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# Request for Proposal

## Longleaf Pine Sustainability Analysis Contractor

**Location:** Remote, flexible within the United States

**Contracted period:** October 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023

**Submission deadline:** August 5, 2022

**Project summary**

The Longleaf Alliance seeks a contractor to produce a GIS-based Longleaf Pine Sustainability Analysis (LSA). The LSA will be a longleaf ecosystem-centric spatial analysis designed to facilitate the strategic, transparent, and evidence-based identification of the "right work" in the "right places" across the historic range of longleaf pine. This project will utilize and synthesize new data and tools including the Southeast LEO, SE FireMap, land-use change and urban growth models, and site-level factors such as soils.

The primary role of the Longleaf Pine Sustainability Analysis Contractor (Contractor) is to develop a weighted model for the longleaf pine ecosystem to support the identification of restoration and management investments for the next 15 years of America's Longleaf.

**Background**

In March 2009, ALRI released the Range-Wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine. Developed by a Regional Working Group beginning in late 2007, the plan reflects input from the broad community of those working with longleaf pine in the Southeast at the time. The Conservation Plan, and the Significant Geographic Area component, in particular, was intended as a framework for a landscape-level approach to the strategic, science-based conservation of longleaf pine ecosystems and associated wildlife species. A foundational premise of the plan was that, given limited resources, efforts should be prioritized in areas with aggregations of extant longleaf ecosystems of sufficient size, integrity, protected status, and connectivity potential to sustain functional landscapes and populations of target species into the future. Three objectives were outlined in the conservation plan for the Significant Geographic Areas cross-cutting theme and are summarized below.
**1a.** Complete an assessment of the 16 Significant Landscapes to determine how well they capture the range of ecosystem and species diversity.
**1b.** Complete a long-term sustainability assessment of the 16 landscapes for appropriate boundaries, land ownership, condition and management needs, as well as long-term sustainability in the face of population growth, land-use change, and climate change.
**2.** Assessment of a suite of Significant Sites across the range of longleaf pine (LLP) using remote sensing and ground validation to identify extant longleaf pine, rare species, and unique community types.

**3.** Identify sustainable population objectives of priority species and needed habitat conditions to support them and prioritize areas on the landscape for implementation of conservation and management actions.

Since the conservation plan's release, fulfillment of the three SGA objectives outlined in the Significant Geographic Area cross-cutting theme has not occurred. One important reason for this is that needed data and information about the spatial extent, arrangement, and condition of extant longleaf pine was largely unknown. As new datasets and tools such as the Southeast Longleaf Ecosystem Occurrence Geodatabase and Southeast FireMap have become available, we now have the information to fulfill the three SGA objectives outlined in the Conservation Plan. A foundational element of a revised 15 Year America's Longleaf Range-Wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine will be the completion of this spatially explicit analysis, allowing America's Longleaf partners to fulfill the three objectives of the Significant Geographic Areas cross-cutting theme in the original Conservation Plan.

This LSA project will take a resource-based, objective analysis of the relative value, efficacy, and long-term sustainability of longleaf restoration and management investments across all acres of the range. Example indicators to consider in this analysis:

- Connectivity (existing and potential linkages for wildlife and climate adaptation)
- Buffering of existing LLP and protected lands
- Condition class (i.e., quality of LLP resource)
- Soils and hydrology suitability for LLP
- Wildlife value, known element occurrences
- Land-Use History (i.e., past disturbance)
- Landscape context and threats from urban growth and land-use change
    - Long-term persistence of restoration investments
    - Long-term ability to manage with prescribed fire due to projected land-use change and future smoke-sensitive areas.

Significant progress has been made over the last few years in understanding the longleaf resource via new research and modeling/data products. Some key datasets that are anticipated to support the LSA are:

- Longleaf Extent and Condition (SE LEO)
- Wildland Fire Occurrence (SE FireMap)
- Urban Growth Projections (FUTURES, SLEUTH, etc.)

