



**The Texas Longleaf Pine Implementation Team**  
**Conservation Plan**

**June 2019**

# Table of Contents

<b>I. Executive Summary</b> .....	1
<b>II. Purpose and Introduction</b> .....	3
A. Mission and Vision	
B. TLIT Background	
C. Recent Efforts	
<b>III. Conservation Planning Approach</b> .....	8
A. TLIT Planning Meetings and Outcomes	
B. Threats, Barriers, and Challenges	
C. Development of Guiding Principles and Goal Framework	
D. Plan Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics	
<b>IV. TLIT Landscape Priority Map</b> .....	15
A. Priority Funding and Strategic Map Considerations	
B. Process Discussion for Determination of Project Funding and Support	
<b>V. Implementation and Evaluation (Monitoring Section)</b> .....	17
<b>VI. References</b> .....	20
<b>VII. Appendices</b> .....	21
<b>Appendix A:</b> List of Agencies and Organizations - Contributors to the Conservation Plan	
<b>Appendix B:</b> Annual Business Plan and Budget Format	
<b>Appendix C:</b> Preface, Vision, Mission, Operations and Governance (Declaration of Operations)	
<b>Appendix D:</b> Communications Strategy	
<b>Appendix E:</b> Glossary of Terms	



Post winter burn in a Longleaf Pine stand / Pulaski



Wes Pruet, Resource Management Service forester, addressing landowners / Longleaf Alliance

# Executive Summary

This Texas Longleaf Pine Implementation Team (TLIT) Conservation Plan is intended to help guide the partnership through 2025 and beyond. **With unanimous approval of the Conservation Plan, the TLIT extends the date of the Declaration of Partnership (DOP), with amended participants and wording, through December 30, 2025.**

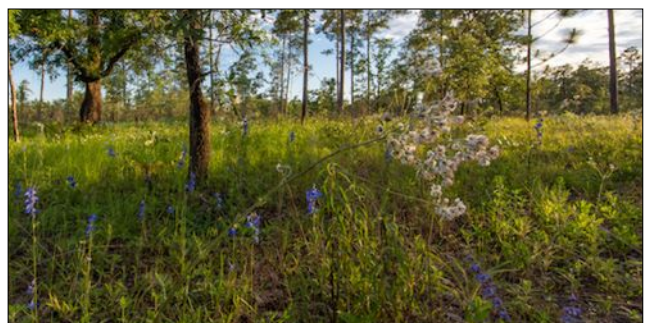
TLIT was formed in 2014 (by more than 200 diverse and conservation-minded stakeholders) to accelerate the restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystem on both private and public forestlands. The vision of TLIT is to **“Re-establish the abundantly biodiverse and wildlife-sustaining habitat of the longleaf pine ecosystem in East Texas.”** The mission of this partnership is to **“Promote conservation of the longleaf pine ecosystem and associated ecosystems on private and public lands through a transparent, collaborative, and coordinated network of diverse stakeholders.”**

Based on the vision and mission, the simply stated goals of the TLIT are to establish, enhance, and conserve the longleaf pine ecosystem. The TLIT goals identify that within the next decade, TLIT will establish 15,000 acres of longleaf pine, enhance and/or maintain 110,000 acres, primarily through prescribed fire, and conserve 30,000 acres of longleaf pine on private lands through long-term agreements or easements to preserve our longleaf forests as “working forest lands.” Accomplishing these goals would more than double the area of Texas longleaf documented in the 1990’s.

TLIT is comprised of partner organizations as part of the larger, range-wide **America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative**, whose purpose is to increase longleaf pine acreage from 3.4 to 8.0 million acres by 2025. The TLIT Conservation Plan identifies 12 counties in the Pineywoods of East Texas as areas suitable for these longleaf pine ecosystem restoration efforts. TLIT and the range-wide conservation plan for longleaf pine identified two significant geographic areas (SGAs) in East Texas: the “Big Thicket” SGA and the Angelina and Sabine National Forest anchored “Longleaf Ridge” SGA.

