

Another StrikeForce Conservation Success Story...

Appling County, Georgia

April 2012

Farmer Re-establishes Longleaf Pine Species on Several Acres

Donald Corrado has made managing trees a successful business. He's been able to take a few acres that he purchased more than 30 years ago and expand his operation into just under 200 acres of healthy forest land.

"I bought my first piece of property in 1977," Corrado said.

"It's a good program. It's good with helping you re-forest,"—Donald Corrado

A retiree from General Electric's Nuclear Division, Corrado moved to Baxley in 1972. Over the last few decades he has learned not only best management practices for growing trees, Corrado has also become a conservationist committed to protecting wildlife habitats on his property.

In 2009, retired District Conservationist Joey Futch in the Baxley office told Corrado how a few USDA-Natural Resources Conservation



County Soil Technician Linda Campbell and landowner, Donald Corrado.

(NRCS) programs could assist in meeting his goals.

Corrado applied for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and was approved for a contract.

That contract has helped Corrado with site preparation and planting longleaf pine as part of the Longleaf Pine Initiative. Longleaf pine is native to Georgia and is known to perpetuate wildlife habitat, prevent soil erosion and improve air quality.

"It's a good program. It's good with helping you re-forest," Corrado said.

He planted 600 longleaf seedlings per acre on a total of 21 acres.

"We had seven people planting the seedlings by hand. They finished in two days," Corrado explained.

The site also underwent herbaceous weed control after the seedlings were established. This practice involves spraying herbicide over the row of planted trees in the spring following planting to control undesirable competition.

Corrado said that EQIP technical and financial assistance, "was encouragement for me to plant longleaf. It's very expensive. I would have probably

planted slash pine without NRCS assistance,"

Corrado added that slash pine is less expensive and grows faster than the longleaf species.

In addition to the EQIP contract, Corrado also participates in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

A 2011 WHIP contract involved 27 acres in which more longleaf pine seedlings were established on Corrado's property.

By 2013, Corrado will apply a prescribed burn in order to control undesirable vegetation, control disease, reduce wildfire hazards and improve wildlife habitat.

Corrado sees both EQIP and WHIP as great ways to conserve natural resources for future generations. He said the government's financial assistance in protecting the land has been an important factor.



Because longleaf pines are fire tolerant they can survive prescribed burns as young as 2-years-old. Prescribed burning controls growth of undesirable vegetation and reduces wildfire hazards.



The longleaf pines pictured above are one year old.

"If I can get money from the government and perpetuate this native tree here, I'm game for it," Corrado added.

Appling County is a designated StrikeForce county in Georgia. The USDA StrikeForce Initiative is designated to help relieve persistent poverty in historically high-poverty counties.

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Conservation & Development Council
912-367-7679

 **NRCS** Natural Resources
Conservation Service
912-384-4811

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District
912-681-5241

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