



THE LONGLEAF LEADER

LONGLEAF COMMUNITIES

By America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative Communications Team

News from the Longleaf Partnership Council

Interview with LPC Chair Tiffany Woods, The National Wildlife Federation



LPC Chair Tiffany Woods with Gary Burger, Past-Chair and mentor, holding an education indigo snake at a field day near Ft. Benning. Courtesy of T. Woods.

How did you become involved in longleaf restoration and America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative?

I joined the National Wildlife Federation (NWF)'s Forestry Program in 2012, working closely with our affiliate, the Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF), to provide outreach to private landowners to restore longleaf pine with a specific focus for wildlife habitat restoration. I fell in love with the project, and from there, I worked with AWF and NWF to implement similar outreach programs for both Georgia Wildlife Federation and Florida Wildlife Federation. It is incredibly rewarding to be a part of innovative landowner outreach programs centered around longleaf pine restoration and to know that we are changing how private landowners think about and manage their properties to improve habitat for wildlife.

I took on the NWF Longleaf Partnership Council seat for America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) during my first year on the job—I was very much a “newbie” to the Initiative's efforts, but there were so many wonderful members on the council that mentored and guided me into the position to learn and eventually take on a leadership role. If you had told me during those initial years that I would one day take on the Chair position, I wouldn't have believed it. I am so grateful to the leadership team and for the guidance of the past chairs to provide me the skills and knowledge as I work to lead the Initiative into this new decade.

What is the most rewarding experience in your work with the Longleaf Partnership Council (LPC)?

This Initiative has taught me the importance of community and the immense value in working beyond the mission and goals of my organization. New projects and partnerships have developed solely because of the Initiative, as there is immense

value of having biannual face-to-face meetings and the connections that the Initiative provides. For instance, NWF recently gained the Sandhill Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) as one of our programs, which is a landowner group that works to educate and provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities for prescribed fire in North Carolina. Jesse Wimberly, the leader of this PBA, hosted the Longleaf Partnership Council on his farm a few years back—this was how we met, and I was able to see first-hand the amazing work that he and the PBA were doing. When the opportunity arose to help him find an organization for the PBA, NWF jumped at the chance because of the wonderful work they do and the benefits to forestry and wildlife. This venture would have never happened had we both not been involved with ALRI. The community and regional connections are incredibly special.

What is the LPC working on this spring?

This year marks ALRI's 10th Anniversary, and we are incredibly proud to elevate the Initiative's decade-long work to reverse the decline of longleaf. While we are disappointed that the March celebration in Washington D.C. was postponed due to travel concerns around COVID-19, we will continue to look for opportunities to share our group's successes. We are excited to unveil our 2019 Accomplishment Report this spring, and we are also working on documents that describe the value and resiliency of longleaf.

How does it feel to be elected the first female LPC chair?

It is such an honor to be nominated and elected and a huge privilege to be both the first female and youngest chair to date. I think this is representative of the number of women that are joining the fields of forestry, wildlife, and prescribed fire. We are seeing so many different leaders throughout this work that are females—my hope is for other women entering this field to see someone like them and know that these opportunities await them. The LPC is unique in the diversity of representation among non-profits, businesses, government agencies, extension/educators, and landowners, and over the past few years, more women have taken a seat at our table. There is a place for all when it comes to longleaf pine restoration.

You are quite an outdoor recreation enthusiast! What is your favorite way to get outdoors in the piney woods?

One of the biggest perks of this work is that I get to travel throughout the Southeast to see these incredible landscapes. I love endurance sports, and my favorite way to connect with nature is running through the woods. I have been lucky enough to run the trails at places like Weymouth Woods, as well as running on rural roads in the Southeast with tall pines swaying overhead—it is quite the experience.

By the Mississippi Longleaf Implementation Team

The Mississippi LIT – A Confident Conservation Team Meeting its Goals

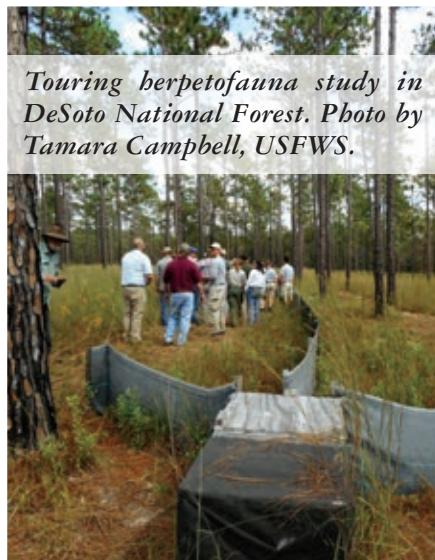
Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge.
Photo by Scott Hereford, USFWS.



