As the month grinds to a close, we seem busier than ever. We’re deep into the interview process to fill our two vacant positions and are blessed with a large slate of quality applicants. We’ll fill our President’s slot first, maybe before you receive this newsletter, and then look for a Vice-President for Operations. Both are essential positions and our deliberations have been appropriately “deliberate”.

In the meantime, much of our activity has centered around our Longleaf Academy 201 courses. We have held a total of three “Herbicides and Longleaf” Academy courses in Tifton, GA and here at the Dixon Center since our last newsletter and have Understory Restoration 201 courses scheduled in each location in September and October. All have been filled to capacity, with waiting lists promising continued interest.

Recently, Mark and Carol conducted several webinars on a variety of topics during the summer and we’ve conducted in-house workshops for the U.S. Navy and NRCS in the past couple of months. We also participated in events organized by NRCS targeting landowners and natural resource professionals here in Alabama. As usual, we respond daily to requests for technical assistance from landowners across the region on topics ranging from herbicides to prescribed fire to planting rates, seedling sources, funding sources and more.

Today’s mail included the first advance copy of our new book, Longleaf, Far as the Eye Can See, published by the UNC Press and coauthored by Bill Finch, John Hall and myself and featuring the beautiful photography of Beth Maynor Young. It truly is a beautiful book, exceeding even my expectations. We’ll debut the book at the 9th Biennial Regional Conference in Nacogdoches, TX in October, although it will be available from booksellers prior to that date. Jonathan Streich has a new longleaf book as well. It’s called, Fat Lighter: Our Southern Longleaf Heritage, and is now available at www.Amazon.com.

This should be my last “From the President’s Desk” column as my career at the Alliance comes to a close. It has been the most demanding and satisfying period in my life. I’m not sure that Dean Gjerstad and I would have embarked on this journey had we known what we were getting into and I sure would not have attempted it with anyone else. Our management philosophy was always to hire the very best people we could and provide them with all the resources we had available and try to stay out of their way. Our success is a testament to how prescient we were. Our first employee, Mark Hainds, is still with us 18 years later and seems as enthusiastic as he was the day we hired him. His experience and intellectual curiosity have made him the premier “trouble shooter” for all things longleaf in the region and perhaps in the world.

We have had very little turnover, but our first Outreach Coordinator, John McGuire did yeoman’s work in that and any job capacity we tasked him with. Although he
From the President’s Desk continued...

changed employers later, we never truly lost John and his passion for longleaf and for the Alliance is undiminished. I greatly value his friendship and support to this day. Our current staff continues to expand and each addition seems to bring new skill sets but the same dedication and enthusiasm to the job. I still contend that we deliver more bang-for-your-buck than any other organization I know. JJ, Anne, Carol, Ad, Vernon, Vickie, Tamara, Steve, Karen, Brian, and Donna have become vital parts of our organization and now I can’t imagine the Alliance without them. To use a trite phrase, “They’ve drunk the Kool-Aid!”

The Alliance has been blessed to have enjoyed the support of a great Board of Directors and, before them, an Advisory Board. Those groups have provided sage advice and guidance and unflagging support when we sorely needed it. I’ve been on and continue to serve on several Boards and ours is the most engaged in my experience. I leave them all with mixed feelings.

Finally, the real heroes in this movement we are all engaged in are the hundreds and even thousands of private landowners and natural resource professionals who have put their properties, time, finances, resources, and careers into the effort to conserve longleaf ecosystems. I’ve made and enjoyed more friendships than I can count. I’m excited about retirement (or re-retirement), but can’t imagine life without the excitement and business of the Alliance. I anticipated time dragging as I counted down to this point, but it seems to be flying by. I suspect after a brief hiatus, I’ll try to find a much reduced role for myself wherever I can help out. Maybe a Rolling Stones type farewell tour complete with t-shirts?

In the meantime, we’re busy planning our Regional Conference in Texas and have lined up an impressive slate of speakers, topics and field sites. Texas and Louisiana are hotbeds of longleaf activity these days and this is their opportunity to show the rest of us what they’ve accomplished. I look forward to seeing all of you in Nacogdoches in October! Thanks for a great eighteen years together! Rhett Johnson

Sponsorships Needed for the Regional Conference

As we all know, these events can’t happen by themselves. All levels of support are needed and greatly appreciated. Sponsorship levels are as follows:

Old growth* $10,000 and up: complimentary exhibit space, if desired, and 4 conference registrations
Pole stage* $5,000 - $9,999: complimentary exhibit space, if desired, and 2 conference registrations
Rocket stage* $2,500 - $4,999: complimentary exhibit space, if desired, and 1 conference registration
Grass stage $1,500 - $2,499: recognition in the conference program and 1 conference registration
Seedling $500 - $1,499: recognition in the conference program

* You can sponsor a specific conference session and be recognized both in the program and at the session.