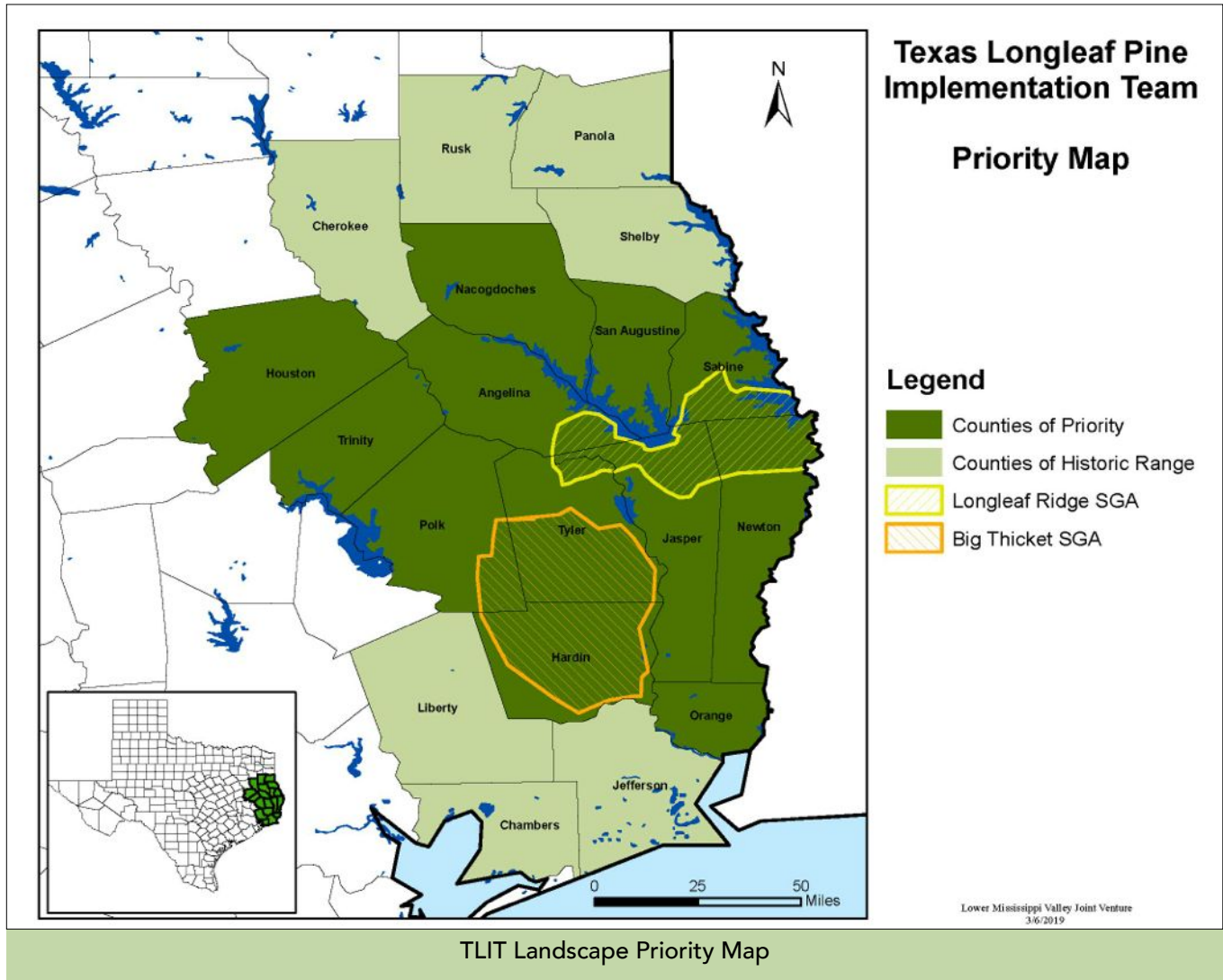


Natural regeneration of Longleaf / Longleaf Alliance



Diverse herbaceous groundcover, Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary / Jacqueline Ferrato

These two SGAs will be the focus of TLIT investment of resources, with secondary investment in the seven “longleaf” counties that contain the SGAs. The priority counties and SGAs will guide the investment of resources by TLIT.



Communication and outreach will be significant delivery mechanisms to accomplish all three goals and meet our conservation outcomes. TLIT is committed to success. This success must be led by a coordinator to facilitate the many strategies and tactics described in this plan. The Coordinator will work with the Steering Committee and Communications Team to secure the necessary engagement and support from decision-makers and allies, enabling communication within the partnership to reach out to regional, state, and local levels.

It is the intent of TLIT, the coordinator, and all member organizations and agencies to influence, inspire, and change behavior in positive ways towards longleaf restoration in Texas. Restoring native longleaf pine forests in East Texas offers many economic, ecological, recreational and aesthetic benefits, including additional income to landowners when they establish working forests. Ultimately, TLIT hopes to see longleaf pine become a significant element of the Texas Pineywoods once again, providing goods and services as well as ensuring the long-term health of our unique natural resources.

# Purpose and Introduction

## Mission and Vision

The TLIT vision is to “Re-establish the abundantly biodiverse and wildlife-sustaining habitat of the longleaf pine ecosystem in East Texas.” Our mission is to “Promote conservation of the longleaf pine ecosystem and associated ecosystems on private and public lands through a transparent, collaborative, and coordinated network of diverse stakeholders.” TLIT efforts will establish, enhance, and conserve target areas of longleaf pine through a network of conservations stakeholders, using a fully coordinated communication strategy to interpret and apply science and information for the benefit of Texas landowners and managers.

## Background

The Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*) Ecosystem (upland longleaf pine community) is one of the rarest plant communities in the West Gulf Coastal Plain and southeastern United States; less than 3% remains of the southeastern landscape that was formerly longleaf pine. In East Texas, it is estimated that approximately 45,000 acres of the original 3 million acres (less than 2%) remains (Outcalt K. W. 1997).



Pitcher plant (*Sarracenia alata*) bog in Texas / Judy Gallagher, Flickr

Though the majority of Texas longleaf range is on private lands, most remaining examples of longleaf pine stands are on public lands within the Longleaf Ridge and Big Thicket SGAs. This forest community is globally important for migratory birds, resident wildlife, and a host of rare or declining plants and animals. The primary

ecological process that maintains areas of these SGA ecosystems is fire. A well-managed upland pine savannah that includes frequent prescribed fire has the potential to produce and sustain habitat for rare species such as the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, and the Louisiana Pine Snake. Fire is an essential process that will produce the herbaceous understory required by these species. In addition to these rare species, well-burned pine savannahs benefit other species like Eastern Wild Turkey and Northern Bobwhite, both popular game species that are declining across the West Gulf Coastal Plain of East Texas.



Longleaf seedling in a prescribed fire / Longleaf Alliance



Red-cockaded Woodpecker / John Maxwell, USFWS

Due to its ecological importance, restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystem has become a regional and a Texas conservation priority; building for over four decades, longleaf restoration is now taking place on public and private lands throughout the southeastern United States, including Texas. Longleaf discussions in Texas and the West Gulf Coastal Plain began in the 1970's, with interest in the Big Thicket National Preserve and a decline in species associated with longleaf pine. The Nature Conservancy in Texas has been a presence in this area for more than 30 years, having established the Big Thicket Bogs and Pinelands Preserve in 1971, and the Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary in 1977. Additional preserves (Little Rocky, Timber Lake), fee title acquisitions, and other easements (1995-2018) have added more than 16,000 acres of conserved longleaf area in Texas. To effectively conserve longleaf pine ecosystems rather than representative patches, partners recognized in those initial years that conservation must work outside of preserve boundaries, partnering with public land management agencies, commercial enterprises, and private landowners in the Big Thicket region.



