Longleaf Pine Ecosystems Enhanced Across Florida

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During the past two years, longleaf pine (LLP) ecosystem management activities have been occurring on both public and private lands across Florida. Many of these activities are the direct result of an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant awarded to the Florida Forest Service (FFS). Activities including reforestation, understory enhancement and other management practices have created or improved over 20,000 acres of LLP habitat while creating and retaining forestry sector jobs in local economies during challenging times. FFS employees and private forestry companies assisted in exceeding every goal for this program.

The public land management component saw an increase in acreage and improvement of the conditions of 14,664 acres on 20 State Forests and two sister agencies’ lands. Activities included preparing for and planting LLP and native understory, prescribed burns in longleaf stands, improving red-cockaded woodpecker foraging area stands, and treating invasive plant species.

Private landowner forests were another target of the FFS goal. In total thus far, cost share contracts with private landowners have accomplished LLP improvements on 5,431 private forest acres. These practices include planting, native understory establishment, prescribed burning, midstory treatments, and invasive species treatment.

The FFS nursery, Andrew’s Nursery in Chiefland, expanded growing capacity for both LLP and native understory by one-million each. Two new suspension fields were built and more seedlings were sown than before. With this new capacity expansion, state land managers and private landowners will continue to have the seedling resources needed to meet their LLP and groundcover planting demands.

The strategic planning goal targeted enhanced data collection to assist forest managers and private landowners in making more fully informed LLP management decisions. Additionally, Gopher Tortoise (GT) and Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) habitats have been inventoried and monitored on selected State Forests.

LLP ecosystem restoration and management outreach trained 83 forestry professionals from the FFS, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, US Forest Service, private consultants, etc. through three Longleaf Academies. Likewise, 898 private landowners have taken advantage of local workshops sponsored by FFS to learn about the latest management prescriptions for sustainable longleaf ecosystems.

Both public and private longleaf pine landscapes across the state have benefited from this multi-faceted program. Although this program ends in June of 2012, the positive impact will be evident for decades. For more information please contact: Penelope.Bos@freshfromflorida.com
Relationship Between Watershed Land-Cover/Land-Use Change and Water Turbidity Status of Tampa Bay Major Tributaries, Florida, USA


The extent and change of land cover/land use (LCLU) across the Tampa Bay watershed, Florida, was characterized for the time period between 1996 and 2006. Likewise, the water turbidity trend was determined at a site near the Bay for each of four major tributaries to Tampa Bay (Hillsborough River, the Alafia River, the Little Manatee River, and the Manatee River). This study identifies consistent changes in LCLU across the Tampa Bay watershed and a decrease in water turbidity. LCLU change analysis as a percent of the total Tampa Bay watershed revealed an increase of 2.6% in developed area followed by a 0.9% in bare land and a 0.6% in water cover. A decrease of 1.8% of the total Tampa Bay watershed was found in agriculture, followed in order by 1.1% in wetland and 1.4% in scrub/shrub. Other land classes changed less than 0.2% of the total watershed. A linear mixed model (SAS procedure PROC MIXED) revealed an overall decreasing trend in water turbidity (p = 0.003, slope estimate = −0.02) across the four major Tampa Bay tributaries considered. This study suggests that development (urbanization) could be associated with decreasing water turbidity in Tampa Bay. Finally, although these results may help explain similar effects on other water bodies with similar conditions of adjacent urbanization and low slope, more analysis are needed considering a larger number of watersheds with similar scales and longer time period in order to confirm that the findings of this study are generally evident.

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Recent Research

Upcoming Events


- JFSP Webinar: Heat Stress in the Wildland Firefighter, March 7, 2012, 3:00pm to 4:00pm (EST) This webinar will describe recent research that examines the role of heat stress in wildland firefighting accidents and fatalities. To join go to http://www.southernfireexchange.org/ProDev/Webinars.html

- Forestry Webinar: Ecological services as an incentive for forest management, March 14, 2012 from 12:00 to 1:00 pm ET. To join go to http://www.forestrywebinars.net/webinars/ecological-services-as-an-incentive-for-forest-management

- 2012 Southern Forest Economic Workers annual meeting, March 20-21, 2012 in Charlotte, NC. For more information and to register go to http://sofew.cfr.msstate.edu/meeting_registration.asp

- JFSP Webinar: LANDFIRE Total Fuel Change Tool March 21, 2012, 2:00pm to 3:00pm (EST) The LANDFIRE Total Fuel Change Tool (LFTFC) allows users to edit LANDFIRE fuels attributes and associated layers directly with an ArcMap Toolbar. To join go to http://www.southernfireexchange.org/ProDev/Webinars.html

- 1st Annual School of Forest Resources and Conservation Spring Celebration, March 23-24, 2012 in Gainesville, FL. Come celebrate the 75th anniversary. For more information go to sfrc.ufl.edu/spring_celebration
Upcoming Events


- The 21st International Pepper Conference, November 4-6, 2012 in Naples, FL. For more information contact the Hendry County Extension, Gene McAvoy, 1-863-674-4092 or gmcavoy@ufl.edu.