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Onslow Bight Enhanced Conservation Action Planning

PRESENTATION TO THE ONSLOW BIGHT CONSERVATION FORUM

HERVEY MCIVER

APRIL 29, 2010



**“If you had a Dollar to spend
on Conservation in
your Landscape,
Where would You
Invest it First?”**

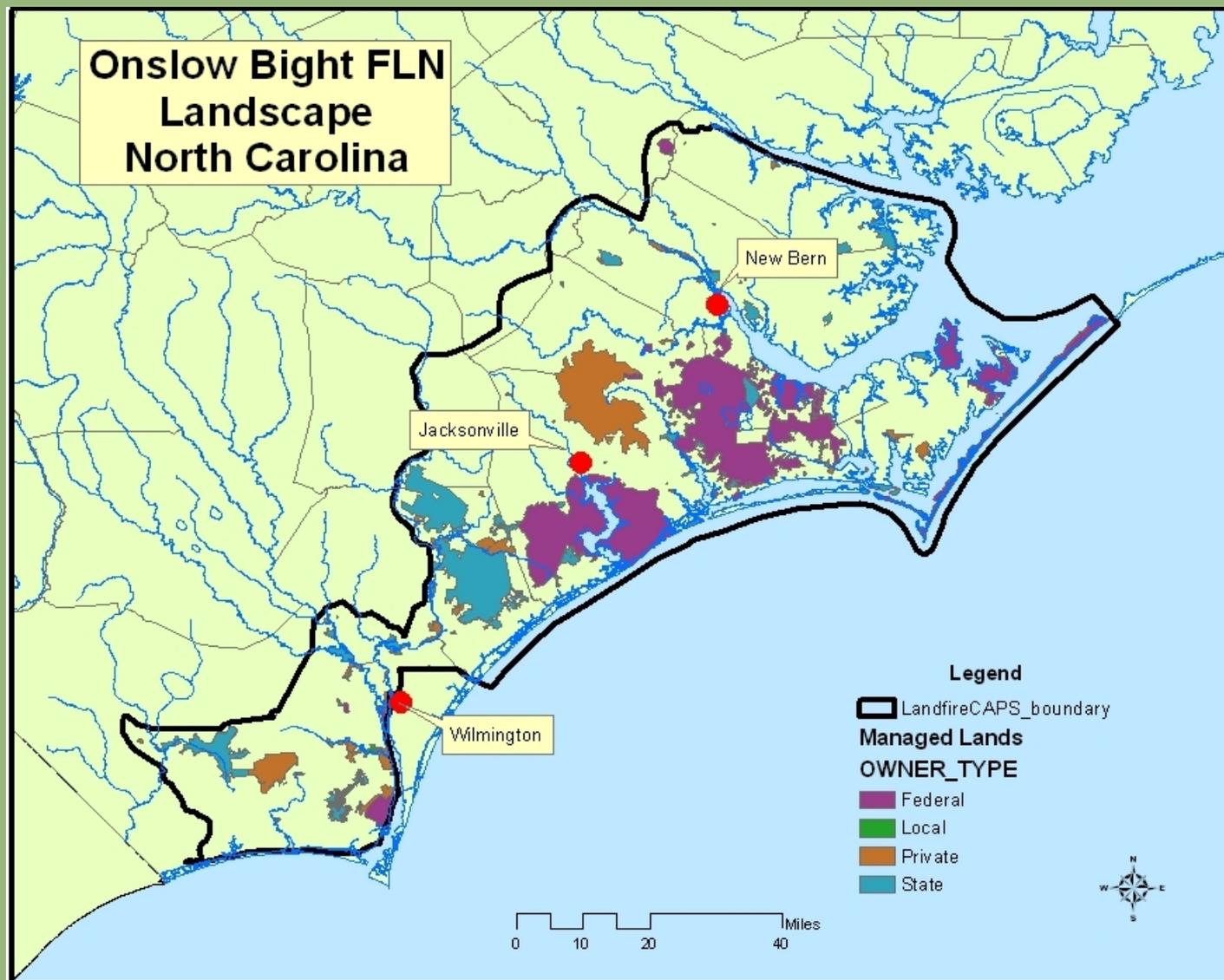
Linking LANDFIRE Products and Data to the CAP Process



Primary Objectives of the Enhanced CAP

- Compare the Ecological Effects of various combinations of conservation strategies or management scenarios.
- Compare the cost of implementing each scenario with the resulting ecological impacts to determine a return on investment.
- Complement land management plans for many public agencies and provide a scientific foundation for NEPA assessments and funding requests.

