



## South Carolina Lowcountry Forest Conservation Project

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### Introduction

The Lowcountry Forest Conservation Partnership has a goal of protecting South Carolina Coastal Plain forest ecosystems and their levels of biological diversity, rare and special plants and animals. These forests represent important ecosystems found in most Southern states. The area's forests are globally significant because they contain remnant longleaf pine forests that support one of the richest plant communities known in the world. There are also undisturbed wetland forests and isolated wetlands such as Carolina Bays which are essential habitat for many birds and water-loving animals. These systems exist because of a historic interaction of two ecological processes, fire and water. The project area is at risk from a combination of threats such as, urban development, incompatible forestry practices, the loss of fire, alteration of stream flow on major rivers and climate change. This landscape can only be sustained through conservation and restoration. The Lowcountry Forest Conservation Partnership was made possible as the result of a generous grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Restoring and restructuring degraded bottomland hardwood forests into productive forests; Using uneven-aged forest management in bottomland hardwoods stand; Using fire and other methods to preserve and develop herbaceous vegetation communities in longleaf pine stands; Use of fire as a tool in the ecotone between pine uplands and bottomland forests; Change even-age loblolly and longleaf stands to uneven-age stands; Transition loblolly stands to longleaf stands.

- 287 Natural Resource Professionals who manage more than 4,238,800 acres have been trained in Conservation Forestry Practices in twelve programs.
- 363 landowners who own more than 226,970 acres have attended thirteen workshops on Conservation Forestry.
- 79 landowners have developed and are implementing conservation forestry plans on 134,300 acres.
- Conservation Forestry cost-share program in partnership with AFF & USF&WS.

### Accomplishments

- 100,000 acres of land protected from development through purchase and conservation easements which allow the land to continue to be managed for ecologically-sustainable forestry and wildlife management.
- The South Carolina Prescribed Fire Council has been established to promote and protect the use of prescribed fire in the state. Three annual meetings have been held.
- Seven demonstration areas with a total of 9,000 acres have been established to show conservation forestry concepts which include:

