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We would love to hear from you!  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



|   |    |
|---|----|
| FROM THE PRESIDENT .....                | 2  |
| MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST .....              | 4  |
| FROM THE INBOX .....                    | 6  |
| PLANT SPOTLIGHT .....                   | 8  |
| WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT .....                | 10 |
| LONGLEAF EATS .....                     | 12 |
| GREEN SIDE UP .....                     | 14 |
| 30 YEARS OF THE LONGLEAF ALLIANCE ..... | 16 |
| LANDOWNER CORNER .....                  | 20 |
| REGIONAL UPDATES .....                  | 24 |
| NEXT GENERATION .....                   | 32 |
| ARTS & LITERATURE .....                 | 34 |
| LONGLEAF DESTINATIONS .....             | 36 |
| PEOPLE .....                            | 38 |
| SUPPORT THE ALLIANCE .....              | 40 |
| HEARTPINE .....                         | 41 |

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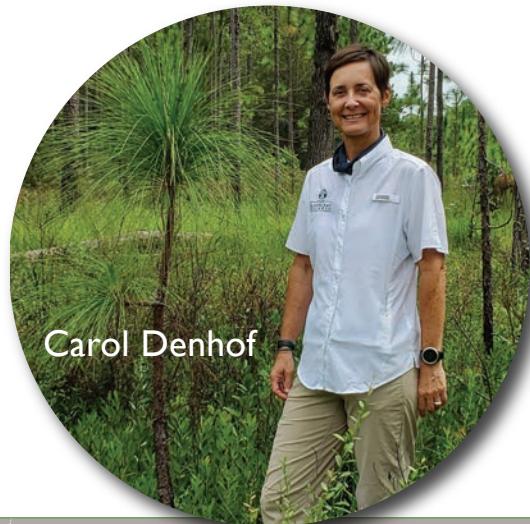
**COVER** The Catesby's lily, commonly called the pine lily, is one of the most striking wildflowers native to the Southeast, blooming from late summer into fall. [Clint Gibson, CC BY-NC 4.0, modified using generative fill]

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# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS



Carol Denhof

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Longleaf Alliance was built on the premise that partnerships are essential in advancing longleaf pine restoration. So much so that it plays prominently in our mission statement:

**The Mission of The Longleaf Alliance is to ensure a sustainable future for the longleaf pine ecosystem through partnerships, landowner assistance, and science-based education and outreach.**

When The Alliance was first established in 1995 as a project within Auburn University, our team worked with landowners and agencies (both state and federal) who were making inroads into this new endeavor to bring back longleaf. Over the past 30 years, as the longleaf effort has evolved, we have grown our partnership base to strengthen relationships with landowners and agencies and formed new relationships with conservation partners from a wide array of sectors, including other non-profits, universities, and industry. This interest from so many illustrates the diversity of benefits that come from sustainably managed longleaf forest systems.

Regional collaboration has also greatly expanded over this time period with the formation of America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative and its governance structure, which includes the Federal Coordinating Committee, the Longleaf Partnership Council, and longleaf Local Implementation Teams (LITs). This successful regional partnership effort has had a profound impact on the total amount of restoration work that has occurred over the last few decades. In the 2024 Range-Wide Accomplishment Report published earlier this summer, the partners of America's Longleaf announced two milestones reached since 2010 (when regional accomplishment data were first compiled

and reported) – over two million acres of longleaf pine gained and more than 20 million acres of prescribed fire across longleaf habitats of the Southeast. This work would not have been possible without the established network of partners who are collaborating to advance the overall goal of getting back to eight million acres of longleaf.

This is especially true regarding the longleaf LITs – these 17 strategically located teams are responsible for getting the work done on the ground across this regional geography. The Longleaf Alliance is proud to be coordinating three LITs – the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP), the Fort Stewart/Altamaha Longleaf Restoration Partnership, and the SoLo-ACE Longleaf Partnership. We are also active in coordinating how all of the LITs learn from and work with each other to scale up restoration impacts moving forward. Every two years, individuals from each LIT gather together for a Summit where they share updates from the Teams and discuss upcoming projects and collaborative opportunities. This is an important event that ensures the open lines of communication are maintained and restoration success is maximized.

As we move into our "thirtysomething" years, partnerships will continue to be the key to making significant progress on our longleaf restoration goals. Changes are occurring in industry, government, and land ownership that will inevitably lead to challenges, but also present potential for great opportunities. Maintaining our existing relationships while bringing in new stakeholders that can help us expand the footprint of longleaf across the landscape and evolve further to remain relevant among shifting landowner needs will enable TLA to continue guiding longleaf restoration, stewardship, and conservation for many years to come.





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# MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST | FALL

## PREPARE FOR PLANTING LONGLEAF

### Apply fall site-preparation herbicides.

- For effective treatment, foliar active herbicides such as glyphosate (Roundup®/Accord®) should be applied to pasture grasses before the first frost.
- Triclopyr (Garlon®) may be delayed until after the first frost to target waxy leaf competitors while minimizing impact to herbaceous groundcover.
- **Allow time for soil active herbicides to break down** before planting longleaf, especially when using imazapyr (Arsenal®/Chopper®) or Metsulfuron-methyl (Escort®/Patriot®). The waiting period will vary based on the rate applied, date applied, rainfall since application, and soil type.

### Implement mechanical treatments for site-prep.

- Scalp agricultural sites. Remember to stay strictly on the contour and pick up the scalper regularly. Leaving these plugs (or mini-water bars) in the furrow will significantly reduce erosion.
- Subsoil or rip sites with hardpans, allowing sufficient time for the ripped furrow to resettle prior to planting (up to 2 months with several rain events). Do not plant seedlings directly into the sub-soiled/ripped furrow. Plant just beside the rip, and the taproot will find it.

## PLANT LONGLEAF EARLY

**It is never too early to plant longleaf if the following conditions are met: the site is prepared, there is adequate soil moisture, seedlings are available, and a planting crew is available.**

## PRIORITIZE PRESCRIBED FIRE

- **Clean up or establish fire lanes** for site prep or fuel reduction burns.
- Need better burning weather? **Conduct post-burn evaluations** to determine if previous burns, including woody control, achieved objectives.

## GROUNDCOVER RESTORATION

### Harvest native herbaceous seeds.

- Certain species, such as the Indiangrasses, ripen and fall in a very short time window (as little as one to two weeks).
- Wiregrass can lose all its ripe seed if a cold front blows through. Be prepared to collect when it's ready.

### Order native seed for understory restoration.

- Although some landowners and land managers have the time and expertise to collect their own, most restoration will occur with seed purchases from the few seed companies that sell southeastern sourced seed.
- Contact southeastern seed companies to develop a custom mix for your property. Find a list of suppliers at [longleafalliance.org](http://longleafalliance.org)

## TREAT INVASIVE SPECIES BEFORE THE FIRST FROST

- For invasives with thorough coverage like cogongrass or climbing fern, the recommended prescription is 4% glyphosate with surfactant for glyphosate formulations that contain 41% active ingredient (4.0 lb./gal.). Map these infestations for follow-up treatments in spring and fall until control is achieved.
- In existing stands, avoid any herbicide contact with green needles of longleaf (or other desirable plants).

## THIN LONGLEAF STANDS

Drier conditions typical of the fall season favor pine thinning operations.

## CONSIDER WILDLIFE

- Avoid disturbance around intermittent wetlands, as some amphibians, especially salamanders, move to seasonal breeding ponds when heavy rains occur.
- Use caution with any mechanical operations around gopher tortoise burrows, as any newly hatched tortoises will be nearby, and their burrows are shallow.

Reach out to The Longleaf Alliance for any questions about establishing and managing longleaf stands at [longleafalliance.org/contact](http://longleafalliance.org/contact).



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# Q&A

**Q.** Dear Longleaf Alliance,

Do you have a recommendation on where I can purchase larger longleaf pines? I'm looking for trees that are bolting in gallon containers, 3 to 5-year-old longleaf pines that would work in my native landscaping project.

Pining for Native Plants

**A.** Dear Pining,

Unfortunately, we don't maintain a list of nurseries that sell larger longleaf pine trees. This is a rare request as we most often assist forestry projects requiring several thousand seedlings. Large longleaf pines are used more often in landscaping or urban settings.

Planting these older specimens also comes with a disadvantage. During its first years, longleaf pine trees focus their energy into developing a taproot and extensive root system, eventually initiating height growth and moving from the grass stage to the young sapling stage. With this growth strategy, potted longleaf pines (grown in containers for more than 9 months or so) are likely root-bound, suffer from poor root formation after outplanting, and may be prone to tipping over as they mature. You'll notice longleaf pines planted in landscaping are often accompanied by many stakes/supports. Larger longleaf harvested with a tree spade may prevent some of the root concerns, but nurseries do not commonly offer this.

While it takes time for longleaf pine container plugs to initiate height, these small plugs can work in landscape settings too. The tradeoff here is between instant gratification and longer-term satisfaction. Take care to prevent competition from turf grasses and accidental damage from mowers or weed trimmers; protective caging may help. Small quantities are sometimes available for free at local native tree giveaways.

Sincerely,  
The Longleaf Alliance



*Read more in Planting Longleaf Pine in the Southern Urban Landscape from Alabama Cooperative Extension.*



## Why are we located where we are?

*Excerpt from our Spring 2008 Newsletter*

By Dean Gjerstad, co-founder of The Longleaf Alliance

There are several reasons why The Longleaf Alliance developed in Alabama. First, more than 30% of the remaining longleaf pine acreage occurs within 100 miles of the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center. The Dixon Center is a 5,300-acre educational and research forest that emphasizes longleaf management and restoration.

Secondly, we have access to a broad array of stand/site factors from dry ridges at 1800' elevation in north Alabama to coastal plain sites near the Gulf of Mexico.

[Thirdly,] Alabama is centrally located within the nine longleaf states, being ~600 miles from the northern extent in Virginia and ~600 miles from the western extent in Texas.

Finally, the proximity of longleaf researchers on the Auburn University campus including the School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences, the U.S. Forest Service Longleaf Pine Research Unit, the East Gulf Coastal Plain Joint Venture, the Agricultural Research Service Soils Dynamics Laboratory, and several additional Auburn University faculty involved with longleaf research involving soils, ecology, and herpetology allow us ready access to a diversity of ongoing research activities and most of the major longleaf pine researchers.

\* The Longleaf Alliance operated initially as a project within Auburn University, with our co-founders employed by the University: Rhett Johnson, Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center Director, and Dean Gjerstad, Auburn University's School of Forestry. We are very proud and fortunate to maintain our Auburn connection with our headquarters located at the Dixon Center in Andalusia, Alabama.



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Reese Jordan Thompson  
Vidalia, Georgia

By Michael Hubbard, The Longleaf Alliance

# PLANT SPOTLIGHT

## Catesby's Lily, Pine Lily | *Lilium catesbyi* Walter | Lily Family – Liliaceae



### Description

The Catesby's lily, commonly called the pine lily, is one of the most striking wildflowers native to the southeastern United States. This perennial herbaceous plant is distinguished by its large, vibrant, trumpet-shaped flowers. Blossoms face upward with vivid orange to red-orange tepals (usually 6), adorned with maroon spots near the base, and gracefully recurved tips. The flower's central structure is accentuated by prominent stamens and a long style, giving it an elegant and exotic appearance.

Blooming from late summer into fall, the pine lily stands between 1 and 3 feet tall, with narrow, alternate leaves sparsely distributed along a single, slender stem. Unlike many other lilies, *Lilium catesbyi* often produces just one flower per stem, making each bloom especially precious.

### Distribution & Habitat

*Lilium catesbyi* is endemic to the southeastern United States, primarily spanning Florida and parts of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. It thrives in open pine flatwoods, wet savannas, and boggy prairies, favoring acidic, sandy, and seasonally moist soils.

The pine lily is specially adapted to habitats that experience periodic fire, which helps maintain the open canopy and prevents woody overgrowth. It often grows alongside other fire-adapted flora, such as pitcherplants and wiregrass.

### Conservation Status

Due to habitat loss, fire suppression, and wetland drainage, the pine lily has seen significant population declines in parts of its native range. While not currently listed as federally endangered or threatened in the U.S., it is considered rare or of special concern in several states.



Mark Catesby's illustration of  
The Wampum Snake with Red Lily

18th century. He was among the first Europeans to document the rich flora and fauna of the region, and his influential work, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands* (published between 1729 and 1747), featured detailed illustrations of many native species—including this striking lily.

Catesby's meticulous illustrations brought global attention to North America's biodiversity and laid the groundwork for future botanical and ecological studies in the region. The pine lily stands as a living tribute to his legacy and remains a symbol of the Southeast's wild beauty.

Conservation efforts emphasize the importance of habitat preservation, restoration of natural fire regimes, and public education about the ecological value of native wildflowers. In some regions, collecting or disturbing pine lilies (and all wild lilies) is prohibited to protect remaining populations.

