



Illustris Palustris Award 2021



In 2021, the NC Longleaf Coalition selected Jeff Marcus as the recipient of the Illustris Palustris Award. This award is the coalition's annual recognition of an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the maintenance and restoration of North Carolina's Longleaf Pine ecosystem. Jeff has contributed to the conservation, restoration, and protection of the longleaf pine habitat at system-wide, regional, and local levels for almost 20 years.

A few examples of Jeff's multi-level engagement and continued dedication include assisting with the Longleaf Pine Whole System Prioritization Map project, serving as the Local Implementation Team (LIT) Coordinator for the NC Sandhills Conservation Partnership, voluntarily chairing the Natural Heritage Advisory Committee, and choosing to use his "free" time to serve as land steward for the Friends of Plant Conservation's Eastwood Preserve. Since starting with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 2013, Jeff has been instrumental in the protection of over 6,000 acres of longleaf pine ecosystem in the Sandhills.


Locating and acquiring funding is a key component in protection, conservation, and restoration work. Jeff has taken the lead in collaborating with the Department of Defense, resulting in over 16 million dollars being dedicated to land protection in the Sandhills. Jeff has been a lead writer or partner contributor on 12 TNC National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grants that total roughly \$3.6 million.

In the Southeastern U.S., Jeff is recognized as one of the leading voices on restoration and maintenance of longleaf pine. He is a coalition builder—working with diverse individuals and groups across the longleaf range to improve and increase habitat. Jeff is always willing to assist in community meetings to relay the importance of healthy connected longleaf habitat and direct landowners to management resources. Based on research findings, he developed a unique story about a gopher frog traveling through a longleaf forest during his annual breeding migration that is a crowd favorite. He contributes to local restoration efforts by assisting on prescribed burns, planting longleaf seedlings, refining collection and planting methods for wiregrass and other native grasses, and numerous bird and vegetation surveys.

Although not a North Carolina native, it is fair to say that Jeff's heart and soul are firmly entrenched in the "Land of the Longleaf Pine." Jeff's dedication and love of the longleaf pine habitat, his commitment to local, regional, and system-wide support of the ecosystem, and his proactive engagement with community make him an integral part of longleaf pine conservation in North Carolina. Congratulations to Jeff for a well deserved recognition.



NCLC recognizes Jeff Marcus as the 2021 recipient of the Illustris Palustris Award for his vast contributions to longleaf conservation in North Carolina.



North Carolina
Longleaf Coalition