



America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative
2022 RANGE-WIDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



2022 was a big planning and implementation year for America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI). We set the stage for renewing and signing the Federal Coordinating Committee Memorandum of Understanding. A team was put together to begin updating the Range-wide Conservation Plan for the next 15 years, and the idea of another celebration event began to take shape. We also revamped ALRI Working Groups to tackle the highest priorities and returned to in-person Longleaf Partnership Council (LPC) Meetings. Time spent with colleagues in Pensacola, Florida, and Wilmington, North Carolina, was invaluable to fellowship and enhancing our collaborative work. I was honored to Chair the LPC during this time and work with many dedicated partners to help shape these actions.

This report highlights ALRI's achievements for fiscal year 2022 (October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022) compiled from the many accomplishments of the vast network of colleagues dedicated to this effort. Annual accomplishment reporting is a vital tool for assessing the scale of on-the-ground work and measuring progress toward meeting the goals and priorities identified by the Conservation Plan and LPC. It is a reflection on the collective efforts made by public and private partners to

restore this iconic forest and highlights the benefits of longleaf to Southeastern communities.

The sections in this report include detailed acreage results of longleaf restoration on private and public lands and specific stories showcasing examples of the many individuals, agencies, and projects that collectively contribute to the success of ALRI. From invasive species management to climate considerations, there are many moving parts contributing to the goals of the Conservation Plan. If you are part of ALRI, this report celebrates your accomplishments.

Restoring longleaf pine forests is more important than ever to help mitigate the global climate and biodiversity crisis in our corner of the world. Our collective work can help improve habitat for vast numbers of rare and endemic species while also building more resilient corridors for wildlife. In addition, the management practices of these forests improve community safety from wildfires and can boost rural economies. Thank you to everyone who is a longleaf champion and part of the ALRI network.

LET'S KEEP IT GOING!

LANDSCAPE SCALE CONSERVATION SINCE 2010

In fiscal year 2022, partners across the range recorded 2.2 million acres of longleaf management activities. Since 2010, more than 21.5 million acres* of longleaf management activities have been reported translating to positive outcomes for local economies, national defense, rare species, recreation, forest resiliency, wildfire risk, clean air and water, carbon sequestration, and climate change mitigation.



1,731,407 ACRES
OF LONGLEAF
ESTABLISHED



17,109,531 ACRES
OF PRESCRIBED
BURNS



363,215 ACRES
OF LAND
PROTECTED

**multiple treatments applied to some acres*

AMERICA'S LONGLEAF 2022 REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

RESTORATION IMPACTS

Prescribed fire continued a record setting upward trend in 2022 with 1.75 million acres burned, but longleaf tree planting estimates (123,304 acres) were the lowest since reporting began in 2013. The Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative reports a continued decline in longleaf production since 2019. Strategies are being developed by ALRI partners to reverse this trend and grow nursery capacity to advance future longleaf restoration.

PUBLIC LANDS INITIATIVES

The Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape joined the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape, Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape, and Georgia Sentinel Landscape as the Southeast's newest Sentinel Landscape. Longleaf conservation and restoration in this newly designated landscape will help buffer military facilities from incompatible uses and potential conflicts while also providing wildlife habitat.

PRIVATE LANDS INITIATIVES

With the vast majority of the South's forestland in private ownership, private forests provide many of the ecosystem services we rely on including carbon sequestration and water resources. Sustaining new and existing longleaf forests through public-private cross-boundary collaboration is vital to the past and future successes of ALRI.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

ALRI's 18 local implementation teams remain a driving force for on-the-ground restoration and accomplishments. ALRI's first local partnership, the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership, recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, a testament to the long-term commitment of its sixteen partners with a collective ownership of 1.3 million acres.

