



THE LONGLEAF LEADER

**OUR ROOTS  
RUN DEEP**  
**THE IMPACT OF PARTNERSHIPS**

VOLUME VII - ISSUE 4

WINTER 2015



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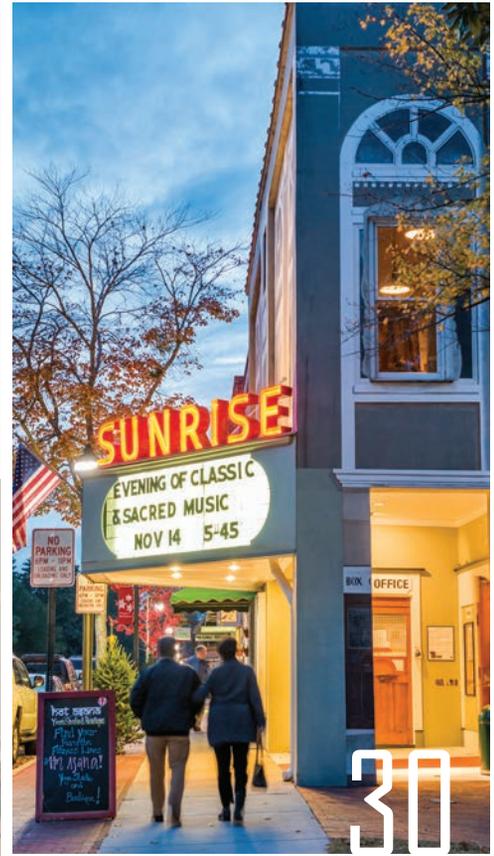
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**COVER** High quality longleaf habitat in South Carolina. Photo by Randy Tate.

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BY ROBERT ABERNETHY, THE LONGLEAF ALLIANCE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 10th Biennial Longleaf Conference and the 9th Eastern Native Grass Symposium was just completed in late October in Mobile. It was a great conference. I wish everyone involved in longleaf could have been there to experience the event. A total of 359 landowners and professionals showed up to learn about longleaf and native grass restoration and management. This issue of *The Longleaf Leader* will highlight the event and some of the speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors. It truly was a wonderful week.

I have often thought about exactly who are the people, companies, agencies, and partners that are the Alliance. That question was answered in Mobile. The Longleaf Alliance is the people that sat in the sessions and went on the field trip. It is also the folks spread all across the south, and even beyond the longleaf range that care about the longleaf pine and its ecosystem, and want to see it restored.

Members of the Alliance come from all walks of life, and they care for many different reasons. Some own family land that has longleaf and are compelled to manage that land properly because their Daddy or Mama took care of it and they feel a responsibility to pass it on to their children in a beautiful and productive state. Others have bought land and want to restore it to a vision from their youth when they followed pointers and setters with their grandfather through tall pines and knee high grass in pursuit of a small brown bird. Some grow longleaf for its beautiful and valuable straight-grained timber or for its pine straw that can be raked and sold for mulch.

Some are natural resource professionals who manage state and federal land with timber harvests and fire for enhanced wildlife populations and the health of the ecosystem, or to improve military preparedness.

And finally, some are members because of the history of this incredible tree that provided ship's masts and timbers; planking and decks; as well as tar and pitch for the British Navy and the US Navy for over 300 years. History tells us the great cities of the South- Savannah, Wilmington, Charleston, and Mobile were built with longleaf and from the profits of longleaf. History tells us that the textile mills of both the North and the South were built with longleaf, and today, these abandoned mills are providing recycled longleaf to be used in the modern construction of new homes and buildings.

Members of the Longleaf Alliance come from all across the land, and we cannot protect and restore this ecosystem without all of them, without all of us. We all play a role in this story, whether we are carrying a drip torch, a dibble bar, or walking the halls of Congress and state capitols looking for support for what we all do.

All indications show that the Alliance, and the partnerships forged around the Alliance and the Longleaf Partnership Council, are stronger than ever, and we are moving ahead toward the goal of 8 million acres of longleaf by 2024.

However, as we know, all is not rosy across the range. We see it every day. A new landowner buys a tract of beautiful longleaf with healthy understory and immediately cuts the



timber, stumps and clears the land for agriculture. We lose acres of longleaf every day to new subdivisions, gas stations, convenience stores, factories, schools, and businesses. As the economy improves, building and development will accelerate. More acres will be lost under concrete forever.

It is up to us to actively manage the public and private lands we currently have and expand holdings where we can and where it makes sense. We must look for forest land that can be converted back to longleaf, and we must educate the landowners about longleaf. Economic models that can accurately predict the income landowners can expect from longleaf are needed.

If we as a society want to keep this incredible ecosystem, incentives can play an important role. Continued support for

state and federal cost share programs makes all the difference for many landowners and allows them to do what we would like to see them do. Tax incentives may provide greater motivation for other landowners. Both approaches aim to encourage private landowners that produce public benefits.

Again, I wish all of our readers and supporters could have been in Mobile. I encourage everyone to attend workshops and Academies to learn, make new friends, and network. Only through networking and partnerships can we hope to expand the management and restoration of this incredible southern forest. Thank you for all you do, every day. Have a wonderful winter!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



Snow & longleaf. Photo by Bryn Pipes.

2015

### \*Longleaf Academy: Herbicides 201

#### March 10-12, 2015

Hammond, LA

This course will help you select herbicides for ecological restoration: rates, timing, active ingredients, and application methods that target weed species while minimizing impact to desired species and families. Additional topics include: calibration, equipment, safety, invasive species control, surfactants and adjuvants, minimizing damage to longleaf pine, and case studies.

### \*Longleaf Academy: Longleaf 101

#### April 2015

Florida (Location TBD)

This course will introduce the participant to the history and cultural significance of longleaf pine and provides the foundation for successful longleaf restoration and management.

\*Registration is not open at this time. Email The Longleaf Alliance office ([office@longleafalliance.org](mailto:office@longleafalliance.org)) if interested and we'll notify you when it is open.

Check The Longleaf Alliance website ([www.longleafalliance.org](http://www.longleafalliance.org)) for updates on scheduled events.

## WINTER MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

- Site Prep Burns: It is important to conduct a site prep burn prior to planting longleaf. Site prep burns remove logging slash, lead to better planting jobs, stimulate early growth by increasing available nutrients, and decrease hot spots that may kill young seedlings in subsequent burns.
- Planting Longleaf: To take advantage of the winter precipitation and maximize survival, planting early is almost always better than late planting. Remember to keep an eye on planting depth.
- Prescribed Fire: Winter is a prime time to conduct fuel reduction burns in mature or sapling stands. Late December through the end of winter is a good time to introduce fire in young longleaf stands to help control unwanted pine seedlings and other competition.
- Evaluate Young Stands: Determine one year survival and ensure adequate stocking. Wait until after the first frost so the grass stage longleaf can be more easily seen.
- Prune Longleaf: In some stands that lack fuels or have a low stocking rate, mechanical pruning may be an option to avoid the "Old Field" growth form. Winter is the easiest time to prune and should be finished before the spring green-up. Pruning may not be practical in a large stand.
- Plant Native Warm Season Grasses: Late winter through early spring is the recommended time to plant our native understory species. Some plants require a cold-stratification period and need to be planted earlier.
- Herbicide Treatments: Basal bark and stem injection herbicide treatments are typically most effective at controlling unwanted or invasive trees and shrubs during the dormant season.

## FROM THE INBOX

## Q&amp;A

Longleaf forest after the 2014 snowstorm in South Carolina. Photo by Ad Platt.

**Q.** Ryan,  
I'm working with a new landowner and a new (to me) forester. It's a project like several that I've been a part of before - 15 year old longleaf stand that hasn't really been managed (i.e. no fire and no herbicides) so the oaks are also 15 years old. Because it's such a poor site and perfect for longleaf, the longleaf are doing really well. (It was formerly longleaf.) Ground cover is present, but suppressed. Now the landowners want to remove the oaks and improve it for wildlife. I've done this with landowners many times before by one of these three methods: 1) granular treatment of oaks with Velpar®, 2) cutting of oaks and spraying stumps immediately, or 3) hack-and-squirt of oaks. I've relayed this to the landowner and their forester, however, the forester still has it in his mind to cut the oaks and treat the resprouts in 1-2 years. I've not heard of this being effective before. Can you all provide me with any research, experiences, or resources that support my approach or his? And if so, what chemicals are you all finding to be successful in each of the scenarios?

Thanks,  
J.D.

**A.** J.D.,  
This is a problem we are beginning to see more in certain areas within the range. Sometimes landowners are not able to apply fire when the oaks (especially laurel oak) are in the most vulnerable stage due primarily to a very good site prep that has eliminated the majority of fine fuels. It is important for landowners to look at the stand and determine what plant species they want to keep before applying a chemical site prep.

Mechanically cutting the oaks and treating the stumps would work as well as the hack-and-squirt method. Unless aesthetics is the main priority, it is not necessary to add the additional labor required to mechanically remove the oaks and then additional

labor to treat the stumps or waiting 1-2 years to treat the resprouts. It has been our experience that a spring application of Velpar® (liquid or granular) does a great job at reducing the number of oaks in a stand. Follow the chemical with a dormant season burn to reduce the heavy fuel load. Velpar® is a soil active herbicide and only needs to be applied under the drip-line of the problem trees. Be sure to use the rates recommended on the label.

I hope this helps,  
Ryan

**Q.** Ad,  
I was wondering if there are any disadvantages to burning 3 year old longleaf that was burned last year at 2 years old.

Sincerely,  
W.B.

**A.** W.B.,  
For any prescribed burn, we would start out by asking, "What is your objective?" Once your objective(s) are known and the stand and fuel conditions are understood, the timing of the next burn will become much more obvious. Frequently that objective might be fuels management or competition control on a site that may not have burned very well in the previous attempt. For example, you might need to burn again if your particular challenge is loblolly seeding into your stand. On the other hand, if your objective was to increase soft mast production for wildlife, don't do it. Soft mast is produced on the 2nd year growth, and you would likely eliminate it in a repeated annual burning.

Other considerations might include more seedlings starting height growth now in that sensitive 1-3' height stage, suggesting more care and cooler burning. Depending upon the fuels, your site may still have a low fuel loading after only one year. So

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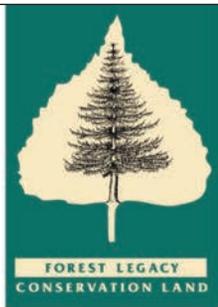
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while it might burn, it may yield another spotty, highly variable result. If it is a dry or poor site with slow fuel accumulation, another disadvantage might be wasting your fuels without getting the desired burn effect (maybe not hot enough to control hardwoods, etc.). If your trees are growing in heavy grass fuels such as bermuda, bahia, or worse yet, spots of cogon grass, your seedlings will fare much better if not burned until they are taller. In the meantime, do your best to eliminate any such cogon grass or climbing fern issues. On the other hand, if it is a rich site, you might want to burn more often to reduce accumulating fuels and fire intensity.

The best bet is to take a very close look at your site after revisiting your management objectives. After a good look at the conditions and the need, a suitable prescription can be developed to help you reach your desired effect. These tips are even better explained in our brochure: *The Pine that Fire Built*. Please send us your address, and we will be glad to mail you a copy, which you may find very helpful. While the answer this time was “it depends,” thank you for asking a very important question.

Hope this helps!

Ad

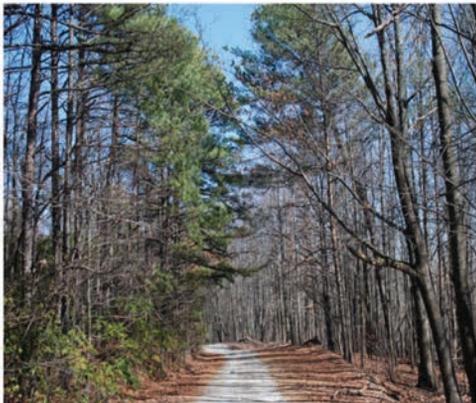


## Forest Legacy Program

### *Protecting Forests through Partnership*

***The Forest Legacy Program protects private, working forests and provides multiple public benefits.***

The majority of the nations' forests are in private ownership and they are trending toward some type of non-forest conversion. These forests are key to providing timber products, wildlife habitat, scenic views and recreation. They help to protect soils and provide clean water.