Inspecting Hurricane Katrina damage. Photo by James Cummins, Wildlife Mississippi.



Touring herpetofauna study in DeSoto National Forest. Photo by Tamara Campbell, USFWS.



In Mississippi, we understand constraints. We are one of the poorest states in the nation. Yet here we are today, the “Hospitality State,” fully integrated and functional, and considered one of the most charitable states in the union, based on federal reports. As far as longleaf implementation teams go, we have a unique history among the region, one with resolve, tenacity, and a strong value for collaboration that has strengthened our partnership, helped us overcome challenges, accomplished goals, and expanded our boundaries.

At times we may have appeared defiant and unruly, like a strong-willed child. “There they go again, only in Mississippi.” We were told to focus our efforts and prioritize activities due to shrinking budgets and reduced capacity. To us, “hone your vision” meant “think small.” We responded, however, not small, but collaboratively. We broadened our partner base. We leveraged existing programs and empowered those partners to partake in our vision and goals. We’ve become more than a natural resource network; we’ve become a partnership team.

Team: (noun) a group of people who work together
(adj) marked by devotion to teamwork rather than individual achievement. 2. Two or more draft animals yoked together to pull the same vehicle.

Although we may at times appear more akin to definition #2, the Mississippi Longleaf Implementation Team (MS LIT) embodies the essence of teamwork.

Our team struggled to find our identity, as evidenced by multiple inquiries from external partners, and occasional disgruntled correspondence from internal partners. As with any expectant family, there’s initial excitement, followed by a phase of discomfort and fatigue, then the reality of problematic disruptions and near derailments. However, during those challenges, relationships may be strengthened, resolve deepened, and hope sustained for a successful future. With the proper ingredients over time, a beautiful family can develop and thrive.

This is a normal process in building resilience in the face of challenges. Our team suffered from leadership changes, the BP oil spill incident, some initial distrust that may accompany territoriality, membership turnover (retirements), reduced capacity, and the usual growing pains and misconceptions that come with listing a new species for federal protection (the black pinesnake) within our operational area.

Nevertheless, with grace and fortitude, our transparency has built trust among our members, and our relentless drive propelled momentum when challenges threatened to derail our efforts. We are now recognized as having one of the strongest conservation teams in the state, and dare we say, the region?

History of the MS LIT:

Longleaf pine restoration in Mississippi was stimulated by events such as Hurricane Katrina (2005) and release of America’s Longleaf Range-wide Conservation Plan (2009), where private and public land interests were peaked due to superior native qualities and resiliency of longleaf pine compared to other southern pines, and in an increase in financial incentives, such as the Longleaf Pine Initiative authorized by the Farm Bill. The development of the Longleaf Pine Implementation

Team organized entities in the longleaf pine management community and advanced coordinated conservation delivery efforts.

Initiated by the Forest Service, America's Longleaf, and the Mississippi Forestry Commission in April 2010, the first partner meeting birthed the MS LIT - committed to longleaf pine restoration and sustainability. Although a Significant Geographic Area (SGA) was identified around Camp Shelby/DeSoto National Forest, the MS LIT elected to focus activities across the entire historic range of MS, which included 16 counties in the Piney Woods Region with the greatest potential for increasing longleaf pine acreage in priority areas. Beginning in 2012, partners of the Camp Shelby/DeSoto SGA, facilitated by the US Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy, received grant support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Longleaf Stewardship Fund to advance restoration of fire-maintained longleaf and pine-grassland communities in the Camp Shelby/DeSoto area through on-the-ground establishment and enhancement activities.

Growth and Progress:

Following the inception of the MS LIT, partners defined organizational structure and bylaws, creating a Steering Committee and separate Membership with specific roles. This addressed turnover, deepened investment, and provided opportunities for new ideas through rotational leadership. In 2018, partners of the MS LIT and Camp Shelby/DeSoto SGA combined efforts to operate as one team improving efficiency in multi-agency program delivery. Further expanding influence in priority areas, the Southwestern portion of Alabama and a portion of the Florida Parishes in Louisiana recently combined with the MS LIT due to collaborative partnerships and high-value conservation impact.

