

LIT Summit & TNC Longleaf All Hands Meeting

Meeting Notes

August 27-29, 2019

Saint Simons Island, GA

Facilitated by Ryan Bollinger and Colette DeGarady

Find all Presentations [HERE](#)

Meeting Purpose

To bring Longleaf Local Implementation Team leads and partners together across the range to discuss progress and solutions for longleaf protection, management, and restoration.

Intended Outcomes

- A better awareness of current project work occurring across the range.
- Increased understanding of priority strategies in America's Longleaf plan and discussion around further implementation by LITs.
- Enhancing communication and support across partners to tackle current challenges for longleaf restoration and management.
- Fellowship

Summary of Action Items:

- Create restoration signs "Pardon our Dust" explaining restoration steps of cutting and replanting.
- USFS Shared Stewardship: Kyle Jones to share strategy documents with Ryan B to be placed on LLA's SharePoint for LITs.
- Contact Jon Scott when considering proposals for the 2020 LSF RFP.
- Charge- If you've been previously been rebuffed by TIMO contractors, talk to Andrew Schock. Opportunity to open doors by talking with the right landowners.
- How can state coordination teams be recharged across the range and used to better link state, federal, and private longleaf work?
- Breakout Session Groundcover Working Group - Restoration Subgroup action items/objectives: Database of resources, StoryMap of Projects, List of range-wide reference sites with relevant plant species, Best practices for seed sharing/commercial sources of seed, Groundcover restoration handbook, Restoration resources inventory, Restoration Decision Matrix – when to take drastic measures
- Breakout Session Groundcover Working Group - Metrics Subgroup Initial action items/objectives: Gather veg monitoring protocols from across range, Skill building workshops
- RCW Breakout Session - Questions for follow-up (Colette/Lisa) - Are states still eligible for Sec 6 funds if RCW is down-listed to threatened? When does 4d rule take effect in relation to protection litigation? Is an injunction needed?

Tuesday, August 27

Collaboration and Inspire

Objectives: Inspire participants with great work already existing and the power of partnerships and how we can better share the stories of that good work.

- Strong partnership and Innovative projects (Ivan Green)
- Telling the Story (Debbie Crane)

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- Ivan Green with USFS Osceola National Forest kicked off the meeting presentations highlighting the value of partnerships in advancing longleaf restoration on the Osceola and the O2LIT landscape. He focused on innovative projects kicked off like Job Corps/STEP that have brought new and under-served communities into the field of conservation. The successes of these programs and CFLRP could not have been possible without sitting down with partners and finding new ways to collaborate.
- Debbie Crane, the Communications Director for NC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, presented on the importance of telling our longleaf story that resonates with our audience. The focus of the presentation was the general public and why story telling is important to our work. Highlights include having an authentic story teller, focusing on a single story, convey emotions and including a clear call to action. The language of conservation is key to reaching our audience. Certain words and phrases need to be avoided and others used. Debbie presented helpful lists of do's and don'ts and shared examples.

Communicating Across Scales

Objectives: Highlight the ways ALRI is reaching different audiences to showcase our shared successes and discuss the role of LIT Coordinators for supporting partners and sharing news and opportunities from LPC and ALRI.

- America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative communications (Tiffany Woods / Stephanie Hertz)
- Local Implementation Team communications – from regional to local (Ivor Kincaide)

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- Opportunities for LITs to share and improve communication: build cross LIT relationships and support (challenge of time and travel constraints), sharing and messaging across other partnerships in alignment with LIT goals, finding common projects to work collaboratively on (ex. Cogongrass), improved web connections (LIT pages / resources on LLA and ALRI websites / discussion boards)
- Longleaf Resilient resources are being created including: Fire (Alison McGee and Jen Faucet), Insects (Lisa Lord), and Wind (Lisa Lord). Need to incorporate current research and storm trends.
- Sharing success stories and what we've learned through trial and error is important.
- Choosing LIT board members wisely can have leverage strengths for greater impact

Suggested Action Items:

- Create restoration signs "Pardon our Dust" explaining restoration steps of cutting and replanting.

Shared Initiatives and Partner updates

Objectives: Learn about regional restoration initiatives and discuss the role of LITs in collaborating and leveraging opportunities to accelerate restoration.