To confront this problem the Forest Legacy Program was started with a mission to protect privately held forests. Administered by the USDA Forest Service, the Forest Legacy Program uses primarily conservation easements to ensure that protected forests will continue to provide their array of public benefits.

State agencies throughout the nation assist the Forest Service in locating land owners interested in protecting their forests for generations to come.

You can learn more about this program at our website

<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flp.shtml> which also contains a link to federal and state personnel (Federal and State Coordinators List) who could answer specific questions about participating in this program.

***Protecting Private Forest Lands from Conversion to Non-Forest Uses***



By Carol Denhof, *The Longleaf Alliance*

# Our Roots Run Deep



Members of the longleaf community converged in Mobile this past October for the 10th Biennial Longleaf Conference. This event marked the 20th anniversary of the regional conference and was a homecoming of sorts since Mobile was the site of the first Biennial Longleaf Conference.

The Longleaf Alliance was pleased to cohost this year's event with the Eastern Native Grass Alliance (ENGA). The 9th Eastern Native Grass Symposium took place concurrently with the 10th Longleaf Conference. Partnering with this group was a natural fit since grasslands are such an integral component of longleaf ecosystems. Plans are already forming to continue this relationship and cohost the 2018 meeting with the ENGA.

Over the course of the week, conference attendees were given many opportunities to learn about the latest work being done in longleaf and grassland restoration and research. The week started with the meeting of the Longleaf Partnership Council (that convenes twice per year), to report on and set goals for achieving the objectives set in America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative. Leaders in the field of groundcover restoration also met during a pre-conference workshop to improve communication between the research and applied restoration communities and to prioritize needs in the field. Conference speaker sessions followed themed tracks that focused on subjects ranging from the latest applied research findings to the economics of restored forests & grasslands to the use of native warm season grasses for grazing. The field trip reinforced many of the concepts that were introduced during the indoor sessions. Attendees were able to visit three different properties with varying management guidelines. Mr. Keville Larson hosted the group on his 900 acre property in Jackson County, MS. The subjects discussed included wood products, naval stores, stumping, pinestraw, native grass establishment for forage, and habitat management for gopher tortoises. For a different perspective on longleaf management, attendees also visited The Nature Conservancy's Splinter Hill Bog Preserve located in the headwaters of the Perdido River. This landscape includes longleaf pine savanna and seepage bog communities

with interspersed sandhill habitats. The focus of this stop was to explore the amazing plant and animal diversity found in bog and longleaf habitats. Lunch was hosted at the Mobile Botanical Gardens (MBG). MBG is home to a significant urban longleaf forest that is actively managed with fire. Field trip attendees were treated to a catered lunch and a walking tour highlighting the successes and challenges of managing an urban forest. The week came to a close on Friday when members of Prescribed Fire Councils gathered to discuss fire topics. No matter what your interest, everyone was able to take home valuable knowledge that can be applied on their personal property or properties they manage.

As with most conferences, the primary reason for attending is to network with others in a common field. The Longleaf Conference not only provides the opportunity for networking, but is also described by some as a "Family Reunion." The longleaf family is a tight knit group of private landowners, academics, and restoration professionals from industry, government, and non-profit organizations all working to restore the longleaf ecosystem across the southeastern United States. This gathering, that occurs every two years, provides the opportunity for colleagues to strengthen existing partnerships and form new relationships with others to achieve common goals. Our common goal is to increase the acreage of longleaf habitat across the range that runs from Virginia south to Florida and west to Texas. In order to work effectively across this significant landscape, strong partnerships are key to achieving range-wide objectives. The conference provided the venue for partners to meet face to face to discuss challenges, explore opportunities, and learn more about various aspects of longleaf and grassland management.



# 10th Biennial Longleaf Conference





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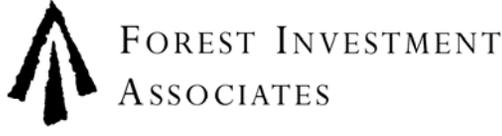
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1. Attendees perusing wares of conference exhibitors. Photo by Lark Hayes.
2. Tuesday night reception to celebrate America's Longleaf 5th Anniversary. Photo by Carol Denbof.
3. Field trip host, Keville Larson, discusses management priorities for his land. Photo by Casey White.
4. Information kiosk at Mobile Botanical Gardens. Photo by Ad Platt.
5. Carnivorous white-topped pitcher plant that inhabits Splinter Hill Bog. Photo by Casey White.
6. Longleaf Alliance staff member Casey White getting up close with a juvenile gopher tortoise. Photo courtesy Casey White.
7. The GCPEP engine on display. Photo by Randy Tate.
8. Plein Air Society member exhibiting her craft during the field trip. Photo by Randy Tate.
9. The amazing longleaf cake created by Lorrie Chambers of The Little Cake Shop and featured at the Mobile Botanical Gardens during the field trip. Photo by Carol Denbof.
10. The Bill Boyer Natural Resource Professional of the Year Award recipient Kevin McIntyre (R) of The J.W. Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway with Robert Abernethy (L) of The Longleaf Alliance. Photo by Carol Denbof.
11. Longleaf Champion Glen Gaines (R) of the USFS with Robert Abernethy (L) of The Longleaf Alliance. Photo by Carol Denbof.
12. Suzi Mersmann discussing the importance of the gopher tortoise in the longleaf ecosystem. Photo by Randy Tate.
13. The Gjerstad/Johnson Landowner of the Year Award recipient L. Keville Larson (R) with Robert Abernethy (L) of The Longleaf Alliance. Photo by Carol Denbof.
14. The Palustris Corporate Achievement Award recipient Wayne Bell (R) of International Forest Company. Photo by Carol Denbof.
15. Keville Larson and Carol Denbof enjoying the America's Longleaf 5th Anniversary Celebration. Photo by Lark Hayes.
16. The Longleaf Alliance store staffed by Casey White and Margaret Platt. Photo Courtesy of Casey White.

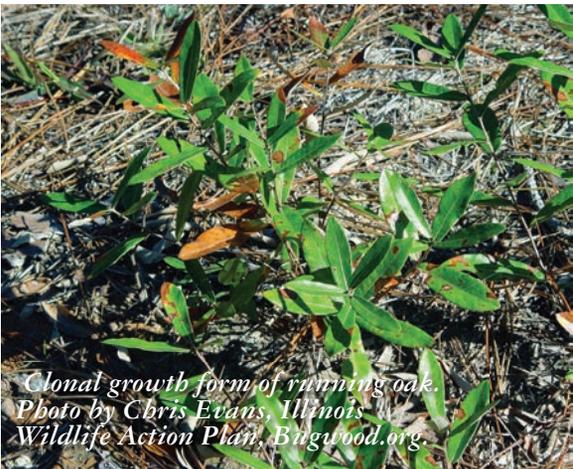
# Thanks again to our generous conference sponsors



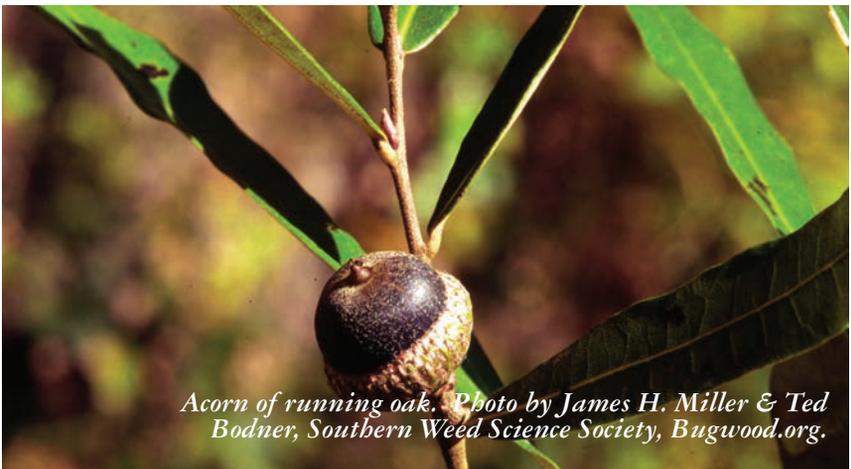
By Carol Denhof, *The Longleaf Alliance*

# PLANT SPOTLIGHT

{ RUNNING OAK *QUERCUS PUMILA* WALT }

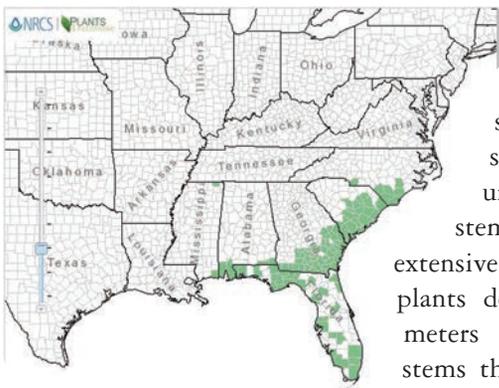


Clonal growth form of running oak.  
Photo by Chris Evans, Illinois  
Wildlife Action Plan, Bugwood.org.



Acorn of running oak. Photo by James H. Miller & Ted Bodner, Southern Weed Science Society, Bugwood.org.

Distribution map for running oak. PLANTS Database.



## Description

This shrubby oak species is clonal spreading by underground stems to form extensive colonies. The plants do not exceed 2 meters in height with stems that are generally low and spreading along

the ground. The leaves are narrowly oblong in shape measuring 4-8 cm in length and 2cm in width. The upper side of the leaf is shiny green, while the underside is densely grayish hairy. Running oak flowers in the spring with the other oak species, and acorns are ripe from September-February. The acorns are small measuring 1cm in length.

## Distribution & Habitat

Running oak is typically found in coastal plain sandy pine forests that are frequently burned. The range of this species runs from North Carolina south to central Florida and west to Mississippi.

## Wildlife Uses

Oaks such as running oak are extremely beneficial to many wildlife species. These plants produce abundant acorns from the extensive colonies and typically produce acorns quicker than tree oak species. Wildlife also benefit from the presence of this food item into the winter when other food plants are no longer available. Animals that utilize running oak include white-tailed deer, wild turkey, black bear, and gray squirrel to name a few.

## Other common species

Other species that are similar in growth pattern to running oak include creeping live oak (*Quercus minima*), myrtle oak (*Q. myrtifolia*), and dwarf chinkapin oak (*Q. prinoides*).

## Commercial Availability

Wildlife food plants such as running oak can be found at select nurseries in the southeastern United States. These plants are generally potted or in plugs.

## References

- Miller, J.H. and K.V. Miller. 2005. Forest Plants of the Southeast and their Wildlife Uses. The University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA 30602. 454pp.
- USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 30 July 2014). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA.

# ARE BETTER TIMES COMING?

## Supply Demand Factors Impacting Southern Timber

By Marc Walley and Andrew Boutwell, Forest Investment Associates



*Longleaf band saw sharpening at Balfour Lumber Mill in Thomasville, GA. Photo by Robert Abernethy.*

In December 2007, what is now known as the Great Recession officially began. The U.S. unemployment rate stood at 5%. Over the course of the next 12 months, brokerage firm Bear Stearns collapsed and was bought by JP Morgan Chase; Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were taken over by the feds; Lehman Brothers filed the largest bankruptcy case in U.S. history; the federal government bailed out insurance giant AIG; and the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) was passed into law. Since the start of the recession, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 8.8 million jobs have been lost. Today the U.S. economy is slowly clawing out of these dire conditions - unemployment has dropped below



*Longleaf lumber planed and stacked at Balfour Lumber Mill in Thomasville, GA. Photo by Robert Abernethy.*

6% (though the real number is considered higher when accounting for people who have dropped out of the labor force), payrolls have increased by more than 200,000 jobs each of the last nine months, and real GDP expanded at 3.5% in the third quarter, following strong GDP performance in the second quarter of 4.6%.

While much of the economic news is good, the housing sector is lagging behind. During the recession, the U.S. housing market experienced an unprecedented decline in new home starts. After a historic peak in 2005 of 2.2 million new starts, housing starts plummeted by almost 80% to around 500 thousand in 2008. Since that collapse, a dramatic period of underbuilding ensued that is well below the annual demand level of about 1.5 million, which many experts estimate as the long-term sustainable annual demand for new homes in the U.S. The lack of new home demand resulted in a virtual collapse of North American softwood lumber production, dropping from 75 billion board feet in 2005 to 42 billion feet in 2009. The hardest hit segment of lumber demand was in residential construction, which fell by 78%. As lumber demand fell, so did prices for southern pine sawtimber. While many markets historically have enjoyed sawtimber prices exceeding \$40/ton,

the average across the South today stands at around \$25/ton.

