

# The Key to Longleaf Restoration: Groundcover Seed “Bank” & Partnership

## FY09 Accomplishments

Restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystem is a national priority. Restoration of the ecosystem’s species-rich native groundcover is essential to this effort, but sources of locally-adapted, soil-type-suitable seed are often not consistently available to USFS units and local land conservation partners.

In 2009, the Apalachicola National Forest was funded for initial creation of a native groundcover seed “bank” for use in restoration projects on the Forest and to provide seed collection areas for nearby partners. The Florida Division of Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida State Parks, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Northwest Florida Water Management District all manage large tracts needing groundcover restoration within 50 miles of ANF. The seed bank will house native groundcover seed collected from each of the three major community types on the Forest (Sandhill, Flatwoods, and Savannah). The native seed mix will be used as a ready seed source to re-seed wildfire control lines, forest roads that are being decommissioned and other restoration projects.

To accomplish this proposal we first reviewed the planned prescribed burns for FY 2009 to identify the most promising sites for seed production. Priority was given to burn units with fully intact groundcover. Because May- July is the critical window for fire to stimulate wiregrass and associated species to produce flowers and eventually set seed, we scheduled the most promising units for burning during this period. Prescribed burns were paid for out of district fuel reduction funds. After burns, each unit was further assessed for seed production ability. During this process we identified a collection area for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

We developed contract specifications for seed collection this fall (peak wiregrass seed production is Nov-Dec). The contract was advertised and awarded to begin collection in November 2009. The goal is to collect 745 pounds of clean seed at ~ \$55 per pound. Next year we will update the project on the number of pounds collected.

Once the seed is collected it will be inventoried and “banked” in cold storage for use as needed. With a ready source of seed, restoration projects can be planned and contracted as necessary.



*Seed Collection Area in Compartment 303  
Burned 6/10/2009*

Year Awarded: 2009  
Project completion: (2010)

Report number: (1 of 2)

**Expenditures:**

- FY09 funding: \$ 38,110
- Expended: \$ 40,975
- Remaining: \$ 0

**Partners/Contractors/Coop:**

The Nature Conservancy,  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation  
Commission

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