



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

## *Voluntary Habitat Restoration on Private Lands*

### PARTNERS PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

- ◆ voluntary
- ◆ incentive-based
- ◆ habitat restoration
- ◆ private and tribal lands
- ◆ application of state-of-the-art techniques
- ◆ leveraging resources through partnerships
- ◆ collaboration of public and private resources
- ◆ combination of environmental, economic and social benefits
- ◆ natural resource management teaching and learning projects
- ◆ keep common species common and restore habitat for declining species



Program. The Service established partnerships with over 4,000 private landowners to restore valuable fish and wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, is a voluntary partnership program that helps private landowners restore wetlands and other important fish and wildlife habitats on their own lands. For over 15 years, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has been providing financial and technical assistance to private landowners through voluntary cooperative agreements.

State resource agencies work closely with the Service to help establish priorities and identify focus areas. The restoration of degraded wetlands, native grasslands, streams, riparian areas, and other habitats to conditions as close to natural is emphasized. The program's philosophy is to work proactively with private landowners for the mutual benefit of declining Federal trust species and the interests of the landowners involved.

Usually, a dollar-for-dollar cost share is achieved by working with landowners and a host of nationally based and local entities (e.g., Federal, State, and local agencies, soil and water conservation districts, and private conservation organizations). Landowners sign an agreement to retain the restoration projects for the life of the agreement (at least 10 years) and otherwise retain full control of their land

### FISCAL YEAR 2003

Fiscal year 2003 was another productive year for the Partners

habitats. The fiscal year 2003 habitat restoration budget was \$28 million, and the Service and its partners restored and improved the following fish and wildlife habitats:

- 37,500 acres of wetlands;
- 184,000 acres of native prairie and grasslands, and other uplands;
- 820 miles of riparian corridors, streambanks, and instream aquatic habitat; and
- 35 fish passage barriers were removed.

### RESTORATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS - 1987 TO 2003

- ◆ 677,000 acres of wetlands;
- ◆ 1,253,700 acres of prairie, native grassland, and other uplands;
- ◆ 5,560 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat; and
- ◆ 33,103 landowner agreements.

**Longleaf Pine Restoration Initiative,  
Southeast Region (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS,  
NC, SC)**

The longleaf pine ecosystem in the southeastern U.S. is an endangered ecosystem (85-95% historic decline). Partners Program staff are active participants in a major initiative involving numerous partners throughout the region (e.g., The Longleaf Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, State fish and wildlife agencies, State forestry agencies, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service) to develop and carry out longleaf pine habitat restoration projects. In fiscal year 2002, the Partners Program completed 39 projects that resulted in the planting of approximately 2,584 acres of longleaf pine. Since 1996 over 8,000 acres of longleaf pine habitat in the Southeast Region has been planted under the Partners Program.

The longleaf pine ecosystem provides habitat for a number of species of interest to the Service including migratory songbirds (e.g., Bachman's sparrow, pine warbler), threatened or endangered species such as the red-cockaded woodpecker and the gopher tortoise, and other species that are declining due to habitat loss or fragmentation (e.g., fox squirrel, eastern diamondback rattlesnake, northern bobwhite). ❖



**Clockwise from the left:** Mature longleaf pine stand, northern bobwhite, gopher tortoise and longleaf pine seedlings on a restoration site.

**LANDOWNERS SAY IT BEST!**

*"This program has allowed us to develop 143 acres of our ranch into wildlife habitat. Without the cost share benefits provided by the program, we would not have been able to accomplish this significant restoration of badly needed habitat for our wildlife."* Thomas C. Gigliotti, Biggs, CA.

*"The Partners for [Fish and] Wildlife Program has allowed me to restore wetland habitat on two sites. The projects on my property stimulated several of my neighbors to become more involved in wisely managing their own wetland areas. In this manner, several hundred more acres were positively impacted by the program."* George Franklin, Jr., Rayville, LA.

*"The relatively small amount of money appropriated to this program is establishing much needed wildlife habitat in my home state of Oklahoma. I am willing to set aside a portion of my property for this very worthwhile program."* Daniel L. Hauser, Tulsa, OK.

*"This is an excellent program which offers private landowners with restorable wetlands and/or endangered species habitat an opportunity to receive cost share funds and maintain these public resources."* Janice Nicholls, Swannanoa, NC.

**Right: The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a voluntary program that helps landowners, tribes, and schools restore and improve many different types of fish and wildlife habitat on their own lands.**



**For more information about the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration, Branch of Habitat Restoration at: 703/358 2201, or visit us on the Internet at: <http://partners.fws.gov/>**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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