

## Eligibility Requirements

- Minimum 10 acres of forest land that is overstocked, under stocked, and subject to fire hazard, disease, or insect infestation
- Minimum 10 acres required for tree planting.
- Lands currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), EQIP, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), or other Farm Bill programs are ineligible.

## Steps in the Application Process

- Stop by your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to process or clear your eligibility to participate in USDA farm programs.
- Visit the Natural Resources Conservation Service/Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office to apply for the Partnership Initiative Targeting Underserved Forest Landowners.
- Applications will be ranked and considered for approval as quickly as possible and as funds are available.
- A forester with the Alabama Forestry Commission will visit with you to develop a forest stewardship plan on your farm.
- If funded, you will be contacted and NRCS will work with you to develop a schedule of planned practices along with funding for your practices.
- NRCS and AFC will assist landowners in the application of practices. Upon completion, landowners will file bills with the NRCS office for payment.

## Contact Information

<u>County</u>	<u>NRCS and SWCD Office</u>	<u>AFC Office</u>
Bibb	205-926-4360	205-926-4917
Dallas	334-872-2611	334-875-7131
Hale	334-624-3856	334-624-8073
Macon	334-727-3763	334-725-0034
Marengo	334-295-8724	334-295-5811
Perry	334-683-9017	334-683-8537
Pickens	205-367-8168	205-367-8232
Sumter	205-652-7521	205-652-6500
Wilcox	334-682-4117	334-682-4421

### Farm Service Agency Offices

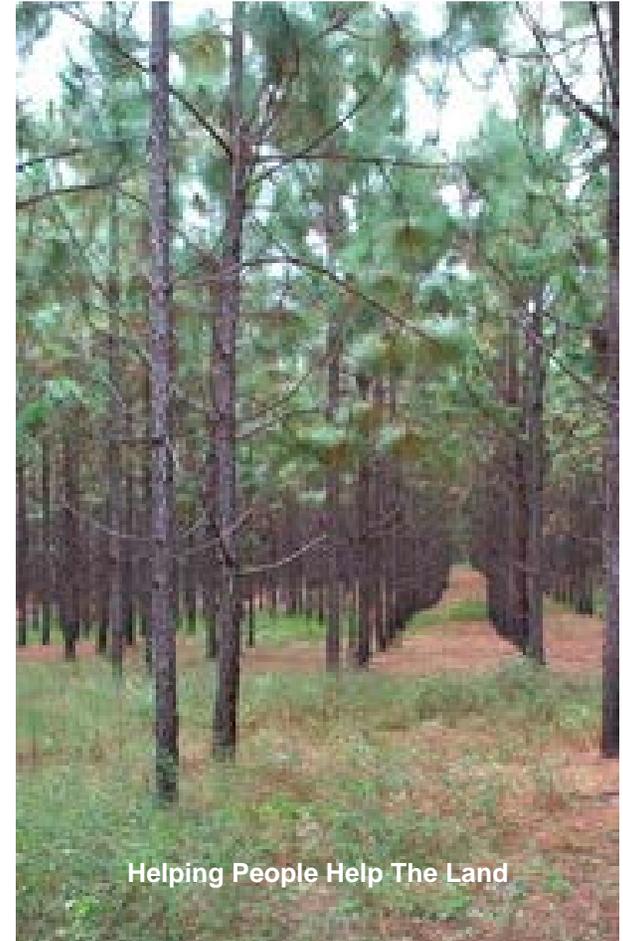
Bibb County	334-683-9017
Dallas County	334-872-3433
Hale County	334-624-3856
Macon County	334-298-6925
Marengo County	334-295-8724
Perry County	334-683-9017
Pickens County	205-553-1733
Sumter County	205-372-3271
Wilcox County	334-682-4825

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(October 2012)

# Alabama Partnership Initiative Targeting Underserved Forest Landowners



Helping People Help The Land

## Improving Forest Health

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) are working together on a Partnership Initiative Targeting Underserved Landowners in the Black Belt region of Alabama. Funds for this initiative will be administered through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and will target underserved landowners in Bibb, Dallas, Hale, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, and Wilcox Counties. This program is designed to promote and inform private forest landowners about forest stand improvement practices that can improve growth, reduce risk of wildfire and insect damage, and improve forest health.

Lands eligible for this initiative are forestlands that are overstocked, under stocked, and subject to fire hazard, disease, or insect infestation and that are not enrolled in any other EQIP or Farm Bill programs.

Forestland makes up about two-thirds of the state, and many of these acres are overstocked and at risk of wildfire damage. Worse yet, insects and diseases harm the forest more than wildfires. In fact, they destroy 43 times more trees than wildfires.

Forest stand improvement is an intermediate treatment made to improve the composition, structure, condition, health, and growth of even- or uneven-aged stands.

The EQIP Partnership Initiative Targeting Underserved Forest Landowners is one of many conservation efforts undertaken by government and private groups aimed at improving or restoring forests in the Southeast.

The goal of this initiative is to aid in forest restoration efforts by supporting and encouraging forest stand improvement practices.

## Conservation Practices

### Approved Conservation Practices

- Prescribed burning
- Firebreaks
- Fuel breaks
- Pre-commercial thinning
- Hardwood tree planting
- Loblolly tree planting
- Longleaf tree planting
- Site preparation practices that are needed for tree planting

### Prescribed Burning

The deliberate use of fire can help manage a forest, but it is a complex management tool that should only be used by those who are trained and experienced in its use.

Prescribed burning helps to eliminate pine needles, hardwood leaves, fallen branches, herbaceous vegetation, and other fuels that can accumulate on the ground and increase the chance of damage to young stands if a wildfire erupts.

Refer to Alabama Guide Sheet No. AL 338 for more information on prescribed burning.



*Applying fire to predetermined areas under conditions where the intensity and spread of the fire are controlled can reduce the risk of damaging wildfires.*

### Forest Stand Improvement

Forest stand improvement practices are used to improve the overall quality and health of a timber stand. Improving timber stands can lead to

improved quality and quantities of products harvested from the timber stand, as well as reduce potential damage from pests and wildfire, improve wildlife habitat, restore natural plant life, and increase aesthetic and recreational value of the forestland.

For more information, refer to the Forest Health Initiative Specification Sheets on Pre-commercial Thinning and Heavy Thinning of Pine Stands, as well as USDA-NRCS Job Sheet 666: Forest Stand Improvement. All information referred to in this brochure is available online:

[www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/](http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/)



*Firebreaks work by slowing a fire's progress or stopping it altogether, whether it is a prescribed burn or wildfire. Firebreaks should be at least 8 to 10 feet wide.*

### Firebreaks and Fuel Breaks

Firebreaks help protect soil, water, air, plant, animal, and human resources by preventing the spread of wildfires or containing prescribed fires by using strips of bare land or vegetation that slow fire's progress.

Firebreaks may be temporary or permanent and should be located to minimize risk to the resources being protected. Constructed firebreaks should also tie into existing natural barriers where possible.

For more information on firebreaks, refer to Alabama Guide Sheet No. AL 394.

### Longleaf Pine Establishment

In addition to prescribed burning, firebreaks, and forest stand improvement, longleaf pine establishment has been added as an approved conservation practice.