## Discovery Highlights

*Lilium catesbeianum* was named in honor of the English naturalist Mark Catesby, who explored the American Southeast in the early

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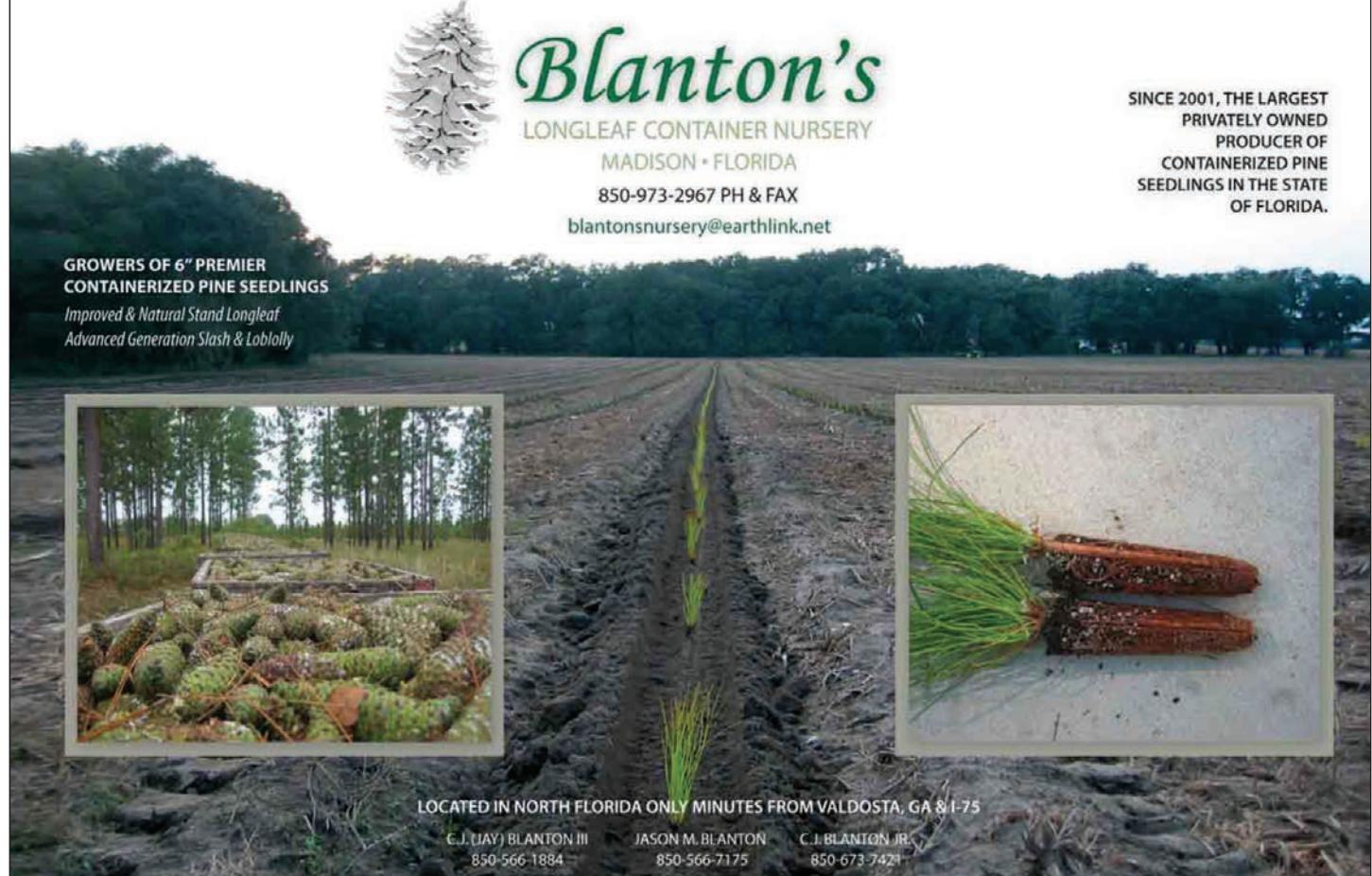
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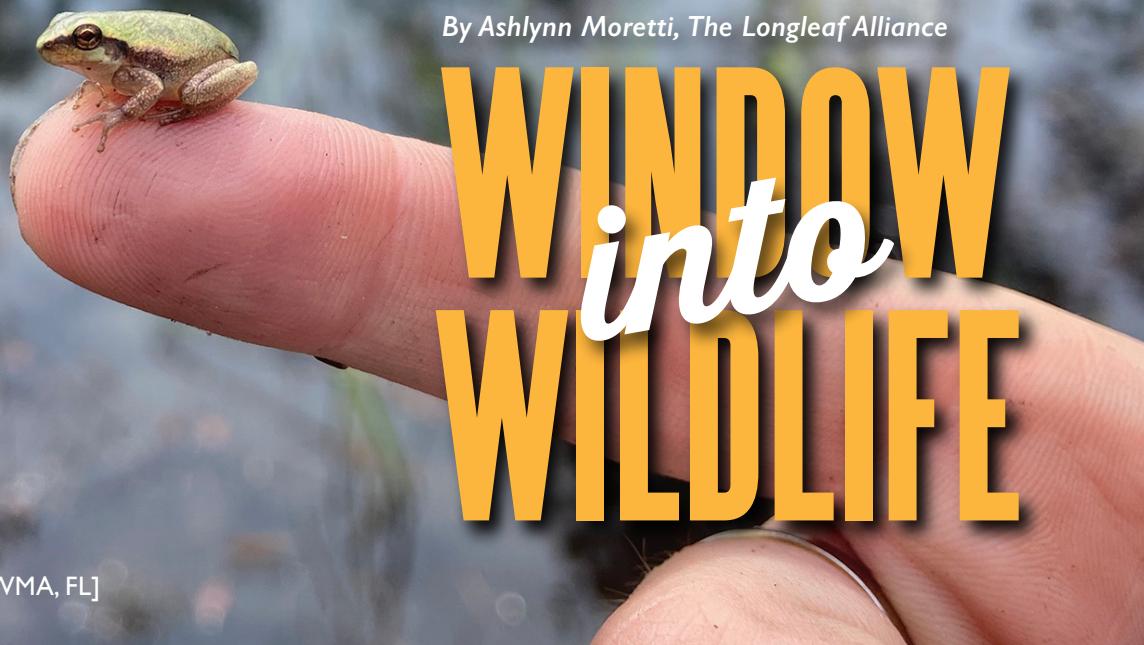
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# Pine Woods Treefrog

## *Dryophytes femoralis*

By Ashlynn Moretti, The Longleaf Alliance



[Ashlynn Moretti, Escribano Point WMA, FL]

**Appearance** – Pine woods treefrog tadpoles have bright red-orange fin tails with dark stripes. As the frog matures, its appearance can be quite variable from individual to individual with one key distinguishing feature of orange (or whitish-yellow) spots hidden on their inner thigh. The species ranges in color from brown, tan, gray, or green. Most pine woods treefrogs are marked with a “bandit mask” but not all have one. There may also be darker blotches or bands on its body.

Adult pine woods treefrogs grow to around 1 to 1.5 inches with enlarged, sticky toe pads like other treefrog species. Like some other species of frogs, pine woods treefrogs can quickly change color and pattern.

**Breeding** – Pine woods treefrogs breed from April to October and can lay up to a total of 2,000 eggs each breeding season. Eggs are laid in loose clusters (100-200 eggs each) and are usually found attached to vegetation just below the surface water of ditches, puddles, or shallow pools that are likely to dry up later in the season.

**Habitat** – Forest (pine forests, flatwoods, or cypress swamps) with small bodies of shallow water with vegetation that they can climb and/or live on.

**Threats** – Though these frogs are not facing major threats to their populations, habitat loss and degradation due to development, agriculture, and fire suppression can impact local populations.

**Behavior** – Pine woods treefrogs are arboreal and love to climb high into longleaf pines or shelter in cabbage palms, bromeliads, and/or pitcher plants. Over the winter, they hunker down in old logs or under loose bark.

**Call** – Low pitch dots/rapid quick tapping that sounds like Morse code – occasionally described as “getta getta” in rapid succession.

**Diet** – Pine woods treefrogs are insectivores; they primarily eat flies, crickets, and wasps but are also known to eat other smaller arthropods such as ants, beetles, moths, and spiders.

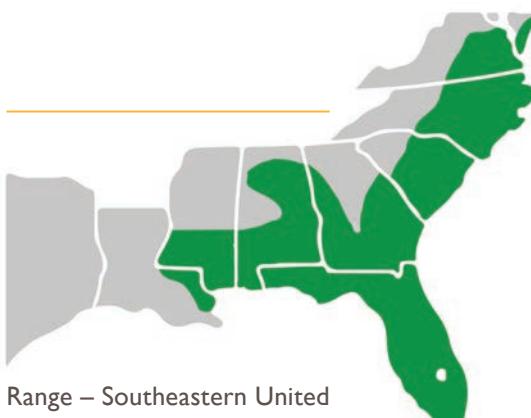
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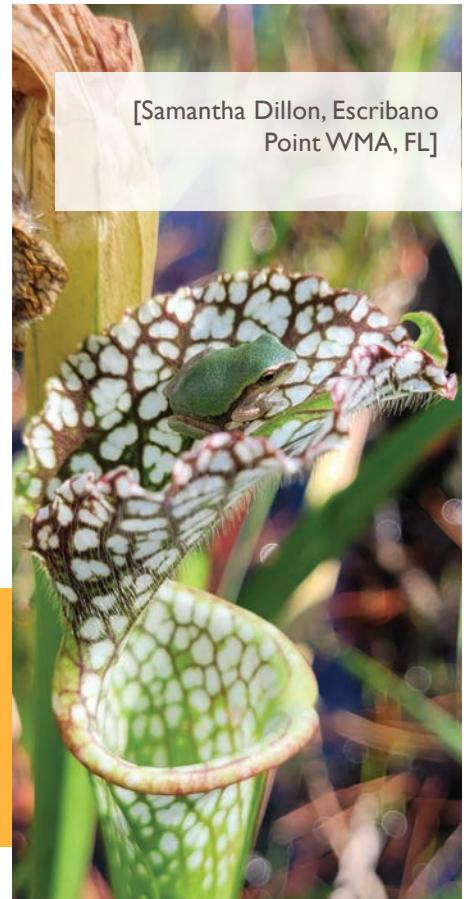
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Range – Southeastern United States, from Virginia to the north and west to Louisiana [Map adapted from the University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory]



[Julianne Jones, Blackwater Ecological Preserve, VA]



[Samantha Dillon, Escribano Point WMA, FL]



Distinctive thigh markings [Jason Gibson]



Tadpole [Alachua Conservation Trust]

# LONGLEAF ECOSYSTEM



## eats

By Alan Patterson, The Longleaf Alliance

### Hedgehog Mushrooms (*Hydnus* spp.)



#### IN ECOSYSTEM EATS,

WE DISCUSS EDIBLE MUSHROOMS AND PLANTS FOUND IN THE LONGLEAF ECOSYSTEM, HOW AND WHEN TO FIND THEM, AND HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM. WE ALSO SHARE RECIPES FOR OUR BOLDER READERS TO TRY.

The most prevalent hedgehog mushroom species in the longleaf pine range is *Hydnus umbilicatum* or **depressed hedgehog**, but foragers may also encounter *Hydnus repandum* (**wood hedgehog**) and *Hydnus albidum* (**white hedgehog**). The primary identifying feature of hedgehog mushrooms is the presence of a toothed hymenium (the spore-bearing layer of tissue) rather than the gills normally associated with this structure.

Both *H. umbilicatum* and *H. repandum* are tan-orange in color, with the former having a naval-like indentation in the top of its cap. *Hydnus albidum* are a much paler color.

*Hydnus* fungi can vary in size, with the largest fruit bodies reaching sizes comparable to a typical portobello (about 5-6 inches in diameter). They are a mycorrhizal species, growing under and around host tree species in a symbiotic relationship in which water, sugar, and mineral resources are shared.

Hedgehog mushrooms typically fruit in the summer to late fall; however, they can be found in the late winter in some areas when conditions are favorable. Look for them around numerous hardwood species, particularly hickory and oaks.

## RECIPES WITH HEDGEHOG MUSHROOM TO TRY AT HOME



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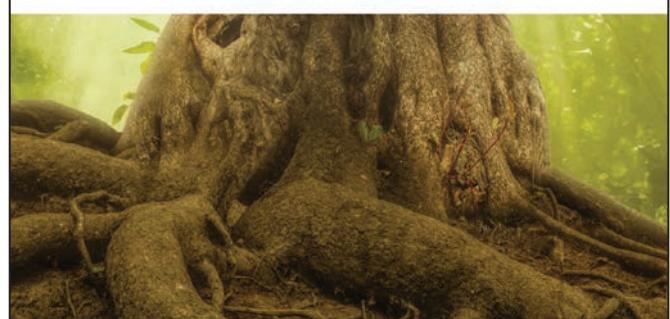
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By Lisa Lord, The Longleaf Alliance

# TRADEOFFS AND MARKET CHOICES FOR LONGLEAF PINE

Longleaf pine forests offer landowners a range of market opportunities, from traditional timber and pine straw markets to emerging markets like carbon credit programs. But the real strength of longleaf pine lies in its ability to support both economic and ecological values at the same time, including high-value timber, pine straw, recreational leases, wildlife habitat, increased water yield, and other conservation benefits. Yet not all options for income generation have equal outcomes or can be accomplished on the same acre. Shaping future market access opportunities are management decisions made now, such as planting density, thinning schedules, or whether to enroll in a market or incentive program.

