



WHO WE ARE



**Gulf Coastal Plains
& Ozarks Landscape
Conservation
Cooperative**

Open pine is one of the most beautiful forms of southern pine forest, known for its open structure -- maintained by fire -- that allows dappled sunlight to support a diversity of grasses and flowers in the understory. Yet, according to a draft rapid ecological assessment conducted by the GCPO LCC, about 25% of the GCPO region's 180 million acres is pine forest, but only 4% has an open canopy. An even smaller amount, 1%, can be considered high quality open pine habitat. Five GCPO LCC open pine projects are delivering analyses and tools that will (1) improve our ecological understanding of landscape and stand-scale factors of importance to open pine-dependent wildlife, (2) assist landowners and foresters to assess the quality of pine forests as wildlife habitat, and (3) improve the attractiveness of conservation incentives to landowners.

How We're Funded

These projects have been funded over several years by the GCPO LCC, using funds from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service totaling almost \$651,000, combined with matching funds from the grantee institutions equivalent to 78% of that total.

IN OUR PARTNERS' WORDS

"The LCC provided the resources and tools that allowed NatureServe and the USFWS to collaborate with a diverse group of stakeholders to develop our metrics, which are designed to help people understand if their land is good, fair, or poor quality for the types of wildlife that need high quality open pine habitat. Without the LCC's support, this partnership could not have happened." - Rickie White, Ecologist, NatureServe

For More Information

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THE GCPO OPEN PINE PROJECTS

Assessing the attributes of landscape patterns and forest conditions that make open pine, including managed pine systems, beneficial to wildlife. Developing tools to assist landowners with forest management/incentive decisions.



With management that creates the right conditions, open pine forests support a host of species that rely on this habitat type: Red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, flatwoods salamander, Northern bobwhite quail, Louisiana pine snake, and many others.

Interest in the conservation of longleaf and shortleaf pine has risen in recent years. Many landowners and managers want to know whether their pine stands are good habitat for open pine-dependent species, and if not, they are seeking guidance and assistance to improve their management to achieve desired forest conditions for wildlife. According to a U.S. Forest Service 2006 survey of family forest owners nationwide, 58% of forestland in the South is owned by families. Roughly half of U.S. family forest owners rank beauty and nature protection as top land management goals. Yet only about 6% of family forest owners have participated in cost-share conservation incentive programs.

KEY PARTNERS

Central Hardwoods JV, Duke Univ., East Gulf Coastal Plain JV, Grand Bay NERR, Jones Ecological Research Center, Lower Mississippi Valley JV, MS Farm Bureau Federation, MS State Univ., National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, NRCS, NatureServe, USDA Forest Service (DeSoto National Forest), USFWS, Weyerhaeuser NR Co.