If you would like to sponsor, please contact:
Rhett Johnson: rhett@longleafalliance.org (334-427-1029)
9th Longleaf Alliance Regional Conference!

Registration

Even though early registration will have come and gone by the time you receive this newsletter, it's not too late to register. Go to our website (www.longleafalliance.org) and register today! We do accept walk-ups at the conference, but in order to assist with our planning efforts, pre-registration is greatly appreciated.

Exhibitors

Our conferences draw a wide range of people with varying backgrounds and interests making them an excellent opportunity for vendors and exhibitors to showcase their products and merchandise. We have had several exhibitors register, but we still have plenty of room for more. Want to exhibit? Go to our website for more information. It's fast and easy!

Poster Sessions

The poster sessions are very important components of the conference. Two periods of time will be devoted solely to posters. By the time that you receive this newsletter, the deadline for poster abstracts will have passed, but we will still gladly accept posters at the conference. Your poster abstract will not appear in the conference program, but you can still submit an abstract and it will go in the conference proceedings. In order to plan for space requirements, please let Ad Platt know that you will be bringing a poster to set up at the conference. Ad's email: Ad@longleafalliance.org

Silent Auction

It is not too late! Thanks to our early submissions, we are on our way of having another fun and exciting silent auction. So far we have received hunting trips, signed art work, several bottles of Florida wine, and much more. But, we still need your help in contributing items. Be creative! Even if you are not planning on attending the conference, you can ship your donations directly to Texas. It's easy...just go to the website and complete the silent auction form. Questions? Call Carol at 678-595-6405 or Carol@longleafalliance.org

Store

The Longleaf Alliance is going to unveil some new merchandise at the conference store. Be the first to sport the new shirts and hats and to be seen drinking out of the new LLA cups! We'll also have new artwork and for you puzzle fanatics a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle of the longleaf pine ecosystem print. Don't forget, the holidays are just around the corner...get your shopping done early!

Contest

Have you located the biggest longleaf pine cone or the longest longleaf pine needles? If so, bring them to the conference. The 3 categories are: 1.) the widest longleaf pine cone; 2.) the longest longleaf pine cone; and 3.) the longest longleaf pine needles. Winners will be announced at the after field trip party Thursday evening. Prizes, along with bragging rights, will be awarded. Must be present to win! If you won in a particular category at the 8th Regional conference, you aren't eligible to enter in that category for the 9th. We'll also have a bag of wiregrass seed and we'll give you the opportunity to guess the number of seeds that it contains. Closest number without going over will win. $1.00 a guess!
Seasonal Questions: Can I Find Seedlings? When Should I Start Planting?
by Mark Hainds

Can I find seedlings?
Once again, longleaf seedlings have gotten quite sparse. Most of the larger nurseries have already sold out for the 2012-2013 planting season. One relatively new addition to The Longleaf Nursery List still has seedlings available as of September 9, 2012. Zellner Farms was added to the Longleaf Nursery List in 2011. You can see some of their seedlings at: http://zellnerfarms.com/wp/. Seedlings are $190 per thousand for this planting season. Call Bob Zellner at 770-283-7187.

If you have difficulty finding seedlings, please give us a call at The Longleaf Alliance (334-427-1029). We are going to contact all the nurseries on our list and it is likely that we will locate additional seedlings, even when the market appears "sold out."

When should I start planting?
For much of the coastal plain, now is a great time to plant longleaf. If your site preparation is complete and you have adequate soil moisture, get those seedlings in the ground! Bennett Whitfield is one of the best combination nurserymen and longleaf tree planters in the South. He attended our most recent Herbicides and Longleaf 201 Academy course in Tifton, Georgia, which was held August 28-30, 2012. While there, Bennett told us he was planning to start planting tracts in Georgia during the first week of September.

A couple of years back, the single best tree planting I inspected was planted the previous August by Dr. Langford in Covington County, Alabama. One year post-planting, most of these seedlings looked like two-year old seedlings. Twelve months after out-planting on Dr. Langford’s property, many of these longleaf had already bolted or were on the verge of initiating height growth! Of note, Dr. Langford is also a combination longleaf nurseryman and tree planter.

We have two cautions for those considering early tree planting. 1.) Don't plant into dry soils. 2.) Don't plant immediately behind a site that was sprayed with high rates of imazapyr in the site preparation application. Allow Arsenal or Chopper time to control unwanted vegetation and to degrade in the soil prior to planting.

