

# Apalachicola National Forest Native Groundcover Seed Bank

## FY10 Accomplishments

Restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystem is a national priority. Restoration of the 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 2010, the Apalachicola National Forest (ANF) was funded to continue 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, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida State Parks, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Northwest Florida Water Management District all manage land 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.

The first step in this proposal was to review the prescribed burns planned for the growing season in FY 2010 and identify the most promising sites for seed production. Priority was given to burn units with intact native groundcover. We coordinated with Fire staff to schedule burning of the most promising sites during May-July because this is the critical window for fire to stimulate wiregrass and associated species to produce flowers and eventually set seed. We burned a total of 47,000 acres during the growing season with 2,412 acres where seed was actually collected. The prescribed burns were paid for out of fuel reduction funds. After the burns, each unit was further assessed for potential seed production ability. During this process we also identified a 60 acre seed collection site that could be used by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to collect seed needed to restore the groundcover on a 10 acre parcel of their land.

After assessing the seed collection areas, we also developed contract specifications for seed collection. The contract was advertised as a Best Value Contract and awarded to begin collection in November 2010 (peak wiregrass seed production is Nov-Dec). The initial FY10 goal was to collect 1080 pounds of clean native seed mix at \$35 per pound. The awarded price was significantly lower than last year's contract, resulting in a \$33,000 savings. Next year we will update the project on the number of pounds of seed actually collected. For future contracts we would revise the contract specifications to allow for additional pounds of seed collection if such potential savings occur again.

Once the seed is collected, it will be inventoried, bagged, dried, and "banked" in cold storage for use as needed. Samples will be sent off for purity and germination tests. Current plans are to over-seed 54 acres in the Ditch Bay Analysis Area before it is planted to Longleaf Pine. Any remaining seed will be a ready source of seed, for other restoration projects.



*Seed Collection Area in Compartment 32  
Burned 5/19/2010*

Year Awarded: 2010  
Project completion: (2011)

Report number: (1 of 2)

#### Expenditures:

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| • FY10 NFN3 : | \$ 38,081  |
| • FY10 WFHF:  | \$ 82,008  |
| Total         | \$ 120,089 |

Partners/Contractors/Coop:  
The Nature Conservancy, Florida Fish and  
Wildlife Conservation Commission

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