Of the many accomplishments and highlights in the past 10 years, the MS LIT is especially proud to announce the completion of the Mississippi Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Strategy. Developed under the auspices of America's Longleaf, this strategy represents a shared vision of partners and stakeholders (state, federal, and non-governmental) in identifying threats and opportunities, while developing priorities and support for increasing longleaf pine conservation delivery for economic and ecological sustainability. Our strategic priorities can stimulate more effective conservation in our state while maintaining a growing network of land managers dedicated to longleaf pine sustainability. After all, longleaf is a labor of love.

Accomplishments:

The Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory reported 574,904 acres of longleaf pine out of a historical 2.1 million acres (1935, 2013) in Southeast Mississippi. Since 2013, entities have reported establishing an average of 5,322 acres of lon-

gleaf pine annually, while also reporting a positive increase in prescribed fire in this landscape, particularly on private lands. Based on trends from the past six years, the state plans to establish roughly 22,000 acres of longleaf pine on public and private land by 2022.

Targeted localized initiatives promote longleaf pine restoration and provide technical guidance for restoration and prescribed fire on private land, including the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Department of Wildlife Private Lands Program, USDA Farm Bill Programs, Fire on the Forty, Mississippi State University Extension Program, Forest Resource Development Program, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funds. Since 2007, more than 150,000 acres have been restored and enhanced on private lands through these programs. Moreover, collaborative partnerships with specialized conser-

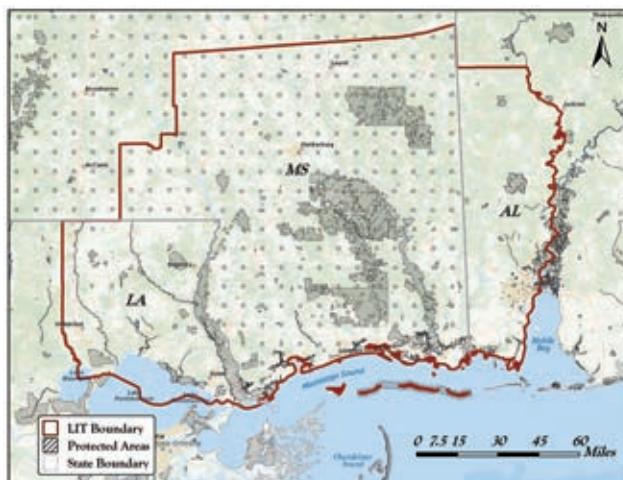
vation outreach organizations such as National Wild Turkey Federation and Mississippi Forestry Association have amplified program reach by broadening the target audience (i.e., County Forestry Associations, NWTF members).

Although a large portion of establishment occurs on private land (roughly 80%), the US Forest Service in Mississippi has also committed to an impressive rate of establishment on National Forests. These protected areas are critical for the conservation of imperiled species, such as the black pinesnake, gopher tortoise, and red-cockaded woodpecker. Several National Forests, particularly the DeSoto NF, are poised to make

significant contributions to longleaf pine conservation (more than 300,000 acres, Southern Region National Forest System Longleaf Pine Restoration Strategy). Other public lands provide important longleaf restoration opportunities in the Piney Woods Subprovince including Wildlife Management Areas, National Wildlife Refuges, State Forests, Department of Defense, and 16th Section lands. In fact, the last of the large remnants of wet pine savannas/flatwoods are those of the Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge in south Mississippi.

Final Thoughts:

