

# Alabama/Tennessee Habitat Improvement Initiative

## Landowner Information Sheet

### PROJECT

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) and the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program are collaborating with Tennessee Department of Agriculture-Forestry Division, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Alabama Forestry Commission, and the Geological Survey of Alabama to provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners. The goal of the partnership is to improve occupied and potential terrestrial and aquatic habitat in north Alabama and south central Tennessee to support federal listing decisions for at-risk species, and to obtain information on location data and habitat potential for current and future populations on private lands.



*Through this partnership, landowners will receive financial and technical assistance to enhance habitat for at-risk species and avoid further regulatory oversight.*

### ELIGIBILITY

- Properties located within certain watersheds in the following counties in Alabama: Blount, Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, St. Clair, Tuscaloosa, Walker and Winston, and in Tennessee: Bedford, Bledsoe, Cannon, Coffee, Cumberland, DeKalb, Dickson, Franklin, Giles, Grundy, Hardin, Hickman, Humphreys, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marion, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Rutherford, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, White and Williamson
- Landowners should have at least one at-risk species present or previously documented on their property or be adjacent to a property where an at-risk species is present or has been previously documented (the subject property should have similar habitat type)
- Interested landowners should implement, or demonstrate plans to implement, sustainable forestry and best management practices on their property
- **No annual gross income (AGI) limitation is identified;** therefore, larger eligible properties will be considered
- Activities covered in this initiative focus on headwater habitat improvement including barrier removals, livestock exclusions, culvert and ditch removals, streambank restoration, riparian buffers, and widening streamside management zones (SMZs). Other terrestrial habitat improvement actions that may be covered include timber stand improvement, pine planting (shortleaf only), hardwood/mid-story control, invasive species control, prescribed burning, site preparation, native warm season grass and other groundcover establishment, hydrology and isolated wetland restoration and other habitat improvement practices, as needed



Photo Credit Roger Thoma

## AFF/USFWS WILL:

- Meet with interested landowners to determine if the subject property fits the criteria for the project
- Provide **cost share** for practices completed consistent with the plan
- Provide resources to complete an inventory for the at-risk species present on the property or evaluate habitat potential for at-risk species on the property
- USFWS agrees to provide technical assistance to plan and implement the habitat restoration practices, as identified
- Provide resources for habitat quality surveys and monitoring for the property
- USFWS agrees to evaluate the potential take of any endangered, threatened, and federally designated at-risk species that may occur during implementation of the identified habitat improvement practices. If such take is reasonably certain to occur, USFWS will incorporate any reasonable and prudent measures to minimize the take in a landowner agreement. The habitat improvement evaluation ensures the landowner is not liable for any take of wildlife resulting from the habitat improvement practices described in the landowner agreement

## LANDOWNER WILL:

- Provide input into the development of the habitat improvement plan that meets their long-term wildlife, forestry, and recreational objectives for the property
- Have a written forest management plan or be willing to develop a multi-resource management plan for the property in coordination with a conservation professional
- Allow the AFF/USFWS and partners reasonable, prearranged access to their property for surveys/monitoring
- Provide a non-federal match, depending on percentage of funding, to the cost share (**can be cash or in-kind**)
- Sign a **non-regulatory** Private Landowner Agreement with USFWS and AFF for a minimum of 10 years
- Actively manage and maintain the subject property and associated habitat improvement practices for a minimum of 10 years, as outlined in the Private Landowner Agreement

## CONTACTS

### GREG PATE

American Forest Foundation  
(919) 922-1539  
greg.pate@fourwforestrygroup.com

ALABAMA

### LEE HOLT

USFWS Partners Biologist  
256-353-7243 ex. 28  
roger\_holt@fws.gov

### ROB HURT

USFWS Partners Biologist  
256-353-7243 ex. 29  
rob\_hurt@fws.gov

TENNESSEE

### DUSTIN BOLES

USFWS Partners Biologist  
931-525-4984  
dustin\_boles@fws.gov



Photo Credit Pat O'Neil