On August 3, 2012, authors from the Universities of Florida and Georgia co-authored a paper: A Guide to Using Imazapyr for Chemical Site Preparation in Southern Pine Plantation Establishment. This paper, by Doctors Dickens, Minogue, and Moorhead, has recommended waiting periods based upon herbicide rates and site variables. A direct link to this paper is: http://www.bugwood.org/Imazapyr_Site_Prep_6-2012.pdf.

Questions from the Inbox by Mark Hainds

The Longleaf Alliance receives numerous inquiries about restoration and management of longleaf forests. Sharing some of these questions and our responses should enlighten our readers to common issues faced by our supporters across the Southeast. If you have questions for the LLA, email them to questions@longleafalliance.org
Not all the emails are always questions. We also receive emails with some very good suggestions and ideas that we’d also like to share...that whole concept of not reinventing the wheel.

Question on Pales Weevil:
Can you tell us whether longleaf seedlings are vulnerable to Pales Weevil in the same way that loblolly is vulnerable? I may have a few acres clear-cut this month, burned several weeks afterwards, and replanted in longleaf this winter, and I don't want to lose any new seedlings to this pest if I can help it.

Dear Weevil Wonderer:
Yes, Pales Weevil Hylobius pales (Herbst), can kill longleaf pine seedlings. However, I've never found pales to be problematical on sites that had an effective site prep burn prior to planting.

The USDA-FS has an excellent publication from 1984 on pales titled “Forest Insect & Disease Leaflet 104: Pales Weevil, by John C. Nord,1 Iral Ragenovich,2 and Coleman A. Doggett,3”. Apparently, much of the damage we attribute to pales in the Deep South may be from a similar culprit called the "pitch-eating weevil." From this publication: Over much of its (Continued on page 5)
range, pales weevil occurs in association with another insect of the same family, the pitch-eating weevil, Pachylobius picivorus (Germar). The pitch-eating weevil is a large black weevil that causes similar damage to seedlings. The ratio of pales to pitch-eating weevil ranges from 11 to 1 in the southern Appalachians to 2-3 to 1 on Piedmont and Atlantic Coastal Plain sites. However, along the Gulf Coast from Alabama to east Texas, the pitch-eating weevil is more common, with ratios of about 1 to 6-10 reported. A direct link to Leaflet #104: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/SPFO/pubs/fidls/pales/fidl-pales.htm

Anytime I have questions about insect pests in the South, I always visit this website: www.bugwood.org. They also have a good article on pales and pitch-eating weevils. From Bugwood’s page: Adult weevils are attracted by the odor of fresh pine resin, and quickly invade recently logged areas. After mating, eggs are laid in lateral roots of fresh pine stumps. Eggs hatch in approximately 5 to 10 days. Larvae feed on the inner bark tissue of dead roots. Full-grown larvae construct a chip cocoon in the wood and pupate. The time spent in the pupal stage lasts from a few weeks to several months, depending on the temperature. Adult weevils are found year round, usually within flying distance of any pine cutting area. There may be two generations per year (http://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:South/Pales_and_Pitch-Eating_Weevil).

Both the USDS-FS publication and Bugwood website caution against planting sites that were harvested after July. However, from my perspective, if logging slash has had time to turn brown and you get a relatively hot site prep burn, the odds of pales or pitch-eating beetle attacking and killing your seedlings are relatively low. In fact, I’ve never seen this to be a problem with young longleaf on new clear-cuts.

I have only seen pales weevils kill longleaf on a couple of sites. On both of these sites, the seedlings were already well established. In one case it was two-year old seedlings from a site that had been planted the year before. On the other site, it was naturally regenerated seedlings. In both cases, fresh logging slash from subsequent harvesting operations was piled immediately adjacent to the older seedlings. After the logging slash was no longer fresh enough for the pales, the weevils moved a few yards and killed established seedlings by stripping the bark and girdling the stem.

If it stays wet and your logging slash remains green into the fall, I’d hold off planting until next year. If we get a hot-dry spell and you are able to apply a decent site-prep burn, you may want to go ahead and plant this winter.
Longleaf Alliance Awarded NFWF Longleaf Stewardship Fund Grant

by Carol Denhof

The Longleaf Alliance is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a grant through the Longleaf Stewardship Fund in the amount of $85,000. The Longleaf Stewardship Fund is a landmark public-private partnership that includes the U.S. Department of Defense, the USDA Forest Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Southern Company. With the combined financial and technical resources of the group, the Fund will support accelerated restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystem and implementation of the Range-Wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine, as part of the America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative, while advancing the mission objectives of each of the partners.

