



Illustris Palustris Award 2016



The North Carolina Longleaf Coalition awarded this year's Illustris Palustris Award to Brady Beck, a wildlife biologist with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC). Brady actively manages longleaf pine on the NCWRC Sandhills Gameland and works with the many wildlife species, including red-cockaded woodpeckers, that depend on the longleaf ecosystem. Like so many of the past winners, and those in the longleaf community, Brady has a genuine passion for the longleaf pine forest. And like so many of us, his career provides him an opportunity to practice and promote the mission of the North Carolina Longleaf Coalition - the restoration and conservation of the longleaf ecosystem. However, what makes Brady Beck so unique is how he tells the longleaf story.

Brady's accomplishments are impressive. Every year he participates in countless workshops for landowners, students, and professionals sharing his longleaf knowledge and experiences of the longleaf ecosystem with both the young and old. For years, Brady has led 4-H campers through the longleaf forests of the Sandhills Game Lands as part of the Annual Fur, Fish and Game Rendezvous at Camp Millstone. It is his passion for longleaf that ignites the same desire in the next generation. He has also led the Virtual 360 Field Tour as part of the new Fire Ecology course offered through N.C. State University, which emphasizes the use of prescribed fire to manage the longleaf pine ecosystem. In March of 2016 Brady served as a leader and organizer for the Palustris Arts Festival in Southern Pines, where hundreds gathered to celebrate the birthday of the oldest known longleaf pine and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of North Carolina's State Parks.



Brady has a special gift - one that allows him to tell the longleaf story artistically through photography and videography. With a creative and artistic eye, and the patience to wait for the perfect shot, he captures the astounding beauty of the longleaf ecosystem with spectacular photography (www.bradybeckphotography.com). It doesn't end there, Brady is also the producer of "More Than Pine Trees and Sand," a series of short, educational videos highlighting the unique character, critters and habitats of the longleaf pine ecosystem in the Sandhills of North Carolina. The first episode highlights two rare frogs, the Carolina Gopher Frog and the Pine Barrens Treefrog. This is part of a larger effort, the "[Disappearing Frogs Project](#)". His imagery also serves as the backdrop for a cultural theater performance, "Bleeding Pines of Turpentine," that tells the story of the longleaf pines and the people of the North Carolina Sandhills. This show, which he helped create, was performed in the Sandhills region of North Carolina and traveled to Northern Ireland.

Whether it's wildlife, threatened and endangered species, plant communities, fire ecology, prescribed burning, or the beauty of the longleaf forest – Brady Beck captures and presents it as only he can- he is truly an inspiring advocate for longleaf. We are truly lucky he calls North Carolina home.