Maximizing one income stream can often mean adjusting expectations for another. For example:

- Some carbon credit agreements may call for higher tree densities and longer rotations, which boost carbon sequestration but limit the open stand conditions that many wildlife species need.

- Pine straw can generate a steady income, but frequent or annual raking may affect the long-term health of the soil and trees.
- Managing for premium timber products like utility poles can bring strong financial returns, but at intervals that are further apart than with traditional even-aged management.

For landowners, meeting both short and long-term objectives requires careful planning and a clear understanding of the tradeoffs. Technical assistance can help match your land and goals to the right mix of markets available today or that are developing in your area. The bottom line is that longleaf pine forests can provide multiple benefits, and aiming to optimize a balance of values, rather than maximizing just one, leads to healthier forests, more resilient and varied income opportunities, and greater long-term success.



From Roots to Revenue is a new factsheet available with a quick summary of established and emerging market opportunities. Please spread the word and share with fellow forest landowners >> [longleafalliance.org/markets](https://longleafalliance.org/markets).



For a more in-depth resource about longleaf economic opportunities, we also recommend The Alliance's 2023 *Longleaf for the Long Run* brochure >> [longleafalliance.org/longleaf-for-the-long-run](https://longleafalliance.org/longleaf-for-the-long-run).

# MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR LONGLEAF LANDOWNERS

Longleaf forests provide short-term and long-term revenue that can generate income simultaneously by layering opportunities.

## ESTABLISHED MARKETS



**Bioenergy:** Fuel chipping low-quality wood and processing it for biomass energy.



**Conservation Easements:** Protect your land in perpetuity for future generations while continuing to own and manage it.



**Hunting & Recreational Leases:** Longleaf forests are often in high demand because of aesthetic and wildlife value.



**Pine Straw:** Steady supplemental income. Long needles are prized for their color and durability.



**Silvopasture:** Blend longleaf and livestock to diversify income and enhance productivity.



**Timber & Lumber:** Prized for its dense, durable wood. Ideal for high-end products and higher long-term returns.

## EMERGING MARKETS



**Biodiversity Credits:** Newly developing opportunity to generate credits for protecting or enhancing habitat that benefits flora and fauna.



**Carbon Credits:** Longleaf pine forests sequester carbon effectively, presenting opportunities for landowners to get paid for sequestering and storing CO<sub>2</sub>.



**Mass Timber:** Straight, strong, dense longleaf pine can help meet demand for locally or regionally sourced engineered wood products.



**Mitigation Banking:** Landowners can sell credits and receive compensation for the ecological services provided.



**Watershed Protection Programs:** Utilities and corporations are investing in upstream forest management to secure clean water supplies in local watersheds.

Established and emerging markets are highly variable across the Southeast. Timber markets are particularly dynamic, fluctuating over time and geography due to various local factors and broader influences, while markets like pine straw and recreational leases can provide a steadier source of revenue.

Longleaf pine forests excel in producing premium products compared to competing southern pines when well managed. While longleaf pine can access the same commodity markets as other species, its superior strength, heavier weight, and high durability set it apart. These qualities make longleaf especially valuable for high-end uses like utility poles, pilings, and specialty flooring, often commanding higher prices and offering better returns for landowners in the right markets.

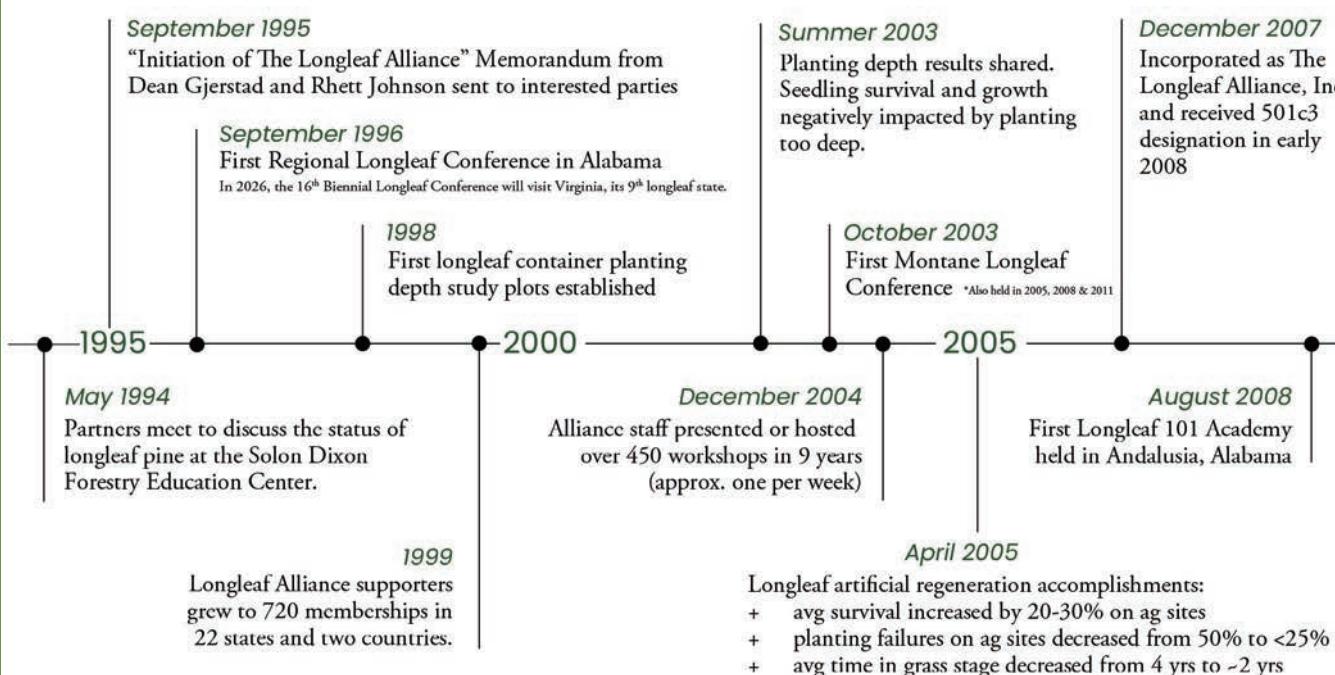
# Rooted in Collaboration, Branching Toward the Future

[Randy Tate]

Like the longleaf pine itself, The Longleaf Alliance's early years focused on laying deep roots by building partnerships, gathering knowledge, and cultivating a vision for restoring one of the Southeast's most iconic ecosystems. Thirty years later, we have grown, faces have changed, and our initial programs have evolved to meet ever-changing longleaf pine restoration needs. However, as an organization, we remain focused on our

mission of ensuring the sustainable future of the longleaf pine ecosystem through partnerships, landowner assistance, and science-based education and outreach.

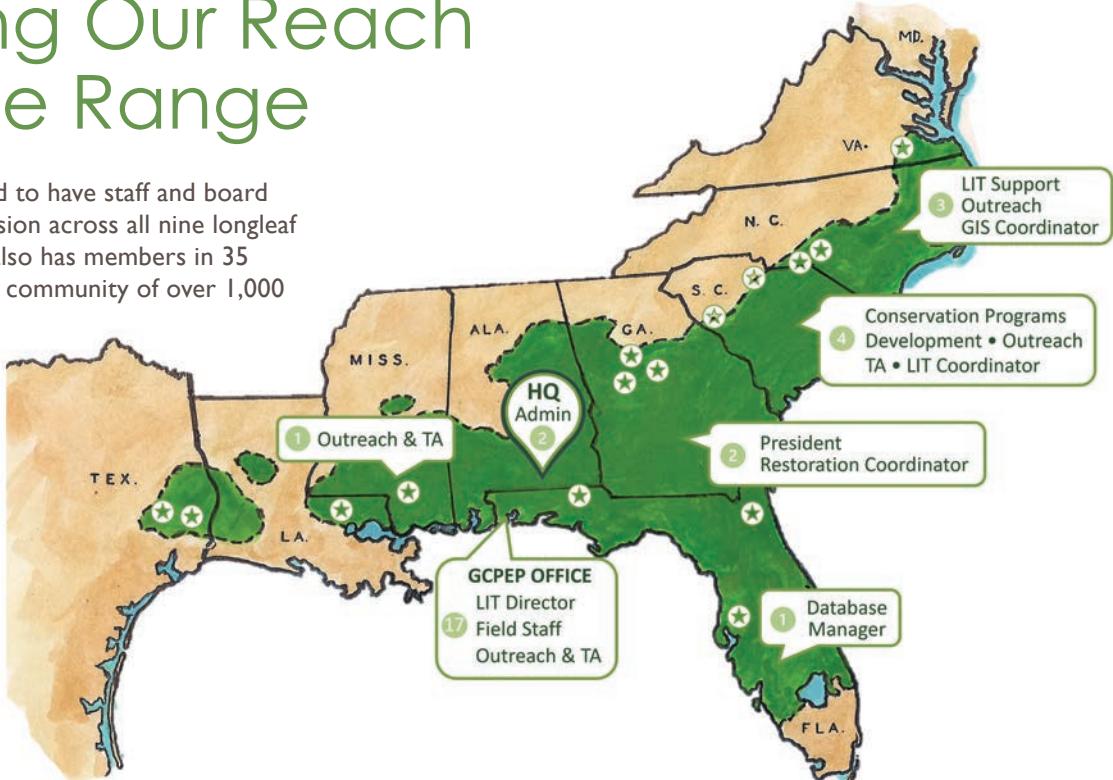
Initially established as a project within Auburn University in 1995, The Longleaf Alliance incorporated in 2007 and received approval as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2008 to meet the growing outreach demands, engage in regional issues, and



# Expanding Our Reach Across the Range

The Longleaf Alliance is proud to have staff and board members\* advancing our mission across all nine longleaf states. The Longleaf Alliance also has members in 35 states and 3 countries, with a community of over 1,000 dedicated supporters.

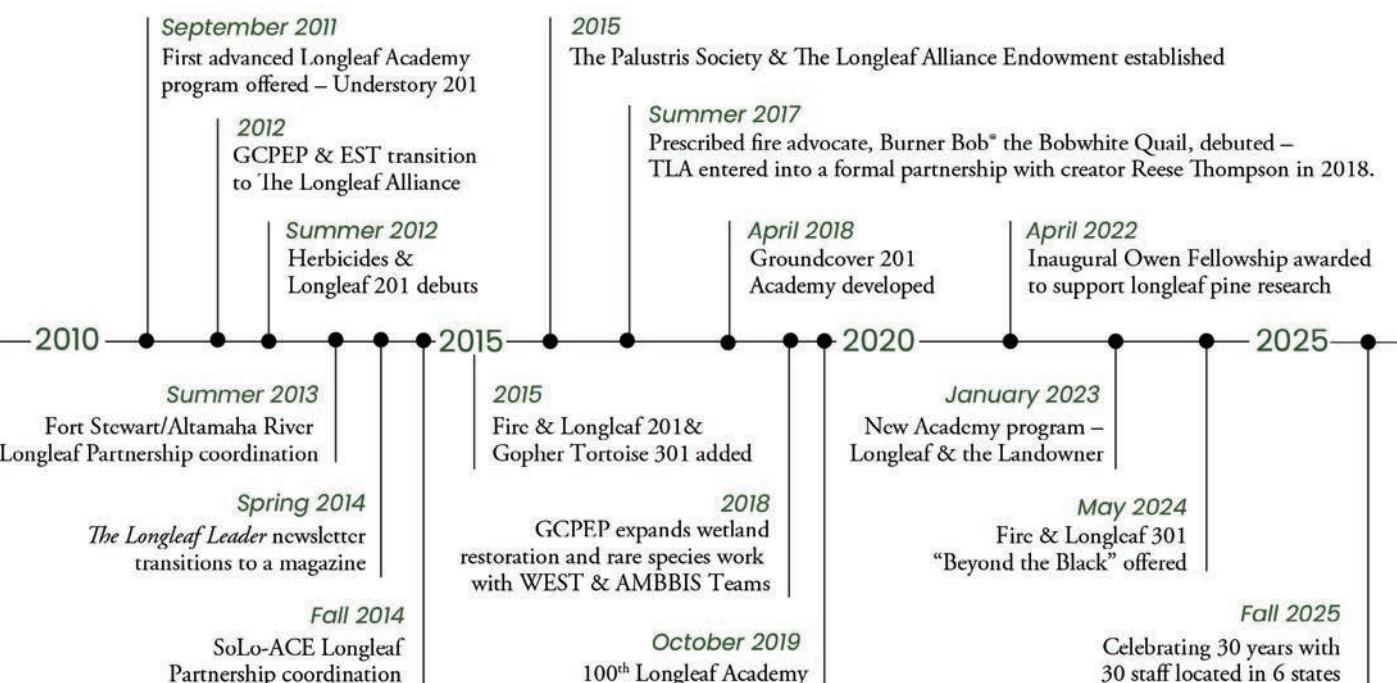
\*Board member locations are indicated with stars.



serve expanding partner networks. As project opportunities increased and grant funding expanded, The Alliance has transitioned from a small team working out of Alabama to a current staff of 30 located across the longleaf range.