Natural regeneration of Longleaf Pine at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary / Rachel Rommel



The Longleaf Ridge between Angelina and Sabine National Forests / Ron Billings, Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS)

Interest in the Longleaf Pine ecosystem expanded in the early 1990's with discussions about the concept of the "Longleaf Ridge" between the Angelina and Sabine National Forests. In 1992, The Nature Conservancy initiated the Piney Woods Conservation Initiative as an alternative to traditional preservation efforts of purchasing land and prohibiting multiple-use management. The goal of the initiative was to integrate economic development and longleaf pine conservation in Texas and Louisiana to create sustainable forestry programs that would benefit private lands and the public in general. The Nature Conservancy worked closely with many partners, and especially with Temple-Inland Forestry, in the creation of this "sustainable forestry" conservation effort. These partnerships founded community-based conservation efforts, with hopes of adding more partners.

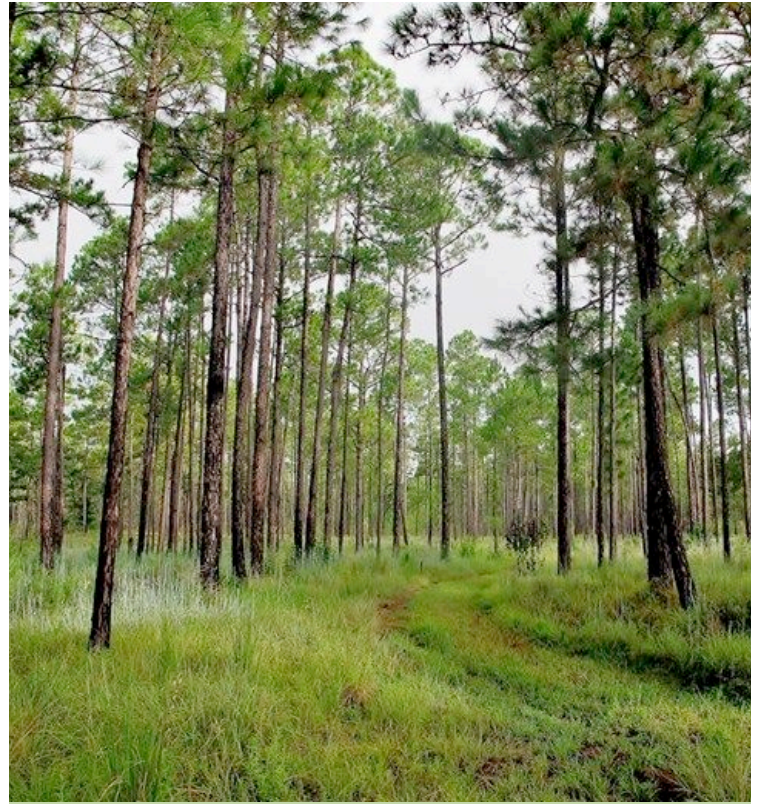
The cultivated and growing interest in longleaf pine led to an informal professional group that met

regularly, evolving into the first Big Thicket Conference in 1996. Later that year, a more formal "pineywoods longleaf pine establishment strategy" was prescribed in the "1996 USFS Forest Plan for the National Forest and Grasslands in Texas," which directed longleaf pine restoration as a priority conservation action. The regional focus on longleaf restoration continued to grow and was solidified through the efforts of The Longleaf Alliance (LLA), formed in 1995. The Nature Conservancy, other NGOs, private forestland managers, and many land management (federal and state) agencies actively support this alliance today.

As discussed, landownership in East Texas is predominantly private (95%), with 84% of the state considered to be working lands (privately owned farms, ranches, and forests that produce food and fiber, support rural economies, and provide wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and recreational opportunities). Specific to East Texas, private lands make up 74% of the pineywoods ecoregion, with an average tract size of these "working lands" (i.e. farms, ranches, industrial timberlands, etc.) of approximately 521 acres. Frequently owned by absentee landowners, these tracts are more likely to be subdivided when sold or inherited, resulting in potential loss of wildlife habitat (<http://txlandtrends.org/>).

Though our historic longleaf pine ecosystem footprint in Texas is mostly private, much of the remaining longleaf is located on public lands. In the past 50 years, half of the historic footprint of longleaf in East Texas has transitioned from diverse forest products companies to being managed by Timber Investment Organizations (TIMOs) and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS). An example of this change was the transition from the Temple Family ownership to Campbell-Global, and then to the current entity known as TexMark Timber Treasury/Forest Resource Consultants. Many of this TIMO's 1,000,000 acres in Texas are now in short rotation loblolly pine production, with about 5,540 acres supporting stands of longleaf, mostly in conjunction with conservation organizations.

The TLIT strategy is steadfast in connecting the Angelina-Sabine National Forest to these critical private land holdings. Much of Longleaf Ridge SGA is managed by Forest Resource Consultants whose stated purpose is to manage the property for multiple uses, including longleaf pine restoration and protection of unique and threatened plant communities. Another key area within Longleaf Ridge is “Scrappin’ Valley,” which is located just south of the Sabine National Forest in Newton County, Texas, and contains more than 600 acres of the oldest upland longleaf pine forest in East Texas. The Big Thicket National Preserve and the Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary serve as anchor points for lands in the Big Thicket focus area. The TLIT challenge is to develop private lands restoration of longleaf pine in all of these focus areas.