The Onslow Bight Project



The Onslow Bight Project

Team

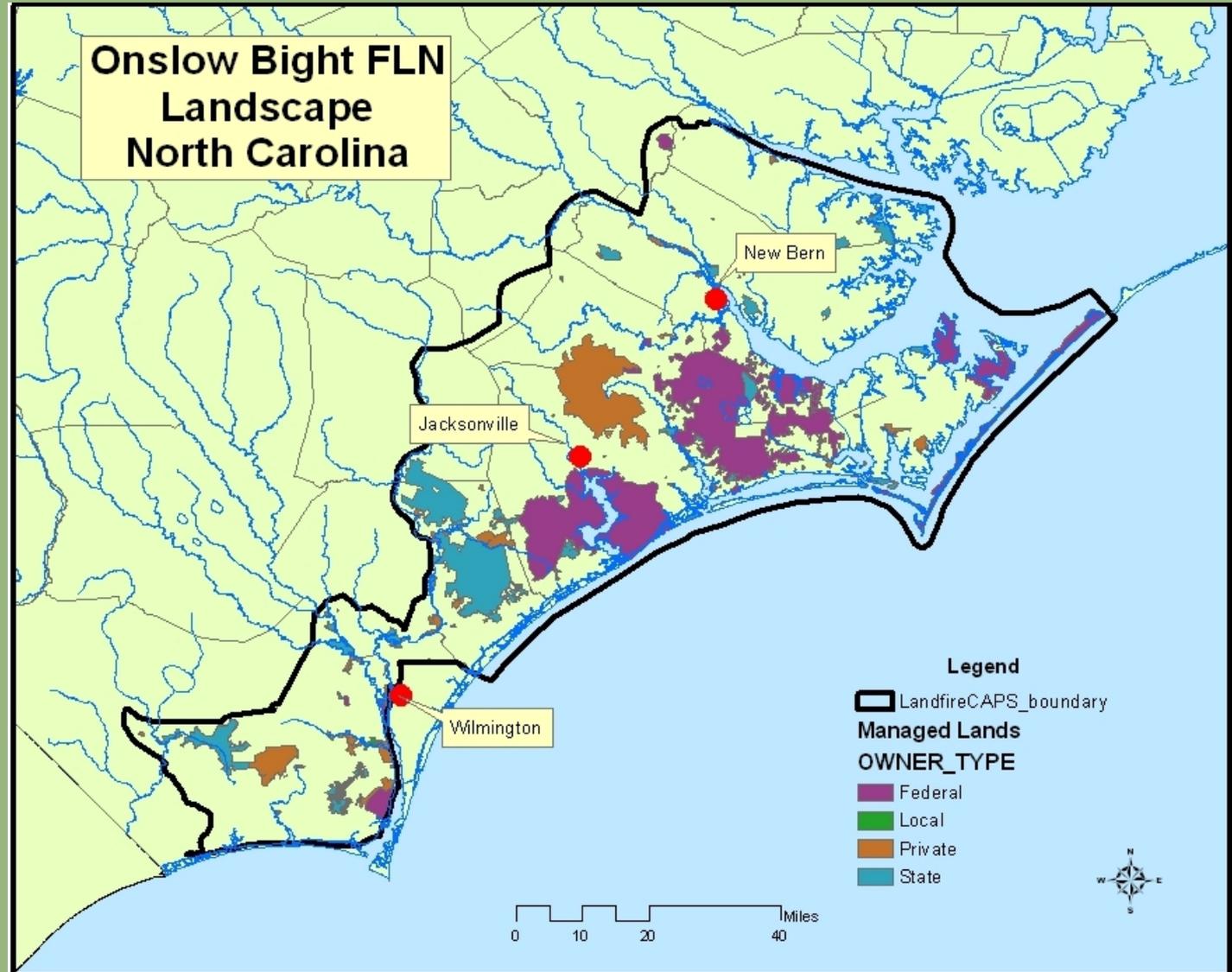
Jennifer Costanza

Tommy Hughes

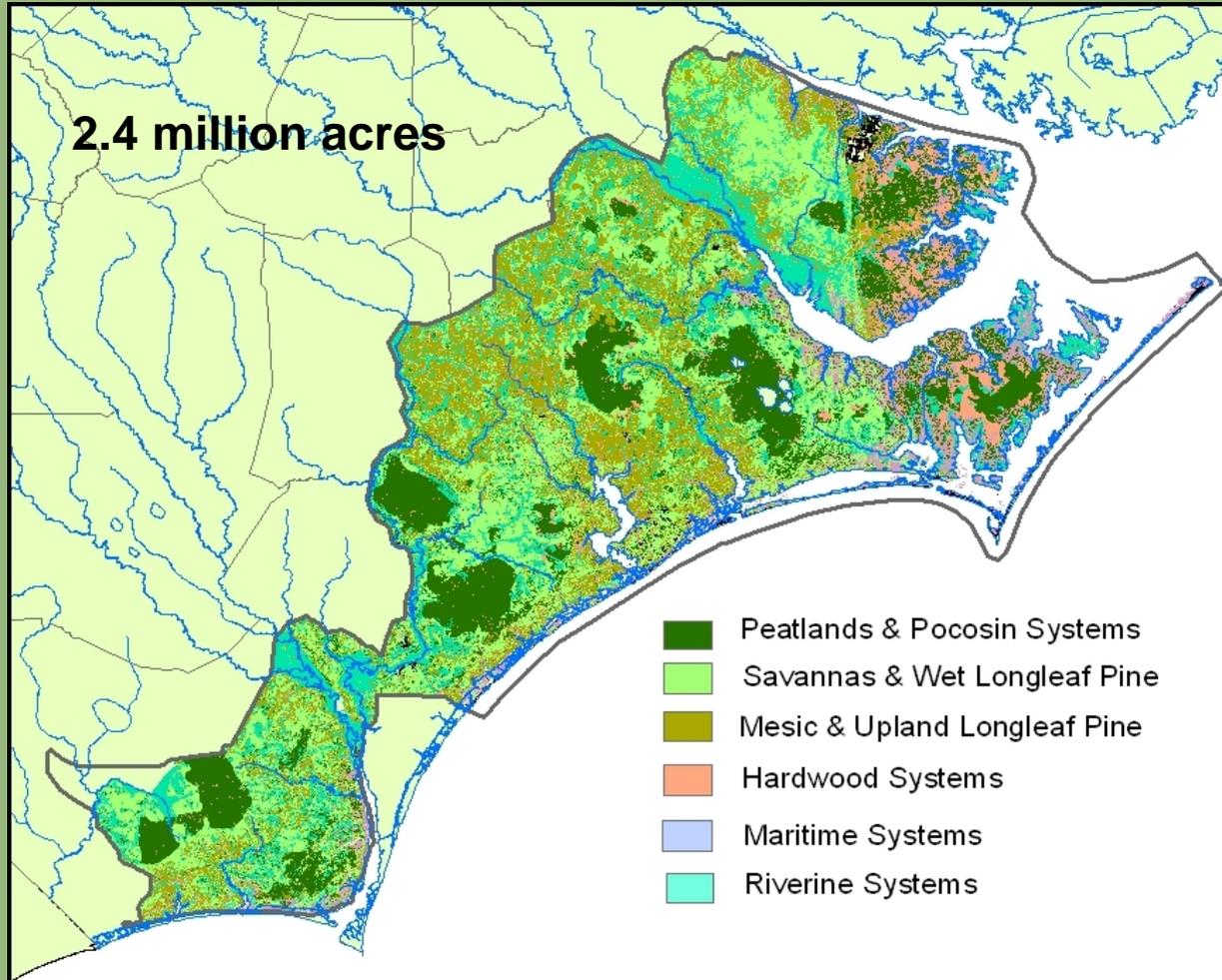
Hervey McIver

Dan Ryan

Rick Studenmund

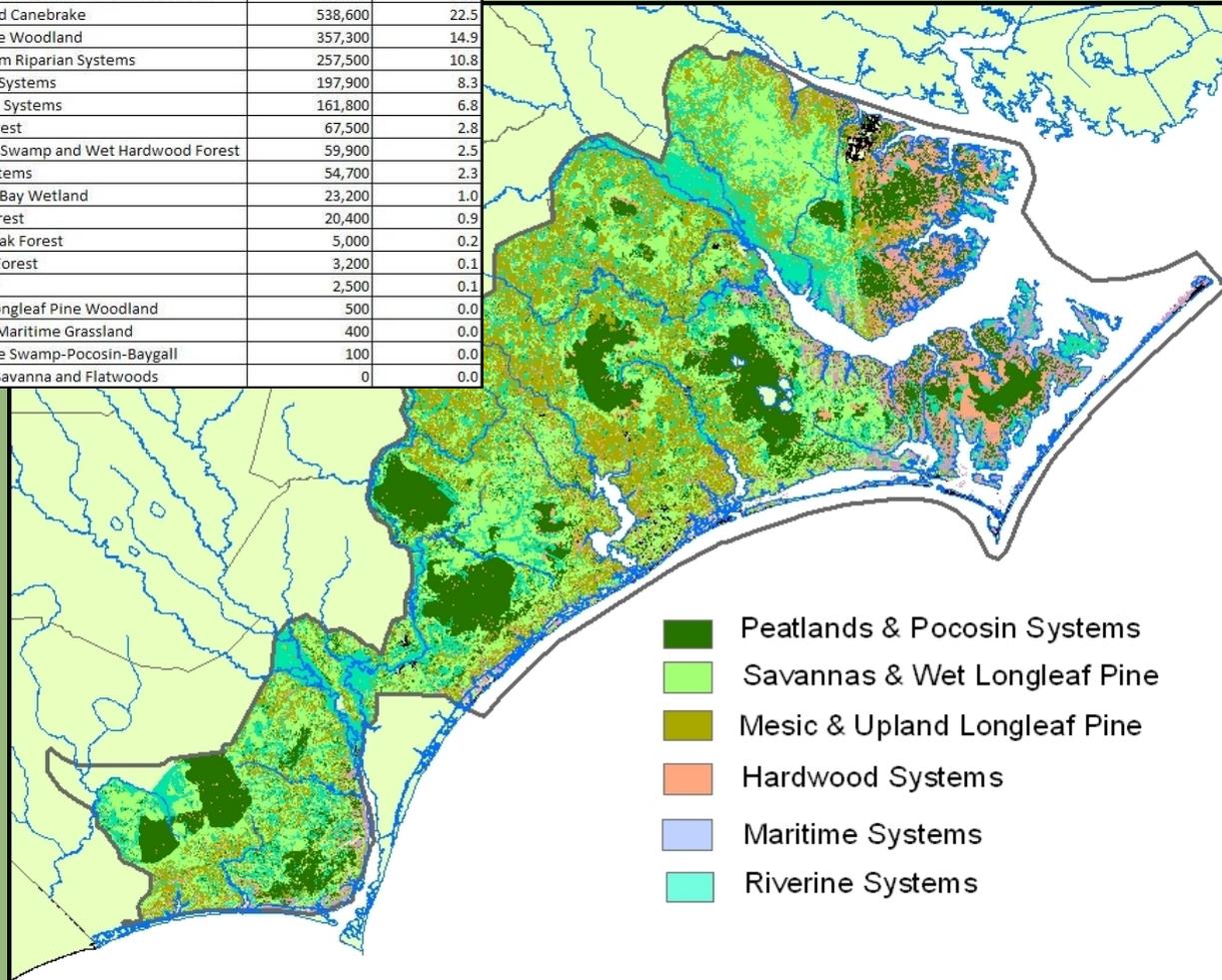


Biophysical Setting (BpS) - Presettlement Vegetation

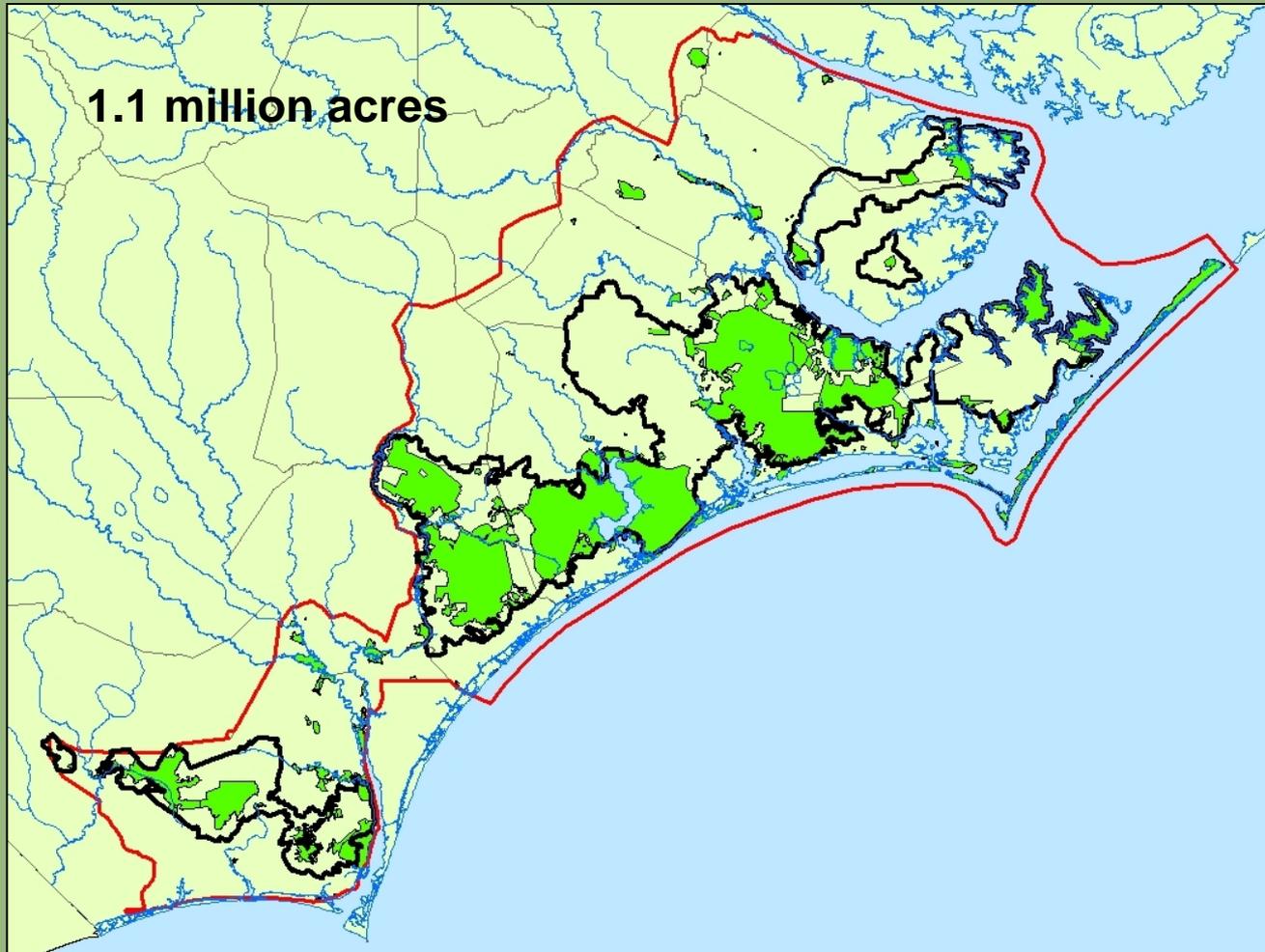


Biophysical Setting (BpS) - Presettlement Vegetation

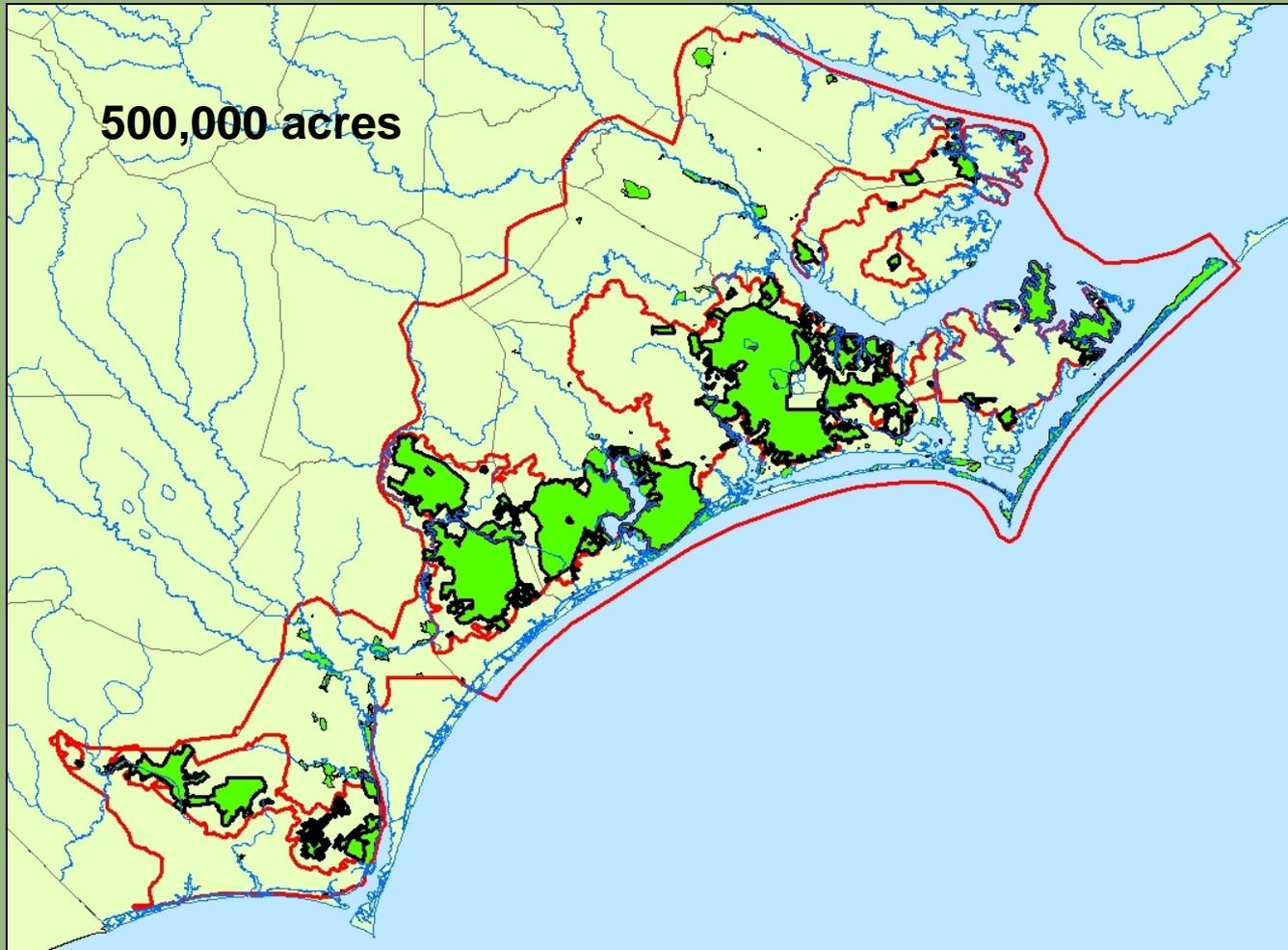