PUBLIC & PRIVATE LANDS CROSS BOUNDARY CONNECTIONS

By Matthew Vandersande, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Kyle Jones, USDA Forest Service

More than 20 million acres of longleaf management activities have been reported since 2010. Positive outcomes associated with local economies, national defense, rare species, recreation, forest resiliency, wildfire risk, clean air and water, carbon sequestration, and climate change mitigation are being realized due to work occurring at a landscape level. Cross-boundary and interagency collaboration between private landowners, public land managers, and natural resource professionals have been the key driver for this success. The bedrock of this initiative is a Shared Stewardship philosophy of doing the right work in the right places at the right scale. This can only be accomplished and sustained through a heightened commitment to work across boundaries with an emphasis on landscape-scale priority setting.



RARE PLANT DISCOVERY LOCAL FOUNDATION NAMED FLYTRAP CHAMPIONS

By Debbie Crane,
The Nature Conservancy



In 2020, Sudie Thomas, a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wildlife Biologist in South Carolina, found pixie moss at the McDowell Preserve in northern Horry County. She sent her finding to Natural Heritage Botanist Keith Bradley. Coincidentally, Bradley had been in a webinar where someone had shown a 1988 record of Venus flytraps in northern Horry County. “Keith said the aerial map and location of where I found the pixie moss looked just like the place where the flytrap occurrence had been recorded,” Thomas explains.

Thomas credits the protection and management efforts of the Horry County Conservation Foundation (HCCF), which owns the property, for the flytrap and other rare plant findings on the property that lies not far from the busy Grand Strand of Myrtle Beach. HCCF recognized the unique and highly biodiverse Carolina bays and longleaf savannas and accepted the land donation, placing it under a Wetlands Reserve Program easement in the early 2000s.

The tract is being restored with technical assistance from NRCS, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). With the finding of a federal At-Risk Species on site, additional federal funds can come into play through the USFWS Partners Program, The Longleaf Alliance, and the American Forest Foundation.

In late spring 2021, Thomas and Bradley came looking for flytraps. They found them – lots of them in bloom, their green stalks topped with tiny white flowers rising from the sandy floor – confirming a third known protected population of flytraps in South Carolina.

In 2022, HCCF received a Venus Flytrap Champion award. “This is thrilling for those of us who love this plant,” said Julie Moore, who leads the Flytrap Champion program that recognizes groups and individuals who manage flytrap habitat, which only occurs in an area roughly 60 miles around Wilmington, North Carolina.

“This is a great example of protecting habitat that results in a wonderful outcome for rare species.”



Photos by
Debbie Crane



PRIVATE LANDOWNERS SHOWCASE BIODIVERSITY

By Sara Anrrich, American Forest Foundation

The Payne Family Farm, just west of the DeSoto National Forest in Mississippi, features a longleaf pine forest that includes ponds, a year-round stream, and riparian areas woven through the property. The mix of habitats allows for a diversity of flora and fauna to flourish.

In May 2022, the farm hosted a bio-blitz and field day which reported a combined 306 plant, bird, fish, amphibian, reptile, and mammal species. Bio-blitz participants included the University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, and USFWS. More than 100 people attended the field day to learn about

longleaf pine management, along with the importance of habitat and species diversity.

Controlling invasive species is an important management concern, and through a partnership with USFWS and the American Forest Foundation, nearly 500 acres were treated to control unwanted vegetation and further enhance the open pine habitat.