The goals of the Longleaf Stewardship Fund are:
- Establish and enhance longleaf pine forests
- Restore and enhance the understory
- Support the recovery of iconic and keystone species
- Increase technical assistance and outreach to private landowners
- Strengthen organizational capacity

The Longleaf Alliance will collaborate with Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center, U.S. Forest Service, Florida Forest Service, and Clemson University to implement a common garden experiment that will help to determine seed transfer zones that are biologically meaningful and commercially feasible. We will establish a suite of common understory plant species from seed collected in sites throughout the Southeast in multiple common garden plot locations and compare their growth and reproductive characteristics by location. This information will help land managers understand which source(s) of seed are best suited for their areas, provide commercial seed companies with general guidelines for zones from which to produce and market seed, and allow government cost-share programs to include language requiring program participants to use site-appropriate seed for restoration.
Alabama’s DCNR Receives State Wildlife Grant for Longleaf Work

compiled by JJ Bachant-Brown

In August the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that more than $5.7 million in grants were awarded to seven state fish and wildlife agencies to help conserve and recover imperiled species and habitats through the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Competitive Program. This federal funding will be matched by more than $4.6 million in non-federal funds provided by states and their partners.

The SWG Competitive Program awards grants to projects that implement strategies and actions to conserve Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) contained in approved State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans (also known as State Wildlife Action Plans). Priority is given to large-scale cooperative conservation projects that demonstrate measurable performance results and benefits to imperiled species.

The goals and objectives of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ grant, *Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration Initiative* (submitted by Traci George Wood of AL DCNR) are to enhance and restore longleaf pine ecosystem habitat, as identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan, on over 5,000 acres of private lands and state-owned properties for SGCN. This project adopts landscape-level focal areas that are complementary to Priority Areas for Conservation Action, to amplify on-the-ground activities for 31 SGCN, resulting in enhanced agency coordination. Focal areas include the Barbour Wildlife Management Area, the Coosa Forever Wild Tract, and private lands in selected counties. Federal funds requested were $1M and $874,327 was awarded. The non-federal match will be $826,577. Congratulations Traci!

For more information on State Wildlife Grants, visit: http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/subpages/grantprograms/swg/SWG.htm

Understory Seed Production Fields Planted in Georgia Fall Line

by Carol Denhof

The Longleaf Alliance has been working closely with Ken Singleton and the Chattahoochee Fall Line Conservation Partnership (CFLCP) to establish a seed production field at K&L Nursery in Buena Vista, GA. This is an exciting venture that will provide a source of seed material that is appropriate for use in restoration efforts in the fall line region of the southeast. Ken Singleton and the other folks at K&L have done a tremendous job with establishment of the production plot. We are thankful to have such wonderful partners working with us to carry out such an important project.

This process started a year ago when we met with Michele and Kevin Elmore with the CFLCP to determine what understory species to grow. It was decided to focus on common plants that occur in longleaf habitats along the Fall Line. Kevin collected seed from various sites around the Ft. Benning area last Fall. International Forest Company propagated the seed and delivered 42,000 thriving plants to us in July. The plugs were set out in an immaculate field at K&L and have grown very well under Ken’s watchful eye and the abundant summer rains.

The following native understory species are being grown at the nursery facility for seed production:

- Hairy Lespedeza (*Lespedeza hirta*)
- Anise Scented Goldenrod (*Solidago odora*)
- Pineywoods Dropseed (*Sporobolus junceus*)
- Yellow Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)
- Lopsided Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*)
- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

As these plants mature and start to produce viable seed, the harvested seed will be used for restoration projects within the CFLCP area and also will be made available for the public. Roundstone Native Seed will be working with us to harvest and market the seed. Please contact Carol Denhof (carol@longleafalliance.org / 678.595.6405) if you have any questions about this project or seed availability.
Wiregrass
*Aristida stricta* Michx.

Wiregrass is an important species that provides significant ecological functionality to the longleaf ecosystem. The structure of the plant creates the perfect litter layer for burning which is essential for maintaining a healthy habitat for plants and animals alike. The leaves of the plant, as well as pine needles that become caught in the tangle of grass leaves, provide a near perfect fine fuel layer. Additionally, this grass is dependent on growing season fires to stimulate flowering and viable seed production. The optimal time to burn for wiregrass is from May-June.

**Plant Description:**
This densely tufted bunchgrass bears long and wiry leaves that grow low to the ground. The plant usually does not exceed 100 cm in height. Another common name for this species is Pineland Threeawn. This name comes from the seeds that bear 3 hair-like awns.

