

**BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST  
LIAISON PANEL MEETING SUMMARY  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2005  
MOULTON, ALABAMA**

**Liaison Panel Members Attendees**

Kevin Holsonback, ADCNR  
Randy Feltman, Logger  
Charles Bordon, Landowner, Recreation User  
Anthony Hood, Recreation User  
Bill Snoddy, Treasure Forest Landowner  
Mike Henshaw, AL Extension Service  
Hank Burns, Wild South (in for Vince Meleski)  
Quinton Humphries, Winston Co. Commission  
Jeff Still, Back Country Trail Riders  
Mary Lee Ratliff, Recreation

**Additional Attendees**

Hudson Parker, Lawrence Co. Comm.  
Ted Kuzma, Wild South  
Stuart Horn, Wild South  
Athel Wilhite, Vinemont  
Bill Sutton, Alabama A&M Univ.  
Jim Hamilton, Alabama A&M Univ.

**Forest Service Attendees**

Glen Gaines, District Ranger  
John Creed, Forest Health and Restoration Team Leader  
Mike Cook, Resource Assistant  
Kathy Wallace, Silviculturist

**Meeting Agenda**

Moderator: Jim Hamilton, Alabama A&M University

6:00	Welcome	Glen Gaines
6:15	FY 2006 Watershed Planning	Kathy Wallace
	Inman Watershed	
	Grindstone and Mill Watersheds	
	Rockhouse, Hoghouse, and Clear Watersheds	
	Corinth Watershed	
7:00	Recreation Work Group Update	Mike Cook
7:30	Upper Brushy Stewardship Project	John Creed
8:00	Forest Health and Restoration Project Update	John Creed
8:15	Alabama A&M Research Update - Herpetology Study	Bill Sutton
8:45	Closeout	Glen Gaines

**Welcome**

**Glen Gaines and Jim Hamilton**

**Watershed Project Overview**

**Kathy Wallace**

Field inventory work will begin on October 1, 2005 on four watershed projects. These projects will focus on "the next steps" in restoring native forest communities and wildlife habitats on the Bankhead. The watershed projects covering approximately 15,600 acres are (1) Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds, (2) Mill and Grindstone Watersheds, (3) Inman Watershed, and (4) Corinth Watershed. Handouts displaying the current conditions based on existing information and preliminary desired conditions for the watersheds were provided to the attendees and are attached.

During the inventory work, Forest Service staff will:

- Conduct forest inventory to determine existing conditions forest communities
- Identify existing old-growth forest communities
- Identify areas that meet canyon prescription definitions
- Locate rare plant community types
- Assess any forest health concerns due to insect/disease
- Assess wildlife habitat, aquatic habitat, and watershed improvement needs
- Review transportation system needs
- Inventory heritage resources
- Inventory threatened, endangered, and Forest Service sensitive plant and animal species and their habitats

Based on the field work, project proposals (prescriptions) will be drafted to meet the desired forest conditions consistent with the NFs in Alabama Land and Resource Management Plan and the Bankhead NF Forest Health and Restoration EIS. The results of the inventory and project proposals ideas will be discussed at the next Bankhead Liaison Panel meeting.

The anticipated timeline for the watershed projects are:

Field Work and Prescription Development	October 2005 - March 2006
Initiate Formal Public Involvement (Scoping)	January - March 2006
Development of Alternatives	February - April 2006
Prepare Environmental Assessment	March - July 2006
Sign Decision Notice and FONSI	September 2006
Appeal Period	October - November 2006

**Recreation Trails Working Group Report - Mike Cook and Jeff Still**

**Identify the "team"** - participants on the panel & public who attend the Bankhead Liaison Panel are the members of the Rec/Trails working group team. We met twice with the following results from our work to date.

**Identify the results of working group to date -**

1. Brainstormed 3 pages of ideas at first meeting.
2. Worked with Ranger Gaines to identify which ideas were to be further considered at present based on timing, demands, other district actions and public support.