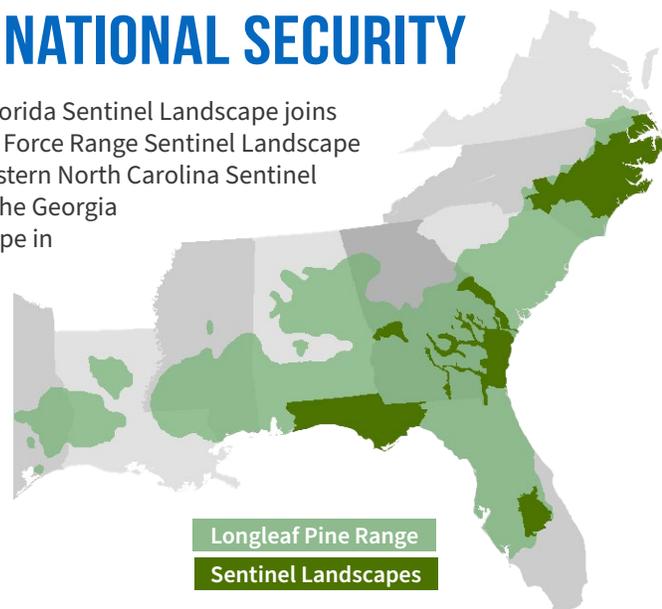
Photo by Randy Browning

ACTIVE LAND MANAGEMENT SUPPORTS NATIONAL SECURITY

The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership program unites seemingly unlikely bedfellows from the Department of Defense, landowners, non-governmental organizations, and a host of state and federal agencies to strengthen military readiness, conserve natural resources, protect critical habitat, and enhance America's working lands.

Northwest Florida, home to six of the nation's most important Air Force and Naval Air installations and ranges, has already racked up considerable success since its designation in March 2022. Landscape partners have provided over \$18 million to protect nearly 8,500 acres and developed forest management plans for private landowners to conserve wildlife habitat, retain working forest and agricultural lands, and protect the missions of military installations on over 24,000 acres.

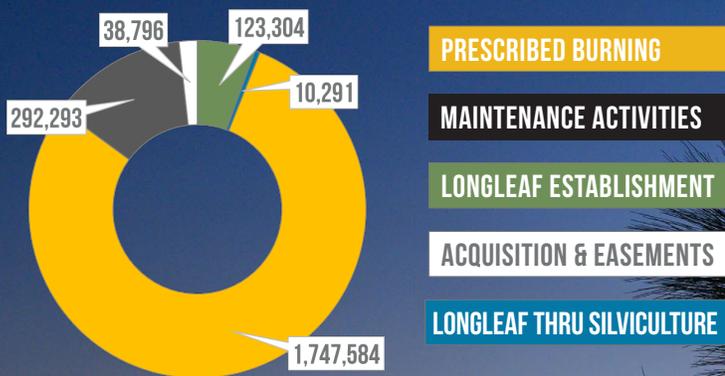
The Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape joins the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape in Florida, the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape, and the Georgia Sentinel Landscape in improving longleaf pine habitat and ensuring national security.



Longleaf Pine Range
Sentinel Landscapes

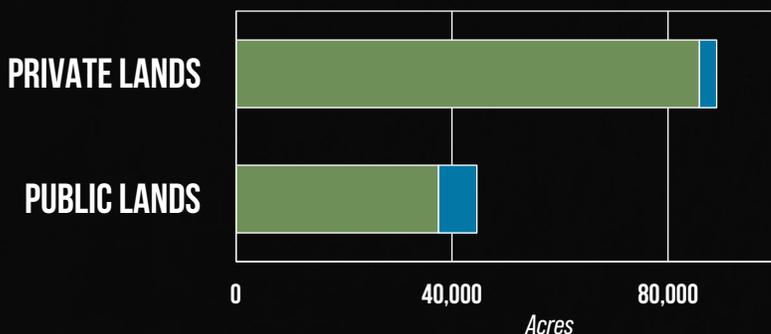
2022 LONGLEAF A

TOTAL ACCOMPLISHMENT ACRES



INCREASING LONGLEAF ACRES

Longleaf tree planting estimates for 2022 were the lowest since annual reporting began in 2013. The Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative reports a continued decline in longleaf seedling production since 2019. Strategies are being developed by ALRI partners to reverse this trend and grow nursery capacity to advance future longleaf restoration.



LONGLEAF ESTABLISHMENT

LONGLEAF THRU SILVICULTURE

ALRI measures longleaf pine acres gained through plantings and silvicultural practices. Silviculture activities can shift an existing forest with a minor component of longleaf to longleaf dominant through thinning, prescribed fire, or other treatments.

~Million Seedlings Planted in

The National Forests in Mississippi are actively restoring and managing longleaf pine ecosystems in the DeSoto, Chickasawhay, Homochitto, and Bienville Districts. Through successful public/private partnerships, the National Forests of Mississippi staff completed projects ranging from longleaf planting, Red-cockaded Woodpecker recovery, and groundcover seed sourcing.

