National Wildlife Federation
Southeast Forestry Program

Working with Partners to Restore Longleaf Pine

Photo: Tiffany Woods
Randy Tate
Longleaf Pine Restoration

• Once covered as much as 90 million acres throughout the southeast
• Today approximately 4 million acres remain (97% decline in 200 years)
• One of the most endangered ecosystems in North America
• Significant cultural, economic, ecological and social values
Longleaf Pine Restoration

- Significant Wildlife Value
  - Endangered, threatened and keystone species
  - Game species
  - Birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians

Photo: Steve Jennings
Photo: Courtesy of NFWF
Photo: Kevin Stohlgren
Photo: Steve Jennings
NWF Longleaf Efforts

- In partnership with the **Alabama Wildlife Federation**
- **13,000+ acres** restored and enhanced since 2007
- Private Landowner Assistance
- Technical, financial, and cost-share advice—**at no cost to landowner**
- NWF prioritizes longleaf at the regional and national level
What we are trying to restore:
Longleaf Pine Straw

Attributes

– Most favored species
– 7-18 inches
– High quality product with more resin
  • Breaks down slowly
  • Lasts longer
  • Retains color
– Natural stands or plantations
– Average yield 50-100 bales per acre
Longleaf Pine Straw

NWF’s Best Management Guidelines

- Balance pine straw income with wildlife needs
- Voluntary
- Optimization rather than maximization
- Developed by expert biologist with technical advisory committee
- Available online
Pine Straw Guidelines

Overview of Recommendations

- Only if site is suitable!
- Plant longleaf on existing cropland or pine plantation lands, do not convert natural stands
- “lifting” pine straw with pitchfork
- Prescribed fire every 2-3 years
- Thin as needed, progress stands to “open canopy”, then stop raking
- Leave brush/debris piles
- Collect red needles, not brown
Pine Straw & Invasive Species
Pine Straw & Invasives

• The spread of invasive species is a growing problem as pine straw markets surge
• i.e. Cogongrass, Japanese climbing fern
• Areas that contain invasive species should not be harvested
• Equipment should be inspected and sanitized on regular basis
• Raked straw and bales should be examined for seeds and fragments of plants before taken off site
• More research is needed, as well as precautions to prevent spreading
What Can I do?

- Inspect your pine straw bales
- Use our guidelines
- Talk to garden centers, clubs, contractors, neighbors...
- Spread Awareness, not invasives!