

# Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



**Project Name:** Engaging Family Forest Owners in Carbon Solutions and Markets

**Funding Year:** 2021

## Stakeholders

Forest Service Region: USDA Forest Service - R8

Lead State Agency: GA Forestry Commission

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Participating Agencies: GA Forestry Commission, LA Office of Forestry, SC Forestry Commission

Grantee: Forest Landowners Association

## Project Funding

Agreement(s): 21-DG-11083150-026

### Funding Sources

Forest Service Funding	\$180,000
Other Federal Funding	\$0
Non-Federal State Contributions	\$0
Non-Federal Other Contributions	\$180,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$360,000</b>

## Project Design

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## Project Purpose

Building collaboration of family forest landowners (FFOs), state agencies, & carbon market developers, w/ the goal of creating trust & understanding of carbon programs as part of FFOs management plan/revenue stream. FFOs can contribute to climate solutions & be compensated, which will support keeping their land in forest use. Yet, FFOs find the carbon market confusing, complex, restrictive, & not compatible with owner objectives. Using proven models of collaborative engagement, we will bring stakeholders together to create understanding of FFOs needs to engage in carbon programs w/ the goal of increasing knowledge & participation in this emerging marketplace. Providing resources and interaction not currently available, we will increase participation, enhancing FFOs stewardship and economic viability across the South. If this key region the wood basket of the US is to sustain its forest ecosystems & provide economic & environmental benefits FFOs must engage in carbon markets.

## Resource Objective

### **Primary Objective**

- Improve important forest ecosystems

### **Secondary Objective(s)**

- Improve fish and wildlife habitats, including for threatened and endangered species
- Maintain or improve water quality and watershed function
- Measure ecological and economic benefits including air quality and soil quality and productivity

## Strategic Issues

Growing climate change commitments from corporate and policymaker interests has led to increased commitments of publicly declared reduction targets, many of which seek forest carbon offsets to achieve their goals. At the same time FFOs are grappling with low stumpage prices and are seeking new forest income streams to keep their land in forest use. Yet, FFOs find the carbon market confusing, complex, restrictive, and not compatible with owner objectives. This project addresses the low access to trustworthy sources of information on voluntary carbon programs by bringing FFOs together with carbon stakeholders and business interests both virtually and in-person as well as developing easy to understand resources to guide FFOs in their exploration of entering the carbon market.

## Collaboration & Partners

This project incorporates forest agencies and associations from several states and has the potential for collaboration with all southern states. we engage with forest stakeholders outside of the traditional supply chain, collaboration will be the springboard of this project, bringing together for the first time diverse stakeholders in the carbon arena to inform and engage with FFOs and state forestry commissions. We will draw upon our extensive and trusted relationships within the FFO community as well as with our relationships in the carbon market and sustainable business representatives.

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## Integrated Delivery

Use FLFs extensive relationships with FFOs we will collaborate with state forestry associations to survey FFOs on their knowledge, attitudes, interest in carbon markets.

Create a web based interactive tool for FFOs to enter their ownership profile which will guide them on the types of carbon programs or IFM opportunities that meet their ownership profile.

Host and record a series of virtual roundtables and educational webinars that will: provide an overview of the carbon market;

Going from virtual to in-person collaboration, we will bring stakeholders together for Timber Talks (forest field tours) and Forest Forums (stakeholder roundtable dialogues) in partner states.

## Influence on Positive Change

As stumpage prices remain depressed and FFOs grapple with economic viability, they must begin to consider innovative income alternatives. The potential of the carbon market offers one of the best new income streams. Yet, forest carbon projects are being developed almost exclusively on properties of 5,000 acres.

FFOs can significantly contribute to natural climate solutions while also receiving income for the contributions, which will assist their ability to keep their land in forest use.

## **Accomplishments**

### Deliverables

- Summary and power point presentation of FLA's survey of family forest owners
- Summary and power point of presentation of FLA's survey of state forestry representatives
- Forest Landowner Association: With more than 340 responses from landowners
- Published study in a special issue of Forests (ISSN 1999-4907) section "Forest Economics, Policy, and Social Science". The study is titled Forest Owner Willingness to Accept Payment for Forest Carbon in the United States: A Meta-Analysis
- Launch of Forest Carbon University: Total of 8 webinars and 2 in-person panels

Hosted informational carbon webinar on NCX/Silvatera program for landowners and forestry stakeholders.

<https://www.forestlandowners.com/fla-hosts-carbon-market-webinar-with-silvatera/>

The webinar was attended by 230 forest stakeholders

Held Carbon/Ecosystem Services panel during FLA Conference: Pathways for Private Forest Landowners to Capture Value from Carbon Storing Properties of Forests with Aaron Bumgarner – Outsyde, Jennifer Jenkins – Enviva, and Zack Parisa – NCX. Attended by 150 forest stakeholders.

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## Accomplishments to Date

We have engaged more than 500 landowners, state forestry representatives and carbon market providers via surveys, webinars and in-person meetings. This program has directly impacted landowners in consideration of enrolling in carbon programs.

Launch of Forest Carbon University - To ensure we were filling the knowledge gaps and delivering the content landowners needed most, we conducted a survey of forest landowners to gauge their understanding and needs for navigating the forest carbon markets. The survey results were used to create a six-part webinar series, for both state foresters and landowners, and a website with resources tailored to landowner's specific needs.