Market conditions have certainly been difficult for southern timberland owners but current supply/demand factors indicate better times could be coming. The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, which is generally regarded as the most respected source for projecting long-term housing demand, estimates that new home demand could top 16 million units in the coming decade. Other sources that focus on near-term housing demand predict new home starts could reach 1.8 million per year by 2018. On the wood supply side, the western Canadian province of British Columbia, and to a lesser

extent the neighboring province of Alberta, has suffered a devastating mountain pine beetle epidemic that has wiped out millions of acres of lodgepole pine forest. Consequently, the supply of Canadian softwood, which has traditionally supplied over a third of U.S. softwood lumber demand, will be severely constrained for decades.

Adjoining British Columbia to the south is the coastal region of Washington and Oregon. While this Pacific Northwest region has an important and thriving forest industry (built around Douglas fir and western hemlock, species not susceptible to the mountain pine beetle) the region's forest products industry has profited greatly in recent years due to Chinese export markets for logs and lumber. Consequently, harvest levels in the region have remained steady and supported strong log prices to meet this demand. Moreover, and especially important for the southern U.S., the potential to expand sawmill capacity in the region to offset reduced Canadian supply is very limited.

Evidence of these foregoing factors is becoming apparent. Recent investments in new sawmills and expansion favors the South. Georgia-Pacific has spent or will spend approximately \$400 million on capacity expansion in the South; three major Canadian sawmill companies have spent over \$300 million on expansion and purchases of existing mills in South Carolina,



*Longleaf timber after debarking at Balfour Lumber Mill in Thomasville, GA.  
Photo by Robert Abernethy.*

Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi; and Klausner, a major European softwood lumber producer, has plans to spend \$240 million on two or three new mills located in Florida, South Carolina and/or North Carolina. These investments indicate long-term commitments and a vote of confidence to both the southern wood supply and the forest landowners who can provide raw material to meet the needs of these facilities.

During the recession, many southern landowners have deferred sawtimber harvests, resulting in a temporary supply increase in the region (estimated at 1.5 to 2 years of harvest), which will cause the recovery of stumpage prices to lag behind the increase in lumber production. After hitting a trough of 11.5 billion board feet in early 2010, southern lumber production has already increased by 30% to close to 15 billion board feet today. Barring another recession, a strong housing recovery is probable. In this case, southern lumber production could surpass its previous peak of 19 billion board feet, set in 2005, and reach as high as 22 billion board feet within the next five years. The combined economic benefit of growing demand from housing coupled with constrained supply from Canada will result in additional lumber capacity in the South, and should lead to better times ahead for southern markets and southern sawtimber prices.

# KEVILLE LARSON, LANDOWNER OF THE YEAR

By Ad Platt with Keville Larson



*Landowners Keville and Weezie Larson. Photo courtesy of Keville Larson.*

In this issue of The Longleaf Leader, it is only appropriate to shine the “Landowner Spotlight” on L.

Keville Larson. At the Biennial Longleaf Conference in Mobile in October, Keville was honored as the initial recipient of the Gjerstad-Johnson Landowner of the Year Award (2014). This new award was named in honor of the co-founders of the Alliance, Dean Gjerstad and Rhett Johnson, and was created to recognize an exemplary landowner

working to ensure the future of the longleaf pine ecosystem on private land.

Keville earned degrees from Stanford and Yale, became a registered forester in several states, and advanced to lead the nationally regarded forestry consulting firm, Larson and McGowin, until his retirement a few years ago. He recognized the value of longleaf when many of his peers relegated it to the status of “hobby tree.” He manages his longleaf appropriately with fire, vigorously combats cogon grass, works to achieve natural regeneration through management, generates income from his productive forest, and with his family and friends, enjoys the intangible assets a well-managed forest provides.

Major influences in Keville’s background include a South Alabama sawmill in his mother’s family, his father’s executive role with Weyerhaeuser Timber Company (propaganda about growing trees from both parents!), and summer forestry jobs in Alabama, Wisconsin, Sweden, and France. Keville’s uncle,

Julian McGowin, and L. K. Pomeroy formed a consulting and forest management firm in 1938 and were early proponents of selective cutting, natural regeneration, and uneven aged management. Throughout his career, their philosophies and practices, adapted to changing conditions, provided a guide. A legacy of their teaching is his strong feeling about the dangers of government involvement potentially leading to regulation or cost share dependency, and a strong interest instead in promoting tax incentives equally available to all citizens.

He gained exposure to other parts of the forestry community by serving on boards or working with many organizations, including the Forest History Society, Association of Consulting Foresters, Forest Industries Tax Council, Coalition of Prescribed Burn Councils, Forest Landowners Association and others. His involvement with foresters in all areas of public and private employ, academia, research, politics, and NGOs provided perspectives on forestry, government and land ownership. His retirement as Chairman of Larson & McGowin has allowed time for work in the woods and with professional and landowner organizations. Keville is an effective advocate for private forestland ownership in the U. S. and points to this as one of our greatest natural resource success stories, with private forestlands in better condition now than any time in the past 100 years.

For managing his family’s timberlands Keville has found annual plans and budgets to be more important than fixed management plans because natural and economic conditions and owner needs, preferences and objectives change so often. Objectives that have remained constant include maintaining a good stocking of sawtimber per acre, a good distribution of tree sizes, improving quality, and enhancing recreational values. Protection, burning, harvesting, planning, and patience have been the most successful management activities that ultimately provide good care of a productive forest while meeting changing owner objectives. His plans have concentrated on growing larger, more valuable sawlogs and poles (with



*Keville Larson giving tour to school children on property.  
Photo courtesy of Keville Larson.*

*The next generation: Keville Larson's children and grandchildren.  
Photo courtesy of Keville Larson.*

pulpwood a by-product only), and on using fire, harvesting, and natural regeneration to create even and uneven aged groups of trees that form an all-aged forest. Periodic income comes from thinning, improvement, seed tree, shelterwood, and overstory removals. Regeneration methods used include gaps, shelterwood, and seed trees. A hunting agreement and pine straw harvests produce important annual income. Pine straw has become a management priority after cogon grass control efforts created easy straw collecting sites. This may lead to little or no thinning of stands with pine straw potential. Unthinned stands not only produce good straw but are better protected from hurricanes.

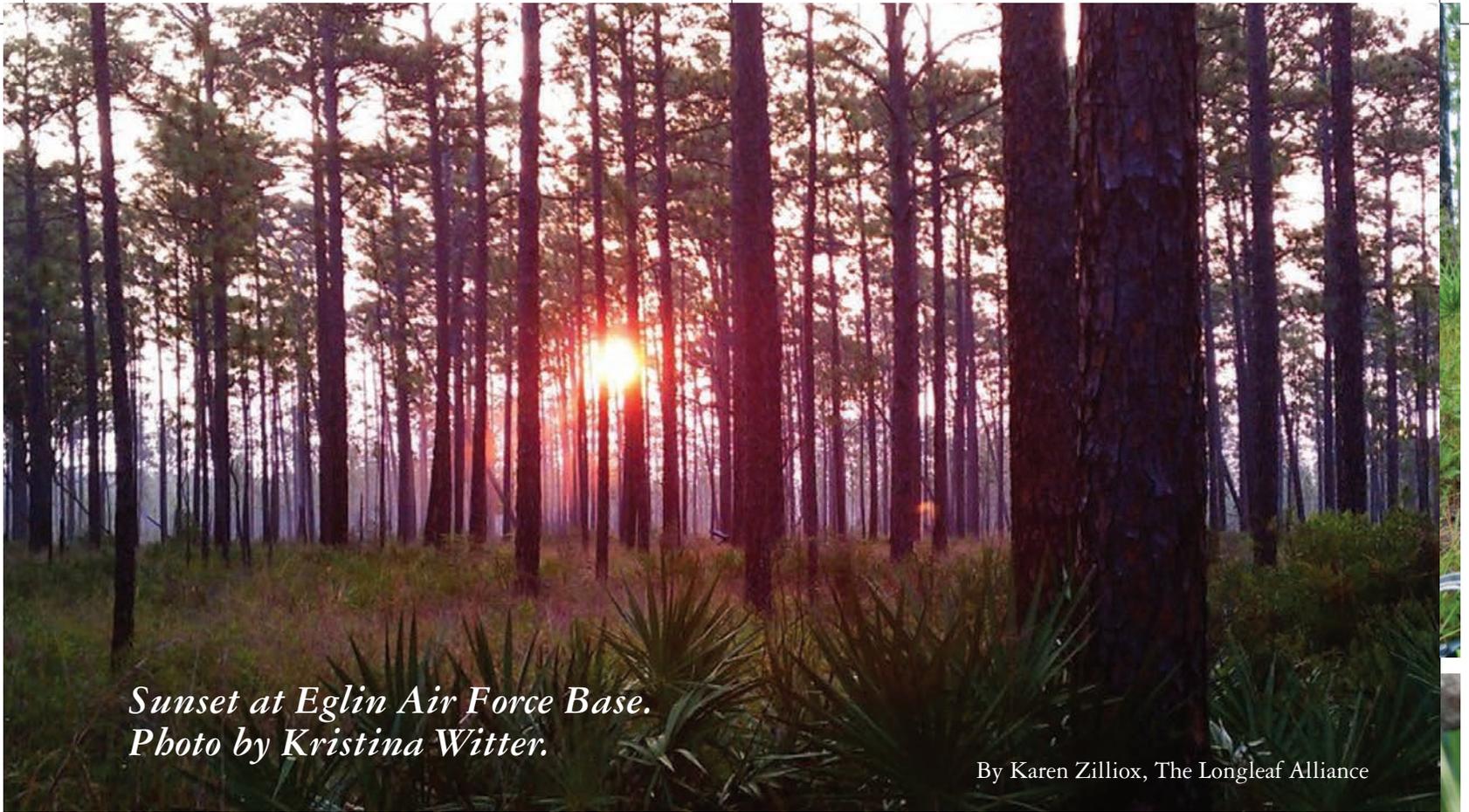
Waiting for trees to grow, seed crops to develop, weather to burn, income for improvements or children to grow up can all be pleasurable experiences if one is involved, patient, and accepting. Keville and his wife Weezie describe their property as providing some or all of the benefits of a health club, hobby, investment, savings account, retirement fund, therapist, and church. In addition, it provides recreation and social opportunities for family, friends, neighbors, church groups, and Boy Scouts as well as forestry field tours.

Keville has been one of the nation's most passionate and effective spokesmen for the rights and responsibilities of private

landowners, working on many levels and in many settings, from the local to the national level. He continues to be active across the natural resources landscape, serving as a wise counsel to many foresters and landowners and spending more time with Weezie and his family on the land he enjoys so much. He has been a valued supporter of The Longleaf Alliance since its inception and has provided advice and insight for the entire 19 years of our existence.

These comments were offered in part while accepting this award: "Like many, we look beyond financial returns and include personal satisfaction, enjoyment, family recreation and hope for premiums for quality or ecosystem services as justification for longleaf management. But a reward likely realized by everyone involved with the Alliance, not just landowners, is a feeling of satisfaction, pride, even righteousness from working with a community of others for a cause we know to be good and worthy."

There was great symmetry in returning to their family lands on the 10th Conference field tour, as Keville had hosted the field trip of the first conference back in 1996. Once again, all who attended enjoyed a highly informative tour with notable presenters on these actively managed lands.



*Sunset at Eglin Air Force Base.  
Photo by Kristina Witter.*

By Karen Zilliox, The Longleaf Alliance

# On The Move:

## Partnerships Aiding the Recovery of a Species

There is a change in the air that comes every fall on the Gulf Coast in northwest Florida. The temperatures finally begin to drop after a sweltering summer and the winds begin to blow out of the north, bringing noticeably drier air. The blooming *Liatrix* and *Solidago* add bursts of purple and gold to an already rich understory. The sun sets a little earlier each evening, and in the golden hour preceding that, light and color play off of one another, casting rose, orange, and bronze glows onto longleaf trunks and limbs, palmetto fronds, and endless acres of bluestem and wiregrass.

These are the things one notices while hunkered down in the brush, as inconspicuously as possible, waiting for the unmistakable chirps of red-cockaded woodpeckers coming back to their cluster for the night.