**Distribution & Habitat:**
Wiregrass is an abundant understory cover in a variety of frequently burned and open longleaf pine forests that have no history of cultivation. It can be found on sites ranging from very dry to wet-mesic. This species only occurs within the central portion of the longleaf pine range.

**Wildlife Benefit:**
This grass provides nesting sites for quail. Gopher tortoises use wiregrass for both cover and forage. The seeds are occasionally consumed by songbirds.

**Other Common Species:**
Arrowfeather Threeawn (*Aristida purpurascens*) and Woolysheath Threeawn (*Aristida lanosa*).

**References:**
I would like to welcome the newest staff of The Longleaf Alliance, the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) Ecosystem Support Team (EST). Recently the EST transitioned from The Nature Conservancy to become staff of The Longleaf Alliance. These four staff will be working mainly in the GCPEP landscape of northwest Florida and south Alabama.

Because fire management ranks as a high priority with the GCPEP partners, one of the highest priority action items initially identified by the partners was to establish a burn team to assist the partners with efforts to reintroduce appropriate fire regimes in order to reduce hazard fuels, decrease the potential for urban interface wildfires, and protect key ecosystems, embedded communities, and species. It was soon recognized that this concept of a burn team should be expanded to assist the partners with other identified high priority items such as invasive species, T&E species and survey, mapping and monitoring of conservation targets and threats. Therefore, the concept of the GCPEP EST was developed. The activation and implementation of the EST includes a fully staffed burn and ecosystem support team outfitted with equipment and supplies to make the team completely self-sufficient. By focusing on several high priority strategies, the EST furthers the landscape scale conservation efforts of the Partnership through coordination; assists in supporting and expanding the T&E species and biological diversity work; and increases the acreage of hazardous fuel reduction and ecological burning. Over the 9 year history of the EST, the team has assisted 11 GCPEP partners in completing 444 controlled burns on 303,062 acres.

The GCPEP EST staff includes Steve Bennett, Karen Zilliox, Brian Schumann, and Donna Vassallo.

Steve Bennett was born and raised in St. Augustine, FL. Exposed to the timber industry through his father’s work, it was inevitable that he would spend his adult life working in the outdoors. After graduating high school in Middleburg, FL, Steve went on to join the U.S. Army and spent 10 years in service. After leaving in early 2001, he began a full time career in wildland fire with the then called Florida Division of Forestry. While working in fire he attended college at Stetson University in Deland, FL working toward a B.S. in Biology. Steve then took a position with The Nature Conservancy serving as a burn crew member on the Ecosystem Support Team in 2008. Transferring from Stetson to Columbia Southern in Orange Beach, AL meant a degree change to a B.S. in Environmental Management his senior year. Steve now serves as the Team Leader for the EST and is nationally certified as a Type 2 Burn Boss, and a Type 4 Incident Commander.

Karen Zilliox was born in Oklahoma and has lived in a number of locations before finding her way to the Gulf Coast of Florida. She received her B.S. in Wildlife Conservation from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Though she grew up with a love of the outdoors and the environment, it was after college that an interest in fire’s role in ecosystems took root. From there, she served on fire suppression crews for the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management (Continued on page 10)
Ecosystem Support Team continued...

Management in the Western U.S., and then in a prescribed fire and restoration role for The Nature Conservancy. This work took her across the country and back, and provided a diverse 8 years of experience in the field. Karen joined The Longleaf Alliance and the Ecosystem Support Team in the spring of 2012 as the Field Crew Leader.

Brian Schumann was born in Memphis, TN. With a father in the Navy, Milton, FL became his home town over 30 years ago. Brian is married with three children and still finds time to enjoy saltwater fishing. He has completed his Associate in Forest Technology at the University of Florida in Milton and is currently working towards finishing his B.A in Natural Resource Conservation. In 2011, Brian interned with The Longleaf Alliance working primarily out of Eglin AFB and was hired by The Nature Conservancy in October 2011. Brian now serves as a member of The Longleaf Alliance’s Ecosystem Support Team.

Donna was born in Philadelphia, PA. After leaving the area at a young age, she spent her childhood in Lynchburg, VA. At the age of 18, Donna joined the U.S. Army as a light weight vehicle mechanic. She then moved to the Northwest panhandle area of Florida right after the military and has been here ever since. Donna graduated with a B.A from the University of West Florida in 2005. Since then, she has worked for SAIC for a summer, a CSU intern, and then with TNC Texas. After working for three months as a fire crew member, Donna became a member of TNC Florida as part of the Ecosystem Support Team in February 2011. She serves in this same role as a member of The Longleaf Alliance.