In the 2022 planting season, 957,300 longleaf pine seedlings were planted on a total of 1,541 acres.



National Forests of Mississippi staff were recognized at the Biennial Longleaf Conference for their outstanding work.

CCOMPLISHMENTS

123,304 ACRES OF LONGLEAF ESTABLISHED

1,747,584 ACRES OF PRESCRIBED BURNS

38,796 ACRES OF LAND PROTECTED

Record Year for Prescribed Fire

For the second year in a row, partners set a prescribed fire record in longleaf ecosystems. More than 1.7 million acres were burned in 2022 – 54,000 more acres compared to the previous year.



Photo by Andrew Kornylak

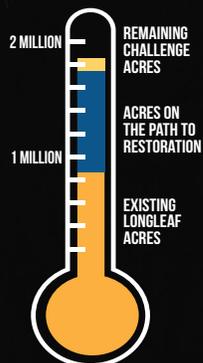


Mississippi National Forests



Photo by Jacob Barrett

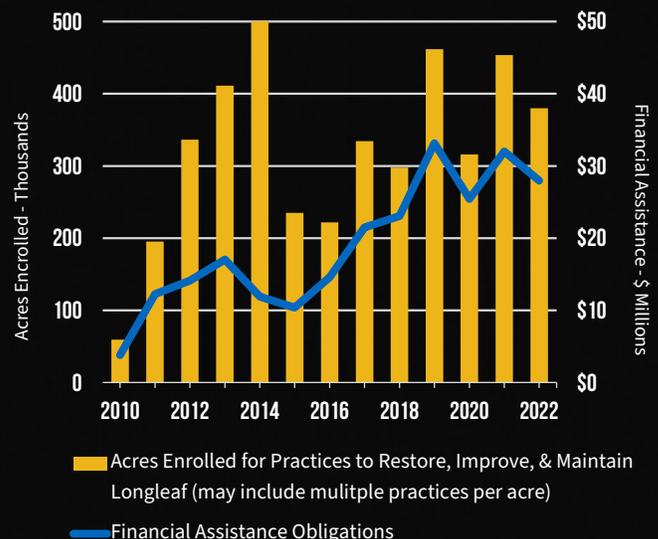
Projects like these contribute greatly to the USDA Forest Service's Million-Acre Challenge. In 2017, the Forest Service committed to add one million acres of longleaf pine to National Forests in the southeastern United States. Just five years later, they are at 88% of that goal with more than 880,000 acres on the path toward longleaf restoration.



Private Landowners Plant 70% of Longleaf

Longleaf planting projects on private properties are funded by landowners, often with support from financial assistance programs. USDA Farm Bill Programs assist with the most longleaf planting acres each year. In 2022, NRCS and Farm Service Agency programs helped fund 58% of longleaf planting acres and 25% of all longleaf management activities on private lands.

NRCS CONSERVATION INVESTMENTS IN LONGLEAF ECOSYSTEMS



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS



Photo by Samantha Dillon



Twenty-five years ago, seven partners came together at Bear Lake Recreation Area in Blackwater River State Forest to launch the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) to restore longleaf pine ecosystems in northwest Florida and southern Alabama. Many of those same partners returned to the scene in May 2022 to celebrate the partnership's Silver Anniversary.

More than a hundred people attended the celebration, which was highlighted by remarks from GCPEP Director Vernon Compton, LPC Chair Colette DeGarady, and Ad Platt, Vice-President of Operations for The Longleaf Alliance.

Today, 16 GCPEP partners manage 1.3 million acres in the region and three field teams assist partners with on-the-ground management including prescribed fire, rare species recovery, wetland restoration, and invasive species control.

When ALRI first formed as a regional initiative, GCPEP served as a model for public and private coordination, already making great progress for longleaf conservation and inspiring similar work in other important longleaf landscapes.