Ecological System	Acres (rounded to next 100)	Percent
Central Atlantic Coastal Plain Wet Longleaf Pine Savanna and Flatwoods	644,100	26.9
Atlantic Coastal Plain Peatland Pocosin and Canebrake	538,600	22.5
Atlantic Coastal Plain Upland Longleaf Pine Woodland	357,300	14.9
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Small Stream Riparian Systems	257,500	10.8
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Floodplain Systems	197,900	8.3
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Tidal Marsh Systems	161,800	6.8
Atlantic Coastal Plain Mesic Hardwood Forest	67,500	2.8
Central Atlantic Coastal Plain Nonriverine Swamp and Wet Hardwood Forest	59,900	2.5
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Swamp Systems	54,700	2.3
Atlantic Coastal Plain Clay-Based Carolina Bay Wetland	23,200	1.0
Central Atlantic Coastal Plain Maritime Forest	20,400	0.9
Atlantic Coastal Plain Dry and Dry-Mesic Oak Forest	5,000	0.2
Southern Atlantic Coastal Plain Maritime Forest	3,200	0.1
Southern Coastal Plain Mesic Slope Forest	2,500	0.1
Atlantic Coastal Plain Fall-line Sandhills Longleaf Pine Woodland	500	0.0
Southern Atlantic Coastal Plain Dune and Maritime Grassland	400	0.0
Atlantic Coastal Plain Streamhead Seepage Swamp-Pocosin-Baygall	100	0.0
Southern Atlantic Coastal Plain Wet Pine Savanna and Flatwoods	0	0.0