- USFS Shared Stewardship (Kyle Jones)
- Keeping Forests as Forests (Colette DeGarady)
- Longleaf Quest (Captain Planet Video)
- NRCS and Longleaf (Matt Vandersande)

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- USFS Share Stewardship- Kyle Jones highlighted the importance and value the USFS's shared stewardship agenda brings to longleaf initiative. Kyle challenged LITs to engage with the forests and take shared ownership of the initiative. Reaching out and connecting with forests can work together to identify projects to work on for mutual gain. The goal is to have all southern states signed on to Shared Stewardship Agreements.

- Keeping Forests as Forests - Goal: Protect and sustain 245 million acres in the SE. Scott Davis, Project Coordinator. Focus of strategies is related to improving messaging and markets to maintain forests on private lands.
- Longleaf Quest- Project to engage youth to do a service project specifically around LLP. The LPC has gotten involved to help shape projects and information. Video information in presentation folder. Update to be given at the LPC meeting.
- Matthew Vandersande is the new LLPI Coordinator and learning on the job. He introduced himself to the group and shared a presentation highlighting the status of NRCS programs. He offered to meet with longleaf partners in the field to learn and network this Fall. Discussion around data sharing and reaching landowners with NRCS contracts. Charles Babb – sharing data has not been a problem in Chesterfield County. Other landscapes have challenges.

Action Items:

- USFS Shared Stewardship: Kyle Jones to share strategy documents with Ryan B to be placed on LLA's SharePoint for LITs.

Sustaining the Work

Objectives: Understand current status of the Longleaf Stewardship Fund. How can we match donor interest with work needed on the ground? Discuss funding challenges and opportunities to leverage NFWF dollars and expand our work.

- National Fish and Wildlife Fund update (Jon Scott)
- Facilitated discussion/open forum around funding ideas and challenges

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- Jon Scott – 2019 cycle was most competitive to date. Competition is increasing while funding levels and sources are dynamic. Next cycle, Jon is looking to connect early with each LIT to discuss how each landscape could be most competitive. Call him with proposal ideas. Each dollar is not created equal and certain landscapes have different funding sources and priorities. Once the 2020 RFP is out, a webinar will be setup and Jon encouraged direct feedback to adjust the 2020 proposal as appropriate. Question – LIT pot vs. Non-LIT pot? Jon was not sure there would be buy-in from funding partners for such a proposal. Dilution potential, Is there too big a disparity between request \$ and ability to fund. A big driver for funding decisions was balance of active grants. Spend rate of staffing has been consistent, but some deliverables get behind for various reasons. It's hard to fundraise when money isn't spent as fast. Question – Funding for capacity creative solutions? What can we do to capitalize on opportunities after natural disasters? NFWF RFP – Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund - \$48M – could be connected to longleaf in appropriate landscapes. Need shovel ready projects.
- Open Forum Funding Ideas and Challenges – What is most promising projects that hit desk? Having a diverse proposal is key. Example – NRCS always needs private landowner cost share support focus, FS – likes to see accomplishment report acres. Suggestion, alternating years within LITs. Dynamic funding sources priorities change. AFF – different outreach priorities. Southern Company –preventing listing of species. Cost Share funding challenges getting landowners? Flexibility is important and it is hard to predict landowner needs 2 years out. Forest Landowners Association (FLA), how can LITs partner with FLA and AFF regarding cost-share work? Shouldn't be separate. Funding Groundcover work? Hard to find at scale without connecting to longleaf.
- Consider reducing proposal amounts for capacity requests when other NFWF grants are outstanding/extended.

Action Items:

- Contact Jon Scott when considering proposals for the 2020 LSF RFP.

Private Lands

Objectives: Provide current information about economics and longleaf while also factoring in storm events and resilience. How can LITs think creatively about engaging private landowners and utilize existing programs and tools?