Contributed by Bonnie Stine, Florida Forest Service

Protecting Longleaf Habitat in a Fast-Growing Region

The Wolfe Creek Forest Florida Forever project is a part of the priority Florida Wildlife Corridor and creates connectivity between Naval Air Station Whiting Field and Blackwater River State Forest. Key purchases by The Trust for Public Land and The Conservation Fund protected 7,100 acres in 2021 and 2022. Since 2010, the state has acquired nearly 10,000 acres with more planned. The lands will be managed by the Florida Forest Service and added to Blackwater River State Forest, which is the largest state forest in Florida. All this conservation is happening in one of the country's fastest growing regions, making this a major GCPEP success story.



Clear waters of Wolfe Creek, photo by Vernon Compton

By Vernon Compton, The Longleaf Alliance



NFWF

Since 2012, the Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund (Fund) has awarded more than \$57 million in grants to longleaf pine restoration, enhancement, and protection across the historic longleaf pine range. These grants have generated \$70 million in matching contributions from grantees, for a total conservation impact of more than \$127 million. It is vital that we support public-private partnerships such as this to enable larger, landscape-level success. It is not possible to achieve these kinds of results without collaboration among all the partners, from funders to government agencies to private landowners, all playing a critical role in restoring longleaf habitat.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has awarded grants from the Fund to over 40 organizations since 2012. These on-the-ground partners are helping us achieve our longleaf goals, including establishing 184,000 acres of new longleaf habitat and improving management on nearly 3.5 million additional acres of existing longleaf habitat. These efforts include more than 3 million acres of prescribed burning which is critical to restoring and maintaining the longleaf pine ecosystem.

NFWF works to increase the resources available for longleaf restoration, improvement, and maintenance activities, and recent years have seen a significant increase in both federal and non-federal contributions. In total, this increased fiscal support has resulted in record amounts of funding available, a testament to the significant benefits of the work the Fund is making possible, including supporting biodiversity, increasing forest resilience, and improving carbon sequestration and water benefits provided by healthy longleaf forests.



Altria



BEZOS EARTH FUND



International Paper



Southern Company



LOOKING FORWARD

CHARTING A COURSE FOR THE NEXT 15 YEARS

ALRI's Conservation Plan was the first effort to frame conservation activities across the entire range of longleaf pine in a way that supports, improves, and accelerates the cumulative success and effectiveness of longleaf conservation. Under this plan, many significant accomplishments in advancing longleaf pine across the range have been achieved. Now it is time to build on that success – creating the Conservation Plan 2.0 to guide our work for the next 15 years.

Partners from across the range are involved in the development of the Conservation Plan 2.0. Our goal is to better integrate and align programs to achieve common desired conditions, gain efficiencies, and improve program delivery within longleaf forests across the range. Issues continue to be identified for longleaf pine restoration such as increasing nursery capacity, improving groundcover, developing markets, improving/increasing maintenance, and controlling invasive species.

ALRI is committed to keeping longleaf restoration on the minds of natural resource professionals and land managers across the range. The Conservation Plan 2.0 will strengthen our successes and improve our shortcomings as we gain more insights and experiences. Thank you to everyone who has provided insights in developing this new plan and to everyone who plans to implement it! You are all a part of ALRI's success.

*By Jason Dockery, LPC Chair-Elect,
Alabama Forestry Commission*

OPPORTUNITY & CHALLENGE

New Longleaf Tree Improvement Working Group

By Ad Platt, The Longleaf Alliance

Expansion of longleaf ecosystem restoration is currently restricted by the reforestation pipeline, but a new working group hopes to fix that situation by addressing limitations in cone production and collection; seed extraction, processing, and storage; and nursery capacity and production.

Over two dozen organizations are partnering on the Longleaf Tree Improvement Working Group to develop a long-term business plan before existing genetic resources are lost. Once characterized and understood, this resource would be available to assist new orchards for future seed production. The group is also identifying improvements to existing longleaf pine orchards and nurseries.