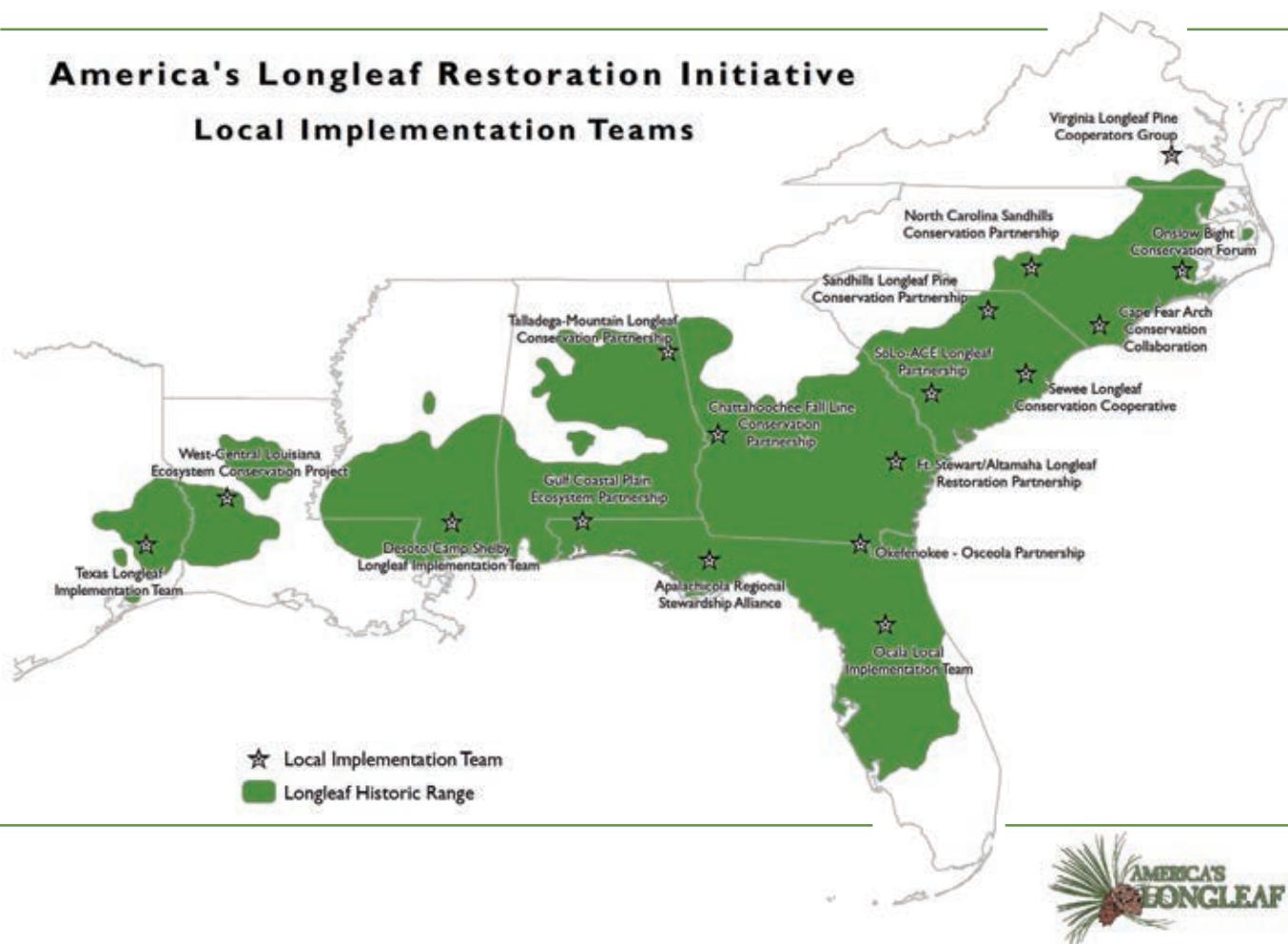
The MS LIT serves as a valuable asset and leader in longleaf pine conservation delivery that is compatible with region-wide goals. Our team engaged strategic partnerships to overcome barriers and challenges since its inception in 2010 and has regained momentum in advancing the mission of increasing and conserving the longleaf pine ecosystem. We acknowledge and appreciate our partners' dedication and work, including our local partners in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, as well as our regional partners such as The Longleaf Alliance, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Florida Natural Areas Inventory, and others. We hope our experiences will inspire perseverance.



Map showing Mississippi Longleaf Implementation Team focal area including recent expansion into Louisiana and Alabama.

America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative

Local Implementation Teams



High-Level Support for Rx Fire Arises from Council Meeting

By Brian Pelc, Restoration Project Manager/ARSA Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy



Interagency partners secure a holding line during Florida Forest Service drone ignition demonstration. Photo by Cliff Leonard.

