



Illustris Palustris Award 2014



The North Carolina Longleaf Coalition presented the 2014 Illustris Palustris award to Boon Chesson, a longleaf advocate and landowner from North Carolina Piedmont region. North Carolina awards the Illustris Palustris annually to recognize an individual for significant contribution to the longleaf efforts in the State.

“Boon is an ambassador for longleaf pine restoration, specifically piedmont longleaf pine,” wrote Terry Sharp in his commendation. “His interest in longleaf forestry, friendly outgoing personality, and sharing what he has learned have made him the go-to-guy for longleaf pine restoration and history in Montgomery County.” Boon’s interest in longleaf forest management motivated him to change careers and acquire a forestry degree. He practices what he preaches, managing his own personal property for longleaf pine.

Boon advocates the frequent use of prescribed fire. Under Boon’s 20-plus year prescribed burn program, his personal land has gone from a typical old farm site to a veritable hotbed of native plant diversity. Every year, he discovers new plant species many of which are rare or uncommon. Just this spring, he discovered a new shrub in bloom, Coastal Plain Serviceberry (*Amelanchier obovalis*), first time seen in Montgomery County. Other rare or unusual plants that have turned up on his property since he started managing include Barbara’s buttons (*Marshallia obovata*), Bog oatgrass (*Danthonia epilis*), slender blue iris (*Iris prismatica*), Pinebarren sandreed (*Calamovilfa brevipilis*), and various orchids. Because of the frequent use of fire and resulting botanical diversity, botanists eagerly visit Boon’s property on a regular basis to identify plant species. He always makes his property available for educational hikes and events for landowners, and research purposes.



Boon Chesson, landowner and longleaf advocate, is recognized for his efforts to restore longleaf in North Carolina.

Boon is instrumental in land conservation efforts in the southern Piedmont serving on The Land Trust of Central NC, Stewardship and Land Protection committee for the last several years. Boon has helped identify key properties for conservation on multiple occasions including the 116-acre Nichols Preserve, an old growth longleaf forest in the piedmont region of North Carolina. He is an active “boots on the ground” voice for longleaf; giving talks on the history of longleaf, hosting educational tours of his property, and assisting to mark boundaries, conduct inventories, and provide advice on restoration management of conservation properties. Boon’s passion for longleaf as a forester, naturalist, botanist, and prescribed burner qualifies him as a voice for longleaf pine in North Carolina, and a deserving recipient of the 2014 Illustris Palustris Award.