Ideas to develop and gather more information included:

- Horse trails - improvements, sidewalk trails along roads, trails connecting roads
  - Owl Creek Campground - improvements, limitations, expansion, day use
  - Hiking trails - short hikes, waterfalls, historic, basing at existing day use facilities
3. Improvements & partnerships - Back Country Trail Riders partner/volunteer agreement to help with drainage on Key Mill Loop, pack & install blocks to harden two crossings, Centennial Grant partnership, participation in the Centennial Event at Brushy Lake (shared some working photos)

**Identify near future work -**

1. New horse group met with Glen & Mike and want to join efforts with the Rec/Trails working group - meeting arranged for Sept 19
2. Work day - Sept 22 with Back Country Trail Riders, Sharpton, Grestman, open trails blocked by Hurricane Katrina - using our pack gear to take saws & equipment on trails
3. Completed clearing of Flint Creek trails last week
4. Have contacted detailers who cleared the wilderness trails last spring and plan to use them again in Nov

## Update on Upper Brushy Stewardship Project

John Creed

The Regional Office has approved the Upper Brushy Stewardship Project. The project consists of three separate stewardship contracts. The first contract will be advertised for bid during the first quarter in FY 2006. The contract will include conducting commercial thinning, planting/site preparation work, mid-story removal to promote fire adapted woodlands, and wildlife habitat improvements. The group discussed various aspects of stewardship contracting as a tool.

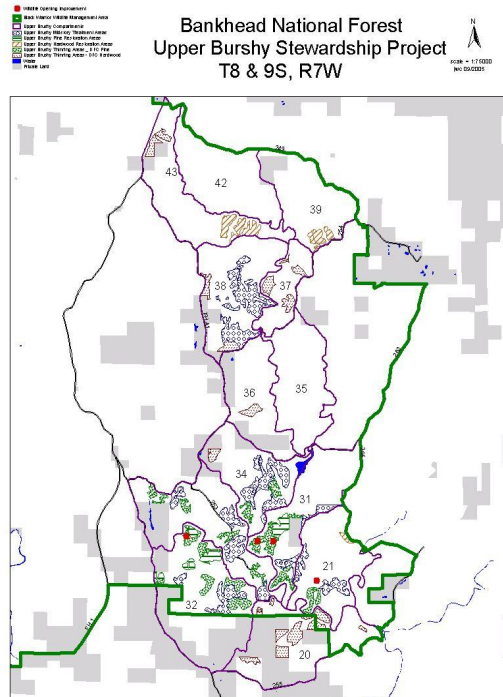
### Upper Brushy Stewardship Project

#### EIS Project Work

- 910 Ac. Thinning
  - 463 Ac. SL Pine DFC
  - 447 Ac. Hdwd DFC
- 138 Ac. Restore SPB to SL Pine
- 150 Ac. Restore SPB to Hdwd

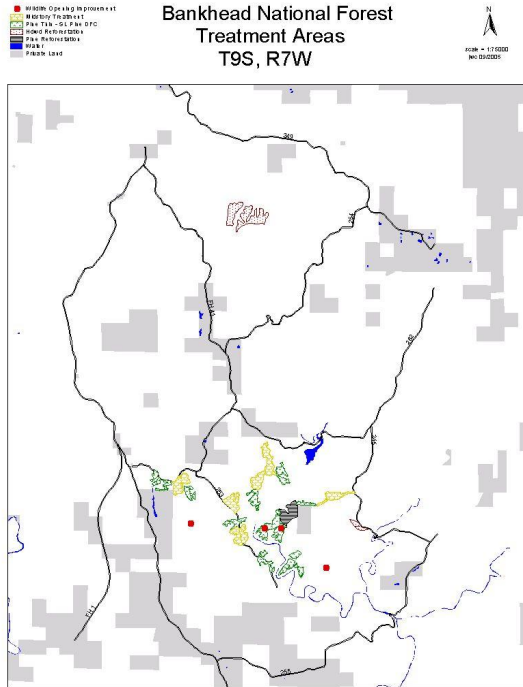
#### Other Project Work

- 1062 Ac. Midstory Treatment
- 88 Ac. WL Opening Improvements
- 2 N. Alabama Birding Trail Signs