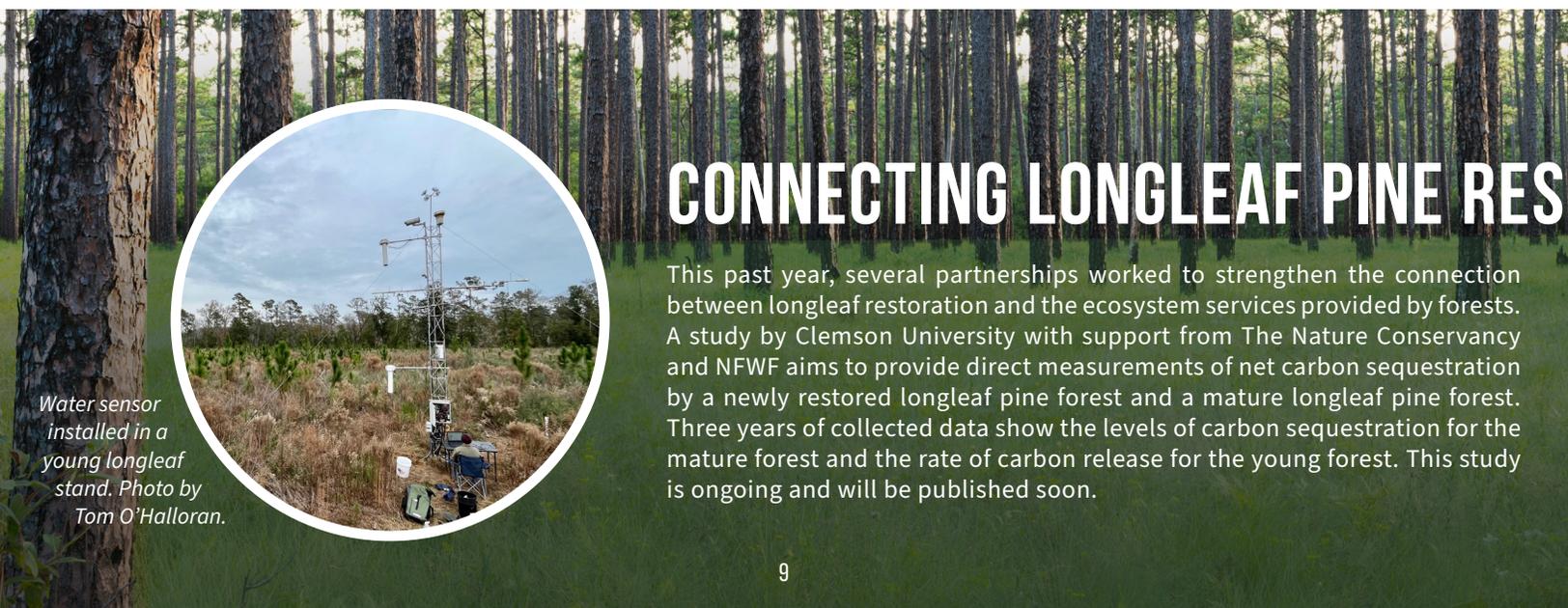


Photo by Casey White

BY THE NUMBERS: 2022 LONGLEAF

BY OWNERSHIP

	Longleaf Establishment <i>Acres</i>	Longleaf thru Silviculture <i>Acres</i>	Prescribed Burning <i>Acres</i>	Maintenance Activities <i>Acres</i>	Acquisition/Easements <i>Acres</i>	TOTAL <i>Acres</i>
PUBLIC LANDS	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>
National Forest System (USDA Forest Service)	7,788	3,564	492,308	19,626	450	523,736
Savannah River Site (USDA Forest Service)	148	1,230	15,650	79	0	17,107
National Wildlife Refuges (USFWS)	44	244	25,917	448	0	26,653
Military Installations (DoD)	21,046	0	269,557	200,289	19,953	510,845
US Army Corps of Engineers (DoD)	0	102	537	374	0	1,013
National Parks/Preserves (NPS)	74	0	1,052	45	0	1,171
State Forests (State Foresters)	2,385	875	172,138	9,706	4,680	189,784
WMAs (State Wildlife Directors)	2,089	459	82,668	16,724	2,566	104,506
Other State/Local Lands	3,919	650	156,369	7,081	5,092	173,111
Total Public Lands	37,493	7,124	1,216,196	254,372	32,741	1,547,926
PRIVATE LANDS						
State Forestry Agencies (State Foresters)	6,646	0	13,616	2,509	0	22,771
State Wildlife Agencies (State Wildlife Directors)	646	2,359	10,811	4,124	0	17,940
NRCS Programs	45,135	0	83,296	25,394	0	153,825
Conservation Reserve Program (FSA)	3,359	263	12,244	454	0	16,320
Emergency Forest Restoration Program (FSA)	1,330	0	316	217	0	1,863
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (USFWS)	2,200	0	4,303	2,391	0	8,894
Coastal Program (USFWS)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Lands - (other funds)	709	0	5,797	368	1,870	8,744
NGO Lands (other funds)	2,101	315	34,060	1,576	3,368	41,420
Non-Industrial Private Lands (other funds)	3,041	230	366,945	888	817	371,921
Private Landowners - Additional Acres	20,644					20,644
Total Private Lands	85,811	3,167	531,388	37,921	6,055	664,342
GRAND TOTAL - ALL LANDS	123,304	10,291	1,747,584	292,293	38,796	2,212,268



CONNECTING LONGLEAF PINE RES

