

DECLARATION STATEMENT

by

The Longleaf Alliance

MISSION

The Mission of The Longleaf Alliance is the restoration of the longleaf pine forest ecosystem across its range, emphasizing its economic and ecological values through research, education, and outreach. To accomplish this mission, The Longleaf Alliance will work throughout the range of longleaf pine to emphasize the ecological, economic, social, and historic importance of this once vast ecosystem. Since its original formation in 1995, The Longleaf Alliance has used outreach, education, research, direct involvement and hands-on experience to develop and provide the best available information and support in an unbiased manner to landowners, managers, policy makers, educators, and the public. Highlights of our contributions to longleaf conservation since 1995 include:

- Supported the addition of 1.4 million acres planted back to longleaf pine – the first ever increase in the ecosystem
- Contributed to a 100% increase in containerized longleaf seedlings and significant increases in planting success
- Conducted more than 850 workshops, seminars, and presentations to professionals, land managers, and land owners in all 9 states in the longleaf range
- Developed publications, brochures, and videos on all aspects of longleaf pine management
- Developed and delivered the elementary curriculum, “Teaching Kids the Longleaf Story”
- Identified and contributed to applied research necessary for longleaf restoration and transfer of research findings
- Hosted 8 major regional conferences, 3 mountain longleaf conferences, 4 nursery conferences, and an understory restoration conference
- Served as the catalyst for creation of Prescribed Fire Councils
- Initiated the Regional Longleaf Working Group that resulted in development of the *Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine* and *America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative*
- Conducted 21 Longleaf Academies providing over 450 forestry and wildlife professionals with the latest information on longleaf pine management in the context of history, economics and ecology
- Incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit organization in 2007 to better address the demands of longleaf conservation

INTERESTS

The vision of The Longleaf Alliance (LLA) is restoration, management and conservation of the longleaf ecosystem such that much of the south can once again claim and benefit from functional longleaf forests. Forests that support local economies, encourage healthy lifestyles with a connection to nature, provide habitats for native wildlife and plants, serve as natural classrooms, provide for outdoor recreation, support the legacy of stewardship that can be entrusted to future generations, supply public benefits such as clean water and clean air, and provide a link to our history and culture as Americans. We will use guidance documents including the Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine (Range-wide Plan), State Wildlife Action Plans, Statewide Forest Resource Assessments, and recovery plans for the many threatened and endangered wildlife species of longleaf ecosystems to inform and increase the effectiveness of our on-the-ground efforts.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

We will contribute to longleaf conservation in the following ways:

1. Sustainability of Longleaf Forests

Through biennial conferences, workshops, field days, publications, newsletters and social media, the LLA will encourage and support the transfer of ownership and responsibility of longleaf forests from this generation to the next such that existing forests remain intact and new longleaf forests are added throughout the range. We will support and encourage sustainable management of longleaf forests through outreach, education, technical assistance, policy influence, and partnership support. The Longleaf Alliance will support the long-term protection and management of longleaf or potential longleaf forests through identification of key properties, policy initiatives, and ownership where appropriate.

2. Education & Training to Facilitate Longleaf Conservation

The LLA will continue to provide quality training and education that delivers the latest information on longleaf conservation and management to all audiences throughout the range through Longleaf Academies, workshops, field days, and conferences. Longleaf Academies and associated continuing education opportunities will develop and support a range-wide network of natural resource professionals that can provide assistance to the growing number of private and public landowners whose objectives include longleaf. We will work with our partners, legislators, and major media outlets to elevate longleaf conservation as a national issue. We will work with universities to update curricula and add unique learning experiences to prepare the next generation of natural resource professionals to restore and manage longleaf forests. We will develop the next generation of longleaf landowners and supporters through promoting the use of our longleaf curriculum, *Teaching Kids the Longleaf Story*.

