



## South Georgia Landscape Cost Share Initiative Guidelines

This cost share program is focused on promoting understory and mid-story management throughout South Georgia that will be ecologically beneficial and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. It will be implemented by the Georgia Forestry Commission with funding from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, American Forest Foundation and other partners.

This initiative will provide landowners a payment of up to \$5,000.00 for successful completion of one or more of the following practices on privately owned forested lands: herbicide applications, mowing, mulching, thinning for habitat improvement, groundcover restoration, bottomland hardwood enhancement and prescribed burning.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Applicant must be the legal landowner.
- Practice must be conducted on forested land.
- Applicants must be a private landowner.
- The practice must be conducted in one of the eligible counties.
- No duplicative cost share funding allowed (landowner must not be currently enrolled in another cost share program for the stand applied.)

### Program Requirements

- Treatment for the purpose of preparing a site for pine straw production is prohibited.
- Priority will be given to established longleaf stands or upland forested pine stands with valuable ecological diversity (a component of wiregrass, gopher tortoise, eastern indigo snake, bachman sparrow, bobwhite quail, etc.)
- Payment will not exceed \$5,000.00 per eligible landowner according to tax records.
- Landowner must be able to fully support and implement the practice or hire someone who can.
- Landowner must allow Georgia Forestry Commission employee(s) to access the property before, during, and after completion of the project.
- Landowner must agree to maintain the treatment area periodically by prescribed burning.
- Agree to all Terms and Conditions listed on contract that will be provided upon approval.

### Practice Requirements

- The lifespan of the practice will vary based on treatment conducted. (Lifespan refers to the length of time before a final harvest would be allowed unless treatment area is damaged by a natural disaster. Failure to comply with lifespan requirements may result in partial or full repayment of cost share payment.)
  - Prescribed burning – 3-year lifespan
  - Herbicide and mowing/mulching treatments – 5-year lifespan
  - Thinning, groundcover restoration, bottomland hardwood enhancement – 10-year lifespan

## Practice Eligibility

- Prescribed burning:
  - Longleaf, loblolly, and slash pine stands are eligible.
  - Landowners who conducted prescribed burns after January 1, 2023 can apply.
  - Stands must have a minimum BA of 50ft<sup>2</sup>/ac in merchantable timber or at least 350 TPA for pre-merchantable stands.
- **Groundcover Restoration**
  - Longleaf, loblolly, and slash pine stands are eligible.
  - Site specific recommendations will be given to plant native grasses, forbs, sedges, and rushes.
- **Herbicide Treatment**
  - Longleaf, loblolly, and slash pine stands are eligible.
  - Undesirable hardwood and/or noxious/invasive plants may be treated.
- **Forestry Mowing**
  - Longleaf, loblolly, and slash pine stands are eligible.
  - Stands that need fire re-introduced to the stand but have a high level of small woody or herbaceous competition preventing use of fire will receive priority.
  - Mowing to prepare site for pinestraw production is prohibited.
- **Forestry Mulching**
  - Longleaf, loblolly, and slash pine stands are eligible.
  - Stands that have not been burned for many years and need mechanical treatment prior to re-introducing fire to the stand will receive priority.
  - Young overstocked natural or planted pine stands needing mechanical treatment to reduce wildfire and/or forest health related risks will also receive priority.
  - Mulching to prepare site for pinestraw production is prohibited.
- **Thinning – Habitat Improvement**
  - Longleaf, loblolly, and slash pine stands are eligible.
  - Thinning must result in improving overall wildlife habitat conditions throughout the stand.
  - Landowners will be encouraged to thin pine stands back to 50 BA.
  - Landowners willing to utilize an uneven aged management regime to promote restoration/conversion to an uneven aged longleaf pine forest will receive priority.
- **Bottomland Hardwood Enhancement**
  - Bottomland hardwood stands located in close proximity to stands containing gopher tortoise and eastern indigo snake will receive priority.
  - Site specific recommendations will be given to reduce the amount of understory and/or mid-story competition in these stands to promote and increase overall wildlife habitat.