



# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

*The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.*

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Resolution No. 1, 2021

## **SUBJECT: IMPROVING FOREST DIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES FROM THE FORESTRY PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM AT LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana calls itself “Sportsman’s Paradise” because of the plentiful outdoor recreational opportunities that are made possible by diverse natural ecosystems including coastal marshes, hardwood bottomlands, and upland mixed forests that offer varied terrain and wildlife and hence many forms of human use; and

WHEREAS, many of these natural systems that provide the foundation for varied outdoor recreational activities are experiencing negative trends due to climate change, evolving land use patterns, changing demand for agricultural and forest products, and suburban developments; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) supports primary economic activities that give landowners a reason to maintain their property in a natural state suitable for recreation as well as income generation; and

WHEREAS, changes in technology and demand for various products have resulted in shifting demand for upland forest products, with lower demand for some products (pulp for paper mills) and higher demand for others (residuals for wood pellet mills that satisfy Europe’s demand for renewable power plant fuel sources); and

WHEREAS, LWF supports reforestation of cutover land with diversified forests that mimic, to the extent feasible, the natural ecosystem species of upland forests which provide the diversity that supports wildlife and scenic values; and

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana has a reforestation program for landowners, funded at about \$2.5 million per year, that pays a substantial portion (approximately one-half) of the cost of replanting forested lands after clearcuts, and this program most often results in sites being replanted into loblolly plantations which historically provided the quickest financial return to landowners; and

WHEREAS, the heavy focus on loblolly reforestation causes diversified, mixed forest lands to be converted to a form of monoculture that is contrary to the recreational use of forests as loblolly forests harbor very little wildlife; and

WHEREAS, many forest landholders wish to use their land, not just for timber production or maximum cash flow, but for recreation such as hunting, birding, ATV riding, and hiking; and

WHEREAS, loblolly reforestation may involve aerial applications of herbicides (if elected by the property owner) in order to suppress regrowth of hardwoods and other species that would compete with loblolly; and

WHEREAS, loblolly plantations produce more potential exposure to pine beetles and other ecological problems and can create an oversupply of loblolly, and small private landowners participating in the reforestation program should be fully advised of all options and benefits; and

WHEREAS, the public has a right to know the details of the reforestation program including the proportion of the public funding that is going into loblolly versus other types of reforestation; and

WHEREAS, the loblolly emphasis, whether intended or not, creates potential ecosystem (monoculture) and economic (oversupply of one product) problems, and the overplanting of loblolly has been documented as a major cause of the general oversupply of timber in the southeast U.S., as discussed in a February 24, 2021 front page article in the *Wall Street Journal*.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that LWF believes the Forestry Productivity Program at the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry should clearly offer, and actively promote, a reforestation option that includes diversified species mimicking the natural forests that would occur on the particular terrain and soil types where trees were harvested;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry is urged to limit loblolly replanting to 70% of the expenditures from the program and the remainder reserved for mixed or diversified replanting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry is urged to expand streamside management area requirements and to require participating landowners to devote at least 25% of the acres to be reforested to wildlife habitat improvement (similar to the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resource Conservation Service's Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LWF urges the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to require that consultants who advise and work with private landowners on reforestation explain options available under the program to include mixed hardwood and softwood replanting, wildlife food plots, and lower herbicide use in order to assure that landowners are fully aware of the implications of their decisions including oversupply of loblollies, greater susceptibility to disease of single-species stands, and lower wildlife utilization and associated recreation potential of loblolly plantations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that program funds give priority to owners of tracts of less than 200 acres;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that LWF urges the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to maintain by parish data on the number of acres reforested, including the type of trees planted under the program and the type of forest that the reforested acreage replaced.

*Adopted by Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled virtually on August 21, 2021.*