Adjusting the Boundaries

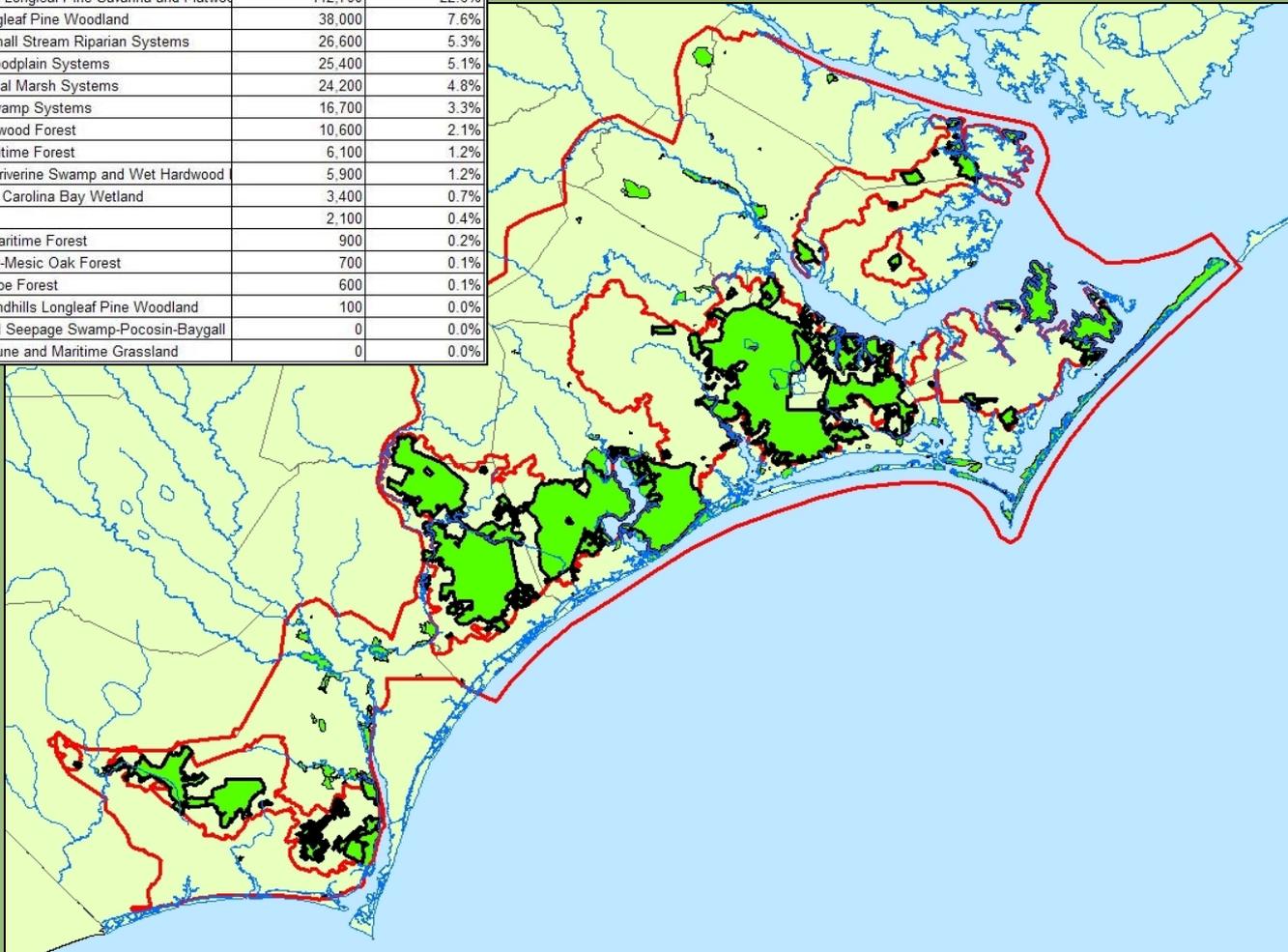


Adjusting the Boundaries



Adjusting the Boundaries

Ecological System	Acres	Percent
Atlantic Coastal Plain Peatland Pocosin and Canebrake	199,400	42.1%
Central Atlantic Coastal Plain Wet Longleaf Pine Savanna and Flatwood	112,700	22.6%
Atlantic Coastal Plain Upland Longleaf Pine Woodland	38,000	7.6%
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Small Stream Riparian Systems	26,600	5.3%
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Floodplain Systems	25,400	5.1%
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Tidal Marsh Systems	24,200	4.8%
Gulf and Atlantic Coastal Plain Swamp Systems	16,700	3.3%
Atlantic Coastal Plain Mesic Hardwood Forest	10,600	2.1%
Central Atlantic Coastal Plain Maritime Forest	6,100	1.2%
Central Atlantic Coastal Plain Nonriverine Swamp and Wet Hardwood	5,900	1.2%
Atlantic Coastal Plain Clay-Based Carolina Bay Wetland	3,400	0.7%
Barren-Rock/Sand/Clay	2,100	0.4%
Southern Atlantic Coastal Plain Maritime Forest	900	0.2%
Atlantic Coastal Plain Dry and Dry-Mesic Oak Forest	700	0.1%
Southern Coastal Plain Mesic Slope Forest	600	0.1%
Atlantic Coastal Plain Fall-line Sandhills Longleaf Pine Woodland	100	0.0%
Atlantic Coastal Plain Streamhead Seepage Swamp-Pocosin-Baygall	0	0.0%
Southern Atlantic Coastal Plain Dune and Maritime Grassland	0	0.0%



Three VDDT models (ecological systems) used:

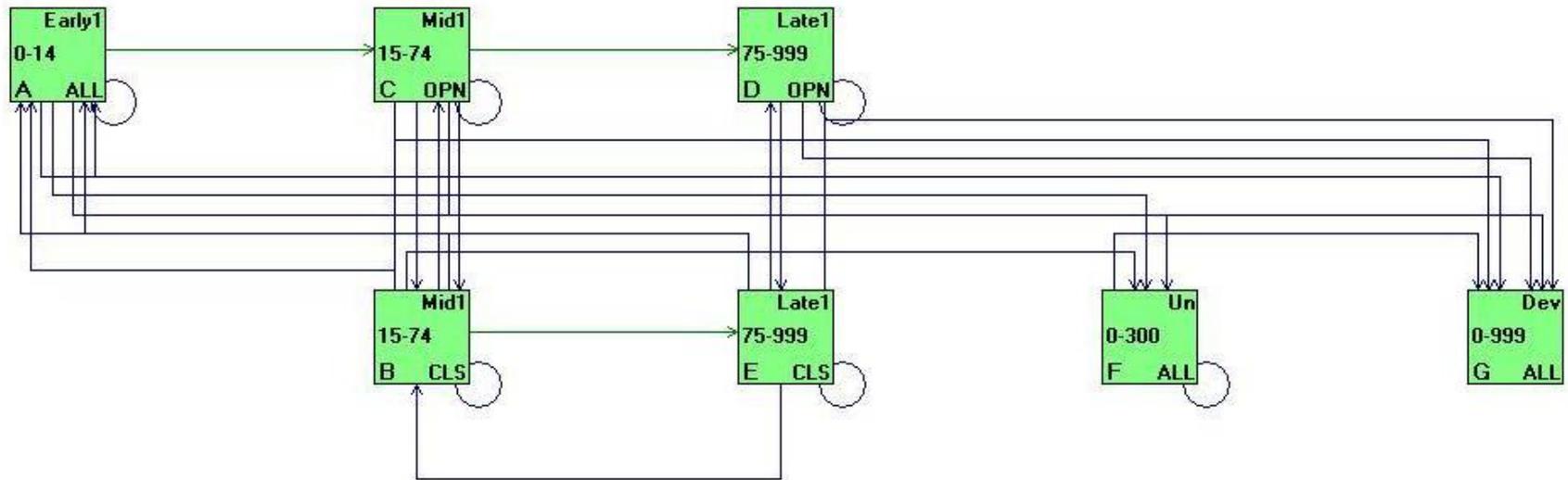
- Peatland Pocosin and Canebrake (includes pond pine woodland)
- Wet Longleaf Pine Savanna and Flatwood
- Upland Longleaf Pine Woodland