Our organization's expansion was not only geographical – our programs, employee expertise, partnership engagement, and member support also grew to support our vision and key strategies to guide longleaf restoration, stewardship, and

conservation. Staff serve as both local resources within priority longleaf landscapes and leading experts within regional collaborations and partnerships. A founding member of the America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative, The Longleaf Alliance provides leadership within longleaf working groups and directly coordinates activities in three longleaf local implementation teams (LITs) in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida/Alabama.



**Adopted in 2019, The Longleaf Alliance's G.U.I.D.E.-ing framework (Growing - Understanding - Improving - Diverse - Ecosystems) identifies our key strategies to ensure a sustainable future for longleaf pine ecosystems, helping us plan for the next 30 years.**



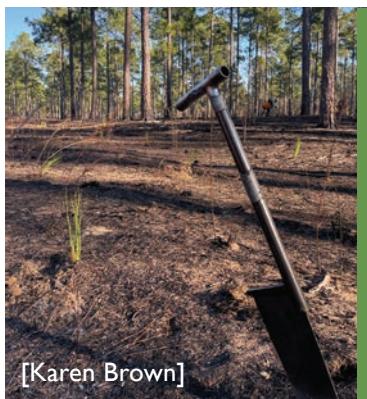
## UNDERSTANDING

Science-based education, outreach, and technical assistance were the foundations on which The Longleaf Alliance was established. We continue to share longleaf information through workshops, trainings, field days, Biennial Longleaf Conferences, and an expanded Longleaf Academy program, now offering eight courses. We also facilitate research and range-wide analyses on the scope of the condition of longleaf pine.



## DIVERSE FORESTS CONSERVED

By promoting longleaf pine's ecological and economic advantages through premium value markets, maintaining healthy ecosystems and the species they support, and helping our partners and landowners conserve their land permanently, we ensure longleaf forests remain resilient and vibrant for the future.



[Karen Brown]

## GROWING

The Longleaf Alliance is expanding the longleaf community by raising awareness, increasing engagement, and developing a love for longleaf across the range. Our alliance of trusted partners has grown to include organizations with expertise in land retention, legal services for landowners, and innovators in the mass timber, water, biodiversity, and biomass markets. In addition to *The Longleaf Leader* magazine, social media, videos, and public prescribed fire festivals, we are reaching the next generation through our iconic prescribed fire mascot, Burner Bob® the Bobwhite Quail.



[Karen Brown]

## IMPROVING FOREST HEALTH

Through active stewardship, we improve the condition of longleaf ecosystems across the range. The Longleaf Alliance team is conducting critical boots-on-the-ground management including prescribed fire, invasive species control, wetland restoration, and rare species recovery.



[Lisa Lord]

## ECOSYSTEMS RESTORED

Through advocacy, policies, assistance, partners, and our own management actions, we are expanding longleaf ecosystems across the range. The Longleaf Alliance provides funding assistance for groundcover restoration projects, and our tree planting program supports the planting of millions of longleaf pine seedlings each year. We are facilitating efforts among longleaf nurseries and seed orchards to improve seedling quality and quantity.



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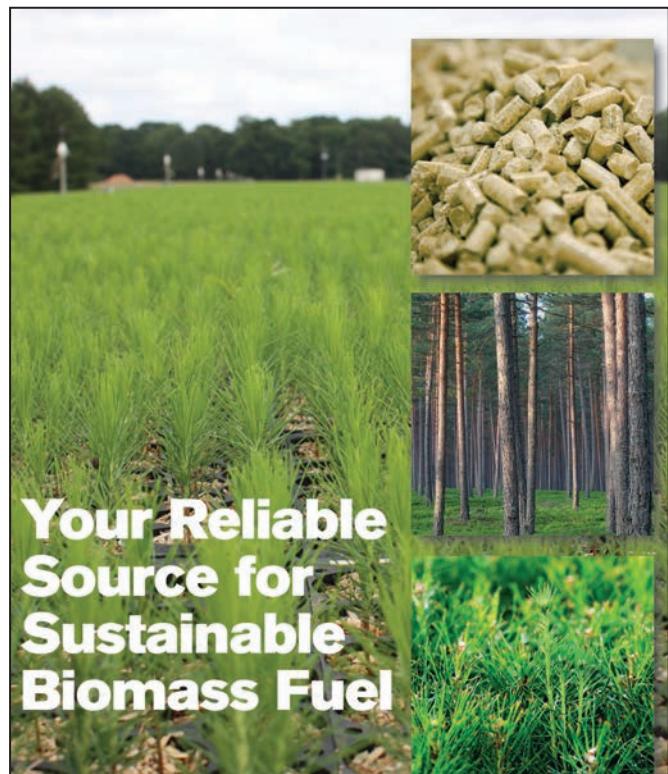


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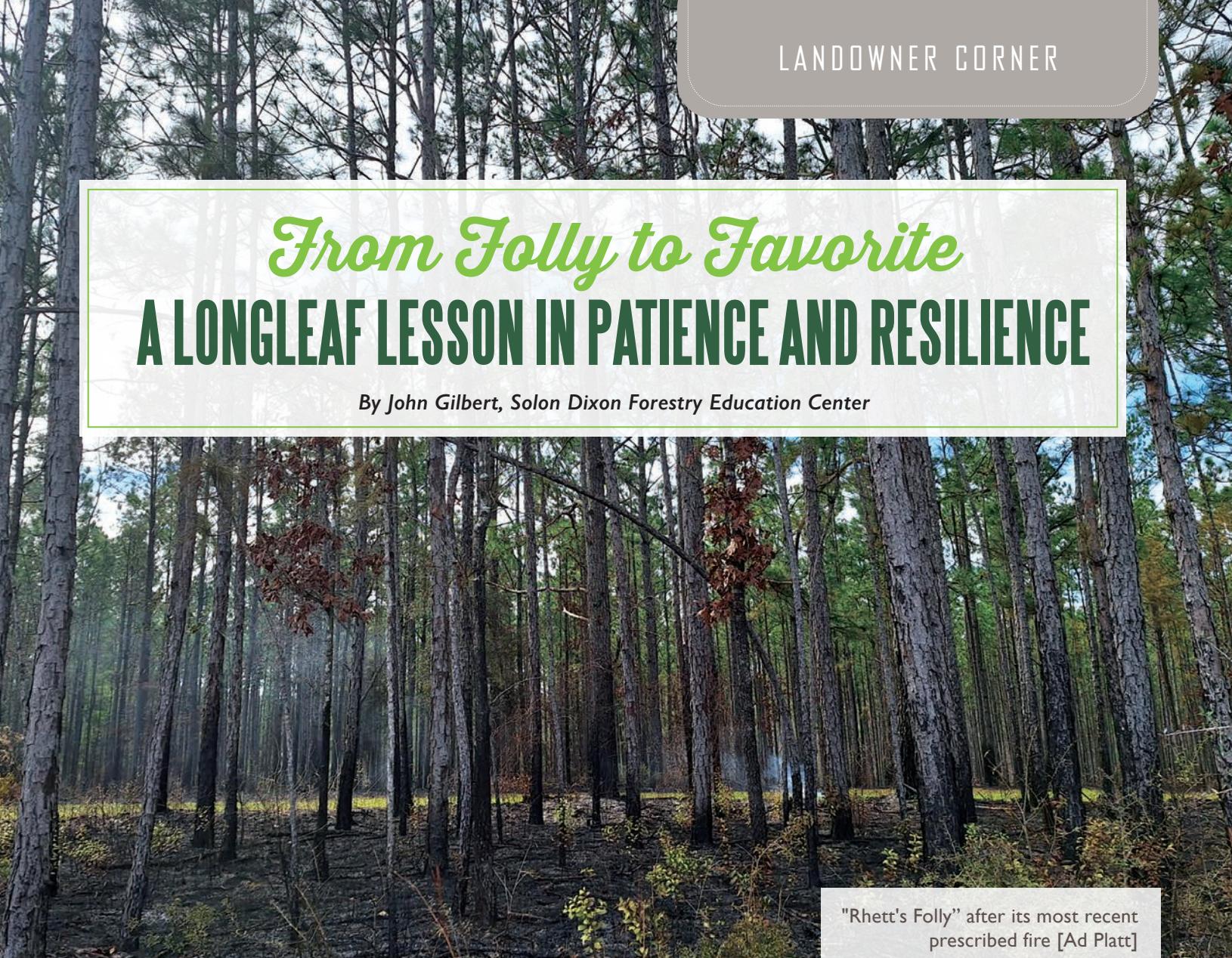


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# From Folly to Favorite

## A LONGLEAF LESSON IN PATIENCE AND RESILIENCE

By John Gilbert, Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center



"Rhett's Folly" after its most recent prescribed fire [Ad Platt]

'Rhett's Folly' is a shelterwood stand where Rhett Johnson, co-founder of The Longleaf Alliance and retired Director of the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, says he learned the most about regenerating longleaf pine naturally. This was one of his earlier experiments with naturally regenerating longleaf. Things didn't look great initially, and he took a 'bit' of abuse and ridicule over trying something different in hopes of a different outcome. But the stand looks great today after thinning and regular burning. In fact, it's still smoking from a recent prescribed fire as I write this.

This tract is on our books at the Dixon Center as a "longleaf pine shelterwood." It's about 34 acres with two adjacent wildlife openings and a hardwood streamside management zone (SMZ) running through part of the stand. It had a shelterwood seed cut in 1991 and an overwood removal in

1994. In 2019, we had an opportunity to work with an in-woods clean chip operation. The stand was thinned with operator-selected rows being punched every 40 to 50 feet to approximate a 5th row thinning.

The stand is mixed, with a significant portion of loblolly pine in places, and has responded well to the thinning, which has provided income and opened up the stand for growth, as well as improved access for burning. We've been burning it on a 2-year rotation, and the U.S. Forest Service used it for a live fire activity in February.

The stand will be ready for a series of additional thinnings before being regenerated. We will continue to thin from below to favor longleaf pine where possible as we go forward.

Though it was once called Rhett's Folly, it has now become one of my favorite stands!

The Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center is a 5,350-acre forestry and wildlife conservation education facility in Andalusia, Alabama, operated by the Auburn School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and home to The Longleaf Alliance's headquarters. As a working research forest, part of its educational value lies in demonstrating both what works and what does not work.



Naturally regenerated longleaf pine at the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center [Ad Platt]

**Shelterwood:** a method of securing natural tree reproduction under the shelter of old trees, which are removed by successive cuttings to admit to the seedlings a gradually increasing amount of light.

## "SEEDS" PLANTED 30 YEARS AGO

At Little Creek Woods in Walton County, Florida, we have a ~60-acre tract planted with longleaf pine in 1996. The stand has been thinned twice — the second time quite selectively — and the trees are now at least 50 feet tall, producing cones and looking really nice as they reach 30-years-old. We also manage about 50 acres of naturally occurring longleaf with wiregrass and native groundcover, which is significantly older (60+ years), and have converted other parts of the property from off-site loblolly and slash pine to longleaf. Of course, we could not maintain any of these longleaf pine stands without periodic fire.

— Bob Reid, Florida

I have a longleaf story — one that goes back 31 years to when I first met Mark Hains, Research Coordinator for The Longleaf Alliance (1996-2015), at a forestry forum in Hammond, Louisiana. I had recently moved back to Louisiana from Chicago to an old family farm that was mostly growing pine trees. Just a few months earlier, we had a pine bark beetle infestation where the infected trees were cut to stop the beetles from spreading. I planned to replant the area with longleaf pine, but the foresters advised against it, saying the site wasn't suitable.

Still, I had grown up hearing about the virtues of longleaf and wanted to learn more from someone who truly understood it. That's when I heard Mark's talk — and I knew I'd found the expert I was looking for. With his encouragement, I went on to plant hundreds of acres of longleaf pine. Today, those trees are thriving, and the longleaf forest is rising again.

Just over a year ago, that forest was accepted into the USDA Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program — a proud milestone in a journey that started with a single conversation.

— Beryl Trawick, Louisiana

Thirty years ago, we rarely wrote management plans to plant longleaf pine on clay soils in the Piedmont. But my fellow forester, Paul Granberry, was always on the lookout for remnant longleaf while cruising timber. Having come from Louisiana, he was familiar with the species and passionate about helping preserve it in its northern range.

Whenever we found natural longleaf, we flagged the trees to save them from harvest and replanted the tract with longleaf pine. We also came across numerous cat-faced or boxed stumps — remnants of the old turpentining days.

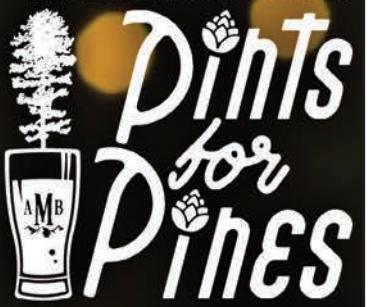
That's how the **60-acre longleaf pine stand at Harris Lake County Park** got its start in 1997. The stand is part of a larger 684-acre park owned by Duke Energy and leased to Wake County for public use. Each year, the park hosts a community celebration honoring the longleaf pine ecosystem and its historical significance in North Carolina, complete with guided wagon rides to visit the nearly 30-year-old stand.

