



United States Department of Agriculture

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

2014 - Supplement to EQIP Manual

April 7, 2014

Longleaf Pine Initiative 2014



The Longleaf Pine Initiative (LLPI) was established in 2010 to offer an avenue for NRCS to support America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI). This initiative provides USDA the opportunity to fulfill its commitment to the overall national goal of restoring and enhancing 4.6 million acres in the unique longleaf pine ecosystem within the next 15 years, a goal that includes both public and private lands. Thus far, NRCS investments of \$25 million have successfully supported the restoration activities on 145,000 acres.

Goals:

The overall goal of the ALRI is to increase longleaf pine acreage from the existing 3.4 million acres to 8 million acres within fifteen years. This goal will be achieved by,

- Maintaining existing longleaf pine ecosystems in good condition
- Improving degraded acres classified as “longleaf forest types”
- On suitable sites, restoring longleaf pine forests on land currently in other forest types or land classifications.

The America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) Strategic Priorities and Actions 2013-2015, Longleaf Pine Initiative (ALRI) Strategic Priorities and Actions 2013-2015, Longleaf Pine Initiative States better guidance on our role, expectations, and the areas to target in support of the overall goal of the America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) for 2014 Longleaf Pine Initiative.

The America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) Conservation Plan calls for roughly doubling the acres of longleaf pine to 8 million acres. Potentially, 80 percent of the acreage increases will occur on private lands and 50 percent will occur within Significant Geographic Areas or state identified significant sites (See Figure- 1 Map of State Significant Geographical Areas). Georgia has identified Fort Benning, Fort Stewart, and Greater Okefenokee as our significant geographical areas.

515.51 - EQIP PROGRAM PRODUCER ELIGIBILITY FOR THE LONGLEAF PINE INITIATIVE

General Producer Eligibility Criteria.—To be eligible to participate in EQIP, an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

- a) Be a producer. to be considered a producer, the applicant must be—
 - i) A person, legal entity, Indian Tribe, or joint operation with signature authority; and
 - ii) Engaged in agricultural production or forestry management or have an interest in the agricultural or forestry operation associated with the land being offered for enrollment in EQIP. Interest in the farming operation means one of the following:
 - (1) Owner or renter of the land in the farming operation
 - (2) An interest in the agricultural products, commodities, or livestock produced by the farming operation; or
 - (3) A member of a joint operation that either owns or rents land in the farming operation or has an interest in the agricultural products, commodities, or livestock produced by the farming operation
- b) Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract period.
- c) Be in compliance with the provisions for protecting the interests of tenants and sharecroppers, including the provisions for sharing EQIP payments on a fair and equitable basis.

Georgia's supplemental material for EQIP Longleaf Pine Initiative 2014.

Fifty percent of Georgia's allocated funds will be utilized in GA NRCS significant geographic areas first. Priority counties are colored in pink, green and blue (See Map Figure- 1). All other counties are eligible for funding within Georgia's Longleaf Pine range. Georgia's identified priority areas will receive ranking priority.

1. Applicants enrolling ≥ 10 - acres.
2. Contracts will be for three (3) years.
3. Participant must develop and implement a forest management plan. Payment must not be issued until a copy of the forest management plan has been provided to NRCS.
4. NRCS-Georgia has set a 75% payment rate limit for this Longleaf Pine Initiative .
5. Plant montane variety longleaf pines seedlings in Piedmont Counties (see map) where applicable north of the piedmont line.
6. Control of invasive/exotic species *see list in FOTG under Herbaceous Weed Control (315)*.
7. Plant only containerized longleaf pine seedlings for both montane and coastal plain seedlings varieties. No bareroot longleaf pine seedlings are allowed to be planting in the 2014 Longleaf Pines Initiative program.
8. Both Tree and Shrub Establishment (612) and Tree and Shrub Preparation (490) practice has a (50) ac maximum cap.
9. Prescribe Burning practice (338) has a (125) ac maximum cap.
10. It is recommended that at least (1) prescribe burn be implemented within a contract.
11. Prescribe burning and pre-commercial thinning may only be used in existing longleaf pine stands.
12. The following are a list of counties appropriate for planting Mountain (Montane) species varieties: Baldwin, Bank, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Butt, Carroll, Chattooga, Clarke, Clayton Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Douglas, Elbert, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Gordon, Hall, Hancock, Haralson, Hart, Harris, Heard, Jackson, Jones, Lamar, Lincoln, Madison, Meriwether, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, McDuffie, Monroe, Morgan, Paulding, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Spalding, Stephens, Talbot, Taliaferro, Troup, Upson, Walton, Wilkes, and Warren.
13. Southern and coastal plain varieties containerized longleaf pines will be appropriate for areas south of the piedmont southern line.
14. *Advise landowners that Longleaf Pines have a difficult time surviving where soil PH exceeds 7. "On Old fields the recommended rate which Oust® is applied when PH exceeds 6.0 should be reduced, and Oust® should probably be avoided when PH exceeds 6.5 (Longleaf Alliance)."*

Approved and Required Land Uses for this Longleaf Initiative:

Forest

Approved Natural Resource Concerns:

<i>Degraded Plant Condition</i>
<i>Excessive Plant Pest Pressure</i>
<i>Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health</i>
<i>Inadequate Habitat For Fish and Wildlife</i>
<i>Habitat Degradation-Food, Water, Cover/Shelter and Habitat Continuity/Space</i>

Core practices required to be offered for this initiative:

<i>Practice Name</i>	<i>Practice Code</i>
<i>Forest Stand Improvement</i>	<i>666</i>
<i>Prescribed Burning</i>	<i>338</i>
<i>Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats</i>	<i>643</i>
<i>Tree/Shrub Establishment</i>	<i>612</i>

Supporting practices may be offered to support this initiative:

<i>Practice Name</i>	<i>Practice Code</i>
<i>Tree/Shrub Site Preparation</i>	<i>490</i>
<i>Access Control</i>	<i>472</i>
<i>Brush Management</i>	<i>314</i>
<i>Conservation Cover</i>	<i>327</i>
<i>Early Successional Habitat Development/Management</i>	<i>647</i>
<i>Upland Wildlife Habitat</i>	<i>645</i>
<i>Firebreak</i>	<i>394</i>
<i>Forest Trails and Landings</i>	<i>655</i>
<i>Herbaceous weed control</i>	<i>315</i>
<i>Silvopasture Establishment</i>	<i>381</i>
<i>Fence</i>	<i>382</i>

Conservation Activity Plans (CAPS)

<i>Practice Name</i>	<i>Practice Code</i>
Forest Management Plan	106
Prescribed Burning Plan	112

PROGRAM EVALUATION

NRCS-Georgia uses the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) as one potential gauge of effectiveness of the habitat improvements and conservation practices implemented. Habitat Suitability Index (HSI), calculates the change in HSI after EQIP practices are implemented. The Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) is located in GA FOTG; section III, Resource Management Systems by Land Use, select Pine Woodlands tab.

Figure-1

Georgia Longleaf Pine Counties Map

