



Strategies and Cross-cutting Approaches

The Conservation Plan promotes six over-arching strategies (with detailed objectives and key actions) critical to achieving the goal of maintaining, improving and restoring longleaf forests range-wide:

- ▷ Public Lands
- ▷ Private Lands
- ▷ Economic and Market-Based Financial

- ▷ Fire Management
- ▷ Understory and Overstory Regeneration
- ▷ Climate Change.

In addition, the Plan relies on three cross-cutting approaches: identifying the Significant Geographic Areas that should receive focused and targeted attention; enhancing Communication, Education and Outreach; and Evaluating Conservation Outcomes.



Conservation Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Plan is intended to be accomplished through voluntary collaborative efforts of organizations represented within *America's Longleaf* and many others associated with longleaf across the range. Earlier conservation activities are acknowledged and built upon. Going forward, participants in *America's Longleaf* and others will work regionally and nationally to advocate on behalf of longleaf conservation, and also will

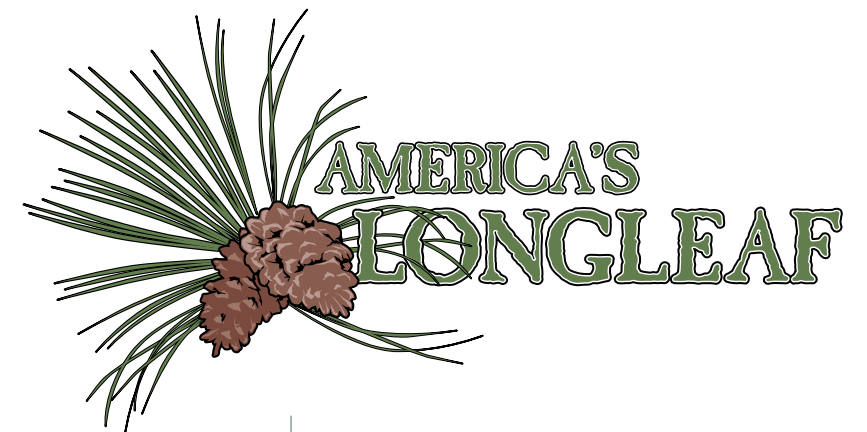
support and encourage locally-led teams whose on-the-ground efforts which will ultimately be the key to success.

The *America's Longleaf* Initiative serves as an umbrella for the collaborative efforts by many stakeholders to ensure the Conservation Plan's implementation. The Initiative is also a vehicle for raising the profile of longleaf as a conservation concern, regionally and nationally, and for generating broad public support.

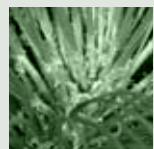
The Regional Working Group is composed of individuals from the following organizations:

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|---|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| American Forest Foundation | Jones Ecological Research Center | SERPPAS | USDA Forest Service |
| Cooperative Extension Service Southern Region | Longleaf Alliance | Southern Environmental Law Center | USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| Department of Defense | National Wild Turkey Federation | Southern Group of State Foresters | U.S. Geological Survey |
| East Gulf Coastal Plain Joint Venture | National Wildlife Federation | The Conservation Fund | Wildlife Mississippi |
| Environmental Defense Fund | NatureServe | The Nature Conservancy | |
| Environmental Protection Agency | Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | |

For more information, please visit www.americaslongleaf.org.



A Restoration Initiative
for the Southern
Longleaf Pine Forest



America's Longleaf

The open, fragrant longleaf “piney woods” are as much a part of Southern culture and history as cornbread. Yet, these iconic forests are truly “*America's Longleaf*,” literally building our fledgling nation and sustaining its growth with an abundant supply of prized timber and naval stores. Though reduced from a once vast extent due to clearing for agriculture and development or conversion to plantations of other pines, longleaf forests still offer extraordinary benefits. More resistant to hurricanes and some pests than other pines, these forests provide highly valuable timber and habitat for bobwhite quail and wild turkey along with impressive biodiversity.

Longleaf forests once covered over 90 million acres from Virginia to Texas. Today, less than 3% remain. Efforts to restore longleaf forests have gained steam and significant progress has been made, but it has not been enough. Amid growing concern from a diversity of conservationists, the need for a range-wide restoration initiative has become imperative.