For wildlife biologists based at Eglin Air Force Base, October means translocation of red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCWs). What is a translocation? Translocations are highly coordinated events in which young adult birds (those hatched the previous spring) are captured from large, stable populations and moved to supplement small, fragmented populations elsewhere in the

range, ultimately to stave off extirpation. Translocations have been part of the recovery effort of RCWs since the 1980s and are crucial for moving towards the goal of down-listing and de-listing this endangered species.

Red-cockaded woodpeckers have seen a decline similar to that of the longleaf pine ecosystem. Today, there are approximately 15,500 individuals in 6,200 breeding groups. This represents less than 3% of the estimated pre-settlement abundance according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The Southern Range Translocation Cooperative (SRTC) coordinates the movement of birds from donor populations to recipients. At Eglin, that charge is led by biologist Kristina Witter. She has been the translocation biologist here since 2010, when Eglin Air Force Base was officially added as a donor site for birds. Eglin joined three other Primary Core Populations— the Francis Marion National Forest, North Carolina Sandhills-East (Fort Bragg), and Fort Stewart, when it too surpassed the recovery goals outlined by the USFWS in number of breeding pairs.



**1:** Translocation biologist Kristina Witter with one of the donor birds captured from Eglin Air Force Base. Photo by Karen Zilliox.

**2:** Bird boxes that RCWs will remain in until taken to their destination at the recipient site. Photo by Kristina Witter.

**3:** Plastic color bands are placed on monitored RCWs several days after hatching. The color combinations are unique to each bird in the population, in addition to an aluminum band imprinted with an identifier number, for further verification. Photo by Danny Bales.

**4:** Longleaf Alliance staffer Karen Zilliox setting up a telescoping net at a cavity tree. Photo by Kristina Witter.

On the day of a capture event, a crew of biologists, technicians, wildland firefighters, foresters, students, members of the Alliance's Ecosystem Support Team, and volunteers assemble outside the Air Force's natural resources building in Niceville, FL. There, Witter will organize them into teams of two: one biologist, who has the required permitting to physically handle an endangered species, and one assistant. She will assign them to one or two clusters out on the 485,000 acre installation. With a map, a net, a spotting scope, a wooden bird box, and a packet telling you the cluster, tree, gender, and banding combination of your bird, the teams depart to attempt their captures.

At the cluster, about an hour before sunset, you find a place to have a good view of the cavity entrance, and be far enough from the tree to not scare off the bird. You sit and wait for your bird to come home for the night. You are waiting for one bird. One bird, who will come home to this one tree.

You know this one bird will be the one you need because this one bird has been monitored since it hatched out of its shell six months ago, between April and June. Witter, and her technicians at Witter Wildlife Consulting, LLC, have spent the spring verifying nest trees, clutch sizes, nest success, and banding hatchlings with uniquely colored identifiers. Throughout the summer, juveniles were continuously

{continued on page 8}



{continued from page 7}

monitored to determine gender, foraging habitat, familial relationships, and other demographic criteria that Witter uses to select the birds she will capture as donors. She estimates it can take up to 10 visits to a cluster to make that determination. She monitors 115-120 groups with the sole focus on supporting an annual translocation goal of moving 20 birds.

Back in the woods, your bird has been verified through the scope as “the one”, and it has retreated into the cavity just as the light is fading; you let it settle in for a few moments. Being careful not to approach from the tunnel view at the front of the cavity, you gently raise up the fine mesh net to a height of about 20-30 feet. In one swift motion you’ll firmly place the opening of the net over the cavity, pressing the rigid sides against the tree to leave no room for escape. Often, this alone causes the bird to flush out, reach the back of the net and drop to the extended sock portion and come to rest momentarily.

Now that the bird is secured, the net can be carefully lowered down, and the permitted biologist can take hold of the bird while the assistant readies the bird box for transportation. They look closely that the color bands and imprinted numbers match exactly to what you have been assigned to capture.

This bird, along with its counterpart of the opposite sex, will be released to their new habitat in the hopes that they will become a new breeding pair. In total, 5 pairs of birds will be released on the same property through the efforts of one capture night. Each pair has a cluster of longleaf pine cavity trees waiting for them. Criteria that the recipient agency must adhere to includes well-managed longleaf habitat, utilizing fire to maintain that habitat, and the creation of not one, but two clusters per bird received. One cluster will be the primary habitat, and one cluster will be a back-up should the first one

be considered unsatisfactory and ultimately not utilized by the birds. Ideally, that back-up cluster will provide a ready home for the offspring created by this new pair.

At the end of the night, around 8:00, all birds have been captured, and all teams have returned to the natural resources building. They have checked in with Witter throughout the evening about their progress, and occasionally with frustrations over birds who don’t seem to want to retreat to the cavities, or who refuse to come out once they do. The representatives from the recipient population load up their birds and begin the journey home that night.

One way or another, sometimes miraculously, Witter always gets her birds. And with two translocation capture nights, at 10 birds a night, that is no small feat. Since Witter joined the SRTC program at Eglin Air Force Base five years ago, 101 birds have been moved from here to recipient populations. In 2014, the recipients were the Talladega National Forest (AL) and the DeSoto National Forest (MS). Success of these translocations will be assessed during the next breeding season.

The success of the SRTC translocation efforts and contribution towards the recovery of the RCW would not be possible without the support, both logistical and financial, of partners. Following another successful translocation season at Eglin Air Force Base, Kristina Witter concurs: “We couldn’t do this without partnerships”.

Special thanks to Kristina Witter and Ralph Costa for technical expertise and access to reports.

**More background information on the translocation program can be found at:**

<http://serppas.org/projects/otherissuetteams/rcwtranslocation.aspx>



*Photo by Carol Denbof.*

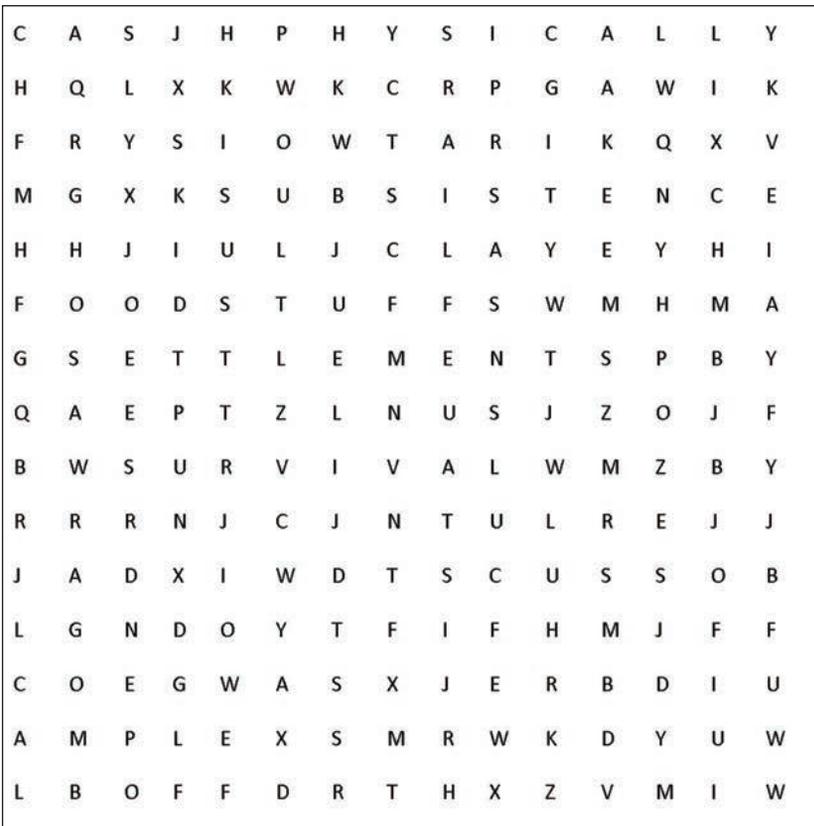


By Anne Rilling, *The Longleaf Alliance*

# While you're in the Grass stage...

“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 Fourteen:** Although it may be hard to envision, at one time the longleaf pine forest was the wild frontier. Mysterious and dangerous animals and plants could be found everywhere in the forest. Mule-drawn wagons slowly carried people through endless longleaf pine forests. Homes were built from the lumber of longleaf pine trees cut with axes and saws. Life was tough for these people. *Use Lesson Fourteen found on our website ([www.longleafalliance.org/nextgeneration](http://www.longleafalliance.org/nextgeneration)) to fill in the blanks and find the answers in the word search puzzle. Answers can be found below the picture.*



\_\_\_\_\_ extracted from the lightwood of longleaf pine lubricated the axles of pioneer wagons. Pioneers gathered herbs, animal parts and minerals to concoct \_\_\_\_\_ from the woods. Longleaf pine grows on a variety of soil types, from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Farms were small compared to today's standard; the average size was \_\_\_\_\_ acres. Pioneer farmers were \_\_\_\_\_ limited by how much land could be farmed. The forest was considered \_\_\_\_\_ for cattle. \_\_\_\_\_ fences were used to keep cattle out of garden plots. \_\_\_\_\_ crops were planted on the few acres surrounding the house. In addition, farmers gathered many other \_\_\_\_\_ from the forests nearby. \_\_\_\_\_ was difficult for pioneer and self-sufficiency was essential. Longleaf pine forests were harvested and replaced with other \_\_\_\_\_ crops such as cotton. The lands were sparsely populated, it could be as much as one day's ride between \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer  
Answers: Tar, medicines, clayey, sandy, fifty, open rangeland, rail, subsistence, physically, foodstuffs, survival, agricultural, settlements

By Mike Black, Past Chair, Longleaf Partnership Council

# Longleaf Partnership Council News

“ MOVING FORWARD ”

By now we are all back at work following an excellent joint meeting in Mobile, Alabama with The Longleaf Alliance (LLA). The Longleaf Partnership Council met at the beginning of the week and thanks go to the staff of the LLA for both their assistance and outstanding hospitality. The Tuesday evening reception featured the second celebration of the 5 Year Anniversary of America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative. This event lasted all evening with a great crowd celebrating the progress that has been made across the longleaf range.

Several changes have occurred in the leadership team for the Longleaf Partnership Council. Glen Gaines (USFS) is retiring after a stellar career and he will soon be generating a lot of sawdust in his woodworking shop back in Alabama. Vernon Compton (GCPEP/LLA) completed his three year tour of duty as Past Chair, I have moved from position as Chair to Past Chair, Kevin McIntyre (J.W. Jones Center Ecological Research Center at Ichauway) has assumed the role as Chair for the next year, and finally, we welcome Troy Ettel (The Nature Conservancy) as the incoming Vice Chair.

Momentum with the Longleaf Partnership Council continues to build for the upcoming year with many items on the agenda including an effort to improve mapping of existing

longleaf stands on private lands, increased emphasis on the capacity to conduct prescribed burning, a continued focus on longleaf on public lands along with more effort and focus on the management of private lands, and a continued process of refining the economics of longleaf management for the private



*Past Chair Mike Black addressing the group during the ALRI 5 year Celebration.  
Photo by Lark Hayes.*

landowner and the range-wide markets. In addition, a subset of the council has been tasked with updating the Strategic Actions and Priorities document in the coming months.

Finally – thanks again to the Local Implementation Teams (LITs) for their continued work at transferring the funding dollars to the work on the ground!

See you all in Pensacola Beach, Florida in April 2015.

## ARSA Update: Seizing Opportunities

By Brian Pelc, *The Nature Conservancy*



*Participants in the October 8th ARSA Private Lands Longleaf Pine Workshop are treated to a guided tour of longleaf forests ranging from pure habitat-focus to timber production. Topics included: Why Longleaf?, Prescribed Fire and Longleaf Pine, Groundcover restoration, Wildlife and Longleaf as well as Incentives and Easements impact on Longleaf economics. Photo by Cheryl Millett.*

Over half of the quality longleaf habitat in the Apalachicola River region is on private lands and in order to reach our local and regional goals for acres restored, Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance (ARSA) has taken a proactive approach: private landowner workshops. Thanks to funding from National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Longleaf Stewardship Fund, ARSA members have been able to reach out to over 100 partners that own or work on private forested lands. Our most recent effort focused on landowners and technical assistance providers in the Florida counties of Liberty, Gadsden and Calhoun, where 50 participants attended the October 8th ARSA workshop. Slides and discussion were followed by a complimentary lunch and an afternoon field trip on The Nature Conservancy's Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve as well as a private tree farm across the street. Two more workshops are planned for 2015.