Certain LANDFIRE data were the basis of the Enhanced CAP process:

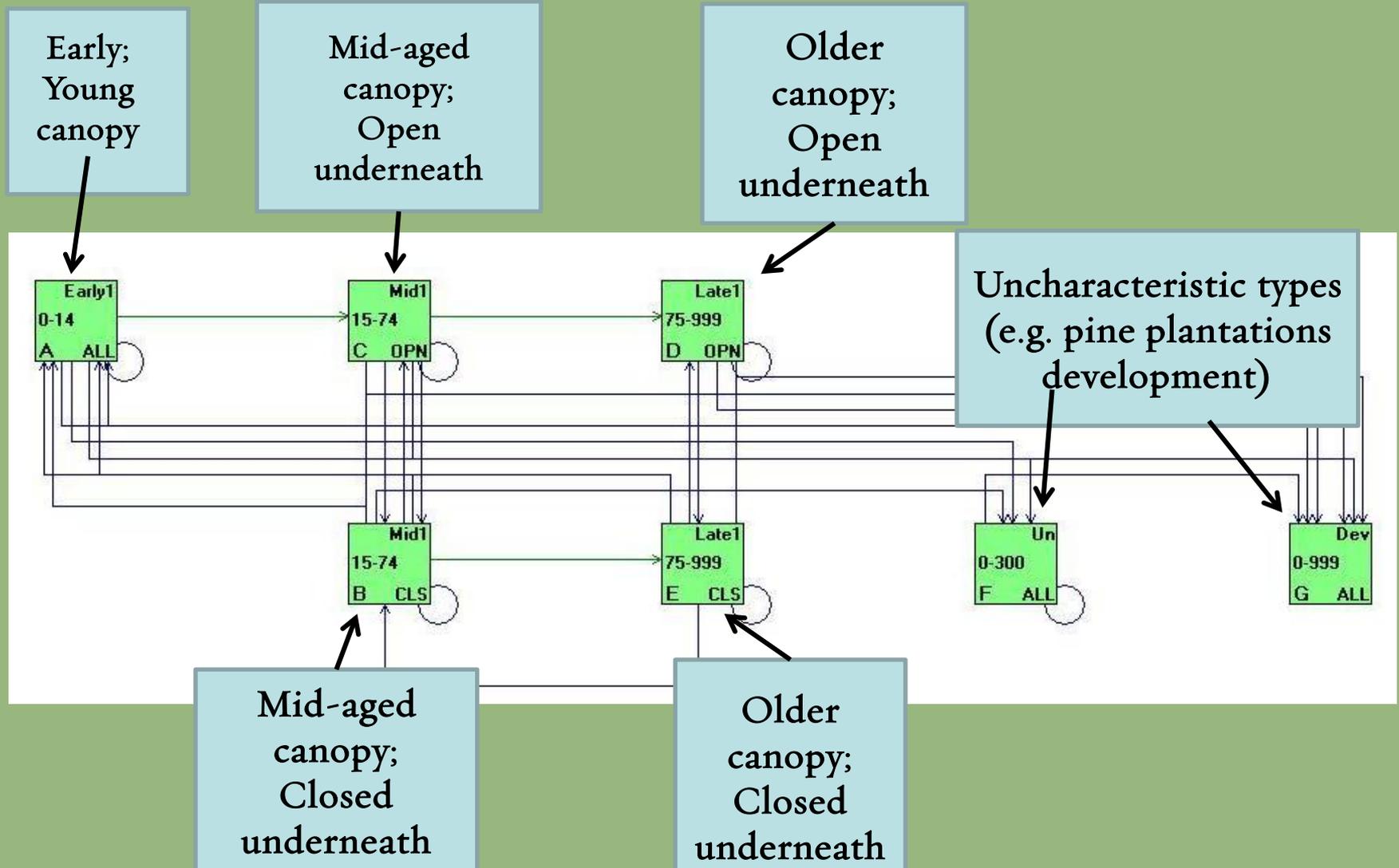
- Biophysical Setting (BpS)
- Succession Class (S-class)

