

# Longleaf Pine Initiative

## 2016 Progress Report

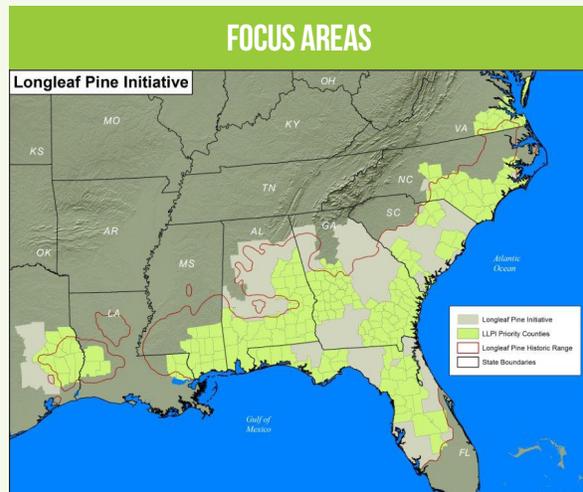
Longleaf pine forests once encompassed more than 90 million acres across the Southeast, stretching from eastern Texas through central Florida to southern Virginia. These forests represent some of the world's most biologically diverse ecosystems and are home to nearly 600 plant and animal species, including 29 threatened and endangered species. But over the past two centuries, development, timbering and fire suppression have reduced the forested area by almost 97 percent.

NRCS works with agricultural producers and conservation partners to restore longleaf pine forests through the Longleaf Pine Initiative (LLPI), which was launched in 2010. From 2010 to 2016, NRCS has helped producers restore nearly 400,000 acres on private lands. Together with other conservation efforts, the amount of longleaf pine forests has grown from 3 million acres to nearly 5 million acres during this time period, reversing a century-long decline across the region.

### NRCS and Longleaf Pine Forests

Through LLPI, NRCS works with producers on private lands in nine states to improve the sustainability and profitability of longleaf pine forests. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to producers, helping them identify and implement a variety of conservation practices. These practices enable landowners to improve these unique forests by establishing new trees and maintaining the ecosystem using prescribed burning or other stand improvement techniques.

LLPI targets efforts in priority counties because of their value in connecting existing longleaf landscapes, providing better habitat and generating more environmental benefits, like cleaner air and water, because of the forests' larger footprints. These targeted areas are usually located in the vicinity of a military installation, a national forest, national wildlife refuge, state forest or heritage reserve.



### Outcomes and Impacts

LLPI enables producers to make conservation improvements on their forestlands with NRCS providing technical and financial help. A healthier, more resilient longleaf pine forest can translate into an increase in forest products, improved wildlife habitat and more efficient operations through the use of forest management practices.

Meanwhile, LLPI helps increase the number of longleaf pine forests across the region, helping regenerate this unique ecosystem. Longleaf forests provide ample recreational opportunities. Many wildlife species like the gopher tortoise and red-cockaded woodpecker, both protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), depend on these forests for habitat. Additionally, healthier forests lead to other natural resource benefits, such as cleaner water and air and healthier soil.

Conservation programs provide assistance to landowners to help them manage longleaf forests.



Fiscal Year 2016 Longleaf Pine Initiative NRCS Financial Assistance (FA) and Active and Completed Contracts

	Contracts	Acres	Obligations
Alabama	315	48,652	\$3,787,995
Florida	75	6,161	\$1,282,162
Georgia	215	15,076	\$3,163,694
Louisiana	31	3,656	\$679,312
Mississippi	91	15,908	\$865,008
North Carolina	42	3,784	\$758,037
South Carolina	97	10,636	\$2,013,366
Texas	10	1,233	\$123,569
Virginia	7	2,040	\$174,347
<b>Total</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>107,144</b>	<b>\$12,847,489</b>

Data source: NRCS Resource Economics, Analysis and Policy Division, November 2016

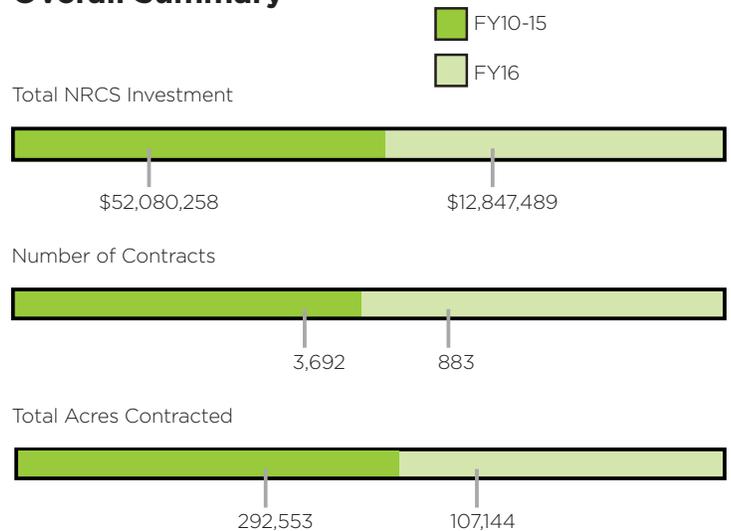
### Tracking Progress

NRCS' longleaf pine conservation efforts support those of the American Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI), a collaborative effort that actively supports range-wide efforts to restore and conserve longleaf pine ecosystems. ALRI's Range-Wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine has a goal of protecting, restoring and enhancing an additional 4.6 million acres of longleaf pine ecosystems in the natural longleaf pine range by 2025. NRCS is working to help ALRI meet those goals, including work in targeted counties.



Efforts to restore longleaf forests on private lands benefits many wildlife species, including the gopher tortoise.

### Overall Summary



### Milestone:

NRCS aims to exceed the ALRI goal that restoration activities take place in priority counties.

