

Restoring America's Forests

Shortleaf Pine-Oak Ecosystem Restoration Project



Key Partners

Arkansas Audubon Society
Arkansas Forestry Commission
Arkansas Game & Fish Commission—
Wildlife Management Areas
Arkansas Natural Heritage
Commission
Arkansas Wildlife Federation
National Forest Foundation
National Park Service—Buffalo
National River
National Wild Turkey Federation
Ouachita Timber Purchasers Group
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
University of Missouri, Columbia
USDA Forest Service—Ouachita
National Forest
USDA Forest Service—Ozark-
St. Francis National Forest (Big
Piney Ranger District)

Pine-Oak Woodland Restoration in the Interior Highlands

The Interior Highlands are a center of biodiversity in North America. They are dominated by an ecosystem of pine and oak woodlands—the largest contiguous remnant of a habitat type that once stretched from Oklahoma to the middle Appalachians and eastern seaboard. Over 150 species of animals and plants are only found in the Interior Highlands and nowhere else on earth. For more than 12,000 years, this open landscape has been shaped and maintained by frequent surface fires. The landscape is also the epicenter of the range of the shortleaf pine (*Pinus ecanata*), a rapidly declining fire-adapted species.

For more than 10 years, collaborative partnerships focused on our public lands have led to the development of large-scale restoration across this landscape. The combination of timber management and a prescribed fire program that treats over 250,000 acres annually has resulted in the restoration of almost half a million acres of pine and oak woodlands on federal, state and private lands.

Supporting the Goals of Restoring America's Forests

Work on federal lands is the cornerstone restoration across this landscape. There are two CFLRP projects in the landscape totaling over 1 million acres, as well as the 80,000-acre Happy Bat Project on the Sylamore Ranger District of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.

Testing the feasibility of large NEPA projects is also important on this landscape.

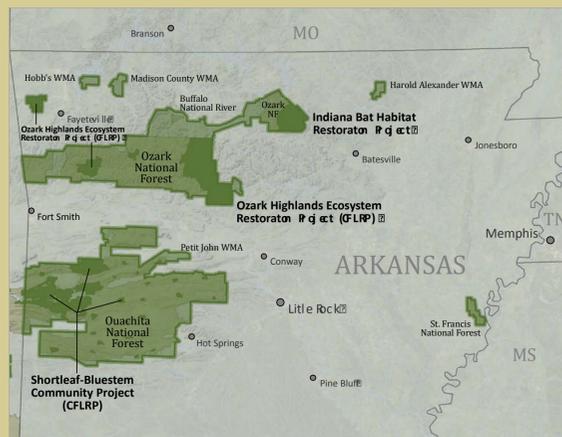
Coming Soon

Implementation: Partners will be working to restore habitat for the collard lizard (*Crotaphytus collaris*) by removing eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) on over 700 acres of high quality glades within the restoration areas. These treatments will be done using a large grinder on a track hoe.



Photo: USFS/Steve Duzan

Outreach: At least nine permanent display kiosks will be installed at key locations across the landscape to support public awareness and outreach. These will help address one of the challenges faced in this landscape, namely the public acceptance of smoke from prescribed fires.



Two Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) projects—the Ozark Highlands Ecosystem Restoration Project and the Shortleaf-Bluestem Community Project—as well as the Indiana Bat Habitat Restoration Project are key parts of the work in this extensive landscape.



Pine savanna in restoration area

Photo: TNC/McRee Anderson

Success Story

In the Interior Highlands, partners with large fire programs are moving to all-season fire management. As a result, over the last few years almost half the acres of all controlled burning on the Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests has been completed during the growing season. Last season we conducted **over 70,000 acres of growing season burning.**



Partners brief before a 5,400-acre controlled burn on the Sylamore Ranger District on April 23, 2014. The burn was conducted by 20 people from the Forest Service, National Park Service, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and The Nature Conservancy.

Photo: TNC/McRee Anderson



Partners from the National Park Service, Forest Service, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and The Nature Conservancy met in June 2013 at Gulf Mountain WMA. The Fire Learning Network plays an important role in this project, supporting regular meetings, workshops and field tours such as this one.

Photo: TNC/McRee Anderson

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The Restoring America's Forests priority project promotes innovative, hands-on forest restoration solutions on over 200 million acres of federal forestlands. We are a national team of forest ecologists and policy experts who, with our state programs and many partners, work to accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration to address threats to people, water and wildlife. More information: Chris Topik (ctopik@tnc.org) or Russ Hoeflich (rhoeflich@tnc.org)