- Economics of Longleaf (Kevin McIntyre)
- Using RCPP to influence industrial forest lands (Andrew Schock)
- Using RCPP for private land protection (Ivor Kincaide)
- Facilitated discussion/open forum for private land strategies

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- Kevin McIntyre - Time value of money (all other things being equal) matters! Early expenses and late returns mean longleaf is less competitive. The bottom line, longleaf isn't as competitive (besides raking). Social science says money isn't everything for most landowners. We need to play to longleaf's strengths.
- Lands that are 10,000+ acres have a different landowner preference than smaller lands
- 110 saw mills across the LLP range. Need to cultivate the quality LLP supply first before creating demand.
- Andrew Schock – Institutional acres – need to work in financial world. With help of Forest Service and possibly NRCs developing Growth and Yield model for longleaf so TIMOs can use models. G/Y model will show opportunity costs given different scenarios. Funding will go through research co-ops. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Coastal Headwaters Project is succeeding. We need institutional landowners to get to 8M acres. RCPP Program is made to work with large landowners but NGOs need to apply. HFRP Easements are held with NRCS. Need to match the funding. Coastal Headwaters takes \$23M. Need to check 2018 Farm Bill program regarding any new RCPP rules.
- Ivor Kincaide – Susan Carr and Mark Hudson with the North Florida Land Trust put the leg work in on the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor. Used ACUB buffering for match of HFRP program. RCPP projects force you to get out and spend time with partners. The program can help meet NRCS enrollment objectives. 2014 cycle was limited to existing programs within the Farm Bill. Program could be getting simpler/better under 2018 Farm Bill. Might have a new program to work through (learning more in the next few months). Focusing on Easements to connect and create a corridor. Easement monitoring will be done by NRCS.
- Discussion - Leaning into economics, wear like a mantle opportunity costs. Realistically G&Y project will be on ground next summer. Establishing different plots, different ages measuring 5 years, 10 years. You can get preliminary results in just a few years. Hope is a G&Y model will be more favorable. Improved seedlings / planting reducing competition techniques. ~2.5 years potential results. Demonstrating public cost savings and enhanced ecosystem services could pump up support and funding for longleaf. Resilience of longleaf – how are landowners taking natural disasters and diversifying portfolio? Geographic distribution better diversification than species. Is fire treated as an advantageous tool compared with mechanical treatments? Landowner sentiments are changing for the better. Its an issue of communication. TIMOs insulated from liability? ... Market for seed source...
- Demonstrate cost savings base on resiliency of LLP (to the public when considering public lands),
- Younger generation landowners are a new dynamic.

Action Items:

- Charge- If you've been previously been rebuffed by TIMO contractors, talk to Andrew Schock. Opportunity to open doors by talking with the right landowners.
- How can state coordination teams be recharged across the range and used to better link state, federal, and private longleaf work?

Wednesday, August 28

Putting Longleaf on the Map

Objectives: Discuss the latest range-wide longleaf mapping datasets and initiatives that can inform and support LIT prioritization and conservation planning efforts.

- Priority Mapping Outcomes and Next Steps (Lucas Furman)
- SERPPAS “Good Map” and shared interests with other regional initiatives (Addie Thornton)
- SE Fire Map (Lucas Furman)
- TNC LLPWS Resilient Prioritization map (Jeff Marcus)
- LEO project update (Karen Brown/Carolyn Kindell)

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- View presentations for best information.
- Much progress has been made over the last few years by LITs developing priority maps. A range-wide restoration Road Map continues to be maintained and updated by Lucas Furman. Prioritization and conservation planning are an iterative process, and new datasets are coming online that will improve our knowledge of the landscape.
- SERPPAS “Good Map” effort has been underway since last Fall to pull together best available data to set and communicate priorities of SERPPAS partnership. Organizing using an interactive online Storymap and including longleaf datasets (<https://repimap.org/>)
- NRCS has secured funding to support development of a Southeastern Fire Map that can track and display wildland fire across the southeast. This is a very exciting project in the early stages of development. A Technical oversight Team has been formed to guide decisions in how the work is completed. Timeline of deliverables still TBD.
- TNC is using resilient data as a first lens for all future work. The Resilient and Connected Networks dataset has recently been updated for longleaf. A new Asset Map has been developed to highlight the places most in need of conservation, restoration and management. An action map will be developed to guide TNC’s work into the future.
- The Southeast Longleaf Ecosystem Occurrence Database project is in full swing. Field surveys are being conducted in Mississippi and work planned for 2019 in AL portion of GCPEP, the Chattahoochee Fall Line and SoLo ACE. We are already seeing exciting results. The LEO project resulted in an increase of 17% of known longleaf pine forests in MS based on preliminary survey results. Stay tuned! LEO project staff will be reaching out to you as the project moves forward.