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council met on January 9th and 10th in the Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance (ARSA) LIT region. The first day was dedicated to field trips, including a prescribed fire demonstration with drone ignition led by Florida Forest Service at The Nature Conservancy's Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve (how's that for partnerships in action?). Numerous VIPs were in attendance, including Jim Hubbard, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Vicki Christiansen, USDA Forest Service Chief, and Ken Arney, Regional Forester for the Southern Region. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue attended the business meeting at Tall Timbers on the 10th to deliver one message - prescribed fire can and will increase. Discussion at this meeting suggests the "controlled burn" message has reached the top, and LITs across the longleaf range should consider how they will implement more acres of fire when resources become available. ARSA members completed the 10-year Longleaf Pine Conservation Plan in 2017 with several action items relying on a strong commitment by agency leadership to fund and implement more prescribed fire.

Private Lands in Alabama Host Successful RCW Population

By LuAnn Craighton, The Nature Conservancy, and Mark Bailey, Conservation Southeast Inc.



In partnership with the US Forest Service, artificial cavities are installed in preparation for the upcoming breeding season.

Photo by L. Craighton.

supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation documented 37 RCW groups. Truly a conservation success story, the number of breeding groups has increased each year since 2006.

Private landowners in the Enon-Sehoy plantation complex near Hurtsboro recently hosted an expert team of artificial cavity installers from the National Forests in Alabama. The insert blitz brought together partners, including private landowners, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service to install new cavities in preparation for the upcoming red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) breeding season. This landscape hosts the largest RCW population on private lands in Alabama and has an interesting history. In 2002, initial surveys documented five active RCW clusters on the property, but not all had breeding pairs. At that time, the landowner, Cam Lanier III, placed more than half the property under conservation easement and was the first enrollee in the Alabama Safe Harbor Program. By generously setting the baseline for the property at 10 groups, he secured the future of this remnant population. Next, artificial cavities were installed, and juvenile birds were translocated from Fort Benning and Fort Stewart. Today, incredible habitat resulting from decades of quail management through prescribed burning provides a stellar environment for this population. Last year, monitoring activities

Burner Bob®, a Big Attraction at the Southeastern Wildlife Expo

By Randy Tate, The Longleaf Alliance



Burner Bob® makes new friends at the Southeastern Wildlife Expo. Photo by Randy Tate.

Burner Bob® attended the 37th annual Southeastern Wildlife Expo (SEWE) in February. SEWE is a three-day celebration held each year in Charleston, South Carolina, showcasing 'all things wild.' It is a huge event drawing thousands of people. This year two of our LIT partners exhibited with booths; The Orianne Society and The Longleaf Alliance both had scores of people dropping by to learn about all aspects of longleaf pine. Burner Bob® was a hit, taking photos with young and old alike. As 'A Cool Dude with a Hot Message!™,' he was there to educate folks about the beneficial qualities of prescribed burning. Burner Bob® gave away coloring books and bumper stickers for folks to take home and spread his message. This was one of the largest crowds for Bob as he continues to spread the word about good fire across the Southeast.

Conservation History Made in Alabama

By Traci Wood, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries



Traci Wood, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, and Jim Godwin, Auburn University's Alabama Natural Heritage Program, holding the first wild eastern indigo snake found in Alabama in 60 years. Photo by Francesca Erickson.



Eastern indigo snake hatchling found at Conecuh National Forest. Photo by Francesca Erickson.

Conservation history was made this past January in Covington County, Alabama, at the Conecuh National Forest within the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP). After almost 60 years, a wild eastern indigo snake hatchling was discovered. Biologists have been staunchly working on the recovery of this species since the mid-1980s. Beginning about a decade ago, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries partnered with US Forest Service and Auburn University to initiate an eastern indigo snake reintroduction project. Finding this wild snake is evidence that reintroduced indigos are behaving, breeding, and acting as wild snakes. The indigo snake plays a critical role in the longleaf pine ecosystem, providing a balance among the landscape as a predator to their favorite foods, including copperheads and rattlesnakes. Part of this conservation story is featured on the NatGeo show, 'Wild Secrets of the Zoo: Tampa.' You can also join us on Friday, May 1st for the third annual Eastern Indigo Snake and Wildlife Festival at Open Pond Recreational Area, Conecuh National Forest. School groups are welcome but must register. Check the *Outdoor Alabama* website for details <https://www.outdooralabama.com/node/3678>.

Southern Longleaf Gets a New Voice — Heartland Longleaf Local Implementation Team

By Rosalind Rowe, Florida Park Service



Aerial view of restoration work on a historic sandhill site at Lake Manatee State Park, FL. The contractor chipped the hardwoods and sold the mulch. Photo by Zach VanHook.

