

NORTH CAROLINA LONGLEAF HONOR ROLL
FAQS

What is the NC Longleaf Honor Roll?

The North Carolina Longleaf Honor Roll is a program to celebrate the good management landowners do for their longleaf resource. It identifies, recognizes, and thanks private landowners who are actively managing longleaf pine for the many values of the longleaf ecosystem.

Why the Honor Roll?

Longleaf pine is a special tree native to North Carolina and the southeastern United States. It is meaningful to a multitude of people and communities because of its rich values including wood products, cultural history, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and recreation.

As existing longleaf pine forests in North Carolina are lost to golf courses, residential communities, and intensive timber management, there is a crucial need for natural resource professionals to connect with more longleaf owners, particularly those who do not know how valued longleaf is today. Without awareness of the many values of the longleaf resource that their property supports, landowners may intentionally or unintentionally convert natural stands to any number of other uses. The Longleaf Honor Roll encourages landowners to hold on to their longleaf resource and to engage in active management that enhances the longleaf ecosystem.

Why the Longleaf Pine “Ecosystem?”

The longleaf ecosystem is much more than a single tree species. The fire-maintained longleaf pine forest with its rich native groundcover is one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. It is the intent of the Longleaf Pine Honor Roll to consider all aspects of longleaf, the entire ecosystem, rather than just the tree.

Who?

Private landowners are eligible for the North Carolina Longleaf Honor Roll recognition. Landowners with longleaf of any age are eligible for recognition. Nominations are made by natural resources professionals and recognition is given by the North Carolina Longleaf Coalition.

Where?

The program recognizes landowners from the entire historic range of longleaf in North Carolina.

How are landowners recognized?

Landowners will be notified and a small group will visit the property to present the landowner with a Longleaf Honor Roll sign for display and a letter highlighting the reasons for the recognition. With their permission, recognized landowners may be featured in articles and websites about longleaf pine.

What are the criteria for recognition?

Minimum eligibility requirements for the Honor Roll are:

1. A current forest management plan
2. Active fire management:
 - For longleaf < 5 years old, must complete at least one non-site-prep prescribed burn
 - OR
 - For longleaf > 5 years old, must complete at least two prescribed burns in the last ten years
3. Reduce negative impacts from pine straw production, if harvesting straw, by raking on rotation with periods of rest and burning

HONOR ROLL NOMINATION PROCESS:

How do I nominate a landowner?

The nomination form is available at: www.nclongleaf.org. The form includes a checklist to demonstrate that all eligibility requirements are met and shows recent management for each parcel that is being nominated. A copy of the forest management plan is required with the nomination.

Natural Resource professionals may submit nominations to the NC Longleaf Coalition through the website at any time. Nominations will be reviewed and awarded periodically throughout the year.

Recognition is available for landowners with well-managed longleaf of any age or stage. Landowners may qualify for the Honor Roll in any one (or all) of these 3 stages:

- **The Grass Stage:** Landowners are establishing longleaf pine where it historically existed, by natural regeneration or planting on sites where a different forest type or agricultural product was growing at the time of the last harvest. Longleaf trees are < 5 years old.
- **The Flame Stage:** Landowners have already established longleaf pine and are managing the forest with commercial or pre-commercial thinning and/or fire to improve native ground cover. Trees are 5-40 years old.
- **The Golden Cone:** On these lands, landowners have demonstrated their commitment to regular prescribed burning. The longleaf dominated forest is characterized by lush native ground cover, older thinned trees, and pockets of natural regeneration. Trees are 40 years or older.

How are landowners selected?

Applications will be reviewed and recognition awarded by a committee of the NC Longleaf Coalition periodically throughout the year.

Is there a size minimum for Honor Roll recognition?

No. Every acre of longleaf matters. Keep in mind that a forest management plan is required.

Why is a forest management plan required?

Whether you are just planting or have established longleaf trees, following a multi-resource forest management plan is the best step to ensure that you maximize the values of your longleaf pine forest and other timber resources on your property. The NC Forest Service as well as consulting foresters are available for hire to write your forest management plan that fits your specific objectives. A copy of the plan (less than 20 years old) is required for the award.

Where does fire fit in?

Fire is an essential and natural part of the longleaf pine ecosystem. Because fire is so important for longleaf pine, regular prescribed burns must have been conducted on the nominated parcels to qualify for the NC Longleaf Honor Roll—at least one non-site-prep prescribed burn on longleaf under 5 years of age or completing at least two prescribed burns in the last ten years on longleaf over 5 years of age.

Where does pine straw raking fit in?

Many landowners choose to rake and sell pine straw from their longleaf pine lands. This economic use of the property can affect the ability for the longleaf pine stand to provide the full array of values of the longleaf ecosystem. Therefore, while lands that are raked for pine straw can qualify for the NC Longleaf Honor Roll, they must not be raked annually, but rather on a rotation to include rest and burning that will allow some groundcover to be present and which will provide some wildlife benefit.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE HONOR ROLL:

What distinguishes between a Longleaf Honor Roll landowner and just anyone who owns longleaf pine acreage?

Owning longleaf is special. Recognition is reserved for landowners who are taking steps to actively improve and balance all the values of a longleaf forest, including wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and recreation as well as wood products. Although a landowner may not meet the eligibility requirements, the NC Longleaf Coalition would like to work with all longleaf landowners to provide resources and technical assistance for improving longleaf pine forests.

What if landowners want to cut their timber?

Trees are a renewable resource and thinning or harvesting longleaf pine trees is part of management. Responsible harvesting includes following a plan written by a professional forester with consideration of the landowner's objectives that includes re-establishment by natural or artificial means after harvest.

What about cost share programs?

Many landowners benefit from state and federal programs that provide cost share for longleaf management and establishment of new stands. Landowners are always encouraged to work with agencies and organizations that can provide technical and financial assistance. No cost share funds are available from the North Carolina Longleaf Honor Roll or the NC Longleaf Coalition.

What is the NC Longleaf Coalition? (<http://www.nclongleaf.org/>)

Formed in 2010, the Coalition was built on a long history of interest in longleaf restoration in the Tar Heel state and was inspired by the launch of the America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative with its Range-Wide Conservation Plan. (www.americaslongleaf.org)

The mission of the North Carolina Longleaf Coalition is to promote the maintenance and restoration of North Carolina's longleaf pine ecosystem, including its cultural and economic values, by forming a collaborative network of diverse stakeholders to provide strategic leadership across the historic range while also supporting local restoration activities. Participants in the Coalition include multiple state and federal agencies as well as nonprofits, consulting foresters, landowners, educational institutions and other longleaf proponents.

Questions regarding the NC Longleaf Honor Roll should be submitted to the NC Longleaf Coalition at: nclongleafinfo@gmail.com