



Forestland Stewards: 2019 Grant Slate

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CORPORATE PARTNER

International Paper is a global leader in the packaging and paper industry with manufacturing operations in North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia and North Africa. International Paper's partnership with NFWF supports the sustainable management of natural, working and restored forests to benefit wildlife and people. To learn more, go to www.internationalpaper.com.

To learn more, go to
nfwf.org/forestlandstewards

ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$6.1 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Prairie warbler

OVERVIEW

International Paper and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) formed the Forestland Stewards Partnership in 2013 to identify, restore and protect landscapes in three priority regions in the United States: the Low Country forests of North and South Carolina, the Cumberland Plateau, and the Piney Woods of Texas and Louisiana. Because of the measurable conservation successes within these landscapes, International Paper and NFWF expanded the partnership in 2017 into a fourth landscape, the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley, in a concentrated effort to restore and protect bottomland hardwood forests and associated wildlife, including migratory and wading birds, wintering waterfowl, and other terrestrial and aquatic species. Through a gift of \$17.5 million over ten years from International Paper, the project is designed to:

- Protect and enhance core habitat areas as anchor forests
- Improve management of private and public forests for environmental and economic needs
- Restore populations of at-risk wildlife and plant species
- Improve water and air quality through healthier forests
- Promote and support working forests

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The four priority geographies represent places where International Paper is part of the fabric of the community, where they own and operate mills and other facilities, and where many International Paper employees live and work. In addition, these are areas of special ecological value, where large intact forests serve as habitat hubs for many rare and threatened species and protect water quality and quantity. The partnership marries International Paper’s interests to continue to serve as a corporate steward in the communities in which it operates, and to enhance the health of forests on which the environment and many wildlife species rely.

In 2019, 20 projects were awarded grants and are expected to establish more than 4,500 new acres and enhance and protect approximately 109,000 existing acres of longleaf and shortleaf pine and bottomland hardwood and riparian forest habitats. These grants are funded in partnership with International Paper and other federal and non-federal funding partners.

Pineywoods Longleaf Restoration (LA) - VI

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy
 Grant Amount:\$190,942
 Matching Funds:\$190,942
 Total:\$381,884

Restore and enhance longleaf pine habitat on private lands adjacent to and surrounding the Kisatchie National Forest and Fort Polk in west-central Louisiana, benefitting open pine and grassland-dependent birds, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker and northern bobwhite. Project will engage private landowners, forestry practitioners, and agency staff through field days and workshops. Technical assistance will be provided to willing private landowners to restore and enhance 2,700 acres of longleaf pine habitat.

Cape Fear Arch Longleaf Initiative (NC) - IV

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy
 Grant Amount:\$319,998
 Matching Funds:\$ 420,000
 Total:\$739,998

Restore and enhance longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood forest habitats in eastern North Carolina, benefitting birds such as red-cockaded woodpecker and Bachman’s sparrow, and amphibians such as Carolina gopher frog. Project will plant 360 acres of longleaf pine and enhance more than 16,000 acres of existing longleaf pine habitat through prescribed burning and other treatments. Partners will continue to build public understanding and support for prescribed burning, reaching more than 10,000 citizens through two fire festivals.

Engaging Working Forest Landowners, Building Stakeholder Collaboration & Developing Solutions (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TX, VA) - III

Grantee: Forest Landowners Association
 Grant Amount:\$150,000
 Matching Funds:\$175,000



Red-cockaded woodpecker

Total:\$325,000
 Engage large-acreage family forest owners in longleaf pine restoration and conservation of at-risk and listed species across the historical longleaf pine range, with a particular focus within areas impacted by Hurricanes Florence and Michael. Project will establish 120 acres of longleaf pine and produce collaborative, landscape-level solutions to longleaf restoration on large family-owned forestlands, including species-related regulatory predictability tools and market-based incentives.

Forest Conservation and Wetlands Reserve Lands Management in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (MS)

Grantee: Mississippi River Trust
 Grant Amount:\$640,970
 Matching Funds:\$937,500
 Total:\$1,578,470

Protect 375 acres of bottomland hardwoods with working forest conservation easements and enhance an additional 1,000 acres of existing bottomland hardwood forests to improve wildlife habitat and serve as demonstration sites for landowners and foresters. Project will provide an inventory of more than 30,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forest established through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS’) Wetland Reserve Program in Mississippi, providing landowners, land managers, and NRCS with the information needed to guide management treatments that enhance wildlife habitat at a landscape scale.

