public policy to assess opportunities and constraints that could affect conservation on lands throughout the Longleaf Pine Integrated Landscape.

SIGNATORY



Jeff Danter, Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy of Florida
Sponsor, Longleaf Pine Integrated Landscape

12-13-10
Date