Open forest understory at the TNC Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary / Rachel Rommel

## Recent Efforts

Today, the Longleaf Alliance and America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative spearhead a collaborative effort to restore the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem across the Southeast. With the development of a range-wide conservation plan in 2009, America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) established its 15-year goal to expand the acreage of longleaf pine from 3.4 to 8.0 million acres. ALRI estimates that 131,250 acres of longleaf were planted across the 9 states of its former range in 2017. Planting on public land decreased 35%, while planting on private land increased by 2%, for an overall net decrease in planting of 6%; this decrease from 2016 continues a concerning 5-year trend of planting declines. Prescribed burning of longleaf was reported on 1.3 million acres, with 85% being completed on publicly owned lands (national forests, military installations, and state lands). (America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative, 2017). Having fewer good weather days for burning appears to have caused a 17% decrease in burning in 2017, which was a significant decrease from over 1.6 million acres burned in 2016.



Prescribed fire at TNC Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary



In Texas, longleaf stakeholders organized in 2010 into a “taskforce” which now has over 300 individuals and organizations; this taskforce is guided by a formal leadership group called the Texas Longleaf Implementation Team (TLIT).

Formally established in 2014, TLIT members signed a Declaration of Partnership (DOP), which included 14 agencies and organizations. In 2014, TLIT established a coordinator position, directing funds to ensure consistent guidance and leadership for the partnership. The Nature Conservancy initially provided fiduciary support for TLIT (2013-14). Since 2015, the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) has managed the finances of TLIT and its coordinator. Conservation funding for TLIT is augmented through direct longleaf funding from the Farm Bill via the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), with additional grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s (NFWF)/International Paper (IP) partnership known as the “Forestland Stewards” program.

The TLIT continues working to find innovative solutions that assist landowners to do longleaf ecosystem restoration on its former range in Texas. In 2018, Texas A&M Forest Service was awarded \$300,000 from the Forestland Stewards program. Texas A&M Forest Service uses these funds to support the TLIT and the team coordinator. Like all of the previous awards from NFWF for the TLIT, this grant requires an equal match of non-federal contributions. TFS and the TLIT find those matching funds by using TFS staff time on longleaf work, volunteer work completed on longleaf, landowner longleaf projects, and many other efforts qualified by NFWF as appropriate “match.”

The cumulative total of grants since 2013 exceeds \$2 million. The Forestland Steward grant awarded in 2018 is intended to establish 500 acres of longleaf pine and enhance 2,250 acres of longleaf habitat through the use of prescribed fire and other competition control and release treatments. Targeted technical assistance will engage small family forest owners in conservation programs that promote stewardship planning and prescribed burning. Changes in habitat and key target species populations (including songbirds) will be monitored as habitat enhancement for these species associated with open forest habitat is accomplished.



Nature Conservancy prescribed fire crew / Parker Schuerman



Longleaf pine cone / Ron Billings, TFS



Landowner viewing native bluestem grass / Kent Evans

# Conservation Planning Approach

## TLIT Planning Meetings and Outcomes

Since inception, regular TLIT meetings or conference calls are convened on an “as-needed” basis, depending on issues, project needs, and communications throughout any given year. Communication and collaboration are the foundation of TLIT success. Having identified the need for a more formal conservation plan, the TLIT Coordinator initiated and scheduled a series of meetings to discuss and develop this TLIT Conservation Plan. Summary notes of meetings are posted on the TLIT Sharepoint.

## Threats, Barriers, and Challenges

The Communications Strategy (**Appendix D**) has incorporated many of the threats, barriers, and challenges described by the TLIT, with avenues for messaging to overcome those issues moving forward during TLIT Conservation Plan implementation. The following is a refined listing of identified challenges and concerns that could impact the progress and success of the mission of the TLIT. Many of these items will be addressed by the TLIT as the group works cooperatively with other entities and with national groups, such as the Longleaf Alliance and America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative.

### ECONOMIC CONCERNS

- Limited location of mills that can accept fiber product
- Lack of regional (West Gulf Coastal Plain) growth and yield model for longleaf pine production (including monoculture plantations)

### LEGAL CONCERNS

- Lack of property tax valuations that favor longer timber rotations
- How to develop and support proactive efforts to recover species and preclude the need to list additional species under the Endangered Species Act

### COST SHARE PROGRAM CHALLENGES

- Identify additional private, non-industrial landowners for enrollment
- Ensure adequate financial incentive for landowners to enroll

### ADMINISTRATION CONCERNS

- Willingness to accept fiduciary responsibilities associated with grants

### LAND AND WATER PROTECTION CHALLENGES

- Protect new lands and waters for conservation, with emphasis on connectivity, resiliency, burnability, and restoration potential



Yellow Pitcher plant (*Sarracenia alata*) /  
Matt Buckingham

## LOGISTICAL CONCERNS

- Ensure sustainable, regional source of longleaf pine seedlings and herbaceous understory seed/plants are available

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR CHALLENGES

- Impact and needed rapid response to apparent increase in severe weather events

## FIRE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

- How to broaden the scale of fire application to the larger landscape
- How to sustain fire application over time
- How to recruit and sustain available qualified burn bosses and fire crews

## MONITORING CHALLENGES

- Cost and personnel needs
- How to capture success/change/trends
- How to quantify wildlife metrics/benefits

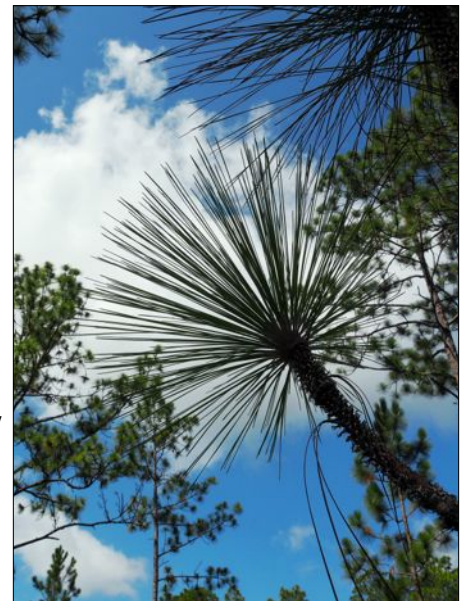
## OUTREACH CHALLENGES

- How to engage future generation landowners (especially absentee landowners)
- How to instill awareness, appreciation, and action of stakeholders (including the general public) for longleaf and conservation
- Dissemination of current knowledge about longleaf pine silviculture, restoration and management for stakeholders

