

# Mountain Longleaf

## *National Wildlife Refuge*



photo: USFWS



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### Refuge Facts

- Established: 2003.
- Acres: 9,016.
- Located north of Anniston in Calhoun County, Alabama.
- Formerly part of Fort McClellan military training base.
- First mountain national wildlife refuge in southeastern U.S.
- Contains the third highest mountain ridge in Alabama.

### Natural History

- Only remaining stands of old growth mountain longleaf pine forest.
- Best remaining fire maintained mountain longleaf pine forest.
- Unique inland extension (Northeast Alabama and Northwest Georgia) of longleaf pine forest into the mountain provinces.
- Southern extension of Appalachian Mountains.
- Large tracts of unfragmented forest.

### Current Financial Impact of Refuge

- Two person staff.
- \$250,000 annual budget.

### Refuge Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the natural mountain longleaf pine ecosystem.
- To help perpetuate species of neotropical migratory birds.
- To preserve a natural diversity and abundance of native fauna and flora, with special emphasis on the red-cockaded woodpecker

and other endangered and threatened species.

- To provide compatible, wildlife dependent recreational opportunities such as hunting, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

### Management Tools

- Prescribed burning.
- Reforestation.
- Partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service (fire protection/prevention and prescribed burning coordination) and Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (game management).

### Public Use Opportunities

The refuge is currently closed to the public. Much of the refuge is being surveyed to determine the extent of unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination left over from former military training and the resulting clean-up requirements. In the near future we will develop a public use plan that will safely allow public use activities that are compatible with wildlife protection.

### Office Hours

The refuge office is open Mondays – Fridays from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. The office is located in the Army Garrison Transition Force (Building 215), which is a secured and locked building. Please call 256/848 6833 before visiting the office.

### Questions and Answers

*Are there any endangered species at Mountain Longleaf NWR?*

The endangered gray bat has been recorded in the area and can be expected to forage along refuge streams. The endangered red-cockaded woodpecker inhabited the refuge through the 1960s, and with prescribed burning could pioneer

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from nearby lands or be reintroduced reestablished in the future. The white-fringeless orchid, a candidate species, is found in mountain seepages within the refuge. The Nature Conservancy has identified 11 species of flora and 21 species of fauna they consider rare within the refuge lands.

### **What will be the economic impact of Mountain Longleaf NWR?**

Currently the refuge has two employees and the Army is providing funding of \$250,000 dollars a year for the first two years of operation. When fully, funded we expect an annual budget for goods, services and salaries of about \$900,000 and we anticipate employing up to ten people.

The Fish and Wildlife Service plans to open portions of Mountain Longleaf NWR to recreation and visitation. We expect Mountain Longleaf NWR to attract thousands of visitors, thereby providing positive economic benefits to the surrounding community.

*What kinds of public recreation will be allowed?*

Wildlife comes first on national wildlife refuges, and so all recreational uses must be compatible with wildlife conservation. We anticipate a number of wildlife dependent uses in the near future. These include hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, bird watching, wildlife observation, environmental education and other forms of nature study.