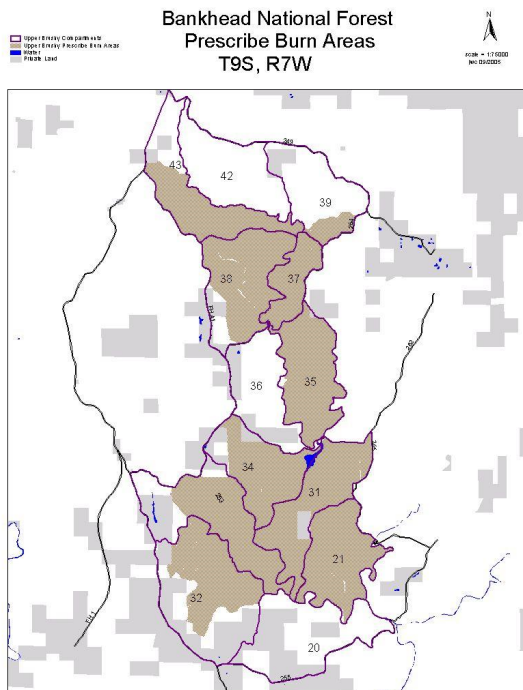


**Stewardship Contract #1**

- 255 Ac. of Thinning – SL Pine DFC
- 100 Ac. of Nat. Regen. Hdwd
- 40 Ac. Site Prep & Plant SL Pine
- 126 Ac. Midstory Removal
- 9 Ac. Wildlife Opening Maint.
- 2 Ac. Wildlife Opening Rehab.

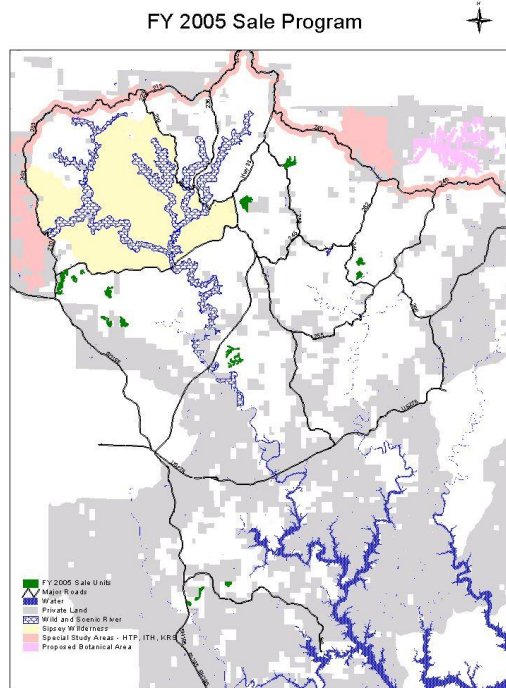


10,357 Ac. Short Rotation Burns



To date, the Bankhead has completed approximately one half of the planned acres of commercial thinnings that were scheduled during FY 2004 and 2005. This is due to reduced budget and impacts from Hurricane Ivan in south Alabama. The desired FY2006 program was discussed. The priorities for implementation are those timber sales associated with Alabama A&M University research and the Upper Brushy Stewardship Contract.

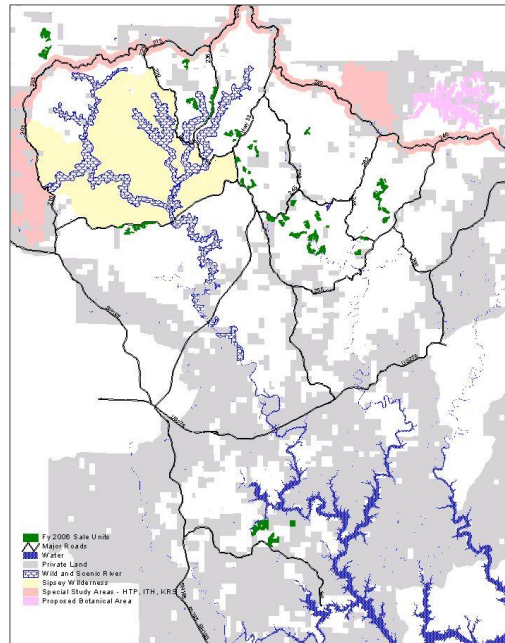
- 6 Sales
- 18 Stands
- 783 Acres of Thinning
  - 663 Ac. Hdwd DFC
  - 120 Ac. SL Pine DFC
  