3. Communicating effectively and facilitating communication among partners

Through our website, quarterly and electronic newsletters, social media and other means the LLA will continue to serve as a clearinghouse of longleaf information and work with partners to develop a gathering point for accomplishments and progress related to America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative. We will continue to serve as connectors of those interested in longleaf restoration, making the necessary matches between expertise, available resources and opportunity to insure that good communication translates into tangible gains in acres of longleaf restored, managed and protected. LLA will maintain and enhance our capacity to meet the constant, tremendous demand for technical assistance through phone consultations, site visits, and email responses.

4. Facilitation and Integration of Efforts

Since 1995, the LLA has become a range-wide network of longleaf landowners, managers, educators, researchers, and corporations with the LLA staff and services connecting longleaf enthusiasts such that longleaf forests are restored, managed and protected. We will continue to provide these vital connections in a way that restores the longleaf ecosystem and supports integration of efforts to implement the Range-wide Plan. LLA will also support and link longleaf partnerships in priority landscapes and local teams focused on implementing the Range-wide Plan. We will support and expand on successful models such as the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) and help to convey lessons learned from GCPEP to new longleaf conservation partnerships. We will work with our partners to develop a common understanding of success and shared measures of progress relative to longleaf restoration and implementation of the Range-wide Plan. We will support evolution of the planning effort related to longleaf conservation and convene a regional group to assess progress and needs as appropriate.

5. Economics and Incentives

Private lands comprise the vast majority of properties currently or potentially available for longleaf restoration and management, and the LLA will continue to focus our efforts on assisting private landowners in meeting their objectives for longleaf and their ability to retain working longleaf forests. We will work to develop and provide accurate economics information to assist landowners in choosing longleaf and making decisions about managing their longleaf forests. Necessary tools include growth and yield models for natural and plantation stands, risk assessments, decision tools that provide for comparisons between economic and ecological outcomes, and market projections for products such as poles, specialty building materials, and pinestraw. We will contribute the technical expertise needed for development of ecosystem markets applicable to longleaf forests and will continue to work with partners to develop the Sandhills Habitat Credit trading system to benefit longleaf ecosystem conservation for gopher tortoises and other priority species. We will work with industries and certification systems to raise awareness of the impacts of their programs and choices on longleaf conservation. We will work with state and federal policy makers to ensure that incentive programs meet the needs of landowners and work effectively with longleaf restoration and management needs and schedules.

6. Management and Restoration

The LLA will continue to develop and disseminate the most current and accurate information available on management of the longleaf ecosystem. We will continue to work with our partners in the nursery industry to provide high quality longleaf seedlings, predict demand, and facilitate transfer of seedlings to landowners. We will support a range-wide effort to assemble available information, develop appropriate techniques, and increase availability of understory plants for restoration. We will work with Fire Councils and other partners to maintain and increase the use of prescribed fire to restore and maintain longleaf forests through education and promotion, publications, advocacy, and policy development and influence. We will work with our partners to promote control of invasive species and make landowners aware of available assistance. We will assist in developing and disseminating information on silvicultural techniques including mid-rotation management, maintenance of forests developed through incentive programs, and gradual conversion of mature slash and loblolly forests to longleaf through gap transition. We will work with our partners to develop Desired

Forest Conditions for longleaf that translate management decisions into future habitat conditions for wildlife species. Where appropriate such as in the GCPEP landscape, LLA will actively participate in managing high priority longleaf forests through support of shared staff, coordination of partner activities, and engagement of private landowners.

7. Research

The LLA will continue to identify research needs based on the problems encountered in managing longleaf and assist researchers in designing and implementing research projects. LLA will work with researchers to translate and disseminate findings to landowners and land managers. We will enhance our website to serve as a tool for cataloging available research and facilitating exchange of research needs and results. We will maintain and add to our range-wide network of Louis Justice Field Demonstration Sites to provide valuable tools for teaching and outreach of research findings and related management techniques.

SIGNATORY



Rhett Johnson, President, Board of Directors
The Longleaf Alliance, Inc.



Emily Jo Williams, Executive Director
The Longleaf Alliance, Inc.

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