



United States Department of Agriculture

EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentives Program

2015 - Supplement to EQIP Manual

May, 2015

Longleaf Pine Initiative 2015



The Longleaf Pine Initiative began when an interdepartmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among USDA, the Department of Interior and the Department of Defense identified the longleaf pine ecosystem as a priority resource concern and established America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI). The collaboration of key partners began in 2010 to offer an avenue for NRCS to support America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI). This initiative provides USDA the opportunity to fulfill its commitment to the overall national goal of restoring and enhancing 4.6 million acres in the unique longleaf pine ecosystem within the

next 15 years, a goal that includes both public and private lands. Thus far, NRCS investments of \$25 million have successfully supported the restoration activities on 145,000 acres.

Goals:

The overall goal of the ALRI is to increase longleaf pine acreage from the existing 3.4 million acres to 8 million acres within fifteen years. This goal will be achieved by:

- Maintaining existing longleaf pine ecosystems in good condition
- Improving degraded acres classified as “longleaf forest types”
- On suitable sites, restoring longleaf pine forests on land currently in other forest types or land classifications.

For better guidance on NRCS’ role and expectations in The America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI), consult the ALRI Strategic Priorities and Actions 2013-2015 document. The America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) Conservation Plan calls for roughly doubling the acres of longleaf pine to 8 million acres. *Potentially, 80 percent of the acreage increases will occur on private lands and 80 percent will occur within Significant Geographic Areas or state identified significant sites in Georgia.*

Georgia has identified private lands surrounding *Fort Benning, Fort Stewart, and Greater Okefenokee* as our significant geographical areas. (See *Figure 1*)

EQIP Longleaf Pine Initiative (LLPI) 2015.

Eighty percent of Georgia’s allocated funds will be utilized in GA NRCS significant geographic areas. Priority counties or significant geographically areas are identified in pink, green and blue (See *Figure 1*). The remaining twenty percent of the allocated funds will be utilized within the Longleaf Pine Initiative range. Georgia’s identified priority areas will receive **ranking priority**.

The following applies to LLPI:

- All acres in the Longleaf Pine Range are eligible for LLPI.
- Contracts will be for two (2) years.
- Participant must develop and implement a forest management plan or a conservation plan prior to payment. Payment must not be issued for practices implemented until a copy of the forest management plan or conservation plan has been provided to NRCS.
- NRCS-Georgia has a general 75% payment rate for the Longleaf Pine Initiative. Beginning, limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers will receive 90% payment rate.
- Plant montane (mountain) variety longleaf pine seedlings in Piedmont Counties (see *Figure 1*) where applicable.
- Control of invasive/exotic species where applicable (see list in FOTG under Herbaceous Weed Control (315)).

- Provide landowners with the Herbicide/Pesticide Form when applying chemicals to forested tracts.
- Plant ONLY containerized longleaf pine seedlings for both montane and coastal plain seedling varieties. Bare root longleaf pine seedlings are not allowed in 2015 LLPI.
- Tree and Shrub Establishment (612) has a maximum payment rate of \$20,000.00
- Tree and Shrub Preparation (490) has a maximum payment rate of \$17,000.00
- Prescribe Burning (338) has a maximum payment rate of \$2,747.50
- It is recommended that at least (1) prescribe burn be implemented within a contract, in existing Longleaf Pine stands.
- Pre-commercial thinning may only be used in existing longleaf pine stands.
- A minimum of one core conservation practice must be offered for the LLPI. The following are a list of core conservation practices: Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats, Prescribe Burning, Forest Stand Improvement, and Tree/Shrub Establishment.
- The following are a list of counties where planting Montane varieties is appropriate: Baldwin, Bank, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Butt, Carroll, Chattooga, Clarke, Clayton Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Douglas, Elbert, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Gordon, Hall, Hancock, Haralson, Hart, Harris, Heard, Jackson, Jones, Lamar, Lincoln, Madison, Meriwether, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, McDuffie, Monroe, Morgan, Paulding, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Spalding, Stephens, Talbot, Taliaferro, Troup, Upson, Walton, Wilkes, and Warren.
- Southern and coastal plain varieties of containerized longleaf pine seedlings are appropriate for any land below the Piedmont Southern Line, indicated on Figure 1.
- **Advise landowners that Longleaf Pine has a difficult time surviving where soil PH exceeds 7. “On Old fields the recommended rate which Oust® is applied when PH exceeds 6.0 should be reduced, and Oust® should probably be avoided when PH exceeds 6.5 (Longleaf Alliance).”**

2015 Longleaf Pine Initiative Description/Summary:

The LLPI provides private landowners with assistance to improve forest health and enhance wildlife habitat in longleaf pine forest landscape.

Approved and Required Land Uses for this Longleaf Initiative:

Approved Natural Resource Concerns:

Degraded Plant Condition
1. Excessive Plant Pest Pressure
2. Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health

Core practices are required:

<i>Practice Name</i>	<i>Practice Code</i>
Forest Stand Improvement	666
Prescribed Burning	338
Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats	643
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612

Supporting practices offered:

<i>Practice Name</i>	<i>Practice Code</i>
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	490
Access Control	472
Brush Management	314
Conservation Cover	327
Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	647
Upland Wildlife Habitat	645
Firebreak	394
Forest Trails and Landings	655
Herbaceous weed control	315
Silvopasture Establishment	381
Fence	382

Conservation Activity Plans (CAPS)

Practice Name	Practice Code
Forest Management Plan	106
Prescribed Burning Plan	112

PROGRAM EVALUATION

NRCS-Georgia uses the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) as a tool to evaluate effectiveness of the habitat improvements and implementation of conservation practices. HSI's identify current condition and allows identification of desired future conditions. The change in HSI after EQIP practices are implemented gauges effectiveness of practices in achieving conservation goals.

- The HSI is located in GA FOTG; Section III, Resource Management Systems by Land Use, Pine Woodlands

Figure 1