Breakout sessions

Rx Fire Challenges (Zach Prusak)

Objectives: Discuss current challenges and obstacles to increasing Rx fire at scale. Share success stories and lessons learned between programs.

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- Replacing equipment (often grants do not pay)
 - Look at <https://www.govdeals.com/> (surplus Government equipment)
 - Iron Planet (<https://www.ironplanet.com/>)
 - Make sure that all our agencies support the regular replacement of equipment, due to the safety concerns of using older and hobbled equipment
 - Can NFWF funds be used specifically for equipment used on other grants that only support staffing?

- USFS surplus?
- Federal Excess Property Program
- Resource sharing (example would be PBA's)
- Rent from state agencies?
- REPI funding specific to DOD projects/landscapes
- Increasing Rx Fire on Private Lands
- We need a mentoring program, perhaps something structured within PBA's?
 - "Learn and Burn" workshops
 - PBA's and other cooperative models
 - Enlisting college students that have fire training as volunteers on private lands
 - Additional certification courses geared towards specific private landowners
 - Georgia Interagency Burn Team
 - Ecosystem Restoration Teams/Fire Team concept that TNC utilizes in many Chapters; funding these teams across regions increases the amount of fire conducted on any given good burn day. Grants/foundations/Donors are needed.
 - Increase contractors
 - Hunt clubs burning their own sites/landscapes
 - State Forestry Agency fire teams
- Funding for fire at the Governor/Cabinet level
 - Dedicated \$\$ for fire on private lands
 - Depending upon the state, supporting pots of money dedicated to Rx fire that the State Forestry agency would work. Have to protect it from being re-allocated by Gov/Cabinet.

Groundcover Working Group (Carol Denhof/Alison McGee)

Objectives: Discuss progress of newly formed LPC Groundcover Working Group, identify strategies and action items for the group to address, and organize subgroups to implement strategies.

Key Messages/Takeaways:

LPC Groundcover Working Group membership: Alison McGee – TNC, Carol Denhof – The Longleaf Alliance, John Seymour – Roundstone Native Seed, Joyce Klaus – J.M. Klaus Conservation Services, Joan Walker – USFS, Latimore Smith – Southern Wild, Vic Vankus – USFS, Wendy Jo Ledbetter – TNC

- Subgroups (Restoration, Metrics, Policy) - WG filling in membership of subgroups, especially leadership and members for Policy subgroup.
- Building LIT Points of Contact within each landscape to pass along information, progress, and news, and connect with local resources as opportunities arise.

Action Items:

- Groundcover Working Group - Restoration Subgroup action items/objectives: Database of resources, StoryMap of Projects, List of range-wide reference sites with relevant plant species, Best practices for seed sharing/commercial sources of seed, Groundcover restoration handbook, Restoration resources inventory, Restoration Decision Matrix – when to take drastic measures
- Groundcover Working Group - Metrics Subgroup Initial action items/objectives: Gather veg monitoring protocols from across range, Skill building workshops

Future of the RCW and how that affects management of LLP (Lisa Lord/Susan Miller)

Objectives: Update everyone on current FWS process for ESA/RCW review. Discuss challenges and opportunities presented by a potential change in status.

Key Messages/Takeaways:

- Opportunities regarding RCW change in status:
 - Try to be proactive to preclude listing (or relisting) through funding sources.
 - Communicate about the entire ecosystem health to support multiple at-risk species.
 - Reclaiming America's Wildlife Act- not finished but could support

Challenges regarding RCW change in status:

- Funding for RCW management
- Cumulative impact on other species in longleaf ecosystem if RCW management reduces
- Continued monitoring of private lands with no legal recourse.
- How do you ensure continued management in letters of commitment?

Action Items:

- Questions for follow-up (Colette/Lisa)
 - Are states still eligible for Sec 6 funds if RCW is down-listed to threatened?
 - When does 4d rule take effect in relation to protection litigation? Is an injunction needed?

Meeting Reflections (Feedback from Participants)

What did you like about the meeting?

- Field Trip was great
- Breakouts
- Active Participation and positive vibe
- Good time for questions and discussion for all sessions
- Location and meeting space
- Diversity of participants

What would you change about the meeting?

- Breakouts – Not enough time on the agenda and would have liked to participate in more than one.
- Coffee and other caffeine - no sodas, issue with coffee maker outside meeting room
- Tech options