

The Federation Establishes a Partnership with the USDA to Engage in Longleaf Pine Restoration



ATLANTA...The Federation is the only regional African American organization that focuses on minority and underserved landowners that is now in partnership with the Federation government to restore America's Longleaf Pine. The was signed in June 2011.

Below is the narrative about the partnership that includes the history of this project along with its purpose and guiding principles. If you would like to participate in this project, please contact Joelette Crawl on the Federation staff at 205 652 9676 for more information.

The Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Interior (DOI), and Defense (DoD) (hereafter "federal partners") hereby enter into this **DECLARATION OF PARTNERSHIP** with state government, private, and not-for-profit conservation partners (hereafter, "longleaf partners") to further the restoration of longleaf pine forest ecosystems throughout their former range.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Declaration of Partnership is to establish a process of cooperation between federal and longleaf partners to achieve the goals of the *America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative* as initially set forth in the *Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine*, and thereby to secure the full spectrum of ecological, economic and social values of the longleaf pine ecosystem.

BACKGROUND

The USDA, DOI, and DoD have long-standing interests in the conservation of the longleaf pine ecosystem with its numerous

associated plant and animal species and significant economic and social values. The federal partners recognized that restoration of the longleaf ecosystem can only be fully realized through voluntary, collaborative efforts of the many state and federal agencies, not-for-profit conservation organizations and private landowners and land managers that share similar interests in the restoration of longleaf. Both federal and longleaf partners made significant contributions in the establishment of the *America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative* (ALRI) with the ambitious goal to maintain, improve or restore 8 million acres of longleaf forests from the current 3.5 million acres.

The *Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine* (hereafter, "Conservation Plan") was developed and released in March 2009 to serve as a catalyst for action in support of ALRI. The Conservation Plan represents a broadly-supported region-wide effort to coordinate conservation activities across the entire range of longleaf forests in a way that supports, improves and accelerates the cumulative success and effectiveness of longleaf restoration efforts.

In April 2010, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum to launch the *America's Great Outdoors* (AGO)

Initiative, an effort to promote and support community-based activities to conserve outdoor spaces. In identifying examples of landscape-scale efforts that support AGO, the longleaf pine ecosystem was identified as a priority landscape of national significance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

On-the-ground efforts and related contributions will serve to support the goals of the Conservation Plan. The signatory partners intend to cooperate to achieve the following goals identified in the Conservation Plan:

- a. **Maintain** existing longleaf ecosystems in good condition;
- b. **Improve** acres classified as "longleaf forest types" and with longleaf trees present but missing significant components of understory communities and fire regimes; and
- c. **Restore** longleaf pine forests to suitable sites currently in other forest types or land classifications.



Photo above: Ralph Paige, Executive Director; Joelette Crawl, Federation Forestry staff; Thomas Tidwell, Chief, U. S. Forest Service on tour of the Federation's Training Center Forestry Project at 2010 Annual Meeting.