

National Forests in Alabama

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News

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Longleaf Pine Restoration Continues Through Agency Partnership

(Talladega, AL) August 3, 2006 --- The USDA Forest Service and American Forests have united for a second time to plant native mountain longleaf pine seedlings in the Talladega National Forest. More than 48,000 longleaf pine seedlings were planted this year covering 117 acres of the Talladega District as an effort to protect the Tallaseehatchee watershed. One objective of the Forest Service and American Forests partnership is to restore the longleaf pine ecosystems to enhance water quality for communities in Sylacauga and surrounding areas.

“We have made further progress in our longleaf pine restoration goals thanks to the partnership with American Forests,” said Kent Evans, district ranger for the Talladega District. According to Evans, last year the Talladega District planted 83,000 longleaf pine seedlings covering 132 national forest acres. “The Forest Service’s commitment to the protection of watersheds within forest boundaries is a major priority. The collaboration is a great opportunity for us to continue to provide a clean water source for communities and restore the native pine ecosystem,” added Evans. Watershed protection is from the establishment of a healthy forest cover that will hold soils for a longer period than the loblolly pine that is currently on-site and in decline.

The longleaf pine is a relatively long-lasting southern tree species that is more resistant to insect and disease attacks than any other tree species. It was the historic, native

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forest type on sites located on the Talladega National Forest. Longleaf pine requires the application of prescribed fire to provide a variety of benefits for itself and the plant communities. Threatened and endangered plant species, red-cockaded woodpeckers, and other native wildlife such as Bob-white quail, all rely on the longleaf pine for survival. A young forest will provide needed ground vegetation that wildlife can reach for feeding and cover.

“We appreciate the continued support we have received from American Forests,” said Miera Crawford, acting forest supervisor for the National Forests in Alabama. “They are an outstanding, non-profit organization recognized for assisting communities maintain healthy ecosystems.”

“The restoration of the native longleaf pine ecosystem is an important step towards improving the health of southeast forests,” said Executive Director of American Forests, Deborah Gangloff. “American Forests is proud to be part of another year of successful partnership with the Forest Service.”

The Alabama longleaf restoration project is one of twenty six projects supported by American Forests Global ReLeaf. The organization expects to plant up to 1 million trees worldwide. The partnership with American Forests, a not-for-profit organization, which can be found at www.americanforests.org, is supported by Coleman Natural Foods, the first corporate sponsor of this reforestation project as well as the Coca-Cola Company.