The Deepwater Horizon was a tragedy affecting the coastal communities in ARSA, and west along the Gulf Coast. The criminal and civil penalties offer a unique opportunity for alliances like ARSA to turn that tragedy into unprecedented opportunity for land conservation and management. While not exclusive to longleaf pine, the focus of The Apalachicola Project (\$15 million over 5 years) is to increase the quality and quantity of freshwater resources in the Apalachicola region through hydrological restoration, conservation land management, and private landowner outreach and assistance. Since the ARSA region is predominantly longleaf habitat, our targets for acres restored, managed, and newly planted will benefit the America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) goals tremendously.

In the upcoming planting season, ARSA is pleased to support 100 acres of longleaf improvements at Tyndall Air Force Base, 200 acres of clear cut restoration at Torreya State Park, 300 acres of pine planting at Box-R WMA, and 137 acres of sandhill restoration at Econfina WMA.

## Chattahoochee Fall Line Conservation Partnership Stewardship Update

By Michele Elmore, *The Nature Conservancy*



*Juvenile gopher tortoise observed on the Chattahoochee Fall Line. Photo by Geoff Sorrell, Land Steward, The Nature Conservancy.*

Stewardship activities continue to scale up on the Chattahoochee Fall Line (CFL). This past season the CFL fire team assisted prescribed fire efforts on over 9,000 acres across the Fort Benning significant geographic area (SGA) including public and private lands in Georgia and Alabama. Efforts are underway to prepare over 500 acres for longleaf planting this winter. This enhancement of longleaf pine habitat is improving the viability of many rare species which are increasingly observed on the CFL. Rare reptiles observed in the last six months include a juvenile gopher tortoise (pictured), mole kingsnake, pine snake, eastern diamondback rattlesnake, southern hognose snake (pictured), and a mole skink.

As part of the Chattahoochee Fall Line Conservation Partnership



*Southern hognose snake observed on the Chattahoochee Fall Line. Photo by Geoff Sorrell, Land Steward, The Nature Conservancy.*

(CFLCP) conservation plan, a network of long-term ecological monitoring plots is being established to track progress and enable adaptive forest management. Plot establishment and data collection began on Fort Benning in 2009. Since June, 345 additional permanent ecological monitoring plots have been installed across Ft. Benning and adjacent partnership lands, bringing the total number of plots in the region to 485. The purpose of these monitoring plots is two-fold: to first quantitatively describe the range of forest composition and structural conditions in upland forests on the CFL, and secondly, to track forest dynamics in response to longleaf pine forest restoration. Monitoring plots are measured one full growing season following a restoration treatment (e.g. burning, harvesting, planting, etc.). Data collected from this plot network is expected to not only enable adaptive forest restoration, but will also provide important insight into the role of environmental factors (e.g. soil, climate) on forest dynamics in the coming decades.

## A Partnership within our Partnership Wins Inaugural Conservation Award!

*By Randy Tate, The Longleaf Alliance*



*Aerial view of the Altamaha River. Photo by Georgia DNR.*

The Townsend Bombing Range, owned and operated by the Marine Corps Air Station in Beaufort, SC, lies along the Altamaha River in the Georgia counties of McIntosh and Long. Over several years a partnership has worked to buffer the military installation while adding thousands of acres to state Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). This marriage of military mission and wildlife conservation was just recognized for its exemplary work. The Townsend Bombing Range Encroachment Partnering Team and retired Brigadier General Bob Barnes were awarded the first Nancy Natoli Élan Award for Innovation in Land Conservation in September 2014. The Team consisted of the Marine Corps Air Station, GA DNR, and the GA Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, all steering committee members of the larger Ft. Stewart/Altamaha Longleaf Restoration Partnership.

The land protection that has been done protects the lower section of the Altamaha River and creates connections between existing WMAs. The Townsend WMA in Long County is in the heart of the Ft. Stewart/Altamaha boundary and is one of the areas protected by the Encroachment Partnering Team. Through funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Longleaf Stewardship Fund (LSF), this 6,714-acre tract that had much of the upland in sandpine, is now being converted to longleaf pine. Townsend WMA protects unique sand ridges found along the northeast banks of the Altamaha. These sand ridges provide habitat for gopher tortoises and indigo snakes. The bottomland hardwoods within the WMA provide nesting habitat for Swallow-tailed Kites and Bald Eagles.

## Largest State-Based Conservation Measure in U.S. History Passes in Florida

*By Vernon Compton, The Longleaf Alliance*



*Old growth longleaf forest on Eglin Air Force Base. Photo by Vernon Compton.*

On November 4, 2014, Florida voters passed Amendment 1, the Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment. For an amendment to pass in Florida, it must have a supermajority of 60% of the voters to approve it. Florida voters strongly supported the measure with 75% voting in favor. Funds for the measure will come from fees on real estate transactions and will be dedicated to acquisition and restoration of lands in Florida for conservation and recreation. Current projections estimate over 10 billion dollars will be dedicated to this effort over the next 20 years. In the GCPEP landscape, several priority land protection projects may benefit from these funds, including Wolfe Creek Forest, Coastal Headwaters Forest, Clear Creek/Whiting Field, Perdido Pitcher Plant Prairie, and Garcon Point. Protection could be in the form of acquisition and/or conservation easements and would lead to additional opportunities for the restoration and management of longleaf pine. Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard on the passage of this very important conservation measure.

## National Wild Turkey Federation Awarded Grant to Restore Longleaf Pine in West Central Louisiana

By Rick Jacob, *The Nature Conservancy*



*Longleaf field day in Dry Creek, Louisiana, 2014. Photo by The Nature Conservancy.*

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) was awarded a \$350,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Longleaf Stewardship Fund to advance longleaf restoration in the Fort Polk/Kisatchie National Forest Significant Geographic Area (SGA). Additional non-federal matching funds of over \$350,000 from NWTf and other partners will also be applied to the project. The project is a part of the Forestland Stewards Initiative formed by International Paper and NFWF to identify, restore, and protect landscapes in three priority regions in the southern United States, one of which is The Piney Woods of Texas and Louisiana.

NWTf will work with The West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Partnership to restore at least 1,000 acres of longleaf pine and enhance 2,100 additional acres of longleaf to expand protected wildlife corridors that link public and

private lands within the Fort Polk/Kisatchie National Forest SGA. The National Wild Turkey Federation and partners will provide management plans and cost-share incentives for private landowners to restore longleaf and maintain and improve understory. The project also will coordinate site visits by forestry and wildlife professionals to support and encourage longleaf restoration and management efforts and provide verified, updated reporting. Efforts will support the mission of Fort Polk by broadening the ecological base of the longleaf pine ecosystem surrounding the installation.

Project partners include The Nature Conservancy, Hancock Timber Company, Resource Management Service, The Campbell Group, Weyerhaeuser, LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Fort Polk, and Practicing Foresters Institute.

## DeSoto National Forest Hosts Field Tour in Mississippi

By Tamara Campbell, *Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks*



*Jimmy Mordica explaining the activities that took place at the Airey Tower Ecosystem Restoration Project Area (De Soto NF) to CFLRP partners and stakeholders. Photo by Becky Stowe.*

The DeSoto Ranger District in southeast MS hosted a field tour in November to review successful ecosystem restoration efforts and to discuss potential challenges. Several members of the MS Longleaf Implementation Team attended the field tour along with other state, federal, and non-government organization collaborators.

The US Forest Service highlighted longleaf pine ecosystem restoration; harvest results on site condition; habitat improvements for Mississippi gopher frogs, gopher tortoises, and red cockaded woodpeckers; hazardous fuel reduction; and prescribed fire results. These accomplishments were made possible through the Ecosystem Restoration for Gopher Tortoise and Red Cockaded Woodpecker decision and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration funding.

## Boon Chesson Receives North Carolina's Illustris Palustris Award

By Bill Pickens, NC Forest Service



*Boon Chesson, landowner and longleaf advocate, is recognized for his efforts to restore longleaf in North Carolina. Photo by Bill Pickens.*

The North Carolina Longleaf Coalition presented the 2014 Illustris Palustris award to Boon Chesson, a longleaf advocate and landowner from the North Carolina Piedmont region. Boon was recognized by his peers at a joint meeting of the Greater Uwharries Land Conservation Partnership, the NC Sandhills Conservation Partnership, and the NC Longleaf Coalition. North Carolina awards the Illustris Palustris annually to recognize an individual for significant contribution to the longleaf efforts in the state. "Boon is an ambassador for longleaf pine restoration, specifically piedmont longleaf pine" wrote Terry Sharpe in his commendation, "His interest in longleaf forestry, friendly outgoing personality, and sharing what he has learned have made him the go-to-guy for longleaf pine restoration and history in Montgomery County." Boon's interest in longleaf forest management motivated him to change careers and acquire a forestry degree.

He practices what he preaches, managing his own personal property for longleaf pine. Boon advocates the frequent use of prescribed fire. Under Boon's 20-plus year prescribed burn program, his personal land has gone from a typical old farm site to a veritable hotbed of native plant diversity. Because of the frequent use of fire and resulting botanical diversity, botanists eagerly visit Boon's property on a regular basis to identify plant species. He always makes his property available for educational hikes and events for landowners, and research purposes.

Boon worked with the local community college to promote and coordinate the first prescribed burner certification classes in North Carolina and is a member of the NC Prescribed Fire Council. Through his work with the Stewardship and Land Protection committee of The Land Trust of Central NC, Boon has been instrumental in land conservation efforts in the southern Piedmont. Boon is an active "boots on the ground" voice for longleaf and his passion for longleaf as a forester, naturalist, botanist, and prescribed burner qualifies him as a voice for longleaf pine in North Carolina, and a deserving recipient of the 2014 Illustris Palustris Award.

## When Opportunity Knocks

By Alan Dozier, Okefenokee/Osceola Local Implementation Team



*GFC Ranger mows a young longleaf stand as part of the Incident Management Team training exercise. Photo by Alan Dozier.*

In September 2014 the Okefenokee and Osceola Local Implementation Team (O2LIT) recognized that the Georgia Forestry Commission had purchased several forestry mowing machines and begun to mow understory for private landowners. Naturally, it followed that a partner with this capacity, through participation on the local implementation team, could be instrumental in restoring understory and helping private landowners to get prescribed fire returned to the forest. Utilizing funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Longleaf Stewardship Fund, a contract was set



*A strike team of mowers is prepared to bit the woods. Photo by Alan Dozier.*

with the Georgia Forestry Commission for 225 acres of understory mowing.

In October 2014, the Georgia Forestry Commission conducted an incident command system training exercise within the Okefenokee/Osceola Significant Geographic Area (SGA). The objective of the event was to refresh the GFC Type II incident management team and to provide opportunities to train future team leaders.

Nearly 100 Georgia Forestry Commission team members and mentors arrived at Waycross, GA and began to organize the wildfire training exercise. Fires were intentionally set on Dixon State Forest with the intent of being extinguished by fire suppression helicopters. The team was also given a list of 32 landowners who had been designated for understory mowing under our Longleaf Stewardship Fund contract. We met with the team, described the project and the contract, described how accomplishments were to be reported, and set priorities for selecting sites to mow.

All in all, understory fuels were reduced on 180 priority acres during the two day exercise. Some 75 incident management team members were able to update certifications and hone their skill, team administrators and training officers were able to identify opportunities for improvement in team performance, and two of our major private landowners within the one mile fire buffer priority area for O2LIT received assistance with fuel reductions. Partnerships were reinforced across the board.

## Taking Advantage of a Fantastic Fire Season: Ocala Longleaf Pine Local Implementation Team

By Cheryl Millett, *The Nature Conservancy*



*The Nature Conservancy's Northeast Florida Ecosystem Restoration Team member monitors a controlled burn in longleaf pine habitat. Photo by Cheryl Millett*

The Ocala Longleaf Pine Local Implementation Team (OLIT) continued focusing on implementing work on the ground on public lands, beginning work on private lands in the region, and coordinating and communicating.

The timing was perfect to begin work on the ground. The 2014 fire season in central Florida provided many great controlled burning days and The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Northeast Florida Ecosystem Restoration Team (ERT) took full advantage of the opportunity. The ERT set a goal of delivering 7,050 acres of controlled burning with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Longleaf Stewardship Fund. The ERT overachieved, delivering a total of 8,173 acres of controlled burning on 19 properties managed by federal, state, local or private agencies or organizations. They also conducted non-native invasive plant treatment and hardwood control on the few days without prescribed fire.

