

wheels" of the ecosystem. These seemingly insignificant parts of the ecosystem are important in the sustainability of the land's health, productivity and our quality of life.



If you'd like to learn more about the Conservation Forestry efforts of the Lowcountry Forest Conservation Partnership, visit the web site at www.sclfc.org or contact Bob Franklin with the Clemson Extension Service in Walterboro at (843) 549-2595 (rmfrnkl@clemson.edu).

The Lowcountry Forest Conservation Partnership

www.sclfc.org

Clemson University
South Carolina Coastal Conservation League
The Conservation Fund
Ducks Unlimited
Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center
Lowcountry Open Land Trust
The Nature Conservancy

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South Carolina Lowcountry Conservation Forestry



Conservation Forestry is an old term taking on new meaning throughout the South Carolina Lowcountry. Landowners can learn more about this concept through the Lowcountry Forest Conservation Partnership.

The purpose of the partnership is to protect ecologically sensitive lands and habitats from the threats of development and fragmentation. The partnership will use a variety of strategies within a three-million acre area of the Lowcountry extending from the Pee Dee River to the Savannah River. These strategies include:



- purchase of land from willing sellers
- development of conservation easements on ecologically unique properties
- understanding and managing urban sprawl
- educating landowners on ecologically sensitive land management
- increasing the use of prescribed fire and
- restoring hydrology of major river systems.

What is Conservation Forestry?

The term can mean many things. Conservation Forestry is a management concept that stresses the stewardship of all the forest's resources, with a particular emphasis in the Lowcountry on upland pine communities and bottomland hardwood forest ecosystems. Conservation Forestry protects and enhances the diversity and ecology of the forest ecosystem, including soil and water quality; aesthetics; wildlife habitat, and the sustainable harvest of wood products. This concept uses forest management activities such as selective timber harvest, patch cutting and prescribed fire to mimic the natural processes that shaped the original forests of the Coastal Plain. The Partnership efforts will demonstrate how to:

- restore unused agricultural land to bottomland hardwood and native pine forests;
- turn cutover, degraded bottomlands into ecologically productive hardwood forests;
- use a Mississippi Delta hardwood management system modified for South Carolina bottomland forests;
- establish and maintain native herbaceous plant communities in pine stands through the use of prescribed fire;
- use extended timber rotations, prescribed fire and selective timber harvests to transition existing loblolly stands to older ages and gradually convert these to uneven-aged longleaf forests.

Why Use Conservation Forestry?



There are several reasons. First, there is a need to protect our natural heritage in these upland, fire-maintained, pine communities that host many species of rare and declining plants and animals that are found nowhere else. Restoring

these communities will keep these species from becoming listed as threatened or endangered.

Second, we need to carefully manage our coastal plain forested wetlands to protect and enhance the numerous functions they contribute both to the landscape and society. These include food, wildlife habitat, wood products, greenspace, recreation, the filtration of pollutants, groundwater recharge and aesthetic and educational values.

Third, by restoring these ecosystems in the project area, we can encourage a vibrant, diverse economy, based on sustainable forestry, as well as recreation-based enterprises.

Finally, Conservation Forestry protects what Aldo Leopold, the father of wildlife management in America, called the "small cogs and