## Development of Guiding Principles and Goal Framework

### Guiding Principles

- a. We agree that greatest efficiency and effectiveness is achieved to the extent that various agencies and organizations (stakeholders) are truly coordinated and working together.
- b. We will consider ecological, economic, cultural, and social values when identifying lands for priority protection and conservation value.
- c. We will respect private landowner rights.
- d. We will support working forests, strong local forest products markets, applied research, and the application of sound silviculture, land, and water practices.
- e. We will work within the historic range of Longleaf Pine in East Texas, with a priority/focus given to those areas and ownerships that include:
  - i. Landowners whose tracts can contribute to overall significant landscape level conservation efforts;
  - ii. Lands adjacent to USFS focus areas and/or other conservation sites;
  - iii. Landowners willing to commit for long-term management of 10+ years;
  - iv. Landowners willing to incorporate the continued use of prescribed fire.



Longleaf branch "reaches" for the sky /  
Longleaf Alliance

## Texas Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Goals for the TLIT

Goal #1 - Establish

Goal #2 - Enhance

Goal #3 - Conserve



The understory of a Longleaf Pine forest in Texas / Mike Oliver, USDA

### Plan Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

#### **GOAL 1 - Establish Longleaf Pine and Associated Ecosystems**

Provide technical and financial assistance to land managers to restore significant, ecologically meaningful areas of upland longleaf pine in appropriate areas of East Texas.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Restore/establish 1,000 acres of open longleaf pine forests and associated ecosystems annually.

**STRATEGY 1.1.1:** Build capacity of agency and private natural resource professionals to deliver technical assistance to landowners to restore longleaf.

**TACTIC 1.1.1.1:** Develop and promote technical silvicultural guidelines for longleaf restoration (site preparation, seedlings, planting).

**TACTIC 1.1.1.2:** Share current applied research on restoration strategies to keep agency and private natural resource professionals informed.

**TACTIC 1.1.1.3:** Deliver longleaf professional development training to agency and private natural resource professionals.

**STRATEGY 1.1.2:** Identify and prioritize restoration of longleaf pine on 500 acres of public land and 500 acres of private land in SGAs.

**TACTIC 1.1.2.1:** Utilize best available science and models (i.e. the West Gulf Coastal Plain Open Pine Landbird Plan, Louisiana Pine Snake Soils, and/or TNC Resiliency Model) to identify priority areas for restoration.

**TACTIC 1.1.2.2:** Coordinate with National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (NFGT), Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Texas General Land Office (GLO), and other public land managers to identify priority areas for restoration.

**TACTIC 1.1.2.3:** Prioritize identified target areas, based on guiding principles.

**STRATEGY 1.1.3:** Identify, communicate, and inform willing landowners through an annual plan/communication strategy.

**TACTIC 1.1.3.1:** Utilize tax appraisal records and local field knowledge of TLIT members to identify priority area landowners (“prime prospects”).

**TACTIC 1.1.3.2:** Target prime prospects:

- i. Outreach post card mailings
- ii. Direct invitations to upcoming workshops
- iii. Informal meetings with resource professionals (consultants, TIMO managers, agencies, etc.)
- iv. Engage longleaf champions in outreach efforts

**TACTIC 1.1.3.3:** Conduct outreach, education, and technical assistance:

- i. Longleaf Alliance workshops
- ii. Field tours / technical site visits
- iii. Exhibits at professional meetings / conferences
- iv. Engage county forest landowner associations

**TACTIC 1.1.3.4:** Web-based and social media communication:

- i. Maintain <http://txlongleaf.org>
- ii. Partner with other outreach initiatives



Blazing star (*Liatris*) on Longleaf pine regeneration area / Ron Billings, TX A&M Forest Service

**OBJECTIVE 1.2:** Encourage research and technology to support longleaf restoration through collaboration and communication of need.

**STRATEGY 1.2.1:** Communicate to appropriate agencies and organizations the need to ensure viable seed source of Longleaf pine for this region.

**TACTIC 1.2.1.1:** Support TFS / WGFTIP tree improvement efforts to enhance Western Gulf longleaf seedlings.

**TACTIC 1.2.1.2:** Promote longleaf seedling nursery capacity.

**STRATEGY 1.2.2:** Coordinate with agencies and organizations to advance longleaf pine restoration.

**TACTIC 1.2.2.1:** Encourage development of longleaf based growth and yield models.

**TACTIC 1.2.2.2:** Support economic assessments of longleaf restoration.

**TACTIC 1.2.2.3:** Promote online decision support tools for longleaf pine restoration (i.e. My Land Management Connector, Herbicide / Thinning tools, etc.).

**TACTIC 1.2.2.4:** Monitor effectiveness of longleaf restoration strategies on survival and growth.

**TACTIC 1.2.2.5:** Monitor wildlife response to longleaf restoration.

**TACTIC 1.2.2.6:** Investigate potential to advance longleaf restoration on NFGT through *Stewardship Contracting* and *Good Neighbor Authority*.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3:** Develop resources (people and finances) to support longleaf restoration.