- Covers: 1161 EIS Stand Acres
  - 981 Ac. Hdwd DFC
  - 180 Ac. SL Pine DFC



FY 2006 Sale Program



7 Sales  
49 Stands  
2035 Acres of Thinning  
1332 Ac. Hdwd DFC  
427 Ac. SL Pine DFC  
276 Ac. LL Pine DFC



### Timber and Thinning Working Group Report

Vince Meleski, Wild South  
Randy Feltman, Logger  
Mike Henshaw, Alabama Extension Service  
Dave Boreland, The Nature Conservancy

The Timber and Thinning Team spent July 25 and July 28 monitoring 8 project sites for the health and restoration project. They were:

- Compartment 52 stands 16 and 17 - This is the AL A&M trial site that will compare cut to length logging with conventional logging. This audit was for baseline data. Roads had been prepared, but the ground was too wet to begin thinning. This site is planned to go from loblolly pines to hardwood.
- Compartment 43 stand 6 - This was a baseline data site for loblolly thinning to hardwood woodland. Trees were marked as leave trees. This location went across the Owl Creek horse trail. When work is being performed, the horse trail will be closed to use.
- Compartment 45 stand 1 - This is a hardwood release site. The work has been completed. It is hard to tell work has been completed, but careful review shows that the area around the desired hardwoods has had competition removed. Many competing trees were girdled.
- Compartment 70 stand 13 - This site was pre-commercially thinned with many thin loblollies left on the ground.

- Compartment 122 stand 1 - This site also had been pre commercially thinned. This site had been checked in April for base line data. The pines had obviously been thinned.
- Compartment 124 stand 16 - This was for baseline data on thinning loblollies and eventual conversion to short leaf pine. Leave trees were marked.
- Compartment 150 stands 4, 7, 8 - Baseline data was taken before this site will be prepared for longleaf planting.
- Compartment 148 stand 17 - We searched for this site, but did not find it. We did observe a site planted in longleaf pine that had bluestem grass established.

**Comments:**

- Leave trees are being marked now rather than cut trees. Marking cut trees tended to leave more basal area than desired.
- Most of these checks were to establish baseline or reference data to compare actual work to. This will be before and after.
- In addition to using checklists, pictures are being taken so it will be easy to visually follow progress as the project continues.
- No problems were found in areas where work had been completed.

**Other Items -**

1. Ivan cleanup was successful - now we have Katrina cleanup
2. SWECO work on Owl Creek trails was good last year - plan to do it in Dec this year
3. Waterline is near completion - that will serve Brushy Lake and Owl Creek, but not Pinetorch

**Overview of Alabama A&M Research Project  
Amphibians and Reptile Study**

**Bill Sutton**

Bill Sutton provided an excellent overview of his herpetological study and provided some initial findings related to species encountered. It was interesting that the most common snake species encountered so far in the study was the copperhead. The study will look at the effects of thinning and prescribe burning at various intensities on native reptiles and amphibians. It will also provide some of the first information on amphibian and reptile occurrence and abundance on the Bankhead National Forest. Similar work is being conducted on birds and mammals.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2006 in Double Springs, Alabama. The main focus of the meeting will be to discuss the inventory and needed restoration work in the four watershed projects. Dr. Hamilton will also provide a presentation on the hemlock wholly adelgid.





**Rockhouse Watershed (6th Level) Current Condition**

	<b>Early Succession</b>	<b>Sapling</b>	<b>Mid Succession</b>	<b>Late Succession</b>	<b>Old Growth</b>	<b>Unknown Age</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>		150	9	208			<b>367</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>		77	126	61	193		<b>457</b>
<b>Oak Woodland</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>		249	854	451	1		<b>1555</b>
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	38	63	2	73			<b>176</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Virginia Pine Forest</b>			79	187			<b>266</b>
<b>Southern Pine Beetle 10 Acres and Larger</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Uninventoried</b>	8					3	<b>11</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2832</b>

**Rockhouse Watershed (6th Level) Desired Condition**

	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>	<b>942</b>
<b>Oak Woodlands</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>	
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	<b>949</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>	
<b>Virginia Pine</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>2820</b>