Other recent and ongoing landscape-level analyses that should be consulted to inform the LSA include:

- TNC Resilient and Connected Network
- Southeastern Conservation Blueprint

The LSA should include an original connectivity analysis for existing longleaf pine that also considers, to the extent possible, element occurrences of at-risk and priority species associated with longleaf pine as well as suitable soils and hydrology.

**Scope of Work/Deliverables**

1. Data Scoping (Fall/Winter 2022) – The Contractor will identify and review the best available data inputs to inform/support the LSA. Scoping results will be shared with the America's Longleaf LSA Working Group via a written summary with clear, detailed recommendations on indicator data to utilize as inputs for the LSA priority index. This should include a list with moderate detail describing scoped data,

including a brief assessment of their strengths and weaknesses as it pertains to supporting the LSA (utility, scale, coverage, format, accessibility, etc.).

2. Ranking and weighting LSA indicator data (Winter 2022/Spring 2023) – The Contractor will develop a ranking system to effectively weight indicator datasets for use in the LSA. Ranks/weights should be developed in consultation with the America's Longleaf LSA Working Group.
3. Model Inputs and LSA Product (Spring 2023) – Produce weighted raster/model inputs based on scoping and ranking outcomes. Develop and publish a final LSA as a queryable GIS layer. Final LSA data must include standard ESRI metadata and product information documentation.
4. Final Report (Spring 2023) – Produce a report detailing the LSA development process and outcomes. This report should include scoping outcomes, details on why the selected indicator data were utilized, an explanation of the ranking system development process/methodology, and a summary of final LSA outcomes/results. The Contractor will present a summary of LSA outcomes/results to ALRI partners (virtual or in-person) upon request.

**Desired Qualifications**

The Contractor should be knowledgeable of common longleaf ecosystem indicators and management practices with a demonstrated background in field botany, forestry, biology, ecology, natural resource management, conservation planning, or a related field.

The Contractor should have prior experience with landscape-scale modeling focused on assessing ecosystem condition and/or prioritization. The contractor must be familiar with GIS modeling techniques and be proficient in leading a complex analysis in a collaborative environment.

The Contractor should have experience leading research projects and publishing technical reports and product documentation.

**Tracking Progress**

The Longleaf Alliance Project Coordinator and Contractor shall monitor the development of the LSA. Frequent progress checks will be done between both parties to ensure consistency in tracking completion, as well as consulting on course corrections with the intent of achieving the full performance of the contract.

**Payment Schedule**

Payments will be made to the contractor by The Longleaf Alliance on a schedule outlined within the contract. Payments may occur no more frequent than monthly. The final payment will be reserved until all contract requirements have been met and arrangements for close-out has been made with the Project Coordinator.

**Eligible Applicants**

Not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organizations, for-profit companies, tribes, intertribal consortia, interstates, state and local government agencies, and colleges and universities are eligible for funding. Unincorporated individuals are not eligible. The Longleaf Alliance does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in any of its programs or activities.

**How to Apply**

Proposals should:

1) Describe the organization or business;

2) Identify personnel that will be conducting the work. Describe qualifications, expertise, education, and years of experience. Resume or CV may be requested;

4) Describe in detail previous work experience related to longleaf ecosystems, landscape-scale ecological analyses, GIS modeling;

5.) Describe the proposed inputs/datasets and methodology to be used to produce the LSA;

6.) Provide a cost of work based on the information within this RFP. A lump sum is acceptable, but a breakdown for each deliverable is preferred;

7.) Provide or confirm an estimated completion date for the project;

The contractor will be required to show proof of general liability insurance and workers' compensation insurance as required by state law.

Questions regarding this project and this RFP can be addressed to Ryan Bollinger at 803-487-1653.

Submit a single document to ryan_b@longleafalliance.org no later than **11:59 ET on August 5, 2022**.