**STRATEGY 1.3.1:** Promote financial assistance programs for longleaf restoration.

**TACTIC 1.3.1.1:** Connect interested landowners to funding programs.

**TACTIC 1.3.1.2:** Deliver an effective Texas Longleaf Conservation Assistance Program for longleaf restoration.

**STRATEGY 1.3.2:** Develop avenues for grant and foundation support through development and succession planning.

**TACTIC 1.3.2.1:** Identify potential donors.

- i. NFWF
- ii. Federal Agencies
- iii. Foundations
- iv. Conservation Organizations

**TACTIC 1.3.2.2:** Create “sales pitch” for longleaf restoration.

**TACTIC 1.3.2.3:** Develop succession plan for future leadership of TLIT.

**TACTIC 1.3.2.4:** Pursue grant and foundation support of TLIT.



Nighthawk egg shell /  
Longleaf Alliance

## **GOAL 2 - Enhance and maintain existing Longleaf Pine and Associated Ecosystems**

Provide technical and financial assistance to land managers to enhance existing areas of upland longleaf pine in appropriate areas of East Texas.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1:** Enhance 25,000 acres of open longleaf pine forests annually.

**STRATEGY 2.1.1:** Build the capacity of agency and private natural resource professionals to deliver technical assistance to landowners to enhance longleaf pine.

**TACTIC 2.1.1.1:** Develop and promote technical silvicultural guidelines for longleaf enhancement (prescribed fire, interplanting, competition control, and understory development).

**TACTIC 2.1.2.1:** Share current applied research on enhancement strategies with agency and private natural resource professionals.

**TACTIC 2.1.1.3:** Deliver longleaf professional development training to agency and private natural resource professionals.

**STRATEGY 2.1.2:** Identify and prioritize enhancement of longleaf pine on 20,000 acres public and 5,000 acres private lands in SGAs, priority counties, and historic range.

**TACTIC 2.1.2.1:** Utilize best available science and models (i.e. the West Gulf Coastal Plain Open Pine Landbird Plan, Louisiana Pine Snake Soils, and/or TNC Resiliency Model) to identify priority areas for enhancement.

**TACTIC 2.1.2.2:** Coordinate with NFGT, TFS, TPWD, GLO and other public land managers to identify priority areas for enhancement.

**TACTIC 2.1.2.3:** Prioritize identified target areas, based on guiding principles.

**STRATEGY 2.1.3:** Identify, communicate, and inform willing landowners through an annual plan/communication strategy.

**TACTIC 2.1.3.1:** Utilize tax appraisal records and local field knowledge of TLIT members to identify priority area landowners (“prime prospects”).

**TACTIC 2.1.3.2:** Target prime prospects:

- i. Outreach post card mailings
- ii. Direct invitations to upcoming workshops

- iii. Informal meetings with resource professionals (consultants, TIMO managers, agencies, etc.)
  - iv. Engage longleaf champions in outreach efforts
- TACTIC 2.1.3.3:** Conduct outreach, education, and technical assistance:
- i. Longleaf Alliance workshops
  - ii. Field tours / technical site visits
  - iii. Exhibits at professional meetings / conferences
  - iv. Engage County Forest Landowner Associations
- TACTIC 2.1.3.4:** Web-based and social media Communication
- i. Maintain <http://txlongleaf.org>
  - ii. Partner with other outreach initiatives

**OBJECTIVE 2.2:** Encourage research and technology to support longleaf enhancement.

**STRATEGY 2.2.1:** Coordinate with agencies and organizations to advance longleaf pine enhancement.

**TACTIC 2.2.1.1:** Promote online decision support tools for longleaf pine restoration (i.e. My Land Management Connector, Herbicide / Thinning tools, etc.).

**TACTIC 2.2.1.2:** Monitor effectiveness of longleaf enhancement strategies on survival and growth.

**TACTIC 2.2.1.3:** Monitor wildlife response to longleaf enhancement.

**TACTIC 2.2.1.4:** Investigate potential to advance longleaf enhancement on NFGT through *Stewardship Contracting* and *Good Neighbor Authority*.

**OBJECTIVE 2.3:** Develop financial resources to support Longleaf enhancement.

**STRATEGY 2.3.1:** Promote financial assistance programs for enhancement.

**TACTIC 2.3.1.1:** Connect interested landowners to funding programs.

**TACTIC 2.3.1.2:** Deliver an effective Texas Longleaf Conservation Assistance Program for longleaf enhancement.

**STRATEGY 2.3.2:** Develop avenues for grant and foundation support through development and succession planning.

**TACTIC 2.3.2.1:** Identify potential donors and grantors:

- i. NFWF
- ii. Federal Agencies
- iii. Foundations
- iv. Conservation Organizations

**TACTIC 2.3.2.2:** Create "sales pitch" and proposals.

**TACTIC 2.3.2.3:** Develop succession plan for future leadership of TLIT.

**TACTIC 2.3.2.4:** Pursue grant and foundation support of TLIT.

**OBJECTIVE 2.4:** Enhance/maintain 20,000 acres of public lands and 5,000 acres on private lands, using prescribed fire annually.

**STRATEGY 2.4.1:** Increase prescribed burn vendor capacity.

**TACTIC 2.4.1.1:** Host annual TDA Certified Prescribed Burn Vendor courses.

**STRATEGY 2.4.2:** Support state policies that promote safe prescribed burning.

**STRATEGY 2.4.3:** Coordinate with TFS Prescribed Burn Grant Programs.

**OBJECTIVE 2.5:** Enhance/maintain 1,000 acres annually, using mechanical and other physical or chemical means of delivery to willing land managers.



Sundew closeup / Longleaf Alliance

**STRATEGY 2.5.1:** Provide education, technical, and financial assistance on longleaf enhancement activities (see Strategies 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.3.1, and related Tactics).

**OBJECTIVE 2.6:** Enhance 200 acres of native understory vegetation (see *glossary of terms for definition of understory and maintenance classes*).

**STRATEGY 2.6.1:** Identify interested landowners (see Strategy 2.1.3 and related Tactics).

**STRATEGY 2.6.2:** Promote the conservation and restoration of native understory vegetation through education, technical, and financial assistance.

**TACTIC 2.6.2.1:** Ensure viable seed source of understory plants.

**TACTIC 2.6.2.2:** Establish native groundcover production and demonstration areas to benefit partner restoration efforts.