Last September, the Heartland Longleaf Local Implementation Team (HLIT) had its first meeting. Twenty-nine participants, including nine public agencies, two vendors, and a private landowner, gathered to discuss ways to increase healthy longleaf pine ecosystems in the south-central lands of Florida. Many were hearing about the America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) for the first time, and many were already restoring or enhancing acres of longleaf pine ecosystems, but all were fully engaged in the conversation. Topics ranged from offering programs that would engage more landowners, to learning about a Memorandum of Agreement in place for partnering on prescribed burning across land ownership boundaries. A discussion thread throughout was the need to balance science-based management, such as promoting increased acres with desired groundcover species and diversity, with the economics for the landowner. In the southern part of its range, the number of longleaf pines per acre was historically naturally lower than that found going north. This means private landowner conservation income must depend on more than timber.

Okefenokee/Osceola Longleaf Implementation Team (O2 LIT)

By Rebecca Shelton, *The Nature Conservancy*



Planting longleaf pine seedlings in coastal Georgia. Photo by LA Allen.

Longleaf pine planting and prescribed burn season is well underway in the O2 LIT! The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is planting 269,000 containerized longleaf seedlings on 519 acres that were site-prepped in Fall 2019. The Osceola NF planted 120 acres using 59,000 containerized longleaf seedlings. Prescribed burns have been conducted on over 20,000 acres with another 20,000 acres possible if the weather cooperates.

The 2020 O2 Stewardship Training for Environmental Progress (STEP) crew is here for the program's fourth year and are making their presence known. The crew consists of three Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns, an SCA crew lead, and The Nature Conservancy crew supervisor, Zoe Hall. Starting in January, they conducted burns on over 1,700 acres at Osceola National Forest (NF) and Moody Forest in Georgia. They also assisted with a research burn facilitated by Tall Timbers at the Macon Study Plots at Osceola NF. Additionally, the crew has assisted Osceola NF with fire-related management needs, including preparing fire breaks and raking around structures and red-cockaded woodpecker cavity trees for prescribed burns. Upcoming activities for the crew include planting containerized longleaf pine, longleaf pine survival studies, and invasive species control.

The O2 LIT is participating in an extensive landowner outreach effort in north Florida with partners, including the Alachua Conservation Trust, Florida Forest Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, North Florida Prescribed Burn Association, and the NRCS. So far, two workshops have been conducted: Longleaf Pine Restoration/Management and Wildlife Management. Meetings have included private landowners, land managers, contractors, and partners managing over 25,000 acres of private land.

Building the Workforce for the Future: Stewardship Training for Environmental Progress

By Colette DeGarady, Longleaf Pine Whole System Director, *The Nature Conservancy*



STEP crew participants photographed after completing their pack test. Photo by Larissa Graham.

In 2014, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) developed a program in partnership with the Osceola National Forest and the Jacksonville Job Corps Center to provide diverse young people (18-25 years old) training and hands-on experience with controlled burns and other land management activities to prepare them for environmental careers. Since then, what became known as the Fire Mentoring Program grew to include work sites with TNC staff across the Southeast and was renamed Stewardship Training for Environmental Progress (STEP). More than 100 participants have completed work in this program. Currently, 14 crew members on three teams are working in three different areas, including Texas, Alabama, and northern Florida/southern Georgia. These STEP teams will be contributing to Local Implementation Team (LIT) goals for the Okefenokee and Osceola, Texas, and Alabama LITs by planting longleaf pine trees, assisting with prescribed burns, tackling invasive plants, monitoring species and more. This work is conducted in partnership

with the Student Conservation Association. It is an important step to build the future workforce for environmental conservation in the Southeast with an emphasis on longleaf habitat restoration.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat Restoration Provides Educational Opportunity in South Carolina Sandhills

By Susan Griggs, NRCS



RCW Install on private lands with youth educational opportunity. Photo by Susan Griggs.

After two years of understory restoration, the Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership (SLPCP) has taken another monumental step by placing the first red-cockaded woodpecker nest cavities on private property in this LIT.