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Prescribed fire

Engaging Private Forest Landowners and Enhancing Bottomland Hardwood Forests in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (AR, LA, MS)

Grantee: The Forest Stewards Guild
 Grant Amount:\$133,212
 Matching Funds: \$69,719
 Total:\$202,931
 Leverage the expertise and accomplishments of state lands managed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to promote and expand implementation of forest management practices that enhance wildlife habitat for forest interior birds, such as Kentucky warbler. Partners will host a regional learning exchange and workshops to share best practices, perform strategic and targeted outreach to private forest landowners, prepare forest management plans for high-priority private landowners, and implement enhancement activities on 1,200 acres of private and state forest lands in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker Conservation Project on Public and Private Lands (SC)

Grantee: The Longleaf Alliance, Inc.
 Grant Amount:\$118,309
 Matching Funds: \$94,560
 Total:\$212,869
 Support recovery of the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker through translocation of birds from the Francis Marion National Forest to public lands and private forests enrolled in the Safe Harbor Program in South Carolina. Project will translocate at least 20 birds to restored longleaf pine habitat that will be managed long-term.

Increasing Prescribed Fire Delivery and Shortleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration in the Cumberland Plateau (KY, TN)

Grantee: The Forest Stewards Guild
 Grant Amount:\$199,875
 Matching Funds:\$200,781
 Total:\$400,656
 Increase prescribed fire delivery and shortleaf pine ecosystem restoration in the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee and Kentucky to benefit songbirds such as prairie warbler and pine warbler, and game species such as wild turkey. Project will engage public and private landowners through outreach and technical assistance to restore and enhance more than 5,400 acres of shortleaf pine forests, including more than 4,000 acres of prescribed burning.

Arkansas Wetland Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Initiative (AR)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
 Grant Amount: \$499,444
 Matching Funds:\$300,000
 Total:\$799,444
 Improve 1,600 acres of bottomland hardwood forest habitat through invasive species removal and hydrological restoration on public and private properties enrolled in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program in Arkansas, benefiting waterfowl and forest-dependent bird species. Project will engage private landowners through outreach and technical assistance, with the goal to enroll at least 30 landowners in stewardship

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programs that work to improve bottomland hardwood forests, wetland habitats, and water quality.

Managing Bottomland Hardwood Forests for Wildlife (NC, SC)

Grantee: The Forest Stewards Guild

Grant Amount:\$144,689
 Matching Funds:\$168,026
 Total:\$312,715

Enhance and maintain bottomland hardwood forests in the coastal plain of North and South Carolina to benefit migratory songbirds, such as prothonotary warbler and cerulean warbler. Project will create demonstration sites on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges and engage private landowners through workshops and field days, resulting in forest management plans developed for 4,000 acres and 1,200 acres of bottomland hardwoods enhanced on public and private lands.

Stewardship of Privately-Owned Bottomland Hardwood Forests in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (AR, KY, LA, MO, MS, TN)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Grant Amount:\$153,047
 Matching Funds:\$306,360
 Total:\$459,407

Increase stewardship of privately-owned bottomland hardwood forests in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley through outreach, technical assistance, and developing conservation plans to guide the management of existing forests and improve habitat for waterfowl, forest-interior birds and other forest-dependent wildlife. Project will reach 150 landowners with existing conservation easements, including properties enrolled in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program, with the goal for least half of these landowners to implement conservation activities that will enhance 2,000 acres of forested wetlands and restore hydrologic conditions on 450 acres to improve water quality.

Sewee Longleaf Restoration and Enhancement (SC) - II

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount:\$286,000
 Matching Funds:\$384,570
 Total:\$670,570

Restore, maintain and protect more than 60,000 acres of longleaf pine habitat on public and private lands in the South Carolina coastal plain, north of Charleston, benefitting birds such as Bachman's sparrow, northern bobwhite and red-cockaded woodpecker, and imperiled amphibians such as the frosted flatwoods salamander and gopher frog. Project will deploy a seasonal fire crew to increase prescribed burning on public and private lands, expand private landowner engagement through a forest landowners association, and partner with local land trusts to protect working forests and longleaf pine habitat through voluntary conservation easements. Partners will host a fire festival



Northern bobwhite

to educate citizens on the use of prescribed fire and build a culture supportive of burning.