**TACTIC 2.6.2.3:** Use existing equipment from partners or purchase new groundcover establishment equipment.

**OBJECTIVE 2.7:** Establish 500 acres of bottomland hardwoods within longleaf systems.

**STRATEGY 2.7.1:** Provide education, technical, and financial assistance on bottomland hardwood restoration and enhancement activities (see Strategies 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.3.1, and related Tactics).



Indian grass, longleaf understory / Longleaf Alliance

### **GOAL 3 - Conserve Longleaf Pine and Associated Ecosystems**

Provide technical and financial assistance to protect and manage longleaf pine in appropriate areas of East Texas.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1:** Support conservation through fee title easement or other structures to enable three (3) or more long-term working longleaf pine forests in each SGA.

**STRATEGY 3.1.1:** Develop a portfolio of conservation easement options, such as NRCS ACEP, USFS forest legacy, or other government / private partnership options.

**STRATEGY 3.1.2:** Encourage third-party forest certification of private lands.

**STRATEGY 3.1.3:** Support conservation on adjacent public lands, which allows support and resources to adjacent private land neighbors (local cooperative).

**STRATEGY 3.1.4:** Support development of financial incentives for conserving working forests through various forms of ecosystem services, carbon markets, watershed protection credits, ecosystem service markets, or other tax abatement rules, tax benefits, and other financial incentives to add value to working forestland ownership.

**STRATEGY 3.1.5:** Advocate for working forests (landowner, government) as cooperative landscape-scale areas within the SGA.

**OBJECTIVE 3.2:** Increase impact and sustainability of TLIT by coordinating with the Longleaf Alliance to establish a staff position in East Texas as soon as possible and no later than October 1, 2020.

**STRATEGY 3.2.1:** Form workgroup led by the TLIT Coordinator and major stakeholders, including the Longleaf Alliance, to draft a job description and define its relationship to the coordinator position as well as timelines.

**TACTIC 3.2.1.1:** Define how to increase sustainability and budget.

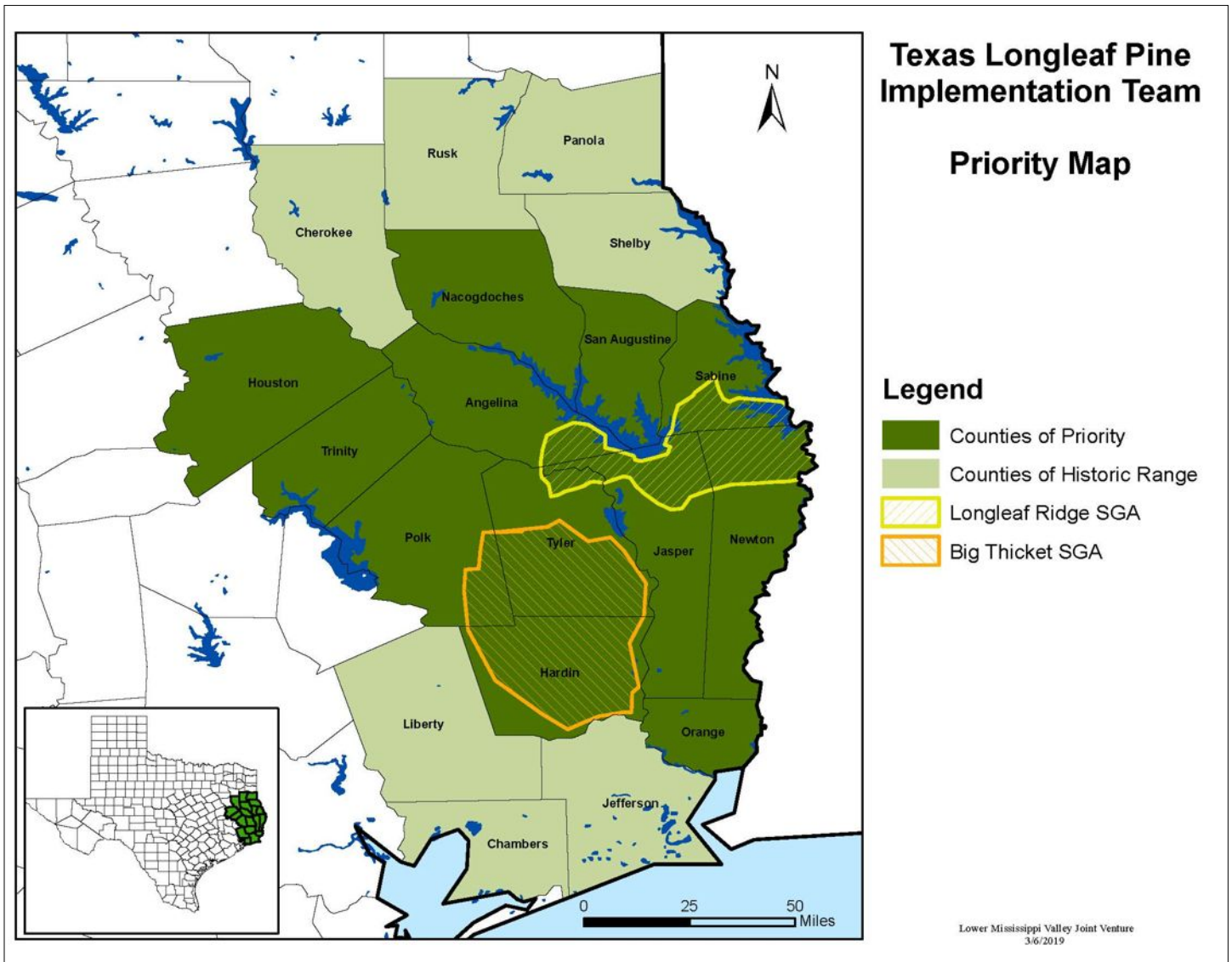
**TACTIC 3.2.1.2:** Identify and build relations with fiduciary agents, funding sources and draft grant proposal.