This past year, several partnerships worked to strengthen the connection between longleaf restoration and the ecosystem services provided by forests. A study by Clemson University with support from The Nature Conservancy and NFWF aims to provide direct measurements of net carbon sequestration by a newly restored longleaf pine forest and a mature longleaf pine forest. Three years of collected data show the levels of carbon sequestration for the mature forest and the rate of carbon release for the young forest. This study is ongoing and will be published soon.

Water sensor installed in a young longleaf stand. Photo by Tom O'Halloran.

ACCOMPLISHMENT SUMMARIES

BY STATE

	Longleaf Establishment <i>Acres</i>	Longleaf thru Silviculture <i>Acres</i>	Prescribed Burning <i>Acres</i>	Maintenance Activities <i>Acres</i>	Acquisition/Easements <i>Acres</i>	TOTAL <i>Acres</i>
PUBLIC LANDS						
Texas	642	47	48,065	408	0	49,162
Louisiana	4,671	19	140,616	27,207	0	172,513
Mississippi	1,950	530	56,279	6,233	76	65,068
Alabama	574	508	166,568	4,786	1,084	173,520
Florida	24,584	3,991	465,075	53,950	15,452	563,052
Georgia	1,210	459	177,487	103,765	5,321	288,242
South Carolina	1,273	1,332	66,071	16,547	4,622	89,845
North Carolina	2,579	38	94,159	41,466	6,186	144,428
Virginia	10	200	1,876	10	0	2,096
Total Public Lands	37,493	7,124	1,216,196	254,372	32,741	1,547,926
PRIVATE LANDS						
Texas	2,650	0	4,046	1,500	1,203	9,399
Louisiana	1,278	0	13,132	1,532	0	15,942
Mississippi	4,861	0	15,979	1,555	0	22,395
Alabama	13,426	137	242,194	6,068	0	261,825
Florida	8,145	25	19,501	4,272	0	31,943
Georgia	22,754	2,439	173,891	13,860	2,965	215,909
South Carolina	6,477	249	43,596	4,663	805	55,790
North Carolina	4,898	5	15,858	4,214	1,082	26,057
Virginia	678	312	3,191	257	0	4,438
Additional Acres	20,644					20,644
Total Private Lands	85,811	3,167	531,388	37,921	6,055	664,342
GRAND TOTAL - ALL LANDS	123,304	10,291	1,747,584	292,293	38,796	2,212,268