The Florida Forest Service is implementing the bulk of longleaf work on private lands, through an incentive program offering restoration, maintenance and technical assistance. There are contracts in place with 25 private landowners to conduct longleaf planting, native understory establishment, prescribed burning, timber stand improvement, and nonnative invasive control projects.

On the coordinating and communicating front, the OLIT email list is growing and several emails have been sent out with information about accomplishments, workshops, incentive programs, resources, and other upcoming events. We worked with TNC and NRCS in Florida to get stories out on social media, radio, and print news to promote the value of longleaf pine. We participated in the annual Florida Forestry Association meeting to gain a better understanding of private landowner needs, and in the biennial Longleaf Conference and Eastern Native Grass Symposium, presented a poster about the key ingredients for a LIT as seen through the eyes of OLIT.

## Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership Update

By Jimmy Lisenby, *Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership* By Kent Evans, *Texas Longleaf Implementation Team*



*LIT Coordinator Jimmy Lisenby collects wiregrass seed using a Prairie Habitats Seed harvester. Photo by Susan Griggs.*

The Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership (SLPCP) has begun native longleaf understory seed collection efforts with its newly acquired Prairie Habitats seed harvester. Lyne Askins and Mark Parker with the Carolina Sandhills Wildlife Refuge were very helpful in locating suitable collections sites on the refuge. Collection efforts were focused on wiregrass stands in open longleaf forests with a history of fire and a large diversity of native understory species. In a little less than 10 hours over two days we were able to collect about 40 pounds of seed. This seed will be used

to reestablish understory on private lands within the focus area. Plans are to continue collecting seed until we have enough to satisfy the needs of interested landowners.

On Saturday October 4th 2014 the SLPCP sponsored a booth in the heart of our focus area at the Carolina Festival in Chesterfield, SC. The booth looked amazing thanks to Sue Griggs and Heather Rivers. The display showed how the Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District, Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service work together to serve the landowners in the Chesterfield County area. Many visitors to the booth took home a longleaf pine seedling courtesy of the SC Forestry Commission's Taylor Nursery as well as a few other educational items. This was a great opportunity to educate landowners about the network of support that exists for longleaf restoration. Many kids were drawn in by the pictures of burning and found it astonishing that fire could be used as a tool to create a healthy forest.



*Potential future landowners learn about the longleaf pine ecosystem. Photo by Susan Griggs.*

## SoLoACE Longleaf Partnership Hosts Workshop & Field Day

By Bobby Franklin, *The Longleaf Alliance*



*Gary Burger (SCDNR) and Bennett Tucker (Hitchcock Woods Foundation) speaking to the group of 60 attendees at the first SoLoACE Longleaf Landowner Field Day held in Aiken SC. Photo by Robert Abernethy.*

The Southern Low Country and ACE Basin (SoLoACE) Longleaf Partnership, Hitchcock Woods, International Forest Company and the National Wild Turkey Federation hosted a workshop at Newberry Hall and field tour of Hitchcock Woods in Aiken, SC on November 20. Topics for the day included History & Future of Longleaf Pine, Prescribed Fire & Wildlife, Longleaf Values, and Cost Share Programs. During the afternoon tour of Hitchcock Woods, participants saw efforts to restore longleaf ecosystems on the 2,000 acre property which is surrounded by the city of Aiken. Tour stops included native groundcover restoration, midstory hardwood control & fuel reduction, prescribed burning, and natural regeneration of longleaf pine. Approximately 60 people attended the day's events. The workshop was sponsored by the partnership which included The Longleaf Alliance, Clemson University, Ducks Unlimited, Hitchcock Woods, National Wild Turkey Federation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Nemours Wildlife Foundation, Open Land Trust, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Forestry Commission U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service, Savannah River Forest Station.

## Talladega-Mountain Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership Welcomes New Coordinator

By Keith Tassin, *The Nature Conservancy*



*Prescribed burn at The Nature Conservancy's Roberta Case Pine Hills Preserve. Photo by Keith Tassin.*

The Talladega-Mountain Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership has hired Alex Varner to guide our conservation efforts. Alex is moving back to his home state of Alabama after stints with The Nature Conservancy in NW Florida and Montana and is excited to be back in the mountain longleaf pine range. With the addition of a coordinator, the partnership can fully begin to refine our conservation strategies and start accomplishing conservation on the ground. With the assistance of a National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Longleaf Stewardship Fund grant, the partnership will contribute to the restoration of over 600 acres of longleaf pine on the Coosa Wildlife Management Area and 60 acres on an in-holding in the Oakmulgee District of the Talladega National Forest this winter. Progress has also been made on getting more ecologically

important fire on the ground in the landscape; a recent agreement between The Nature Conservancy and the US Forest Service will fund additional fire crew resources to assist Alabama's National Forests in implementing more prescribed fires and the NFWF grant will fund these same crews to assist with burns at the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge and on private lands in the partnership area. The NFWF grant will also provide funds for The Longleaf Alliance to coordinate a Longleaf 101 Academy with the partnership and begin planning a Mountain Longleaf Pine Conference.

## Texas Longleaf Implementation Team Update

By Kent Evans, Texas Longleaf Implementation Team



*Crates of collected longleaf cones. Photo by Rufus Duncan.*

The Texas Longleaf Implementation Team is pleased to have a new partner in longleaf restoration in east Texas. Marianna & Rufus Duncan are the new owners of mature longleaf stands in east Texas that support red-cockaded woodpeckers and a treasure of other associated species in the longleaf ecosystem. They are continuing the past stewardship of this area, once provided by Temple-Inland and International Paper and known as Scrippin' Valley. The Duncans are working closely with The Nature Conservancy to permanently conserve the property's conservation value of the longleaf habitat at Scrippin' Valley for future generations. This fall, the Duncans partnered with International Forest Company (IFCO) to harvest cones from the old longleaf growing on these lands.

LA. IFCO made extensive collections of longleaf cones from genetically improved seed orchards and select natural stands from North Carolina to Texas. Working with Rufus Duncan, healthy longleaf cones were harvested from Scrippin' Valley (Wiergate/Burkeville, Texas) and will produce seed for an estimated 4 million new east Texas longleaf seedlings. These seed batches will be used for planting in 2015 and subsequent years. Locally sourced longleaf seedlings of the highest genetic quality provide the best reforestation stock for any area. It is hoped that initiatives like this will positively contribute to the scope and quality of new longleaf establishments in east Texas.

Additional harvests from longleaf growing on the National Forests in Texas were coordinated by George Weick, Forest Silviculturist. George reported collecting 450 bushels from approximately 1000 Texas longleaf trees, some bearing over 200 cones per tree. This harvest was transferred to the Ashe Seed Extractory in Mississippi for further processing. The supply of longleaf seedlings for restoration on the National Forests will be sustained for many years as a result of this abundant cone harvest.

Nick Muir, Tree Improvement Manager, IFCO, reported that they are excited, not only about sourcing great local seed, but also being able to grow these seedlings at the Evans Seed Orchard in DeRidder,

## Donate a Vehicle to Support The Longleaf Alliance

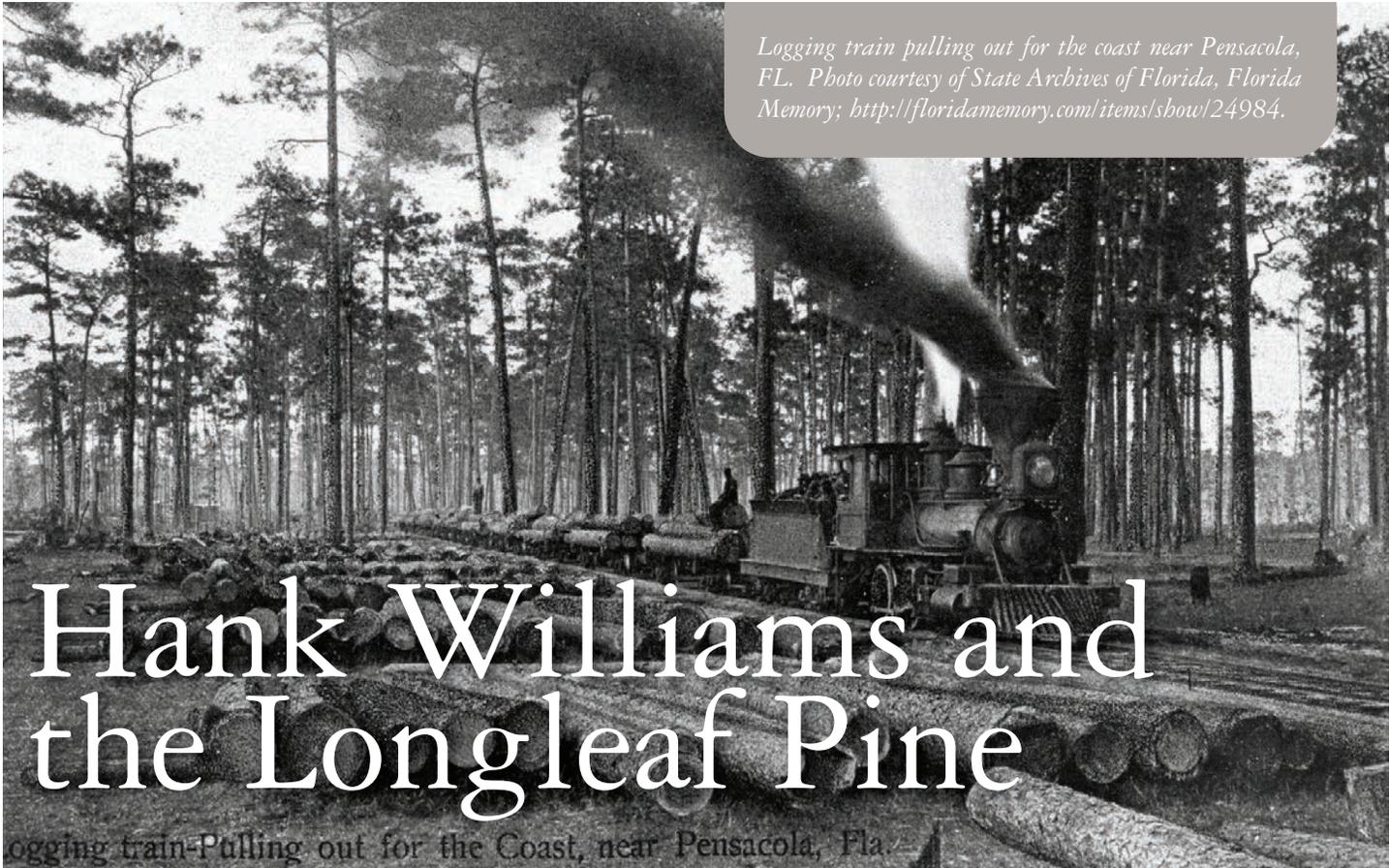
Got a vehicle you don't need anymore? Donate your car, truck, boat, motorcycle, tractor, jet skis, or farm equipment to the Longleaf Alliance. Your donation will help support the Alliance's mission.



Simply go online to the website at [www.1car1difference.com](http://www.1car1difference.com) or call 877-557-1CAR. It is easy and quick. They will pick up the vehicle, handle all the paperwork, auction it and send the proceeds to the Alliance. You receive a receipt for tax deduction purposes. Thank you for making a difference!!!

By Bob McCartney, Woodlanders Nursery

# Historical Perspectives



Both longleaf pine forests and Hank Williams are icons of the South and there is a connection between them.

Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries the cutting of the original old growth longleaf pine forests progressed rapidly. After depleting northern stocks of white pine, loggers came south from the Lake States to cut the southern pines. Many longleaf forests near navigable streams had already been logged. Streams were used to float the logs downstream to mills or for export. With the advent of steam power, forests away from these streams became accessible for logging. Narrow gauge rail lines could be laid to reach into vast virgin stands and small steam locomotives could haul loads of large logs to the mills.

Chapman, in Butler County, Alabama, was one of many lumber mill towns across the South where log trains were used

to haul the timber in from the surrounding area. A mill at Chapman was established in 1883 by K.L. Davis and Sons. Soon thereafter, new owners operated the first log train along a "pole road." About 1890, the little locomotive "Old Prince" was running on iron rails and the company was bought by W.T. Smith Lumber Company. Ten to twelve years later the company was sold to the Foshee and McGowin families but the large mill and its log trains continued to operate for about 50 years under the W.T. Smith name. The company had about 125 miles of rail lines at its peak. No doubt much old growth longleaf pine was cut and hauled during this time by what became "the largest lumber processor east of the Mississippi River."