Hoghouse Watershed (6th Level) Current Condition

	Early Succession	Sapling	Mid Succession	Late Succession	Old Growth	Unknown Age	Total Acres
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>					90		<b>90</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>		4	11	138	67		<b>220</b>
<b>Oak Woodland</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>		39	296	440	22		<b>797</b>
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	29	46		6			<b>81</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>	36						<b>36</b>
<b>Virginia Pine Forest</b>				34			<b>34</b>
<b>Southern Pine Beetle 10 Acres and Larger</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Uninventoried</b>	10					1	<b>11</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1269</b>

Hoghouse Watershed (6th Level) Desired Condition

	Total Acres
Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood	90
Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine	1037
Oak Woodlands	15
Loblolly Pine	
Longleaf Pine	83
Shortleaf Pine	
Virginia Pine	34
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>1259</b>

**Grindstone Watershed (6th Level) Current Condition**

	<b>Early Succession</b>	<b>Sapling</b>	<b>Mid Succession</b>	<b>Late Succession</b>	<b>Old Growth</b>	<b>Unknown Age</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>	1			343	46		<b>390</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>		190	51	14	32		<b>287</b>
<b>Oak Woodland</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>		234	759	324			<b>1317</b>
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>		6					<b>6</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Virginia Pine Forest</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Southern Pine Beetle 10 Acres and Larger</b>	29						<b>29</b>
<b>Uninventoried</b>						3	<b>3</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2032</b>

**Grindstone Watershed (6th Level) Desired Condition**

	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Oak Woodlands</b>	<b>233</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>	
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>	<b>1044</b>
<b>Virginia Pine</b>	
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>2035</b>

**Mill Watershed (6th Level) Current Condition**

	<b>Early Succession</b>	<b>Sapling</b>	<b>Mid Succession</b>	<b>Late Succession</b>	<b>Old Growth</b>	<b>Unknown Age</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>				31			<b>31</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>		150	349	457	289		<b>1245</b>
<b>Oak Woodland</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>	81	196	557	252	134		<b>1220</b>
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>		149					<b>149</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>				51			<b>51</b>
<b>Virginia Pine Forest</b>				87			<b>87</b>
<b>Southern Pine Beetle 10 Acres and Larger</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Uninventoried</b>	8					29	<b>37</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2820</b>



**Mill Watershed (6th Level) Desired Condition**

	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>	<b>942</b>
<b>Oak Woodlands</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>	
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	<b>949</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>	
<b>Virginia Pine</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>2820</b>

**Inman Watershed (6th Level) Current Condition**

	<b>Early Succession</b>	<b>Sapling</b>	<b>Mid Succession</b>	<b>Late Succession</b>	<b>Old Growth</b>	<b>Unknown Age</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>					234		<b>234</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>		144	188	195	570		<b>1097</b>
<b>Oak Woodland</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>	85	249	596	1138	27		<b>2095</b>
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>		60					<b>60</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Virginia Pine Forest</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Southern Pine Beetle 10 Acres and Larger</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Uninventoried</b>	44					3	<b>47</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>1333</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3533</b>

**Inman Watershed (6th Level) Desired Condition**

	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>	<b>847</b>
<b>Oak Woodlands</b>	<b>758</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>	
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>	<b>1633</b>
<b>Virginia Pine</b>	
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>3514</b>

**Corinth Watershed (6th Level) Current Condition**

	<b>Early Succession</b>	<b>Sapling</b>	<b>Mid Succession</b>	<b>Late Succession</b>	<b>Old Growth</b>	<b>Unknown Age</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>				52	41		<b>93</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>			419	178			<b>597</b>
<b>Oak Woodland</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>		191	763	1033	98		<b>2085</b>
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	67						<b>67</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Virginia Pine Forest</b>			17	337			<b>354</b>
<b>Southern Pine Beetle 10 Acres and Larger</b>							<b>0</b>
<b>Uninventoried</b>	26					24	<b>50</b>
<b>Water/Reservoirs/Recreation Sites</b>						429	<b>429</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>1199</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>3675</b>

**Corinth Watershed (6th Level) Desired Condition**

	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>Cove Hardwood and Conifer - Northern Hardwood</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Upland Hardwood and Hardwood Pine</b>	<b>886</b>
<b>Oak Woodlands</b>	<b>362</b>
<b>Loblolly Pine</b>	
<b>Longleaf Pine</b>	<b>1511</b>
<b>Shortleaf Pine</b>	
<b>Virginia Pine</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>Grand Total Acres</b>	<b>3206</b>