GCPEP Summer Interns by Steve Bennett

For the second season, The Longleaf Alliance has been able to offer intern opportunities to current and post undergraduate students. Our 2012 interns, Jordan Boykin, Jarod Barton and Evan Ohr have been exposed to a variety of conservation activities in support of the Gulf Coastal Plains Ecosystem Partnership. They have worked on federal, state and private lands participating in projects that have taken them from the uplands of the Conecuh National Forest in Alabama to the beaches of Eglin Air Force Base on Santa Rosa Island in Florida.

The bulk of their work has been ecological monitoring in support of Eglin’s prescribed fire program. Other highlighted projects are invasives removal for the Florida Park Service, sea turtle nest surveys for Eglin Air Force Base, and Red Cockaded Woodpecker translocation for Eglin Air Force Base, Blackwater River State Forest, and Conecuh National Forest. While their current tenure began in June and will end at the close of October, they have added many tools to their conservation tool box. We are confident the three of them will do great things in conservation in the future and we are proud to have had them as staff of The Longleaf Alliance.
Alabama’s Longleaf Ecosystem Restoration Team (ALERT) Growing into its Second Year by Ad Platt

Just over a year ago, many of the key leaders in longleaf restoration efforts in Alabama met at the Solon Dixon Center to improve their efforts to provide assistance to landowners. The idea to form a team of technical assistance providers originated with Tim Albritton, State Staff Forester for NRCS in Alabama. Patrick Glass, Assistant State Forester in the Alabama Forestry Commission, came up with the name, ALERT, for the team. Our intent was to better serve landowners making requests for technical assistance across the state, to help train associated partners and to set up landowner workshops or field days for habitat management training.

Original members of this technical assistance team included staff from the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC), Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF), The Longleaf Alliance (LLA), National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), Soil and Water Conservation Committees (SWCC), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

As a team, these parties agreed to:

1. Assist USDA-NRCS in implementing the Longleaf Pine Initiative;
2. Provide technical assistance to private landowners/users interested in restoring longleaf ecosystems, including those enrolled in the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and other longleaf restoration efforts;
3. Remove barriers to landowners/users in participating in the USDA-NRCS Longleaf Pine Initiative by improving communication between landowners/users and the members of the Technical Assistance Team; and
4. Assist USDA-NRCS in maintaining habitat on previously implemented EQIP and WHIP contracts by conducting consultations, compliance checks, and providing technical guidance.

Another team effort led to the creation of our outreach product, a full color brochure written by Rhett Johnson (LLA) with editing and graphics design from Tim Albritton and Fay Garner (NRCS). The brochure both lists and shows locations of members of the Technical Assistance Team, so that a landowner can easily find and contact either the nearest or the most appropriate specialist (wildlife biologist, forester, etc.). Ideally, any of these disciplines are available to contribute to writing plans as needed. The Alliance paid for the original printing and distribution to field offices, and also posted this brochure on its website. A landowner seeking assistance thus has several ways of making their request, or for requests made through our website at www.longleafalliance.org, we can also assist by directly answering their need or pointing them to a nearby team member.

Like so many things in our fast-paced world, a brochure can quickly become out-of-date due to personnel and organizational changes. We have recently updated the brochure, added some additional specialists, and have gained another partner through the addition of The Nature Conservancy to the team. Now each organization within the team keeps the latest version of the document electronically and prints copies for their own use as needed. And, as the team has improved our ability to work together on our shared goals, a request has been made to the Longleaf Partners Council (LPC) that the ALERT team be recognized as the Local Implementation Team (LIT) for Alabama. As one method for improving the delivery of technical assistance to landowners, we believe this approach is making a positive difference and are also hopeful this may be of value to other state programs.
Following on our Longleaf Academy: Longleaf 101 course, The Longleaf Alliance had now presented three advanced courses titled: Herbicides and Longleaf 201. These courses were held: July 31-August 2, 2012 in Tifton, Georgia; August 14-16 at the Solon Dixon Center in Andalusia, Alabama; and August 28-30 back in Tifton, Georgia.

Slots to attend these courses were in very high demand, with all three workshops filling up very rapidly after registration was opened. Approximately 30 foresters, biologists, herbicide applicators, agency personnel, and landowners attended each herbicide course. The vast majority of these 90 attendees had already graduated from Longleaf 101 courses that were previously offered in: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Besides Alliance personnel, the instructors for these 201 courses were some of the South’s leading experts on forestry herbicides and invasive species. Instructors and Alliance personnel who participated or lectured in these three workshops included Dr. David Moorhead, Dr. Pat Minogue, Mark Atwater, Dr. Nancy Lowenstein, Travis Rogers, Reggie Thackston, James Tomberlin, Rhett Johnson, Carol Denhof, Anne Rilling, JJ Bachant-Brown, and Mark Hainds.

