

Longleaf Pine Expand and Coordinate Inventory and Mapping

Background

The Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine (RCPLP) calls for improved, comprehensive and coordinated efforts to identify existing longleaf forests, their overstory and understory condition, fire regimes and conservation values. The RCPLP also calls for mapping and data management in order to refine Significant Geographic Areas, monitor progress in meeting goals, support more detailed conservation planning, and identify management needs within specific Landscapes or Sites. Improved inventory and mapping is central to both longleaf restoration and to better address many of the broader questions of forest sustainability as southern forests. The current Plan's longleaf forest acreage estimates were largely based on the USDA Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data supplemented with stand level data from three agencies. Precision estimates are low at the county or sub-state levels, and lack detail to address inventory and monitoring needs for the ecosystem.

Applicable RCPLP Key Actions:

Public Lands Strategy, Objective A, Key Action 1 (page 10):

- ▷ **RCPLP Key Action 1**—Agencies will determine ongoing and planned management and restoration on public lands.

Private Lands Strategy, Objectives A and B, Key Actions 4 and 11 (page 12-13):

- ▷ **RCPLP Key Action 4**—Develop a robust system to inventory those lands under publicly held conservation easements and determine their current and potential support for active management and restoration of longleaf with particular attention to those easements within Significant Geographic Areas.
- ▷ **RCPLP Key Action 11**—Develop a comprehensive database capturing in a spatially explicit manner the longleaf-related activities of all federal and state agencies administering landowner assistance as a means of promoting coordination and measuring success within the Significant Geographic Areas and across the range.

Fire Management Strategy, Objective A, Key Action 1 (page 16):

- ▷ **RCPLP Key Action 1**—Work with USDA Forest Service (Forest Inventory and Analysis), State forestry and State wildlife agencies and others to develop estimates of longleaf acres by ecological condition class and management category.

Significant Geographic Areas, Objectives A and B, Key Actions 2a and 3 (page 23):

- ▷ **RCPLP Key Action 2a**—Complete a long-term sustainability assessment of the first iteration of 16 Significant Landscapes for Longleaf Pine Conservation for (a) ecologically appropriate boundaries, landownership, current condition, and management needs (maintain, improve, restore).
- ▷ **RCPLP Key Action 3**—Complete a more thorough remote sensing assessment and ground validation of extant stands of longleaf pine throughout the historic range of the species.

Subcommittee Recommendations

It is the opinion of the SERPPAS Subcommittee on Longleaf Pine that a concerted effort by the SERPPAS Principals can substantially address challenges and provide coordination that draws upon expertise of many of the agencies and organizations represented in SERPPAS. The concept of producing the “Good Map” has been central to SERPPAS. This is, in part, a continuation of that approach. Therefore, the Subcommittee recommends the issues of inventory and mapping relative to the longleaf ecosystem be adopted as a SERPPAS organizational priority. Furthermore, the Subcommittee recommends that US Fish and Wildlife Service and North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources be invited to take leadership in overseeing implementation of key actions listed above.