The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.
OVERVIEW

• TNC x NRCS collaboration in Longleaf Pine conservation in West Central Louisiana

• TNC x NRCS collaboration in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley tied to Farm Bill – Conservation Title (WRP/WRE) delivery and environmental market development
The Texas-Louisiana Longleaf Taskforce formed in 2010 to support the America’s Longleaf “Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine” in the four SGA’s located in the western Gulf region.

The West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Partnership (WLEP) formed in 2011 as a place-based project sanctioned by this taskforce.
SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES FOR LONGLEAF PINE CONSERVATION

Key
- Longleaf Pine Historic Range
- Federally Managed Lands

Longleaf Pine Acreage by County (FIA)
- 10,000 - 30,000 acres
- 30,000 - 100,000 acres
- 100,000+ acres

Significant Landscapes
- 20,000 acres
- 1,000,000 acres

ABOUT THIS MAP:
Significant Landscapes for Longleaf Conservation are regions where there is the potential to restore connected landscapes of over 100,000 acres of longleaf pine communities. These significant landscapes were developed from expert opinion and numerous data layers on the occurrence of longleaf forests and the rare and unique species found in this ecosystem. The circles are scaled to represent existing longleaf.

Data Sources:
- Longleaf Pine Acreage: USDA Forest Service, Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Data
- The 7th Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology, 20 June, JAX, Bethesda, Maryland
- Significant Landscapes for Longleaf Pine Conservation 2005: Land of the Linn County, Alabama School of Forestry and Natural Resources, Science, Auburn, Alabama

Legend:
- Black: Longleaf Pine Historic Range
- Blue: Federally Managed Lands
- Light Green: 10,000 - 30,000 acres
- Medium Green: 30,000 - 100,000 acres
- Dark Green: 100,000+ acres

1:7,000,000

0 50 100 200 300 Miles

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1:7,000,000

0 50 100 200 300 Miles
Longleaf
Flatwood/Savanna
Hillside Seepage Bog
Work collaboratively with multiple partners to accelerate restoration of longleaf pine and other native ecosystems on public and private lands within the project area.
WLEP Objectives

• Promote effective communication and collaboration among partners and landowners

• Leverage available resources and tools to best meet landowner needs

• Reduce duplication of effort between partners

• Provide networking and educational opportunities
Specific Actions Include

• Coordination among federal, state agencies and NGO’s to provide technical and financial resources in a focused, coordinated fashion, and

• Linking voluntary private landowner actions with actions on public lands to promote sustainable and secure native ecosystems that offer enduring ecological, social, and economic benefits.
Current Partnership Members

Association of Consulting Foresters-Louisiana Chapter
Department of Defense-JRTC and Fort Polk
Farm Service Agency
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Forestry Association
Louisiana Society of American Foresters
Louisiana State University AgCenter
National Wild Turkey Federation
Natural Resources Conservation Service
The Nature Conservancy-Louisiana
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service-Kisatchie National Forest
U.S. Forest Service-Southern Research Station

RED FONT INDICATES MEMBER OF TECHNICAL STEERING COMMITTEE
North America’s largest river basin

Natural floodplain from S. Illinois to Gulf of Mexico

Historically covered approximately 24 million acres

Flood of 1927 provides best estimate of natural boundary
WHY LMV? - AN ECOSYSTEM IN CRISIS

Alterations To Vegetative Structure

Historic Forest Cover

Current Forest Cover

75% Reduction in Forested Area

Fragmentation of Remaining 25% into 35,000+ Blocks

Nearly 100% Loss of "High-site" BLHW's
RESULT: HABITAT FRAGMENTATION
SOLUTION: LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY GROUPED AFFORESTATION PROGRAM
Two sources of income to landowner: TNC Carbon $ + USDA CRP/WRP $ =

Combined funds overcome landowner cost threshold (lost agricultural rent) to incentivize WRP/CRP participation

TNC Carbon financing funds:
- 100% of site prep & forest restoration
- Permanent easement & carbon rights
- VCS carbon project development and certification
ACHIEVE MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDER GOALS

• **USDA** achieves more WRP (30 yr.) & CRP signups

• **Corporate partner** reduces carbon footprint with VCS-verified carbon credits

• **Landowners** retain rights of use:
  - recreation/hunting with CRP & WRP
  - sustainable timber with CRP

• **TNC** stretches limited funding to increase conservation outcomes

• **US Taxpayer** achieves conservation at lower cost (TNC pays 100% of restoration)
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Three landowners enrolled in CRP

- Catlands LLC, Pondlands LLC, and Agnes Russell
- 434 acres in program via CRP
- 285 acres planted (2012)
- First WRP-30 year term to close by mid-August (150 acres)
- > 2,300 acres in “pipeline”
- Financed by $2M from Disney Corporation

Ronnie Ulmer, TNC LMVGAP Manager measures seedling growth in LMV

VCS validation of project design

- Achieved 11 October 2012
- First VCS ‘grouped project’ in USA on private lands
USDA – TNC Collaboration in LMV

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program proposal for AR-MS-LA has been submitted to USDA ($4.3M)
- Member of WRP Partners group and State Technical Committee
- Established development of a NRCS/TNC Cost Share position to advance conservation delivery of WRE in high priority areas of the LA LMAV
- Developing environmental market partnership with USDA tied to LMVGAP-Carbon rights acquisition
- NRCS designated a Special Project area to accelerate environmental market signup in the LMVGAP
- Conservation Innovation Grant to support water quality application to direct EQIP funding