Topics included in these courses were: Modes of Action – How Different Herbicides Work, Application Methods, Surfactants and Adjuvants, Safety and Liability, Site Preparation, Herbaceous Release, Invasive Species, Problematic Native Species, Preserving Key Components of the Longleaf Ecosystem, and Wildlife Management with Herbicides.

In addition to classroom lectures, attendees were divided into teams, taken to field sites, and challenged to come up with the best management recommendations they could formulate to achieve the landowner’s objectives.

These 201 courses started out good and got better as we tweaked presentations and schedules and added additional exercises in response to our participants’ suggestions. If the Alliance can secure additional funding and cooperators, it is likely we will offer Herbicides and Longleaf 201 at additional venues in 2013.
Longleaf Alliance’s 9th Biennial Regional Conference Program

By the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox, we’ll have a very detailed program for the conference up on our website. Be sure to check it out (www.longleafalliance.org). Until then, below is a sample of the sessions that will be offered.

Pre-conference Workshop: Nuts & Bolts of Artificial Regeneration
Planting longleaf is not necessarily difficult or expensive. As of the 2011/2012 planting season, over 80 million longleaf pine seedlings are planted annually, and average success rates on some cutover sites are approaching or possibly even surpassing those of the other southern pines. This post-conference workshop will dispel some of the myths associated with longleaf establishment and growth. We will also examine factors that have proven critical to success or failure: site preparation, planting methods, seedling quality, and herbaceous release. We are in the process of applying for CFIs.

Longleaf Partnership Council
The Longleaf Partnership Council is a group of 33 private and public landowners and organizations working collaboratively to reach the longleaf recovery goals identified in the Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine. The session will focus on new developments, accomplishments, and opportunities pertaining to longleaf recovery and on range-wide management and restoration efforts. The Council focuses on increasing communications and collaboration and the session will allow presenters to detail the growing momentum of this effort.

Managing the Ecosystem I - The Quest for Quality Understory
This session will focus on components that play an important role in the process of understory restoration in longleaf ecosystems. The effort of restoring groundcover across the southeastern region requires working partnerships as well as an interdisciplinary approach. Speakers will range from private landowners to federal agencies to commercial plant producers and presentations will describe a variety of projects that vary by habitat, scale, and methodology.

The Economics of Managing Longleaf: Making Longleaf Pay
This economics session will include a projection of trends for traditional markets, speculate on developing market sectors like mitigation banking and conservation easement value transfer, discuss the future of Farm Bill and other cost share and incentive programs, and unveil the on-line self-taught course on the Economics of Longleaf Management. An array of knowledgeable speakers are on board and the session should be interesting and helpful for longleaf owners and managers with an interest in growing longleaf for profit as well as other values.

Local Implementation Teams
Success with the goals identified in the Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine will require the resources, talents, and efforts of a full range of private and public landowners. Local Implementation Teams are one way in which to bring public and private landowners together to further increase communication, collaboration, and longleaf conservation efforts. Several new teams have started since the last conference. Successes and lessons learned from several of the teams will be shared during this concurrent session that will focus on the benefits of these partnering efforts occurring across the range of longleaf pine.

Managing the Ecosystem II - Where the Wild Things are...in the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem
Longleaf pine is native to the southeastern US and is becoming an attractive option for landowners due to its beneficial timber qualities, cost share opportunities, and its recreational value. Longleaf pine ecosystems support some of the greatest plant and animal diversity in the world. The loss of such an ecosystem has led to the decline in populations of some of our valued wildlife species, such as the pine snake and Northern bobwhite quail. Restoration and proper management of longleaf pine forests could benefit these and other plant and animal species. This session will feature presentations by leading experts on the following topics: desired forest conditions for open pine, beneficial plants for wildlife, and targeted information on pine associated species such as the pine snake, and Northern bobwhite quail.

From What We Know to Where We Want to Go
In this panel discussion, recent advances in the world of remote sensing and inventory will be unveiled from across the range of longleaf as well as specifically in Texas. A diverse panel of experts will address how we are mapping where longleaf remains, where it is being reestablished, and the tools being developed to describe the condition of these forests, now and into the future. Unified mapping and remote sensing strategies are the first step in effective longleaf pine conservation, and are improving our ability to prioritize limited resources and focus efforts among partners. The revolution in intelligent mobile devices (e.g., smart phones, tablets, and iPads) enables the development of a “participatory” GIS that could involve all stakeholders within a landscape to better manage and maintain ecosystems.

