

Apalachicola National Forest Native Groundcover Seed Bank

FY12 Updated 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 2011, 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.

During FY 2011 we had originally proposed to prescribe burn more 20,000 acres in the early growing season (May, June, or July) but were not able to burn any compartments during this time because of a drought. We did have two large wildfires 600 and 300 acres each which will provide some seed collection areas. Our goal is to collect as much seed as possible from these wildfires and use it to seed 50 acres of sandhill habitat. In the summer a Best Value contract was solicited and awarded to fulfill this goal. The contract was awarded to collect 1300 pounds of native seed mix at \$36 per pound and to sow 50 acres at \$200 per acre. The seed collection work began in November and the sowing was accomplished in December.

The areas sown are longleaf pine plantations about 20 years old. These stands were planted on very dry sandhill sites. The groundcover is very sparse silk grass which shouldn't provide too much competition for native seed mix. Prior to seeding the stands were prescribed burned.

We were able to collect the full 1300 pounds of native seed. Lab tests on the seed indicate 745,746 seed per pound, 10.75 % Purity, and the expected germination rate is 33%. The seed was sown at 20 pounds per acre.

Total project cost = \$958 per acre
Seed collection \$720/acre (20 pounds @ \$36/Pound)
Prescribed Burning \$38/Acre
Seed Sown @ \$200 per acre



*Sowing Native Seed between rows in a 20 year old longleaf plantation.
Compartment 220 stand 9*

Year Awarded: 2011
Project completion: (2011)

Report number: (2 of 2) 10/15/2012

Expenditures:

- FY11 CWK2: \$ 56,800

Partners/Contractors/Coop:
The Nature Conservancy

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