— Les Hunter, North Carolina

### A Note from Ad Platt, The Longleaf Alliance

John's testimonial about "Rhett's Folly" speaks to the long vision, something always dear to those who choose longleaf. Some of my own stands, particularly the first one I established, are not picture perfect. And yet, over time, they are becoming much more successful, perhaps like some of the more challenging children you've raised. The lesson is to hang in there and stick with it, to keep bending the trajectory towards the desired outcome, rather than giving up. It is even more gratifying when these places or situations begin to work out.

We all know that nature is more patient than we are and is also willing to endure huge losses to produce those magnificent products that one day we declare National Parks. Many of those attempts falter, fail outright, or are less impressive. A better goal for us is resilience rather than perfection, which can also be fleeting.



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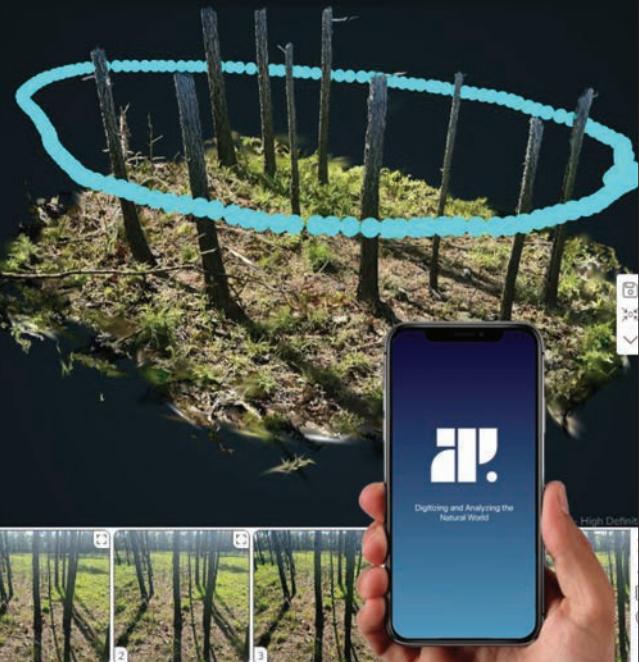
RMS is headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama (USA) with offices across the US South and Brazil.

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By Jamelle Ellis, Longleaf Partnership Council Chair, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

# Shaping the Future of Longleaf: Highlights from the LIT Virtual Summit

The America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative's local implementation team (LIT) leads gathered virtually in August for a forward-looking summit that blended strategic vision with practical next steps. The event offered participants a first look at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's ambitious "Next Generation Business Plans" and how they could guide longleaf restoration for decades to come.

NFWF staff outlined a strategic overhaul that extends planning horizons to 30 years, merges rigorous measurable outcomes with landscape-scale scope, and incorporates broader biodiversity, habitat quality, and community benefits such as carbon sequestration and water conservation. For the longleaf pine ecosystem, this means expanding from species-specific goals to a more integrated approach that also values fire-adapted forests, embedded wetlands, bottomland hardwoods, and aquatic systems.

Tools such as the Longleaf Ecosystem Occurrences (LEO) Geodatabase, the Southeast Fire Map, and advanced habitat suitability models will strengthen monitoring and inform where restoration delivers the greatest ecological and community gains. LITs will play a central role in shaping these priorities, identifying measurable indicators, and piloting innovative monitoring techniques.

The LIT Virtual Summit also focused on America's Longleaf updated Strategic Priorities and Actions Plan for 2025–2029.

This five-year roadmap aligns with the *Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine* and emphasizes public and private land restoration, prescribed fire, market-based tools, and climate resilience. Unlike previous plans, this version is designed for active use and will be reviewed at every Longleaf Partnership Council meeting, culminating in a five-year progress report.

Recognizing that success for America's Longleaf depends on more than "acres treated," the Strategic Priorities and Actions Plan also accounts for the full cost of capacity building, such as seed supply, nursery development, and workforce training.

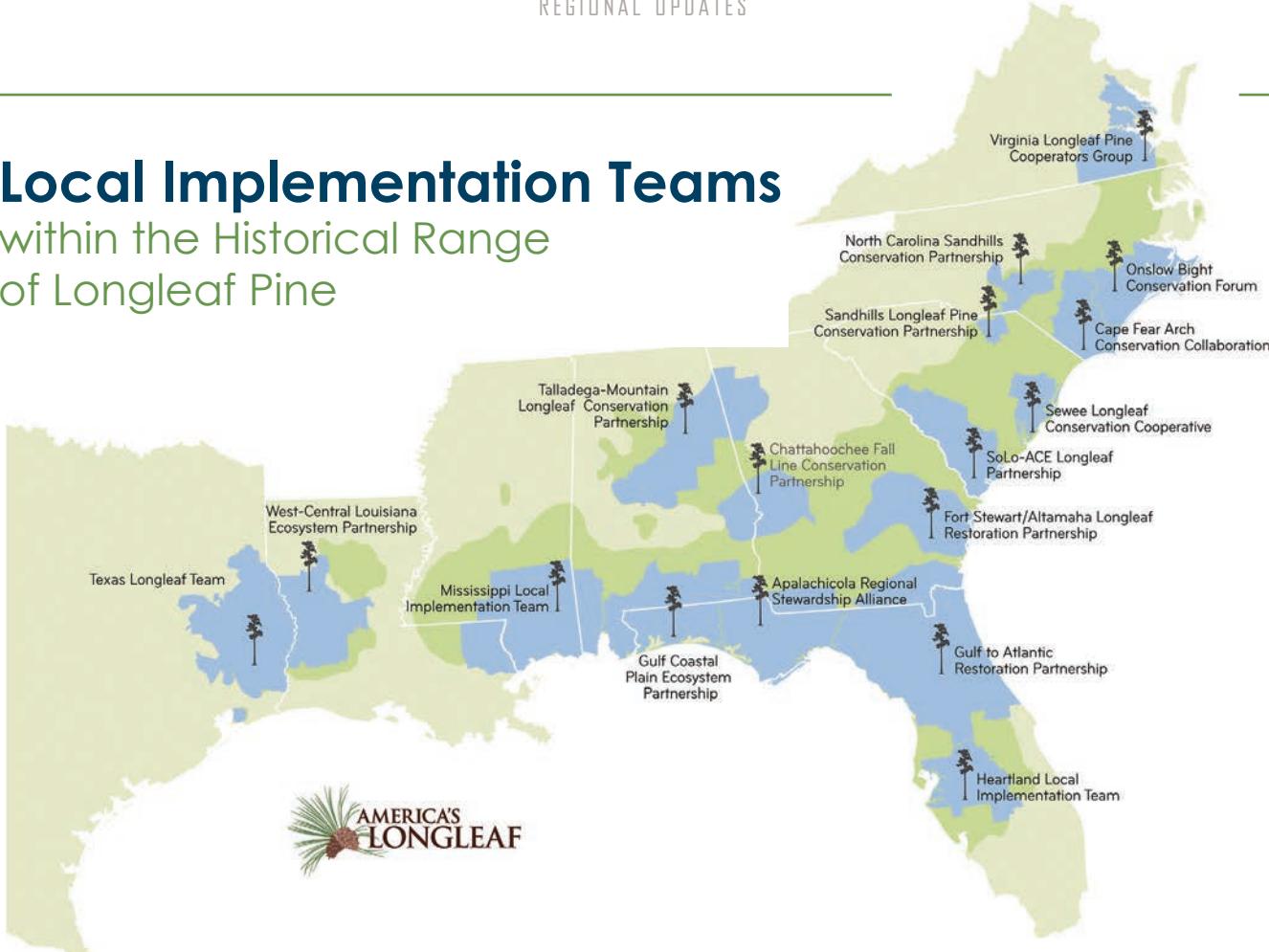
Communication and outreach were another priority. The newly redesigned [americaslongleaf.org](http://americaslongleaf.org) makes it easier to find LIT contacts, explore resources, and showcase accomplishments. LITs without websites can partner with the Communications Team to create dedicated pages, and social media remains an important tool for broadening awareness.

Throughout the Summit, a consistent message emerged: restoring and sustaining the longleaf landscape requires both vision and collaboration. By combining cutting-edge science, flexible planning, and the grassroots strength of local partnerships, America's Longleaf and its LITs are poised to make great strides for wildlife populations, strengthening community benefits, and keeping the culture of longleaf and prescribed fire thriving well into the next generation.



# Local Implementation Teams

## within the Historical Range of Longleaf Pine



Drax Biomass is a manufacturer of compressed wood pellets produced from sustainably managed working forests. Headquartered in Monroe, LA, with operations in Louisiana and Mississippi, the company is committed to supporting the communities in which we operate by promoting sustainable forestry and investing in local economic development.

**drax**

By Karen Z. Brown, The Longleaf Alliance

# Unfreezing the Future: Georgia Heirs Property Law Center



*Generations of Georgians have lost land — and opportunity — due to the widespread issue of heirs property. The Georgia Heirs Property Law Center, a not-for-profit law firm, is working to change this. With proper support, families can reassert land ownership, restore equity, and unlock a future rooted in prosperity.*

## What Is Heirs Property?

Heirs property refers to land that has been passed down through generations without a legally designated owner. As a result, the land ownership is split among multiple heirs who are considered **tenants in common**. No single person has clear title, and every co-owner must agree on decisions about the property — from taking out loans, applying for federal aid, to making real estate transactions.

The situation creates what is called **frozen equity** — land that has value on paper but cannot be leveraged, invested in, or adequately protected.

For forest landowners, this also hampers access to markets for their forest products, and eligibility for many financial assistance programs that are integral to longleaf management.

## Ten Years of Unlocking Generational Wealth

Founded in 2015, the **Georgia Heirs Property Law Center** (the Center) serves communities across Georgia with place-based funding allowing the Center to provide services and education to underserved areas like South Georgia and high-need communities in metropolitan areas. The Center provides:

- **Title clearing and title review services** — title searches, legal filings, and, if needed, litigation
- **Estate planning and will creation** — helping families avoid future heirs property
- **Education and outreach** — empowering landowners to grow their assets for the next generation

Many of these services are offered at no cost to qualifying clients.

## Resolution is Key, Prevention Can Help

Resolving heirs property is key to securing and preserving property rights. Without clear title, heirs property owners lose more than independent ownership; access to land management programs, disaster relief services, home loans, and many other resources become unobtainable. The Center helps clients clear their title so they can achieve the goals they have for their land.

► *Mr. McKay\* discovered he inherited heirs property when scammers tried to take his family land in Ware County. After driving off the scammers, Mr. McKay contacted the Center with the goal of clearing title to protect the property, develop possible timber/conservation operations, and preserve the land for the benefit of his successors. Once the Center successfully cleared Mr. McKay's title, Mr. McKay was referred to the Center's forestry partners to assist him in reaching his goals.*

\*Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.

While resolving heirs property cases is critical, **prevention** is also important. The Center offers estate planning services for title clearing clients to help “close the loop” on heirs property. Without a proper estate plan, landowners with clear title risk creating heirs property again after they die.

► *“Get over the notion of being afraid to do an estate plan. The bottom line is that everyone is going to transition. It's responsible. This is really a love letter to your family — giving them what your wishes are and expressing to your family what you want.” — Center Client & Landowner Workshop Attendee*

The Center also conducts outreach events and community education sessions to raise awareness about the impacts of heirs property and to encourage property owners, professionals, and community leaders to resolve and prevent heirs property situations in their communities.

### Partnering with Landowners: The Longleaf Connection

In 2023, The Longleaf Alliance began partnering with the Center to expand its education and outreach efforts to forest landowners across Georgia. Together, we have introduced webinars, workshops, and Longleaf Academy programs to help landowners understand how clear title and estate planning support their forest management goals by unfreezing the full value of their land.