**TACTIC 3.2.1.3:** Secure fiduciary agent and submit grant.



# TLIT Landscape Priority Map

## Priority Funding and Strategic Map Considerations



TLIT Landscape Priority Map

**Historic** - The TLIT will consider projects to restore/enhance/maintain longleaf pine within the historic range of longleaf pine in East Texas, including Angelina, Chambers, Cherokee, Hardin, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Panola, Polk, Rusk, San Augustine, Sabine, Shelby, Trinity, and Tyler Counties (19 counties).

**Priority** - Projects identified in 12 counties that encompass the Longleaf Ridge and Big Thicket significant geographical areas (SGA)—including Shelby, Orange, Trinity Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, San Augustine, Sabine, and Tyler Counties—will be given priority over projects outside these 12 counties.

**Significant Geographic Areas (SGAs)** - Focus restoration activities in Significant Geographic Areas (SGAs) as anchor points for the TLIT highest priority projects. Projects identified within the Longleaf Ridge or Big Thicket SGAs will be ranked higher and given the highest priority over projects outside the SGAs. Filling gaps, consolidating block or forest patch size with restoration projects will be considered the highest priority for resource support.

## **Process discussion for determination of project funding and support**

Ranking of projects funded by TLIT will also consider landowners whose tracts can contribute to overall significance:

- a. Landscape level conservation impacts, and
- b. Adjacent to Anchor Points (USFS/TNC/NPS), or
- c. Other conservation site considerations.

All landowners must be willing to commit to maintaining the longleaf pine “works of improvement” for a minimum of 10 or more years.

All landowners must be willing to use prescribed fire to maintain their longleaf stands.



Winter prescribed burn / Aiken

# Implementation, Evaluation and Reporting (Monitoring)

Include expected outcomes and reporting (task) items for annual work plan and budget as described in the following tables (based on the 2018 NFWF Forestland Stewards program grant).

## TLIT – Pineywoods Conservation Outcomes

INDICATOR	METRIC	5 to 10 YEAR GOAL	LONG-TERM GOAL (define time period)
<b>Maintenance class Longleaf<sup>1</sup></b>	Acres of longleaf in maintenance class	100,000 acres (public)	300,000 acres (public)
		10,000 acres (private)	100,000 acres (private)
<b>Longleaf Pine Established</b>	Acres of longleaf pine established (planted)	10,000 acres (public)	100,000 acres (public)
		5,000 acres (private)	50,000 acres (private)
<b>Longleaf Pine Gained via Silviculture</b>	Acres of selected thinning, TSI & under-planting etc.	5,000 acres treated (public)	50,000 acres treated (public)
		2,000 acres burned (private)	20,000 acres burned (private)
<b>Prescribed Burning at 2-3yr intervals</b>	Acres of prescribed burning	300,000 acres burned (public)	900,000 acres burned (public)
		25,000 acres burned (private)	100,000 acres burned (private)
<b>Longleaf Pine Conserved (fee/easement)</b>	Acres of longleaf pine conserved	30,000 acres	100,000 acres
<b>Private Landowner Outreach</b>	Number of private landowners engaged in stewardship activities	30 private landowners	100 private landowners

**Develop a Financial Plan** to include partnership staff/coordination; administration; facilities/equipment; meetings/travel; contracts/landowner payments (restoration projects).

**Reporting – NFWF Framework for Reporting (align with final Conservation Plan)**

For each NFWF Longleaf Stewardship Fund grant, complete the following summary and upload into Easygrants. This document should not exceed one (1) page per project.

	1. Total Expected	2.Expected on Public Lands	3.Expected on Private Lands	4. Total Actual	5. Actual on Public Lands	6. Actual on Private Lands
Total Acres of Longleaf Pine Established	500	200	300			
Total Acres Treated to Improve or Maintain Longleaf Pine Ecosystem	2,000	1,000	1,000			
Acres of Prescribed Burning	40,000	30,000	10,000			
Acres of other treatments	100	100				
Total # of Private Landowners Engaged	30/year					

Goal #1 - Establish Longleaf Pine

Objective	Owner (responsible party)	Start Date	End Date	Comments
500 ac Restore	Public USFS/NPS	1/1/2019	12/30/2020	
500 ac Restore Pvt	TFS/NRCS/PFW	1/1/2019	12/30/2020	
400 Contacts	TFS/TX A&M	1/1/2019	12/30/2020	

Goal #2 - Enhance Longleaf Pine

Objective	Owner (responsible party)	Start Date	End Date	Comments
20,000 ac enhance	Public USFS/NPS	1/1/2019	12/30/2020	
5,000 ac enhance Pvt	TFS/NRCS/PFW	1/1/2019	12/30/2020	
1,000 ac mech/chem	TFS/NRCS/PFW	1/1/2019	12/30/2020	

Goal #3 - Conserve Longleaf Pine

Objective	Owner (responsible party)	Start Date	End Date	Comments
1,000 ac	TNC/TFS	1/1/2019	12/30/2020	



Prescribed burn at Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary / T. Parker Schuerman

Note: Cover photo and all banner photos courtesy of the Longleaf Alliance

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Longleaf spring pine cones / Stingray Phil

# Appendices

Appendix A: List of Agencies and Organizations – Plan Contributors

Appendix B: Annual Business Plan and Budget Format

Appendix C: Operations, Governance and Declaration of Partnership (DoP)

Appendix D: Communications Strategy

Appendix E: Glossary of Terms (Adapted from Texas Forestry Association)



Clockwise from top left: Pine Warbler at Roy E. Larsen Sandland Sanctuary / Rachel Rommel; Longleaf pine cone collection for reforestation in East Texas / Rufus Duncan; Louisiana Pine Snake / USFWS; Propeller Flower and Green Eyes / Jacqueline Ferrato