An Ecological Treasure Chest

The fire-dependent longleaf pine ecosystem is one of the most ecologically diverse in the world and is home to some of the most rare and unique plants and animals on the continent:

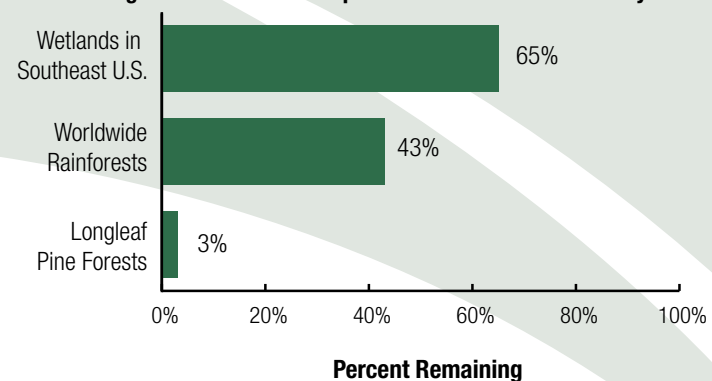
- ▷ Nearly 900 plant species are found in longleaf forests, and nowhere else in the world
- ▷ In some portions of healthy longleaf forests, 140 different kinds of plants can be found in an area smaller than an Olympic swimming pool and 40 different species in a single square yard
- ▷ 29 federally-listed threatened or endangered species are part of the longleaf ecosystem, including the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, gopher tortoise and roughleaf loosestrife.

“Fire in longleaf pine forests is like rain in a rainforest”

—Larry Earley,

Looking for Longleaf: The Rise and Fall of an American Forest

Loss of Longleaf Pine Forests compared to other threatened ecosystems.



Longleaf requires active management including periodic prescribed burning.



The Imperative

The forestry, wildlife and biodiversity conservation communities from the grassroots levels to those in the most senior positions have come to recognize that in spite of improving restoration techniques and significant restoration efforts, it hasn't been enough. More strategic restoration and collaborative efforts are needed—and needed soon—while the window of opportunity is still open.

In 2005, a group of longleaf conservationists articulated the need for a focused, range-wide restoration approach which they named *America's Longleaf—A Restoration Initiative for the Southern Longleaf Pine Forest*. A Regional Working Group of diverse organizations was formed in October 2007 to develop the *America's Longleaf Initiative*. The vision of *America's Longleaf* is sustaining functional, viable longleaf pine ecosystems with the full spectrum of ecological, economic and social values inspired through a voluntary partnership of concerned, motivated organizations and individuals.

Range-wide Conservation Plan

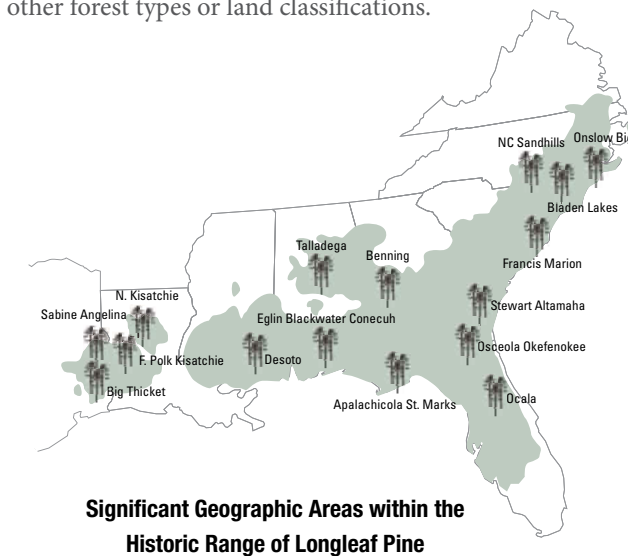
The Steering Committee for *America's Longleaf* developed a Conservation Plan to serve as a range-wide framework and catalyst for action. The Plan's foundation was built through a Charrette workshop of over 80 professionals in March of 2008. Fundamentally, the Conservation Plan calls for strategic coordination of science-based conservation actions among many partners and stakeholders, with the goal of ensuring long-term sustainability and resiliency of the diverse longleaf systems.

Goals

The Conservation Plan boldly calls for an increase in longleaf over 15-years from 3.4 to 8.0 million acres, with more than half of this acreage targeted in the Significant Geographic Areas (shown below on first iteration map) in ways that support a majority of ecological and species needs.

Within this overall goal, the Conservation Plan anticipates:

- ▷ **Maintaining** existing longleaf ecosystems in good condition
- ▷ **Improving** acres classified as “longleaf forest types” and with longleaf trees present, but missing significant components of understory communities and fire regimes and
- ▷ **Restoring** longleaf pine forests to suitable sites currently in other forest types or land classifications.



As a working forest, longleaf offers compatible opportunities for timber production, game management, and biodiversity conservation.