Forests, Floodplains and Flow: Increasing Wetland Habitats, Habitat Complexity and Hydrologic Connections along the Lower Mississippi River (AR, LA, MS)

Grantee: Mississippi River Trust

Grant Amount:\$250,595
 Matching Funds:\$385,000
 Total:\$635,595

Work with private landowners to restore 1,000 acres of frequently flooded forests through the adoption of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Easements and restore flow and habitat complexity within priority Mississippi River secondary channels through ecological engineering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Project will benefit federally listed and at-risk birds, bears, fish, and mussels and improve water quality in the Lower Mississippi River's active floodplain in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Restoring Riparian and Aquatic Habitats on Private Lands in the Paint Rock River Watershed (AL)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

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Eastern hellbender

Grant Amount: \$99,994
 Matching Funds: \$100,000
 Total: \$199,994
 Restore and enhance riparian forests and in-stream habitat on private lands in the Paint Rock River watershed in Alabama to benefit numerous at-risk freshwater species, including freshwater mussels and fish such as the Alabama lampmussel and spotfin chub. Project will restore two miles of in-stream and riparian habitat through streambank stabilization and planting native vegetation.

Advancing Northern Bobwhite Management in the Longleaf Pine Range (AL, GA, LA, VA)

Grantee: The University of Tennessee (AgResearch)
 Grant Amount: \$147,568
 Matching Funds: \$147,597
 Total: \$295,165
 Develop northern bobwhite population goals for target sites within the longleaf pine range in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Virginia to support adaptive management. Project will engage local partners, including state wildlife agencies, to collect habitat and population data, and will produce predictive statistical models that relate population abundance to habitat structure, landscape characteristics, and management actions.

Pee Dee River-Winyah Bay Forest Restoration Partnership (SC) - II

Grantee: National Audubon Society, Inc.
 Grant Amount: \$299,693
 Matching Funds: \$299,693
 Total: \$599,386
 Improve and increase targeted outreach efforts and engage forest landowners in sustainable forestry, enhance habitat for at-risk species, and conserve and improve management of 7,000 acres of bottomland hardwood and longleaf pine forests in the Pee Dee River and Winyah Bay landscape in South Carolina. Project will develop management plans, enroll landowners in Tree Farm certification, establish and enhance longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood habitats.

Measuring Bachman's Sparrow Response to Longleaf Pine Management (FL, GA, NC)

Grantee: Cornell University
 Grant Amount: \$89,700
 Matching Funds: \$0.00
 Total: \$89,700
 Develop a methodological framework to use citizen science and field-collected data by project partners to evaluate and measure Bachman's sparrow response to habitat restoration and management efforts at scales relevant to the species' population. Project will estimate a region-wide baseline for occupancy and potentially evaluate trends in occupancy and relative abundance.

Expanding Prescribed Fire Implementation on the Cumberland Plateau (TN)

Grantee: Tennessee Department of Agriculture
 Grant Amount: \$199,484
 Matching Funds: \$199,484
 Total: \$398,968
 Expand prescribed burning on privately owned shortleaf pine forests in the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee to benefit birds such as Bachman's sparrow, prairie warbler, and northern bobwhite. Project will support a prescribed fire strike team that will implement at least 1,280 acres of prescribed burning.

Restoring Eastern Hellbender Habitat on Private Lands in Tennessee

Grantee: Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy
 Grant Amount: \$99,998
 Matching Funds: \$102,592
 Total: \$202,590
 Restore forested riparian buffers and implement additional conservation practices on private agricultural lands in Tennessee to improve habitat for the eastern hellbender, the largest species of aquatic salamander in North America. Project will restore seven acres of riparian habitat through tree plantings, livestock exclusion fencing, and stream bank stabilization.

Shortleaf Pine Restoration in the Alabama Cumberlands - II

Grantee: Alabama Forestry Foundation
 Grant Amount: \$150,000
 Matching Funds: \$150,000
 Total: \$300,000
 Restore and enhance shortleaf pine habitat on public and private lands in northern Alabama, benefitting northern bobwhite, Bachman's sparrow, and other forest and grassland dependent birds. Project will establish 400 acres of shortleaf pine and enhance an additional 2,200 acres of existing shortleaf pine habitat with prescribed burning and invasive species removal.