Ready to learn more? Visit [gaheirsproperty.org](http://gaheirsproperty.org) and [lonleafalliance.org/events](http://lonleafalliance.org/events)



Executive Director and Attorney, Skipper StipeMaas (R), and Chief Operating Officer Delene Porter (at podium) present at a landowner workshop in Talbotton, Georgia. [Karen Z. Brown]

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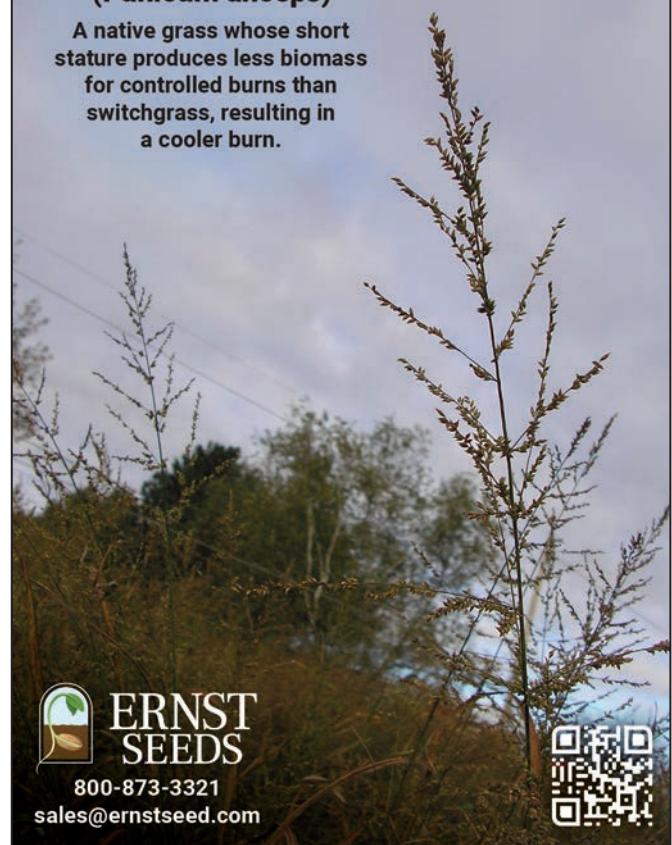


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## Wolfe Creek Forest Project and Partners Receive Inaugural Innovative Partnership Award

By Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation

FLORIDA



Wolfe Creek Forest Project partners received the Innovative Partnership Sabal Award. Pictured: Josh Kellam, Garcia Companies; Vernon Compton, The Longleaf Alliance/GCPEP; Doug Hattaway, Trust for Public Land; Catherine Ingram, Florida Forest Service; Robbie Parrish, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Florida Forever); and Mallory Dimmitt, Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation. Not pictured are Randy Roy, Naval Air Station Whiting Field and Santa Rosa County Commission Staff. [Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation]

The Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation launched the inaugural Sabal Awards at the 2025 Corridor Connect Summit, with over 700 in attendance. The Sabal Awards recognize and celebrate outstanding contributions to the protection, connection, and restoration of the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Wolfe Creek Forest collaborators, The Longleaf Alliance, Trust for Public Land, Florida Forest Service, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Florida Forever), Naval Air Station Whiting Field, and Santa Rosa County, received the Innovative Partnership Award, which celebrates cross-sector collaborations that support the Corridor's success. Wolfe Creek Forest is located within the Gulf Coast Plain Ecosystem Partnership, home to the largest connected longleaf pine ecosystem in the world. Not only does this project conserve longleaf pine forests, one of the most ecologically diverse ecosystems on earth, it also protects numerous seepage and stream systems, supporting a variety of aquatic flora and fauna, like the endangered Gulf sturgeon.

For over a decade, these collaborators have been working to preserve these priority lands and have succeeded in protecting more than 14,000 acres across a subdivided landscape, connecting patches of the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Every bit of connected habitat conserved contributes to the Corridor's vision to link Florida's wild lands permanently, and this team's committed effort has proven to be exemplary. Special thanks to Josh Kellam of Garcia Companies for pledging an additional \$10,000, bringing the total amount awarded to \$22,500 to support the project partners' future land protection in the GCPEP landscape and Florida Wildlife Corridor.

For additional Sabal Award winners, visit [floridawildlifecorridor.org](http://floridawildlifecorridor.org).

## Navy Volunteers Join the Fight to Restore Wetlands and Save Rare Salamanders

By Ashlynn Moretti, The Longleaf Alliance

FLORIDA



Staff and volunteers from The Longleaf Alliance, FWC, and NICO Pensacola take a well-deserved break after manually clearing woody encroachment from a reticulated flatwood salamander breeding site.

field work. During their time, NIOC Pensacola volunteered for 6.5 hours and assisted in clearing about 0.35 acres in an occupied salamander wetland.

The AMBBIS team was established to work with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to restore critical wetland habitat, through hand-clearing, herbicide, mechanical treatments, and prescribed fire. The hand clearing is particularly effective in initial treatments to restore sunlight to native groundcover plants in the wetland basins. Since 2018, the AMBBIS crew has expanded from two to eight staff, assisting multiple private and public lands in need of wetland restoration recovery.

Located along the Blackwater Bay and bordering Eglin Air Force Base (Eglin AFB), Escribano Point Wildlife Management Area (WMA) contains 4,057 acres of diverse ecosystems supporting a variety of rare plant and wildlife species, including the federally endangered reticulated flatwoods salamander.

The reticulated flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma bishopi* or AMBBIS for short) has suffered significant population declines in recent decades, primarily due to fire suppression and consequential loss of suitable isolated wetland habitat. When fire is excluded from these wetlands, shade-tolerant shrubs take over the understory, shading out groundcover crucial to the health of the wetland and reticulated flatwood salamander breeding. The species has been reduced to two known stronghold populations in the Florida Panhandle: Eglin AFB and Escribano Point WMA.

On July 12th, 2025, seven U.S. Navy volunteers with the Navy Information Operations Command (NIOC) Pensacola volunteer group visited Escribano Point WMA and assisted The Longleaf Alliance's AMBBIS Restoration Team in their wetland restoration

## Longleaf & the Landowner Academy Hosted at Tuskegee University

By LuAnn Craghton, Chattahoochee Fall Line Conservation Partnership Coordinator

GEORGIA



Eugene Brooks, USDA Forest Service, discusses longleaf restoration during the Camp Atkins field tour in Tuskegee, Alabama.

[LuAnn Craghton]

provided the opportunity for robust discussions around real-world longleaf restoration challenges and solutions. Tuskegee University faculty were generous with their time and expertise, allowing the group to meet on campus and hosting the field excursion. Academy participants went home with an abundance of resource materials to assist them with the next steps in their land stewardship journeys.

The event also provided a unique opportunity for graduate students from Virginia Tech and Auburn University to connect with landowners and conservation professionals to collect data for their respective projects. The Chattahoochee Fall Line Conservation Partnership, The Longleaf Alliance, Tuskegee University, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and many other partners collaborated to execute this successful event.

## Field Days Advance Longleaf Understanding in Louisiana

By Chris Rice, The Nature Conservancy

LOUISIANA



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries staff with conservation professional field day participants  
[The Nature Conservancy]

cost-share and financial assistance opportunities, where to turn for technical help, and the economics of longleaf. These outreach events increase awareness and are key to achieving the goals of the Partnership. The WLEP is a multi-agency, industry, and private landowner partnership formed to restore longleaf pine and other ecosystems in west-central Louisiana, including Allen, Beauregard, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, and Vernon parishes.

The West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Partnership (WLEP) conducted two Longleaf Pine Restoration and Management Workshops on June 26th (for professionals) and June 27th (for landowners) at the Marsh Bayou Wildlife Management Area in Evangeline Parish. The events led by The Nature Conservancy, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the National Wild Turkey Federation were supported in part by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund. A total of 78 people, including 20 landowners and 58 natural resource professionals, were in attendance. The objective of the landowner event was to share lessons learned and encourage participants to restore longleaf pine on their lands.

Participants were transported to view a variety of longleaf age classes and restoration treatments employed by the Marsh Bayou WMA. Following the field tour, the group heard from state, federal, and NGO partners on available

## Longleaf and Geologic Treasure Protected in NC Sandhills

By Jeff Marcus, The Nature Conservancy

NORTH CAROLINA



Paint Hill Farm supports high-quality longleaf pine habitats. [Matt Greene]

impact in the Chesapeake Bay area 35 million years ago!

These resources are now protected and will be available for the public to enjoy as Paint Hill becomes part of Weymouth Woods State Natural Area. This property helps to buffer training activities and protect airspace for nearby Fort Bragg, and the Department of Defense contributed funding to the project, along with the North Carolina Land and Water Fund.

The Nature Conservancy partnered with North Carolina State Parks to protect the 305-acre Paint Hill Farm near Southern Pines, North Carolina. Landowner Allison Ives and her family have a long history of supporting longleaf conservation and were previously recognized as part of the North Carolina Longleaf Honor Roll for their active management of Paint Hill, including regular prescribed burning. Ives generously provided a bargain sale for this property, which was under severe development threat.

Paint Hill includes mature longleaf forests (over 75 years old) with embedded wetlands and supports a cluster of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and other rare species such as Pinewoods Sparrow and Sandhills pyxie moss.

The property also protects historic resources such as one of the oldest intact cotton gins (circa 1830) in the state. It has a unique geological record of ash and rock ejecta and evidence of the massive tsunami that resulted from an asteroid

## Uniting the Carolina Sandhills: Connecting Longleaf Pine Conservation Across State Lines

By Jessie Jordan, The Longleaf Alliance

SANDHILLS



Layne Rogerson, family representative of one of the private land field tour sites, takes a selfie with the Sandhills Joint Partnership Meeting participants.

The Sandhills Conservation Partnership of North Carolina and the Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership of South Carolina joined together this summer for the first time for a two-day meeting to discuss connectivity of the greater Sandhills landscape.

To kick off the gathering, land managers, wildlife biologists, and other conservationists met in Hamlet, North Carolina, to tour the Sandhills and PeeDee River Gamelands and discuss restoration efforts. The group also visited the property of Jill and Eric Dye to discuss their herculean effort to restore a former golf course back to open longleaf pine savanna and how practitioners can collaborate to better serve landowners who would like to use their land for conservation.

The following day, the group met in Cheraw, South Carolina. They spent part of the morning at Cheraw State Park discussing the management of one of the first and largest state parks in the South Carolina State Park system, and met with landowner Charles Jackson, who recently placed a permanent easement with the Pee Dee Land Trust on his 313 acres adjacent to the Park.

The group then gathered on the Godbold property with Layne Rogerson, the daughter of Pat Godbold. The family is the first private landowner to have an active Red-cockaded Woodpecker cavity in Chesterfield County. The visit highlighted the impact and success of long-term multigenerational restoration efforts.

Meeting attendees returned to Cheraw State Park for an in-person meeting on improving collaboration and communication between partners to better connect and improve longleaf ecosystems across the Carolina Sandhills.

## Chesterfield County Landowner Protects 581 Acres with Easement

By Charles Babb, Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership Coordinator

**SOUTH CAROLINA**



Chesterfield County landowner, Charles Jackson, is dedicated to protecting critical habitat throughout the Pee Dee River Basin through conservation easements.

South Carolina's Chesterfield County landowner and outdoor enthusiast, Charles Jackson, recently completed his second conservation easement with Pee Dee Land Trust. The 581-acre property, adjacent to Cheraw State Park, includes 315 acres of predominantly longleaf, benefitting many species of wildlife, including Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, turkey, and quail. The property has a mix of young and mature longleaf, and Charles is working to convert all suitable sites to longleaf through plantings. In addition to protecting his longleaf lands from development, Mr. Jackson established enhanced buffers on streamside management zones to protect water quality.

"In the future, we want our land to look just like Cheraw State Park – mature longleaf mixed with hardwoods and native groundcover plants. Everyone benefits from natural landscapes that enhance the ecosystem," said Charles during a recent tour of his farm.

Seth Cook, Director of Land Conservation for the Pee Dee Land Trust, said, "We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Mr. Jackson to protect valuable land for future generations. He has been a strong advocate for protecting unique landscapes in the Pee

Dee region, reaching out to many landowners and encouraging them to explore the advantages of protecting lands whose environmental values cannot be replaced."

The Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership, through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funding, assisted in the acquisition of this easement by offsetting a portion of the transaction costs. As a Sandhills Longleaf partner, Pee Dee Land Trust is always striving to help landowners leave a legacy of conservation through the protection of their land.