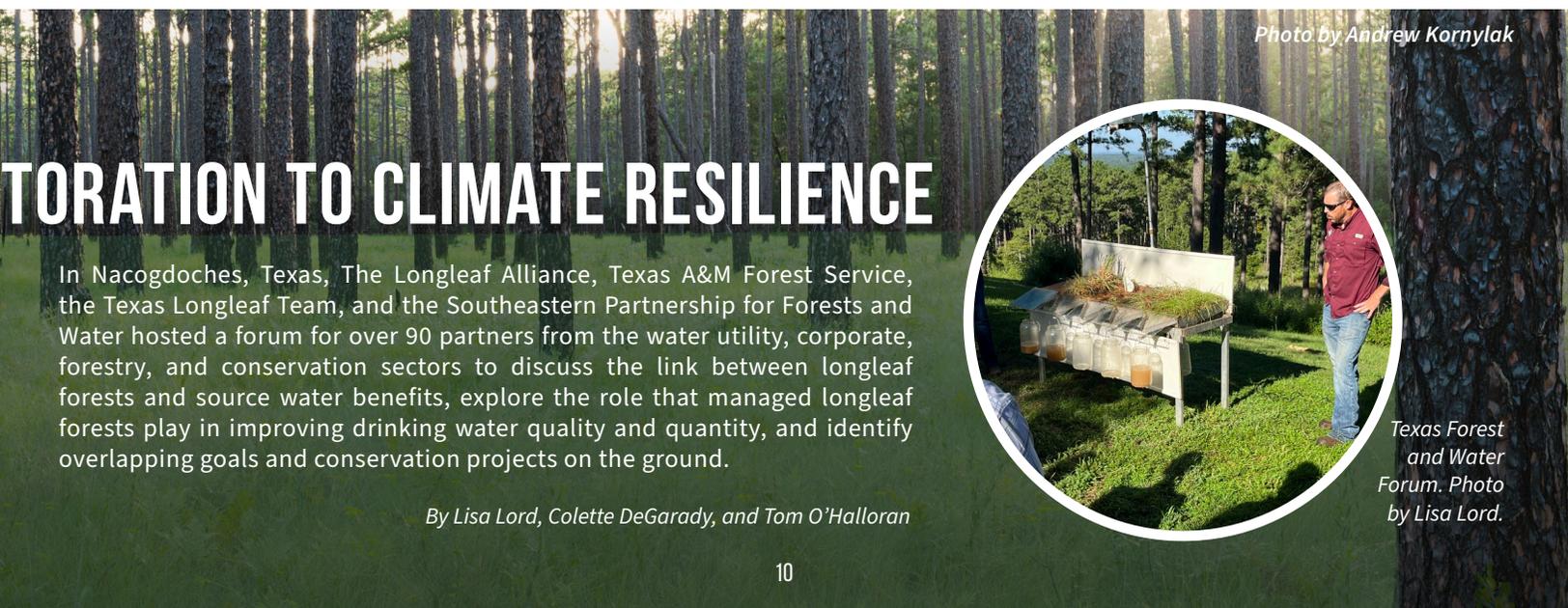


Photo by Andrew Kornylak

TORATION TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In Nacogdoches, Texas, The Longleaf Alliance, Texas A&M Forest Service, the Texas Longleaf Team, and the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water hosted a forum for over 90 partners from the water utility, corporate, forestry, and conservation sectors to discuss the link between longleaf forests and source water benefits, explore the role that managed longleaf forests play in improving drinking water quality and quantity, and identify overlapping goals and conservation projects on the ground.

By Lisa Lord, Colette DeGarady, and Tom O'Halloran

Texas Forest and Water Forum. Photo by Lisa Lord.

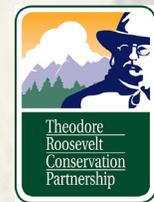
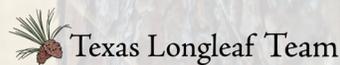
2022 LONGLEAF PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL



American Forest Foundation



THE CONSERVATION FUND



WILLIAM OWEN



ALRI Leadership Team — Colette DeGarady, Carol Denhof, Jason Dockery, David Gonzales, Stephanie Hertz, Kyle Jones, & Matthew Vandersande

ALRI Communications Team — Sara Anrrich, Ryan Bollinger, Debbie Crane, Sarah Crate, Stephanie Hertz, Lisa Lord, Meghan Riley, Kathryn Smith, & Hannah Sodalak.