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News Release

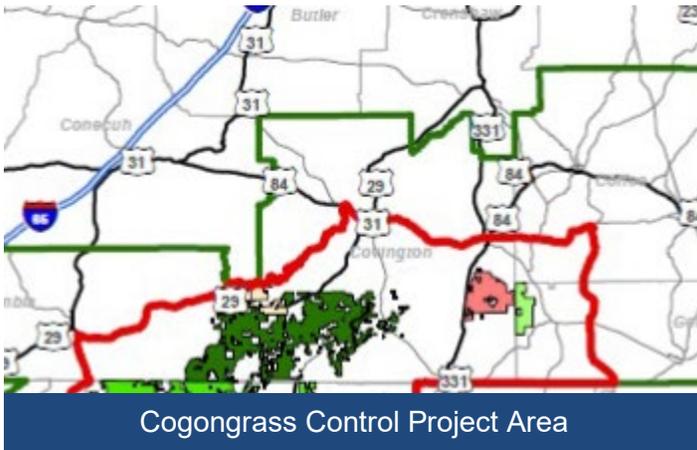
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Alabama NRCS Announces New Joint Chiefs' Partnership Project

AUBURN, Ala., February 8, 2021, – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service announced a new Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership project called *The Sustaining Gains in Longleaf Pine Restoration through Coordinated Cogongrass Control* project. The sign-up deadline is **March 26, 2021**.

The mission of the project is to manage and protect successful longleaf pine ecosystem restoration on 1.2 million acres in south-central Alabama and northwest Florida, including the Conecuh National Forest. The project area represents the heart of the largest significant geographic area identified in *America’s Longleaf Range-wide Conservation Plan*. It is the core landscape targeted by the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP), a partnership coordinated by The Longleaf Alliance. However, past and future investments in this landscape are threatened by cogongrass, one of the world’s top-ten worst weeds. Cogongrass is known for its high-density growth, high burning intensity, poor value as wildlife habitat, and difficulty to control.



This project seeks to complement existing investments in restoring fire regimes, rare species habitat, and watershed health by increasing capacity for cogongrass control, especially on private land.

The project will support a landscape-focused, coordination-intensive partnership that ensures control treatments are prioritized and implemented across boundaries of public and private land, rights-of-way, and state lines.

Partners in this project include: USDA Forest Service, Alabama Forestry Commission, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Florida Forest Service, Covington County Soil and Water Conservation District, Alabama Department of Transportation,

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Florida Department of Transportation, Alabama counties of Covington and Escambia, Florida counties of Okaloosa and Santa Rosa, Northwest Florida Water Management District, US Navy, and Auburn University. Priority will be given to applicants within the designated red area on the map, above.

Eligible practices include herbaceous weed treatment for cogongrass eradication, and conservation cover, critical area treatment, and Native Warm Season Grass planting to re-establish adequate vegetation.

To learn more about financial and technical assistance available to help Alabama farmers and other landowners improve and protect their land, visit NRCS in Alabama's website at www.al.nrcs.usda.gov, or visit your local NRCS office. USDA service center locations are listed at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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