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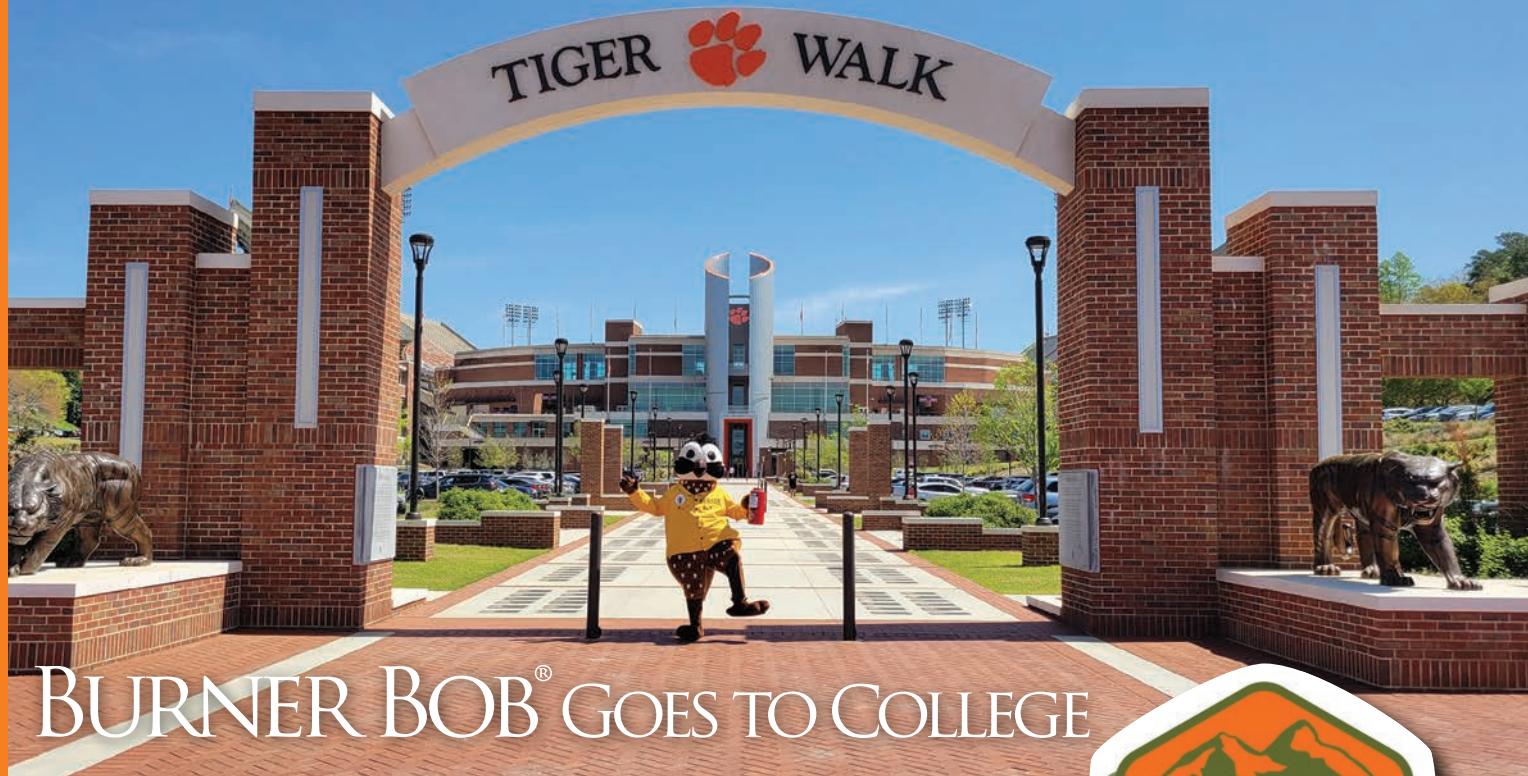
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## BURNER BOB® GOES TO COLLEGE

Join Burner Bob® the Bobwhite Quail as he visits schools with forestry and wildlife programs in the longleaf landscape, where students learn what is needed to become the next generation of natural resource professionals.

### A Visit to Clemson University

The Department of Forestry and Environmental Conservation (FEC) at South Carolina's Clemson University is dedicated to preparing future professionals in sustainable forestry, wildlife and fisheries biology, and environmental conservation. Housed within the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences, the department offers undergraduate degrees in Environmental and Natural Resources, Forest Resource Management, and Wildlife and Fisheries Biology, as well as graduate programs including M.S., Ph.D., and professional non-thesis degrees.

FEC faculty are based both on Clemson's main campus and at the Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science, providing students with access to diverse ecosystems and hands-on research opportunities. The department also manages the 19,200-acre Clemson Experimental Forest, which surrounds the University, and serves as a living laboratory for education, research, and demonstration. In 2024, Clemson broke ground on a new 85,000-square-foot facility that will serve as the future home of the FEC department, marking a significant investment in environmental education and research. By integrating mass-timber construction and advanced wood

technologies, the facility will also serve as a model for sustainable building practices and innovation in forestry sciences.

A crucial aspect of FEC is its partnerships with state and federal agencies and private conservation organizations that provide students access to natural resource professionals in a variety of settings. As a prescribed fire advocate, Burner Bob® was fired up to learn about one opportunity in particular – the Clemson Fire Tigers.

### Learning on the Fireline

The Clemson Fire Tigers is a student burn crew composed primarily of forestry and wildlife students. Clemson University collaborates with the USDA Forest Service and Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists to provide students with hands-on wildland fire experience. The program was established in response to concerns among local fire management professionals about the potential loss of institutional knowledge and progress in fire science as seasoned practitioners retire.



Fire Tigers adhere to the same National Wildlife Coordinating Group guidelines, certifications, and organizational systems used by professional wildland firefighters. Through this partnership, Clemson students assist the Forest Service with prescribed burns and wildfire response in the Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina.

Since its creation in 2016, 86 students have participated. Helen Mohrs, Clemson alum and program co-creator, said, "Many of the students have worked summer jobs out West on hand crews and engines. Numerous graduates are working in land management, and a few have gone on to pursue graduate degrees in fire science."

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One of the best ways to understand prescribed fire is to learn on the fireline alongside trained professionals and mentors.

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NWCG Training for Fire Tigers in 2024. Students completed S-130: Firefighter Training and S-190: Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior. [Helen Mohr]

Fire Tigers Mason Austin and Charley Aho assisting on a prescribed burn on the Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest in the South Carolina mountains. [Helen Mohr]

## Fire Tigers at a Glance

Not to be mistaken for a university club or spirit group due to its fiery name, the Clemson Fire Tigers serve a vital role in providing hands-on learning, professional networking, and skill building for forestry and wildlife students, while also supporting community wildland fire resilience.

- ▶ **Funding** – Initial funding came from the USDA Forest Service fire program in South Carolina. A federal diversity grant helped fund essential equipment for the program.
- ▶ **Liability** – Students in the program are volunteers and are supervised by a USDA Forest Service Crew Boss, which alleviates Clemson University of additional liability coverage.
- ▶ **Training** – All Fire Tigers participants are required to have their Fire Fighter Type 2 certification. Students complete basic wildland fire training through the partnership with the Forest Service.
- ▶ **Scheduling** – Once students complete their training, participation is straightforward. The Fire Tigers coordinator messages students the day before they are dispatched, asking who wants to join the crew. Whoever is available and responds has a spot on the fire engine the next day.



# Igniting Knowledge:

## Exploring the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Professional Reading Program

**Reviewed by:** Michael Hubbard, The Longleaf Alliance

What many people may not realize is that behind the action on the fireline is a deeply rooted culture of professional development. Among the various tools used on the fireline (rakes, nozzles, and kestrels), the most crucial one is a wildland firefighter's mind. Utilizing the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's (NWCG) Professional Reading Program can help keep this key tool honed and sharpened, so to speak.

### What Is the NWCG Professional Reading Program?

The NWCG is the interagency body that develops consistent standards and guidance for wildland fire operations across the U.S. Their impact extends beyond wildfire to prescribed fire management, with standards for training and operating procedures required or encouraged by numerous land management partners in the Southeast.

Among its lesser-known but impactful initiatives is the Professional Reading Program, a curated list of books aimed at helping wildland firefighters grow as leaders, thinkers, and communicators. The reading list includes more than 100 titles, with subjects ranging from history and psychology to memoir and leadership theory.

Started by the NWCG Leadership Subcommittee in 2014 as part of the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program, participation is not mandatory but highly encouraged. Books are selected to give wildland fire personnel, from first-year firefighters to incident commanders, a chance to learn from great leaders, examine historical fire events, and better understand the psychology of decision-making under pressure. Discussion guides are also available online.

### Why Reading Matters in Wildland Fire

To the public, wildland firefighting might appear to be purely physical work. But every fireline decision, from anchoring a handline to calling for aerial support, relies on judgment, teamwork, and leadership.



Selection of books from prior NWCG Professional Reading Program lists: *The Resilient Life* by Dr. Susan Biali Haas, *The 5 Graces of Life and Leadership* by Gary Burnison, and *The Supe's Handbook* by Angie Tom. Each year, four (or more) books are selected for inclusion.

By reading and reflecting, wildland firefighters gain insight into what makes a good leader, how to manage stress in crisis, and why communication and humility are critical traits. The Reading Program also builds common ground across ranks and agencies, helping to shape a shared leadership culture. The goal is not just to read for knowledge, but to reflect and grow.

### Connecting with the Public

For our readers, families of wildland firefighters, and the general public, the NWCG Professional Reading Program offers a powerful window into the world and work of those who protect our natural areas, infrastructure, and sometimes our homes. These books tell stories of courage, sacrifice, failure, and growth. They show that firefighting is more than hard work, it's a commitment to continuous learning.

If you're curious about the culture of wildland fire or the challenges wildland firefighters face, consider exploring a few titles from the NWCG reading list yourself. It's a great way to engage in the values and voices behind the yellow Nomex® shirts and red fire engines.

### Reference

National Wildfire Coordinating Group. 2025. Professional Reading Program. NWCG, [\[nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/professional-reading-program\]](https://nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/professional-reading-program). Accessed 18 July 2025.]

# Devouring Beauties – The Remarkable Pitcherplants

Mysterious, captivating, and under threat.



A. Biologists scout locations to outplant rescued pitcherplants. B. Found from Canada to Texas, the greatest diversity of pitcherplants is found in the American Southeast. C. White-top pitcherplant

Carnivorous pitcherplants take center stage in this short documentary set in the fire-dependent longleaf pine ecosystems of Georgia and Florida. *Devouring Beauties* explores the hidden world of *Sarracenia*, stunning predatory plants struggling to survive amid a changing landscape.

Through interviews with ecologists, botanists, and conservationists — including The Longleaf Alliance's Carol Denhof — the film reveals how habitat loss, fragmentation, and even poaching threaten these natural wonders.

But this is not a tale of despair. It's a story of hope and action, spotlighting the tireless work of scientists, native plant advocates, and private landowners to restore and protect pitcherplant habitat through prescribed fire, careful relocation, and community-based conservation.

**Watch now** to discover the hidden world of pitcherplants and the inspiring efforts to protect and restore their disappearing habitats.

*Devouring Beauties* is a film by **Magic Kumquat Productions**, directed by Laura Albritton with videography by Zickie Allgrove. Produced by Shan Cammack, Carol Denhof, Lisa Kruse, Reese Thompson, and Reese Thompson II. Made with support from The Environmental Resources Network (TERN) and assistance from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Division, Georgia Native Plant Society – Coastal Plain Chapter, and The Longleaf Alliance.



*By Jessica Jordan, The Longleaf Alliance*

# CARVERS CREEK STATE PARK

Located in the Sandhills region of North Carolina, not far from Fayetteville, Carvers Creek State Park is a gem to explore with multiple access points and easy hiking trails. Spend the morning walking, birdwatching, or sign up for one of the educational programs. Keep your eyes peeled for unique flora, such as Sandhills pyxie moss or one of three species of pitcherplants! The Park is also home to Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Pine Barrens treefrogs, Hessel's hairstreak and frosted elfin butterflies.

Although Carvers Creek is relatively new to the North Carolina State Parks system, staff from the Park and the Natural Resources Program have put in substantial work to restore and maintain habitat associated with the sandhills longleaf pine ecosystem. From the conversion of pasture grasses to native warm-season grasses and flowers, the reintroduction of regular prescribed fire in areas where it had been suppressed, and targeted treatment of invasive species, the benefits of their ongoing efforts are apparent, as flora that were once more difficult to find are now more abundant.

Carvers Creek State Park has two sections open to visitors – Long Valley Farms and the Sandhills Access, each with unique historic and ecological features. Both access points offer ample recreational opportunities for families with younger children.

## Long Valley Farm

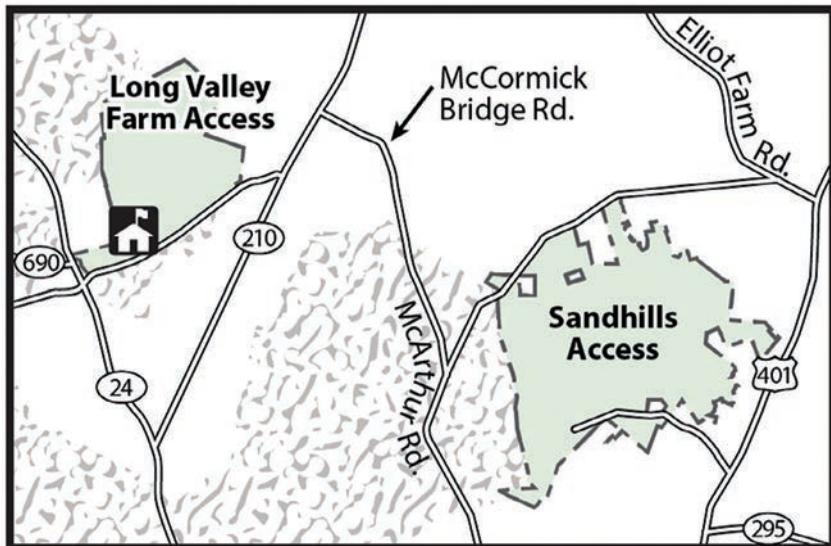
2505 Long Valley Road, Spring Lake, NC

Carvers Creek State Park's main access is Long Valley Farm, a 1,420-acre historic farm with past land uses that include a turpentine plantation, lumber mill, hunting retreat, and agriculture. The property was named by Robert Wall Christian, who pioneered scientific farming methods here in the early 20th century.