Longleaf in the Literature and Arts
At the 2010 Longleaf Alliance Regional Conference in Columbia, SC we hosted our first “Longleaf in the Literature and Arts” session. This session could best be described as “magical.” We fully intend to recapture this magic in Nacogdoches at our second “Longleaf in the Literature and Arts” session. We have confirmed attendance from some of the South’s best nature: authors, photographers, and illustrators. Anyone who wishes to truly grasp the beauty and amazing diversity of the longleaf ecosystem should plan on attending this session.

Prescribed Fire - Today and Tomorrow
This session will combine some of the cutting edge technology used in planning fires and assessing the results with some new approaches to actually getting fire on the ground. From high end modeling to old-fashioned collaborative partnering, the approaches discussed should result in better understanding of the impacts of fire as well as the costs of not burning in fire appropriate ecosystems.
For Those in the Grass Stage by Anne Rilling

“Grass Stage” is a section just for kids and/or kids-at-heart. Longleaf forest management is a long-term endeavor and in order to keep the longleaf pine ecosystem in longleaf, the next generation must get engaged or else all of the hard work, restoration, and protection currently going on will be for naught. We hope you share “Grass Stage” with your “next generation” longleaf enthusiast.

Lesson Five: Sand (Ground) Doves are Well-Adapted to the Open, Sandy Longleaf Pine Floor Habitat. Sand doves, a smaller cousin of the more common mourning dove and pigeon, live comfortably in the open sandy longleaf ecosystem. They feed on the seeds of grasses and other plants, like the butterfly pea. Butterfly peas are related to the beans and peas you eat for supper. However, unlike the peas on your dinner plate, these butterfly peas are poisonous and should not be put in your mouth. Use Lesson Five found on our website (www.longleafalliance.org/nextgeneration) to complete this sentence. Answer can be found on the bottom of this page.

Scrambled Tiles Instructions
Keep the letters, spaces, and punctuations within a particular tile as they appear. Instead, re-arrange the tiles to form words. For example the arrows show the placement of the first two tiles. Hint: there is only one sentence! The punctuation in the second tile in the third row down and the first tile in the fourth row down are commas.

Unscramble the tiles to reveal a message.

Can you draw a Sand Dove? Use this space here to practice.

Answer: Sand doves like fire maintained forests, such as longleaf pine forests, because they can scratch the shallow litter layers.
Upcoming Events

October
What: Understory Restoration 201 course—FULL
When: October 2-4
Where: Solon Dixon Center; Andalusia, AL
Cost: $300; includes registration fee, materials, food & lodging
Details: See LLA website (www.longleafalliance.org).

What: LLA’s 9th Biennial Regional Longleaf Conference
When: October 23-26
Where: Nacogdoches, TX
Details: By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have a
detailed program listed on our website
(www.longleafalliance.org).

We will be working on our 2013 calendar after the conference. Keep checking our website as Longleaf Academy courses develop and check out this section of the Winter 2012 newsletter edition.

If you have a longleaf event that you would like to post, please email JJ the details at JJ@longleafalliance.org. Deadline for the Winter edition is December 7th.

2012 Summer Webinar Series

This past summer, we held a series of six different webinars. The topics were:
1. Native Alternatives for Food Plots in the Longleaf Ecosystem Part I
2. Online Mapping and Spatial Resources for the Private Forest Landowner
3. The Basics of Longleaf Understory Establishment & Enhancement
4. Site Prep / Artificial Regeneration of Longleaf Pine
5. Ecologically Responsible Longleaf Pinestraw Production
6. Native Alternative for Food Plots in the Longleaf Ecosystem Part II

In case you missed them the first go around or if you’d like to view them again, they are now archived on our website.

Can You Name This Snake?
This special creature made an appearance at the NFWF Longleaf Stewardship Fund Grant Announcement and Press Event. Our friends at the Nokuse Plantations and the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center brought her to help celebrate the grantees. Hint: the longest snake in the United States. Answer is below. Photo credit: JJ Bachant-Brown
If you are already a supporter of The Longleaf Alliance, THANK YOU; please consider passing this form on to a friend or colleague. If you are not a supporter, please join us and help The Longleaf Alliance keep this forest type as part of the southern landscape.

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The Longleaf Alliance is a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax deductible when made payable to The Longleaf Alliance, 12130 Dixon Center Rd, Andalusia, AL 36420