- Summary of studies estimating willingness-to-accept (WTA) for carbon sequestration in private forests
- Meta-analysis of Forest Owners Willingness to accept payment for forest carbon
- Survey of forest owners conducted by Auburn University. (251 landowners responded)
- 2 Carbon provider panels at the Family Forest Business Conference (2021 and 2022), attendance by forest stakeholders totally 245.
- Survey of family forest owners conducted by the Forest Landowner Foundation (340 landowners responded)
- Survey of state forestry representatives on their knowledge and needs regarding better serving their forest landowner constituents
- Detailed calls and meetings with key carbon market providers
- Meetings during Climate Week with NYSE/ICE regarding Climate Finance and perspective of family forest owners, discussion on insurance of carbon and monetizing co-benefits.

## Quantities to Date

- Landowner Assistance - 500 Private forest landowners reached through technical assistance

## Deliverables in Progress

Completion of Forest Carbon University Webinars

Online library of resources to assist family forest owners and interested stakeholders

## Challenges

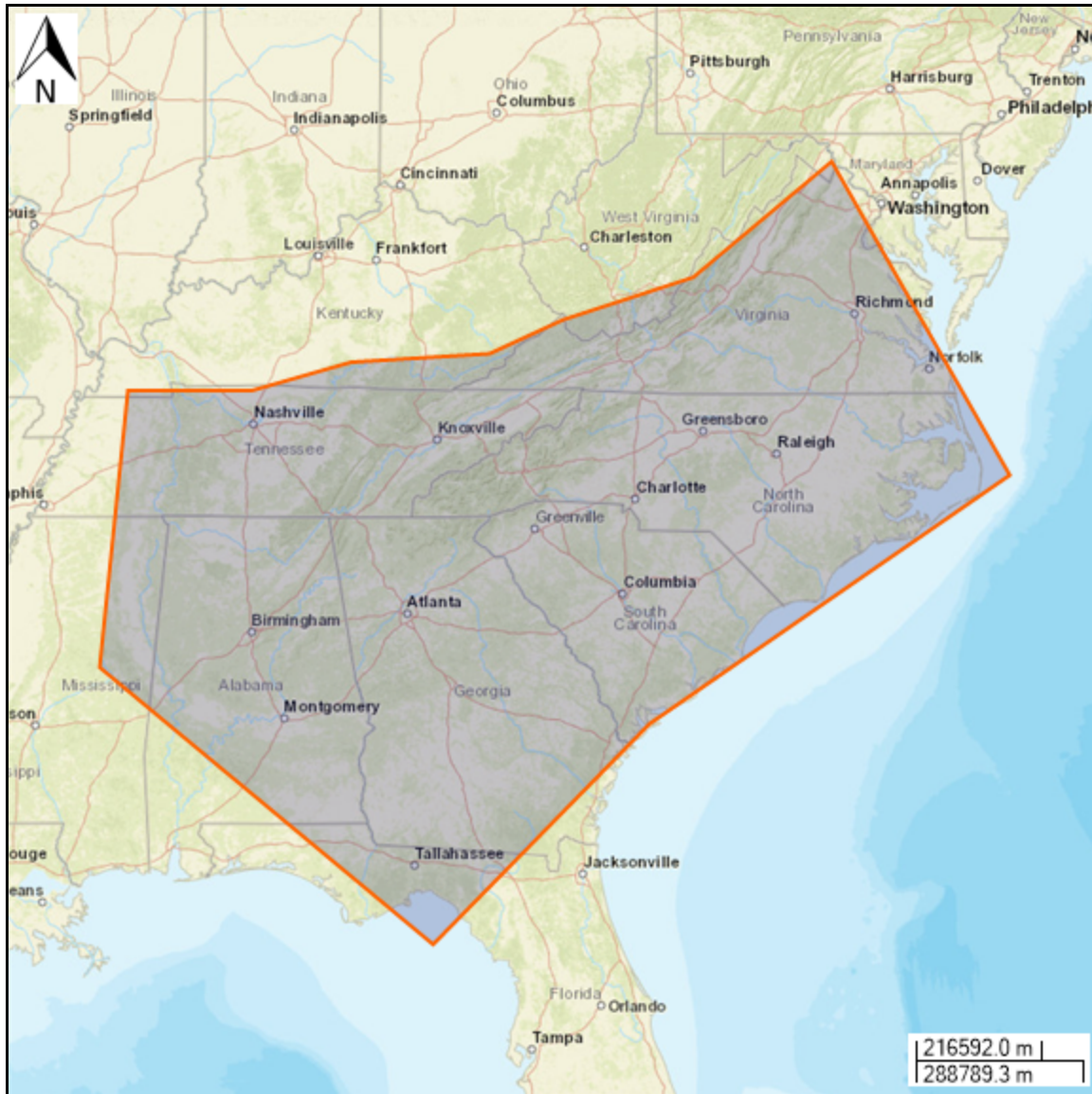
While discussion, news, policy and corporate interest in voluntary carbon markets has increased in the past year, the programs offered for forest landowners are still in their infancy and have yet to become a viable revenue stream for landowners. This is a fast changing market with lost of uncertainty regarding the regulatory and federal policy that may impact the voluntary carbon market. Landowners are interested, but seem to be waiting on engaging.

Due to the evolving market and fluctuations in price of carbon credits based on various factors, the online assessment tool for a landowner to determine best match might be difficult to create to be used in a meaningful way.

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## Impact Area



Information Last Updated  
10/17/2022