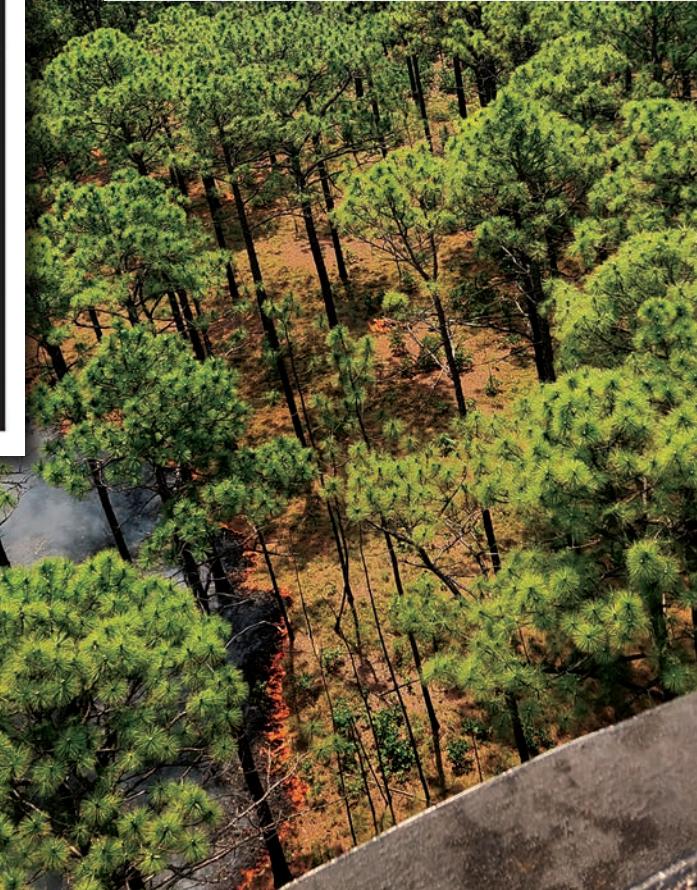
In 1937, James Stillman Rockefeller, a member of the prominent Rockefeller family, purchased the land from his cousins and built a home that would be used as a family retreat. Following his death, Long Valley Farm was left to The Nature Conservancy and later gifted to the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation in 2010. The Rockefeller House and many of the historic buildings and farm structures are still in place today and can be seen from the hiking trails. The Overhills Foundation, created and funded by the Rockefeller family, granted funds for education and historic preservation within the Park.

In addition to the historic buildings at Long Valley Farm, visitors can enjoy easy hiking trails that meander by cypress trees along the historic millpond and open pine forest.

▼ Carvers Creek State Park includes two distinct sections  
– Long Valley Farm and the Sandhills Access.



Approximately 1,400-1,600 acres burn each year at Carvers Creek State Park. [Aerial view of a prescribed fire, Colleen Bowers]



© Joe Rone

▲ Pavilion overlooking Long Valley Farm's millpond, constructed around 1850 to process timber. The dam sustained damage from multiple rain events, including Hurricane Matthew in 2016, but was reconstructed and reopened to the public in 2020. In addition to fishing and picnicking, visitors can register for one of the Park's scheduled canoe "hikes." [Joe Rone]

► The Rockefeller House, built in 1938 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is undergoing renovations in stages with plans for it to serve as a multiuse educational and community center with interpretive exhibits. [Joe Rone]



## Sandhill Access

995 McCloskey Road, Fayetteville, NC

The first major acquisition for Carvers Creek State Park, 1,371 acres of longleaf pine forest located north of Fayetteville, would eventually become part of the Sandhills Access. The eponymous Carvers Creek and its small tributaries meander through this section of the Park. Much of the land in the Sandhills section is ecologically significant, serving as important

habitat for several rare and endangered plants and animals. Additional acres, including critical buffer areas adjacent to Fort Bragg, have been added to the property over time.

All trails from the Sandhills Access are open to hikers, bicyclists, and horseback riders. The wiregrass loop is an easy (and sandy) 1.4-mile loop, while visitors looking for a longer trek can venture down the Longleaf Pine Trail. Just be sure to pack plenty of sunscreen and water. Keep your eyes peeled for fox squirrels!

# News from the Board of Directors

The Longleaf Alliance is pleased to announce **Ruth Cook** has assumed the role of Secretary/Treasurer for our Board of Directors. Ruth joined the board in 2022 and is a forester, private landowner, and Vice President of Sustainability for The Molpus Woodlands Group, living and working out of Mississippi. She succeeds **Rufus Duncan**, who served in this role since 2019. We extend a heartfelt thank you for his six years of leadership.

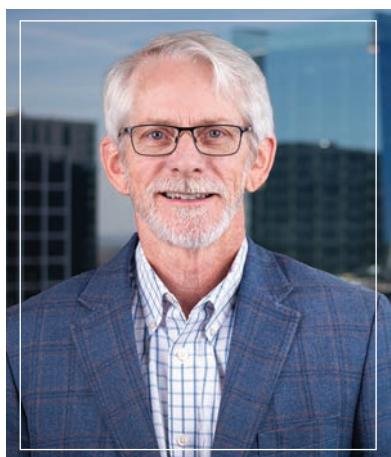
Our gratitude also goes to **Reese Thompson** for contributing to the board from 2017-2024, including his leadership as Chair from 2020-2022. Reese and family are devoting time and energy to Hurricane Helene recovery on their tree farm in South Georgia. Of course, this isn't goodbye – our ongoing collaborations with Reese, including prescribed fire outreach with Burner Bob® the Bobwhite Quail, will continue.

## The Alliance welcomes two board members — David Dyson and Scott Laseter began their terms on October 1st.



**David Dyson** is a Portfolio Manager and Branch Manager with Larson & McGowin, LLC in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. A native of Fairhope, Alabama, he holds a B.S. in Forestry and French Studies from The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, and an M.S. in Forestry from Auburn University, where his research investigated the application of selection silviculture in longleaf pine ecosystems. David worked for the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station in Brewton, Alabama from 2009 until joining Larson & McGowin in 2014. With L&M, David worked at the Mobile headquarters until opening the DeFuniak Springs branch office in 2017. His consulting experience includes direct planning and supervision of forest operations for clients including timber investment management organizations (TIMOs), bank trusts, direct investors, nonindustrial private forest landowners, and non-profits in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, with significant holdings in natural and planted pine forests as well as bottomland hardwoods. David also heads L&M's forest certification program and is responsible for maintaining forest certification and coordinating compliance efforts for American Tree Farm System, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and Forest Stewardship Council.

In his free time, David and his two sons are reestablishing a longleaf pine forest in Walton County, Florida, where they have devoted countless hours to controlling invasive species and are using prescribed fire to keep volunteer loblolly pines at bay.



**Scott Laseter** is a founding partner in the environmental law firm Kazmarek Mowrey Cloud Laseter LLP. Over the course of more than 30 years of practice, Scott has represented public and private companies, local and state government entities, nonprofits and individuals in a wide range of litigation, regulatory and transactional matters involving environmental laws.

Among other civic and charitable engagements, Scott has served as a chair of the board for the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL) and as chair of the board for the Georgia Justice Project (GJP), currently serves as secretary for the Georgia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation, and has served as a member of the board for the Georgia Brownfield Association and for AH Capital Campaign, Inc., a support organization for Atlanta Habitat for Humanity. He has also led the resource development functions for the Institute for IGEL and GJP and volunteered in the Atlanta Legal Aid Society's lawyer-to-lawyer campaign.

Scott has a still unexplained, but nonetheless lifelong, love affair with longleaf pine. For the last fifteen years, he has been engaged in the stewardship of montane longleaf situated along the eastern edge of the Pine Mountain terrain roughly sixty miles south of Atlanta, Georgia, and has harbored a special ambition to develop viable methods for precision direct seeding from local sources that are feasible for both small and larger scale conservation projects. He was recently granted a patent on a specially designed shelter that is undergoing trials at sites in multiple states across the longleaf range.

# New Faces with The Longleaf Alliance Team

The Longleaf Alliance's support for the western longleaf range grows as **Drew Arnold** joins as the Western Technical Assistance and Training Specialist, serving east Texas through Mississippi from Lucedale, MS. Drew brings experience as a wildlife biologist (Alabama Wildlife Federation and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks) and land realty professional, offering unique insight into land use and private landowner needs. He holds a bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Master of Science in Wildlife, Aquatic, and Wildlands Science and Management from Texas Tech University, where he studied Bobwhite Quail. In addition to his passion for upland game birds, bird dogs, and wing-shooting, Drew enjoys gardening, woodworking, and time with his wife Candace, daughters Dorothy and Eleanor, and their German Shorthaired Pointer, Pepper.



The Longleaf Alliance is also excited to introduce several new faces to the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) teams working out of Milton, Florida. Our GCPEP staff assist partners with prescribed fire, invasive species control, wetland restoration, rare species recovery, and other habitat improvement activities in Alabama and Florida.



The Ecosystem Support Team (EST) welcomes **Chloe Holst** to the crew. Chloe is a recent graduate from the University of Florida with a bachelor's in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. As a kid, she discovered her passion for wildlife and conservation through her father, who told her about the protected species, prescribed fires, and unique ecosystems on Eglin Air Force Base. Now, she is eager to further The Alliance's goals and help implement the management plans of GCPEP and its various partners as an EST Technician. In her free time, Chloe enjoys birdwatching, identifying local plants, and arts and crafts.

Following the departures of **Abe Huang** and **Angelica Sandulescu** this summer, **MaryBeth Stager** transitioned from the EST to the *Ambystoma bishopi* (AMBBIS) Restoration Team to assist with reticulated flatwoods salamander recovery and wetland habitat restoration.

New to the landscape and AMBBIS Restoration Team is **Cameron Meredith**. Cameron graduated from Virginia Tech in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Biology. He brings experience in herpetology, habitat restoration, and fire ecology, having worked as a research technician, silvicultural technician, wildland firefighter, and prescribed fire crew member in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia as well as the Coastal Plain and Sandhills of North Carolina. In his free time, Cameron enjoys hiking, camping, field herping, and visiting National Parks.



**Diana Rodas** joined the AMBBIS Restoration Team in August. Diana graduated from the University of Florida in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in Zoology. She worked as a technician on research projects studying freshwater turtles, the gopher tortoise, and invasive reptiles in Southwest Florida. Her favorite habitats are pine flatwoods and cypress swamps. Diana enjoys kayaking, field herping, and creative writing.



A familiar face has also returned. **Sean Seid** previously worked for The Longleaf Alliance, in 2022-23. After a stint in North Carolina learning more about sustainability in an ecovillage, Sean rejoined the AMBBIS Team as a biological restoration technician. Sean is a poet, artist, musician, yoga teacher, and massage therapist who found his way to environmentalism because of his deep concern for the natural world and his burning desire to allow Nature to be his guide and teacher.

By Lynnsey Basala, The Longleaf Alliance

# Fueling the Future – Member Support Drives Longleaf Growth and Resilience

As The Longleaf Alliance celebrates its 30th anniversary, it is important to reflect on the thousands of individuals and conservation partners who have supported our organization with steadfastness and allowed us to reach this important milestone. There are many worthy causes and needs within our communities and on a global scale, yet you have made the longleaf pine ecosystem a priority for generations to come. Whether you are new to the longleaf community or a "longtimer," The Alliance is grateful for your generosity and commitment.

Membership support is our lifeblood, keeping everything in motion. Without it, we would be unable to grow awareness, increase engagement, and foster a love for longleaf across its range; share information through education, outreach, and technical assistance; improve habitat via active stewardship by our teams; conserve existing diverse forests; and restore new longleaf acres. Members and conservation partners enable our highly skilled staff to develop and expand programs and services, network with like-minded individuals and groups, fund longleaf research, and offer a sense of belonging and solidarity for those with an affinity for the natural world.

Our high supporter retention shows just how serious you are about this iconic forest. **We are in this together, and we thank you.**

## Celebrating 30 Years of TLA Membership

Austin Arabie, Louisiana  
 Bankhead Land & Timber, Alabama  
 Bicknell Family Charitable Fund, Georgia  
 Clifton & Bonnie Bailey, Florida  
 Eugene Brooks, Alabama  
 Robert Carter, South Carolina  
 Lawrence Earley, North Carolina  
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 David Lee, Alabama  
 Stephen Lindeman, Virginia  
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# Thirty Years Beneath the Pines

## A Poem for The Longleaf Alliance

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In forests once so vast and wide,  
Where longleaf stood in stately pride,  
Time wore thin the piney veil,  
As axes rang, and fires fell.  
From Texas east to Virginia's shore,  
Longleaf was lost and found no more.  
Then came that spark in ninety-five,  
When Dean and Rhett kept hope alive.  
With partners near and voices strong,  
They built an "Alliance" to belong.  
The first conference, the first plan,  
A growing network hand in hand.  
Staff and supporters joined the way,  
And science lit the path each day.  
To raise the forest, not just the tree —

To shape a lasting legacy.  
No salesmen's pitch, no rushing tide,  
Just honest truth shared far and wide.  
They helped each landowner to succeed,  
No matter size, no matter need.  
They showed the world what roots could do —  
Restore the old and grow the new.  
From young grass stage to timber tall,  
From gopher burrows to warbler's call,  
They stitched the forest back with care,  
And found community everywhere.  
Now thirty years have come and gone,  
And still the longleaf sings its song.  
Today The Alliance is a guiding light,  
For our Southern woods and a future bright.