In the 1920's Elonzo Hubel Williams operated a log train for W.T. Smith Lumber Company. He and his family lived in



Early logging operation using steam powered locomotives.  
 Photo courtesy of State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory;  
<http://floridamemory.com/items/show/27775>.

Chapman. His family included a young son named Hiram King Williams who would go on to become the legendary composer and country music recording star Hank Williams. Hank's dad may have hauled some of the last old growth longleaf logs in Butler County.

In 1930, when Hank was only seven years old, his father "Lonnie" entered the VA Hospital in Pensacola, FL to be treated for a condition related to an injury sustained in World War I. He was hospitalized for seven years during which time his wife divorced him. Hank became a teenager as mother and children moved several times around southern Alabama.

The Hank Williams story is well-known and his short but extremely productive life is commemorated in the Hank Williams Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, and at his Boyhood Home Museum in Georgiana, Alabama. Let's go back to late December 1952. Hank, by then a very successful and popular recording star, drives to Butler County, Alabama to go hunting and visit relatives. At a country store in Greenville he plays his guitar and sings a couple of songs for several friends and relatives. One song he had recently written was about his father who drove the log train. That Christmas he went to visit his father, Lonnie, from whom he had been more or less estranged. Lonnie lived nearby with his second wife. Their daughter Leila was about 10 years old. Unfortunately, Hank found no one home but left a gift and a note before heading back to Montgomery. A cousin told Lonnie that Hank had sung a song that he had written for him and about his working on the Chapman log train. A week later, on January 1, 1953, Hank died of a heart attack en route to a performance scheduled in Canton, Ohio.

Lonnie lived until 1970 but never heard the song and as far as anyone knew, it had never been recorded. Amazingly, a recording by Hank was later discovered. It was copyrighted in 1983, 30 years after Hank's death and 13 years after Lonnie died.

## "THE LOG TRAIN"

If you will listen  
 A song I will sing  
 About my daddy  
 Who ran a log train

Way down in the southland  
 In old Alabam'  
 We lived in a place  
 That they called Chapman  
 Town

And late in the evening  
 When the sun was low  
 Way off in the distance  
 You could hear the train  
 blow

The folks would come runnin'  
 and mama would sing  
 Get the supper on the table  
 Here comes the log train

Every morning  
 At the break day  
 He'd grab his lunch bucket  
 And be on his way

Winter or summer  
 Sunshine or rain  
 Every morning he'd run  
 That old log train

A sweatin' and swearin'  
 All day long  
 Shoutin' get up the oxens  
 Keep movin' along

Load'er up boys  
 'cause it looks like rain  
 I've got to get rollin'  
 This old log train

This story happened  
 A long time ago  
 The log train is silent  
 God called dad to go

But when I get to heaven  
 To always remain  
 I'll listen for whistle  
 On the old log train

# Longleaf Destinations

Weymouth - Southern Pines,  
North Carolina

*By Abigail Dowd, Weymouth Center for the  
Arts & Humanities Executive Director*

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and  
Boutique!

BOX OFFICE

*Sunrise Theatre in Southern Pines, NC.  
Photo by Emily Chaplin.*

Southern Pines, like many towns, is named for its majestic pines. What sets it apart, however, is that, while a great majority of communities were all but forced to rely on their groves of longleaf pines for timber and turpentine to survive economically, much of Southern Pines' forest was spared by a family who saw the immeasurable value of their conservation. Today, Southern Pines is home to one of the oldest stands of virgin longleaf pines, including the world's oldest known living longleaf pine estimated to be 467 years old.

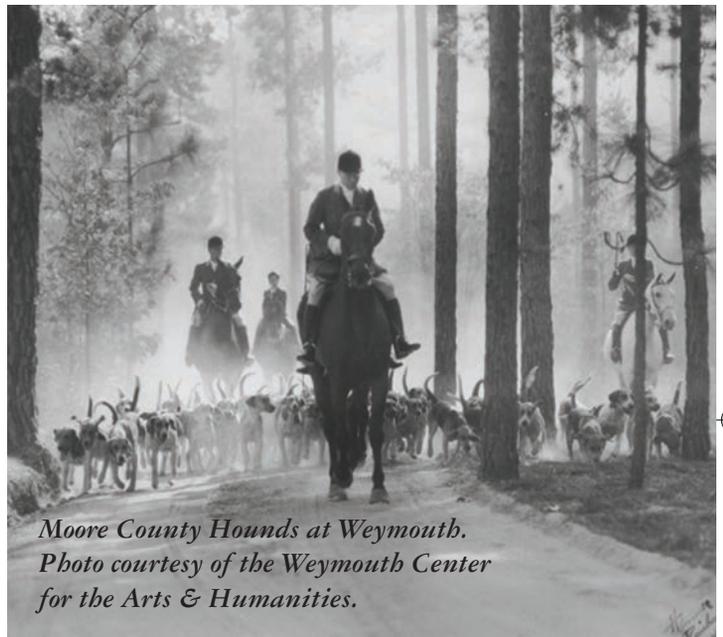
Originally a winter resort town, Southern Pines is a quintessential longleaf destination, rich in nature and culture. Weymouth, both Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve and the Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities, is at the center

resemblance to Weymouth, England. Rather than maintain it for his own pleasure, Boyd opened the land to townfolk and tourists to enjoy as a natural park. Designed over a 24 year span by landscape architect Alfred Yeomans, restoration plans included bridle paths and carriage lanes laid out so as not to harm the trees.

The land was passed to his two grandsons, Jackson and James, who, in 1914, founded the Moore County Hounds (MCH). The MCH is still active today on land originally part of the Boyd estate, now conserved for the public as the Walthour-Moss Foundation. James Boyd was a poet and writer, author of *Drums*, and after serving in WWI, retreated to Weymouth as a permanent resident to write, ride, and manage the estate with his wife Katharine. Together they entertained



*Grounds of the Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities. Photo by Abigail Dowd.*



*Moore County Hounds at Weymouth. Photo courtesy of the Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities.*

## The vibrant downtown and walkable residential neighborhoods are testaments that small main street communities with local shops, businesses and restaurants can thrive within an urban forest.

of this town and provides opportunities to explore one of North America's most diverse ecosystems. The vibrant downtown and walkable residential neighborhoods are testaments that small main street communities with local shops, businesses and restaurants can thrive within an urban forest.

Despite the very real present-day threats from growth and development, the story of Southern Pines is a continuous story of conservation. In the early 1900s, while passing through the town, encountering turpentine workers and witnessing the devastation to the forest, Helen Boyd Dull asked her father, Pennsylvanian steel and railroad magnate James Boyd, to save the land. With the purchase of twelve hundred acres, Boyd established an estate which he called Weymouth for its

guests such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe, and Sherwood Anderson as Weymouth became a center of Southern literary culture. After James died in 1944, Katharine oversaw the estate, its preservation, and established what would become the first nature preserve in the North Carolina state park system.

Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve was established in 1963 with an original gift from Katharine Boyd of 403 acres after the death of her son Daniel. Her wish was to preserve the woods as they were when her son played in them as a child. An additional 153 acres, the Boyd Round Timber Tract, was purchased after Katharine's death in 1977. Set in an area more known for horse farms and golf courses, today Weymouth Woods is a 900 acre, limited-use area that portrays



*Path in Weymouth Woods. Photo by Robert Abernethy.*

the natural features of the Sandhills region. Throughout the woods are remnants of the turpentine industry, pines carved with the v-shaped cuts, and boxed for collecting pine rosin. More than 500 species are present at Weymouth Woods, including the rare and endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, pine barrens tree frog, and bog spicebush. A visitors center, located on Fort Bragg Road, gives visitors a deeper look into the significance of this forest through hands-on exhibits about prescribed burning, the park's flora and fauna, and history of the Sandhills region.

The home of James and Katharine Boyd is now the Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities, a cultural center dedicated to conserving the remaining 26 acre estate as a natural preserve and park, including the formal gardens designed by Alfred Yeomans, and the longleaf pine forest. The

Weymouth Center, located at 555 E. Connecticut Avenue, is also gateway to the Boyd Round Timber Tract and its extensive trails which are located just beyond the house and gardens. Open to the public, the Weymouth Center hosts programs in the arts and humanities throughout the year and is also home to the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame. Across from the Weymouth Center, visitors may enjoy taking in an exhibition at the Moore County Arts Council, located in the former home of Jackson Boyd.

Just a few blocks from Weymouth, visitors will find a thriving downtown with several restaurants, such as the Ice Cream Parlor, Sweet Basil, Rhett's and many others, and local independent shops, including The Country Bookshop.

While you're here, be sure to tell folks that you came because of our trees.

By Mark Hains

# LONGLEAF IN THE LITERATURE & ARTS - WHY IT MATTERS

“Longleaf in the Literature and Arts” was the title of one of the sessions at the Tenth Biennial Longleaf Regional Conference in Mobile, Alabama. Just prior to the session, one of our board members, Lynda Beam, came up and told me how important it was to highlight these artists, authors, and playwrights who are our best avenues to teach the public about the longleaf ecosystem. Near the conclusion of the session during the question and answer portion, with the room full of interested attendees, another board member, Julie Moore, expressed the exact same opinion.

This year’s session included Melanie Walters – a weaver of longleaf pine needle baskets, each and every one a work of art.

Phillip Juras, an artist who paints with oil, creating intense images of fire, longleaf, and other ecosystems of the Piedmont.

Roger Reid, an author of three young adult novels, including *Longleaf*, which he has used to introduce many thousands of middle-school students across the longleaf range. He is also a Producer/Director for *Discovering Alabama* and has won multiple Emmy Awards for his shows covering such topics as the Gulf Oil Spill, Longleaf Pine, The Longleaf Ecosystem, the Red Cockaded Woodpecker, the Indigo Snake, and many other longleaf connected topics.

Ray Own, a playwright whose current work, *The Bleeding Pines*, has already inspired audiences as far away as Ireland! I do not believe I have seen or read a work that has better illustrates the importance of longleaf pine and the cultural history of the south.

At several points in this session, I was moved to tears by the raw emotion evoked by these artists and their works. I have not felt this way since Janisse Ray read her poetry at a previous Longleaf in the Literature and Arts Session in Columbia, SC.

During his presentation, Phillip Juras led the audience through an amazing tour of fire, as it has been portrayed in art over the centuries. As one would expect, for centuries, fire was uniformly displayed as a frightening agent of destruction.



*Backing Fire, Wade Tract, Thomasville, Georgia, 2013, Oil on canvas by Phillip Juras.*

Until Philip made this point, I was unaware that previous artists had failed to focus on and capture the raw beauty of fire as it moved through the forest, grasslands, or other ecosystems of the world. They painted fire as a message, rather than portraying it openly and honestly as powerful and natural phenomenon.

In popular culture, Philip highlighted how Smokey and Bambi had helped to vilify fire in the forest, affecting the opinions of millions of people worldwide.

These artists’ works are reaching a broader audience. If we can, at every opportunity, get Roger’s books into the hands of middle school students, if museums will showcase Melanie’s pine needle baskets and Philip’s paintings, if Ray Owen’s plays are shown on PBS along with Roger’s shows on *Discovering Alabama*, then we are on our way to reaching an audience of millions, and supplanting the negative connotations of fire built up by Smokey and Bambi. If we keep fire, we have a chance to keep the longleaf ecosystem.

Please support their efforts, and do your part to further the development of Longleaf in the Literature and Arts.

