



An NWTF Southeastern Conservation Initiative



PHOTO: CRAIG KUCHENMEISTER

Join Us as We Work Across the Southeastern Landscape to Create Habitat for the Hatch

The restoration of the wild turkey is one of the greatest North American conservation success stories; however, since the early 2000s, we have seen a substantial decline in numbers throughout the Southeast. This is indicative in statistics such as wild turkey harvest and poult productivity data, signifying an overall decline.

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this 10-year initiative is to improve forest and field health and resiliency at a landscape scale in Southeastern states through active management of 1 million acres by 2033. This will ultimately lead to more robust wild turkey populations and healthier ecosystems across the Southeast.

Conducting critical research and applying the findings will play a significant role ensuring the goals and objectives of the initiative are maintained. Past research was foundational to understanding the types of management activities that create and maintain early successional habitat for the benefit of wild turkeys; however, new research is needed due to changing landscape conditions across the Southeast. Through critical habitat research, we will be able to provide education to public



The Landscape

The Habitat for the Hatch initiative area includes all or portions of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

NWTF CONSERVATION INITIATIVE STAMP SERIES

This first offering in the collectable stamp series will help fund our mission and 10-year initiative plan to improve forest and field health and resiliency at a landscape scale in Southeastern states of over 1 million acres by 2033. Featuring original artwork by wildlife artist Dustin Dattilio. A Vermont native, Dattilio was featured as the NWTF 2018 Stamp Artist of the Year.



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and private landowners, helping them implement specific habitat management practices on their lands at the appropriate time, space and scale.

Objectives:

- Supporting scientific research aimed at determining the most efficient and effective means to manage habitats for wild turkeys.
- Increasing controlled burning efforts in forested systems (hardwood and pine) and fields as appropriate throughout the Southeast.
- Increasing our forest conservation footprint on private lands via technical and financial assistance.
- Increase active management of forest stands to promote early successional habitat through activities such as timber stand improvement, thinning, mastication, crop tree release, planting and more.
- Chemical and mechanical removal of invasive plant species.
- Educating and engaging stakeholders, both direct and indirect, to raise awareness of the importance of controlled burning, active forest management and best management practices.

Critical wild turkey habitat restoration will be accomplished with an emphasis on the NWTF's Four Shared Values

– establishing **resilient communities, clean water, healthy forests and wildlife habitat** in wild places that offer significantly **enhanced recreational opportunities**.

Additionally, Habitat for the Hatch is named for the many other wildlife species that benefit and hatch within areas we work in the Southeast, including insects, aquatic species, the imperiled gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpeckers and pollinators, all of which are indicators of healthy and resilient habitats.

Wildlife species of greatest conservation need rely on the same habitats used by wild turkeys and will benefit significantly alongside wild turkeys. Southeastern forests and fields, when well managed, are havens for wild turkeys and provide many additional ecosystem-level benefits, including sequestering more carbon, providing clean water and abundant water, being more resilient to natural disturbances and overall providing robust recreational opportunities that are vitally important to America's sportsmen and women.

Financial Need

NWTF estimates a need of \$40 million – with partner collaboration – by the year 2033 to enhance over **1 million acres** of early successional habitat, which will improve nesting and brood-rearing conditions on both public and private lands. We anticipate leveraging funds at a minimum of 5:1. To accomplish this, the NWTF has an estimated fundraising goal of **\$8 million** over the next 10 years.



Accomplishments in Year 2

76,132.75 Acres Conserved/Enhanced

National Forestry Initiative 30,713 Acres

NWTF Seed Programs – 64.5 Acres

Plus 115,611.5 Acres Through Equipment Donated to Partners

Plus 224,071 Acres Through Prescribed Burn Team Support

2 Year Total: 150,895.75 Acres Conserved/Enhanced

Plus 467,089 Acres Through Prescribed Burn Team Support

Plus 115,611.6 Acres Through Equipment Donated to Partners



The NWTF will continue critical work addressing the complete annual cycle of wild turkey habitat needs; however, acres included in Habitat for the Hatch's 1-million-acre goal are those that specifically establish nesting habitats with quality brood range in close proximity — in other words, Habitat for the Hatch!