According to Charles Babb, this has been a joint effort, spearheaded by the SLPCP and made possible through both the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Wildlife Program and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Longleaf Stewardship Fund. To date, three private landowners have committed to inviting RCWs onto their properties, while others are completing the necessary mid-story control to make their properties suitable. "This has been exciting," said Babb, "to see landowners go from contemplating clearcutting older stands and replanting to understanding the value of preserving mature stands of longleaf, managing them as a cherished asset, and taking pride in owning a locally rare ecosystem." Only about 4,000 acres of mature longleaf remain on private lands within the SLPCP focal area.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, the SLPCP is turning these restoration activities into an educational opportunity for future generations. Babb and the SLPCP partners have been working with local youth groups such as the Boy Scouts, 4H, and middle schoolers to teach them about the longleaf ecosystem. Groups were invited to attend and learn about prescribed fire, understory restoration, and protecting threatened and endangered (T&E) species while Larry Woods performed cavity inserts. "This has been great," said Aleisha Ainsworth, Scout Leader in Cheraw, South Carolina. "The kids have been so excited about the chance to get a hands-on education about longleaf, and what they can do to have an impact on the future of our environment."

South Lowcountry – ACE Basin (SoLoACE) Longleaf Partnership

By Bobby Franklin & Lisa Lord, The Longleaf Alliance



South Carolina Forestry Commission Tree Improvement Technician Chris King discussing the Commission's longleaf pine seed orchard during the Longleaf 101 Academy tour. Photo by Bobby Franklin.

The new year started with a Longleaf 101 Academy held in Ridgeland, South Carolina. Thirty-one landowners and natural resource professionals attended the class. A special thanks to the Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District for hosting the event at their facility, Blue Heron Nature Center.

Last November, partners translocated 21 red-cockaded woodpeckers from the Francis Marion National Forest through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Longleaf Stewardship Fund grant to private and state lands in South Carolina. Eleven of the 21 birds were translocated to properties within the SoLoACE landscape.

Also, The Longleaf Alliance, the Savannah River Clean Water Fund, University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, International Paper, and The Nature Conservancy are working together on a collaborative mapping initiative that will conclude in a strategic conservation plan to conserve both forests and source water for the Savannah River watershed. This project will help determine where the priorities of drinking water utilities and other conservation efforts, such as longleaf ecosystem restoration, overlap to leverage each other's investments

and achieve more conservation on the ground. Funding for this effort is provided through funds awarded to the Georgia and South Carolina Forestry Commission through a US Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration grant and International Paper. We are grateful to our partners for their continued support of this project.

Calcasieu Area Council Boy Scouts of America Restore Longleaf Forest

By Dan Weber, North Louisiana Program Manager, The Nature Conservancy



Scouts Camp Edgewood before (left) and after (right) mulching. Photos by Louisiana Department Wildlife Fisheries.

Scouts Camp Edgewood before (left) and after (right) mulching. Photos by Louisiana Department Wildlife Fisheries.

The Boy Scout's Camp Edgewood was established almost 65 years ago in southern Beauregard Parish. The ability to produce revenue through the management of its timber resources was a featured part of the original plan for the 200-acre camp. Planted in the 1960s with loblolly pine, areas recently harvested were replanted with longleaf (2011). Due to frequent changes in administration and the camp ranger, only one burn has been implemented on these young longleaf.

In order to alleviate wildfire risk and assist the Boy Scouts in implementing a long-term prescribed burn plan, the Longleaf Implementation Team, known locally as the West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Partnership (WLEP) is partnering with the Scouts to reduce the existing fuel load within the camp using mulching and prescribed fire. Removing the dense shrubby areas of pyrogenic species is the first step toward wildfire safety and restoring the historic longleaf ecosystem. With support from the Forest Service and in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, funding was provided to the Scouts to mechanically remove brush and woody vegetation, which will pave the way for a growing season burn in the near future.

The WLEP is a coalition of stakeholders including the US Forest Service and US Department of Defense, Natural Resource Conservation Service, state and federal wildlife agencies, conservation NGOs and others, overseeing longleaf and other ecosystem restoration efforts within the Fort Polk/Kisatchie National Forest Significant Geographic Area (SGA). The WLEP congratulates the Scouts for their desire to return native longleaf forest to their property and for incorporating fire management and longleaf ecosystem maintenance into their learning curriculum.

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COVER Burner Bob® leads a crowd to the prescribed fire demonstration at Party for the Pine in Southern Pines, NC (2018).

Fire festivals bring communities together, connecting the importance of prescribed fire to longleaf pine conservation.

Photo by Brady Beck.

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