By Carol Denhof, *The Longleaf Alliance*

# LONGLEAF ART SPOTLIGHT

## MOBILE PLEIN AIR SOCIETY SHOWCASES LONGLEAF

### *Afternoon Pines*

by Ainsley McNeely

Ainsley McNeely is best known for wildlife, western and sporting scenes as well as portraits and miniatures. She spends many hours in the field studying, painting and photographing her subjects, winning awards throughout the country. Her pastel *Male Kestrel* was on the cover of *Alabama Wildlife Magazine* in 2012. She also designed the 2001-2002 *Alabama Duck Stamp* and represented the U.S. in an artist exchange with Eastern Europe. Currently she is working on an ongoing project of painting historical scenes of the South. Her historical paintings were featured in a two page article in the magazine *Art Galleries & Artists of the South* (vol 10, issue 2).  
251.342.5298 -  
amartist@hotmail.com



Artist: Ainsley McNeely



Artist: Missy Patrick

### *Longleaf Pines II* by Missy Patrick.

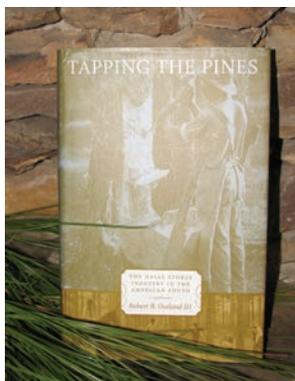
*I am a native daughter of the South, but I am at home almost everywhere, connected first to the environment and then to my fellow travelers. All nature interests me: marshes, steamy summers, moonlit evenings, moss-hung giant oaks, rivers and bays, the sparkling Gulf of Mexico, and friendly, easy-going people. My goal is to create personal and sensitive, one-of-a-kind art. The work I do is the product of where I live and the forces that influence my life.*

*"Each painting is a puzzle to be solved. A painting is a recording of thought and action, and at its best, the final statement conveys a distilled sensation of time."*

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# LITERARY REVIEW

By Robert Abernethy, *The Longleaf Alliance*



*Tapping The Pines*  
By Robert Outland

Have you ever found an old tar kiln in the piney woods or wondered about the men that cut turpentine boxes and catfaces to drain the longleaf pines of their sap? What is the difference between rosin, tar, pitch, turpentine, and sap, and how were these different products used? What determined how many boxes could be cut into a tree, and how long did it take for a box or a Herty pot to fill? Were the pines tapped all year or just during the summer?

Who were the men who tapped the pines, and how did they live? Were they slaves, or were they free?

On the field trip at our recent conference in Mobile, Alabama, we met a man that had tapped the trees in southern Mississippi during his youth. He showed us the tools and answered our questions. So how could men still be alive in Mississippi that had collected turpentine, while in eastern NC my grandfather (who died in 1961), had no knowledge of who might have tapped the trees on the farm where he grew up in the 1890's?

At 352 pages, *Tapping The Pines* by Robert Outland is an exhaustive history of the naval stores industry in the South. Mr. Outland begins with the production of tar, pitch, and turpentine in England in the Middle Ages and brings us through European wars and trade restrictions on tar and pitch coming from Scandinavia. He explains why North Carolina became the leading exporter of naval stores in the 18th century and how these products of the longleaf pine allowed the British Navy to command supremacy on the seas. This book traces the history of the industry through slavery and its migration throughout the South as the Carolina forests played out and were cleared for agriculture. And the book carries us into modern times and explains why almost no one is tapping the trees today.

*Tapping The Pines* is a very well written and very readable history book on the industry that started the decline of the longleaf pine while simultaneously driving the settlement of the American South. This book is a must read for anyone interested in understanding how the longleaf ecosystem declined from 90 million acres to the estimated 4.4 million acres that exists today.

*Tapping The Pines; The Naval Stores Industry in the American South* by Louisiana State University history professor Robert B. Outland III was published in 2004 by Louisiana State University Press.



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*Mark Hains scaling Godzilla Hill. Photo by Ronnie Veborn.*

One of the clear impressions from our recent conference in Mobile is indeed what a powerful team has come together to advance longleaf restoration and to ensure a sustainable future for this great ecosystem. This depth of knowledge and experience ensures that our progress continues even as personnel change. So it is sad to announce, but important to acknowledge, that one of the most knowledgeable and experienced longleaf proponents anywhere is stepping out of the longleaf world - though we hope not permanently. We hate to see him go, but are wishing Mark Hains the best as he pursues another long-term dream. On November 21st Mark resigned from Auburn University and The Longleaf Alliance in order to become the first person to document the experience of walking the Texas-Mexico border along the Rio Grande, both by writing a book and being the focus of a documentary movie.

Mark was the first employee hired by the co-founders of the Alliance when Dean and Rhett brought him on board as the Research Coordinator in 1996. And upon his resignation, he was our last employee working on contract from Auburn University. Mark developed his expertise by doing the needed research to answer the challenges facing those working to restore longleaf at the time. These challenges ranged from improving site preparation methods to refining the keys to successful planting, seedling quality, root morphology, container technology, release treatments, and much more. He

## VAYA CON DIOS TO MARK

*By Ad Platt, The Longleaf Alliance*

passed along what he learned through thousands of site visits, countless phone calls, emails, workshops, field days, many brochures and articles, and untold miles traversing the south through all nine states of the longleaf natural range and beyond. Mark helped develop and present the Regional Conferences (10), the Montane Conferences (4), Nursery and Understory Conferences, and more. He has been instrumental in developing this movement into the vigorous group we hosted at last year's conference.

A large part of Mark's success is due to his passion for learning, exploring, and teaching. All who know him know that he is a man of many interests. When interested in a topic, he applies himself to become an expert, and he certainly achieved a level of mastery in longleaf that can only be acquired by years of study, experience, and investigation. His modesty would preclude the use of the term "expert". Instead, he would say that he is just a student and this is fascinating. But Mark has accomplished an enormous body of work by learning and teaching how to be consistently successful with longleaf.

We think Mark will have a continuing role in longleaf assistance and outreach in the future. We believe Mark has much more to teach, explore, and share in the world of longleaf ecosystems, wildlife, and native understory, and he is very interested in doing so. Though there are details to work out, we are exploring a new work arrangement when he returns from his trek, completes the book, and wraps up his role in the movie, hopefully by this spring. The entire longleaf restoration effort gains from retaining the knowledge and experience of those who have achieved mastery, as there really are no shortcuts to that level. You have to put in the work to get there, and Mark has.

So there is a great, contagious excitement in seeing someone in pursuit of a personal dream. Who among us in the longleaf world has not felt the urge to explore, learn, and grow? If you want to follow Mark's trek from its beginning, check out his blog at Facebook + Mark J. Hains. Vaya con Dios, Mark. See you soon.



SUPPORT THE ALLIANCE

*Longleaf habitat in Florida .  
Photo by Glen Gaines.*

# The Legacy of Longleaf

*By Robert Abernethy, The Longleaf Alliance*

As we enter the new year of 2015, I would like to take a moment to thank all those that helped The Longleaf Alliance in 2014. Thanks to our state and federal conservation partners that awarded us grants to manage and restore the longleaf pine ecosystem from Virginia to Texas. I would like to thank the corporate and the non-profit conservation partners that sponsored the biennial conference and contributed funds so we could host academies and workshops. And, I would especially like to thank the individuals and families that funded our efforts and supported our mission to restore the longleaf pine ecosystem through the South. Simply put, without your support, we could not do the job we do.

2014 was a great year! You funded the GCPEP burn team that partnered with state and federal teams and private landowners to prescribe burn longleaf pine habitat in Florida and Alabama. You funded the establishment of local implementation teams in Georgia and South Carolina that allowed us to focus restoration in these areas to help landowners of both private and public lands. You funded workshops from Texas to Virginia that allowed The Longleaf Alliance, with the

invaluable assistance of partners, to show landowners how to restore their own longleaf forests. As a result of our academies, numerous natural resource professionals and landowners are now better stewards of the land.

We all have a vision of restoring the great southern longleaf forest to a place of prominence. Simply put we cannot accomplish this vision without your continued support and faith in us. We would like to publically recognize all those individuals, families, corporations, non-profits and state and federal agencies that contributed funds to help us get one step closer to our goal of 8 million acres of longleaf by 2024. Whether you were a 4H class that sent in \$25 or a non-profit that awarded us a grant of several thousand dollars you all contributed significantly to the effort and you are all important and appreciated.

This list contains those that contributed funds between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2014. If you find that we have made an error, please call or email us at [office@longleafalliance.org](mailto:office@longleafalliance.org) so we can correct the information. Again, thank you for your continued support and have a wonderful new year.

## **Agency Conservation Partners**

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*The Longleaf Alliance, 12130 Dixon Center Road, Andalusia, AL 36420 – 334-427-1029*

## WINTER 2015 LONGLEAF LEADER



HEARTPINE

*Prescribed burn in longleaf stand.  
Photo by Danny Becker.*

# THAT SORT OF REVERENCE

*By Roger Reid, Discovering Alabama*

"Longleaf, for some reason, inspires that sort of reverence for natural resources," Rhett Johnson said in a public television program in 1997. It was true then. It's true now. Longleaf inspires reverence; it's like being part of a religion without having to get dressed up on Sundays.

Like any good religion, longleaf unites the faithful while giving its congregants a few things to split hairs about. Economics or aesthetics? Conservationist or environmentalist? Manage for the game or the non-game species? Winter burn, spring burn, summer burn? Not that these quibbles are mutually exclusive. The brothers and sisters just find it fun to hold forth among themselves. At the end of the day, though, communicants rally to the cause of longleaf restoration and that

foundational principle best affirmed in a single word: fire.

Everybody loves to burn.

Perhaps this is where the religion metaphor breaks down, but seriously, Everybody loves to burn.

The same public television crew that interviewed Rhett back in 1997, was out in Splinter Hill Bog with Bill Finch in 2014. Bill is Chief Science Advisor for the Mobile Botanical Gardens and an author of *Longleaf, Far as the Eye Can See*. Scientists come from around the United States, perhaps the world, to study pitcher plant diversity at this amazing spot in northern Baldwin County, Alabama. In late June, 2014, Splinter Hill Bog was ablaze with pitcher plants. What was Bill's topic of conversation?

“We get this amazing display of beauty and diversity because of fire.” “You won’t need bug spray. No problems with ticks and chiggers around here, because we burn regularly.” “This area was burned last year.” “A fire was run through here just three months ago, and you can see how it has come back.” Fire. Fire. And fire.

Eavesdrop around talk at a Longleaf Alliance Conference and you may pick up on an appreciation for native grasses or a loathing of feral hogs. More likely you’ll overhear reverential discourse on the whys, whens, and hows of prescribed burning.

Ask Mark Hains about his 30A Radio interview with Claire Bannerman. What interested Claire? That’s right. The smoke billowing from Point Washington State Forest. And where there’s smoke...

Ask Mark and Anne Rilling about their school visits. The kids are amazed at the huge cones and long needles. They’re fascinated with their word-of-the-day, “Fascicle.” They’re enchanted with indigo snakes and gopher tortoises. And they are in awe that all of the above—an entire ecosystem—can be dependent on fire. “Smokey the Bear was wrong? Next you’ll be telling me there is no Santa Claus.”

### The Man Who Invented Fire

Thomas C. Croker, Jr. invented fire in 1947 just above the Alabama/Florida line. That’s the way it was told to the public television crew in ’97, when a group gathered in Brewton, Alabama to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Escambia Experimental Forest. Among them were private landowners, folks with federal and state affiliations, and a fledgling organization called The Longleaf Alliance—just two years old at the time. For the occasion, the governor of Alabama had signed a proclamation commending Mr. Croker for his role in negotiating a 99-year lease with the T. R. Miller Company on behalf of the US Forest Service for 3,000 acres that would become the Escambia Experimental Forest.

Mr. Croker was up in years in 1997, but like a kid, his eyes twinkled and his voice rose an octave when he spoke of the forest becoming something of a playground. He and colleague Bill Boyer could theorize, tamper, test, and maybe even tempt fate a bit. Here they could burn. Over there they could burn. They could burn winter, spring, summer, and fall.

Tom Croker and Bill Boyer are now deceased. Their legacy lives in publications and in the continuing contributions of the Experimental Forest. Perhaps someone would have “invented” fire had there been no lease with T. R. Miller. No doubt others were playing with matches across the Southeast during the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and right on up until 1995, when Dean Gjerstad and Rhett Johnson started an alliance. But for that 50th Anniversary celebration day in 1997, everyone could believe fire was invented right there in the Escambia Experimental Forest.

### A Deeper Force

“There may be a deeper...a deeper force at work and that is that renewal that comes after fire. That is one of the most satisfying things about what I do for a living is to see that regrowth after fire.” Rhett made this comment during that 1997 interview.

He may be right. At a philosophical—some would say spiritual—level, he might be on to something. The “deeper force” idea elevates pragmatic, common sense rationale for prescribed burning back into the realm of religious metaphor. It gives reason to the reverence inspired of longleaf.

On the other hand it could be much more simple and non-allegorical. It could be as literal as, Everybody loves to burn.



*Providence Middle School students are encouraged to leave prescribed burning to the professionals by author Roger Reid. Photo by Emmett Given.*

**Roger Reid is author of the young adult novels, *Longleaf*, *Space*, and *Time*. He is writer, producer and director of the Discovering Alabama public television program hosted by Doug Phillips and produced by The University of Alabama.**

