

2006. Currie, K.*, J. M. Varner, J. Kush and M. Cipollini. A survey of the herbaceous vegetation in the Berry College Longleaf Pine Management Area. The Annual Meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists, Gatlinburg, TN. March 29-April 1, 2006. *Southeastern Biology* 53(2): 208.

Abstract: The Berry College Longleaf Pine Project is a management project designed to restore a fire-suppressed Mountain Longleaf Pine community to its natural, fire-maintained state. The target communities are frequently burned sites at the Mountain Longleaf National Refuge (MLNR) in Fort McClellan, Alabama. To monitor the progress as management activities (hardwood control, prescribed burning) surveys of the herbaceous vegetation were initiated in the summer of 2005. Following NCVS protocols, surveys were conducted in six study stands. Presence and cover values were obtained for all species encountered, and importance values were generated from these data. The presence of Mountain Longleaf Pine community indicator species was also recorded. Of the top 11 species ranked by importance values, seven were considered to be indicator species of healthy mountain longleaf ecosystem. Nevertheless, principal-component analyses revealed that the Berry College stands cluster together and differ distinctively from the MLNR communities. In particular, there are fewer fire-adapted species and more shade-tolerant, fire-sensitive species in the Berry College stands. Overall, the analysis revealed an ecosystem still suffering from fire suppression, but showing clear signs that recovery has begun.

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