Succession Classes

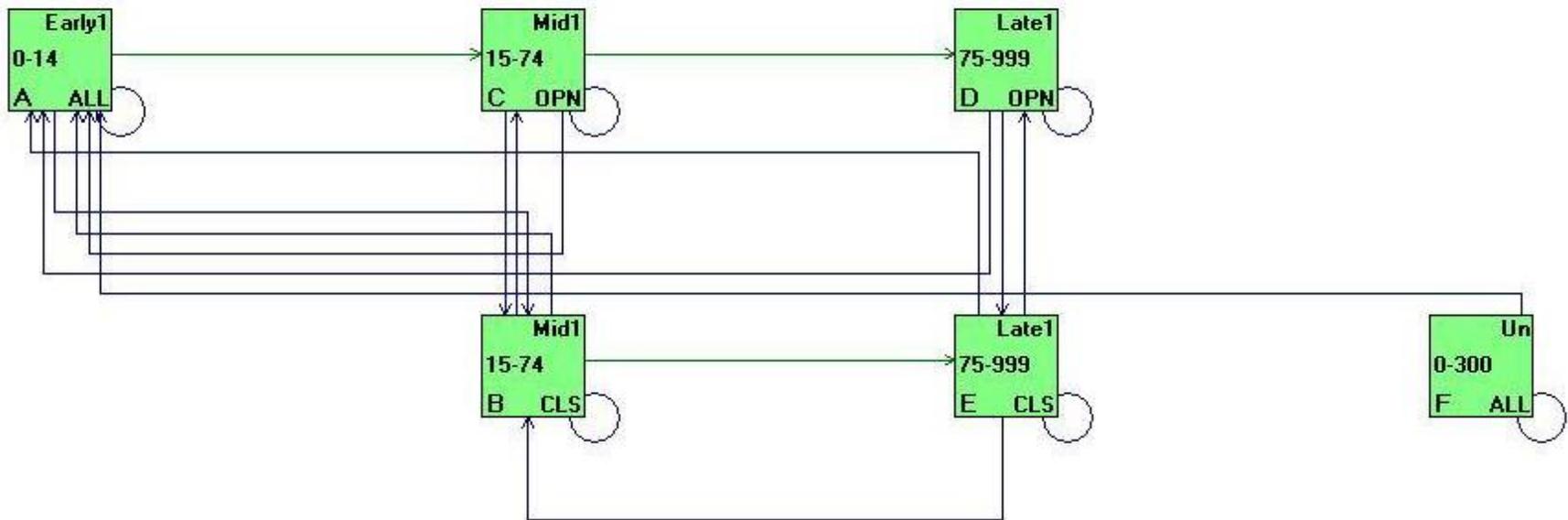
5 “Natural” succession classes plus any number of “uncharacteristic” types



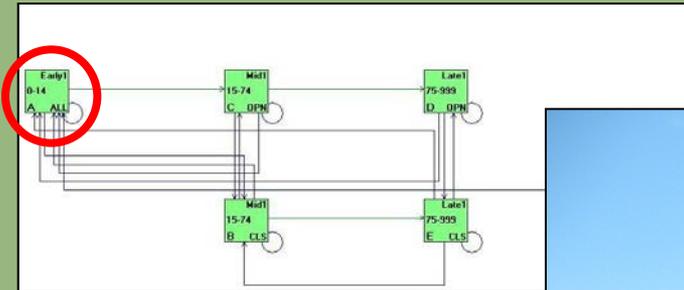
Succession Classes



Wet Longleaf Savanna Model



Wet Longleaf Savanna Model - Early Class



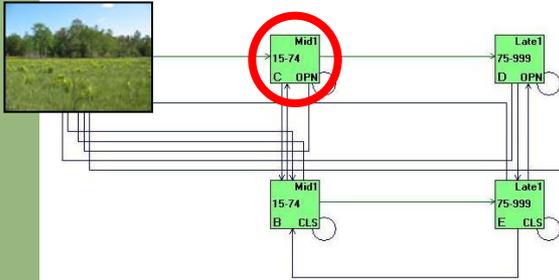
Early Young Canopy Age 0-14 yrs

Created by canopy
destroying events:
major fires, storms,
disease & infestations,
timbering

Maintained by fires



Wet Longleaf Savanna Model - Mid-Open Class



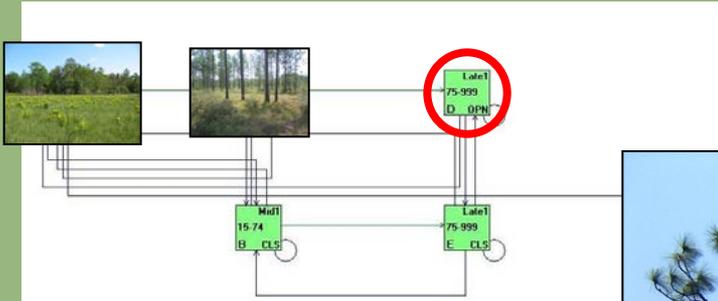
Mid-Open
Mid-aged
canopy;
Open
underneath

Created by natural
growth and fires

Maintained by fires



Wet Longleaf Savanna Model - Late-Open Class



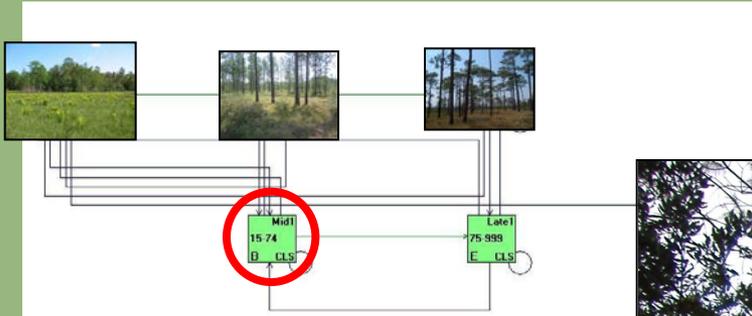
Late-Open
Older canopy;
Open
underneath

**Created by natural
growth and fires**

Maintained by fires



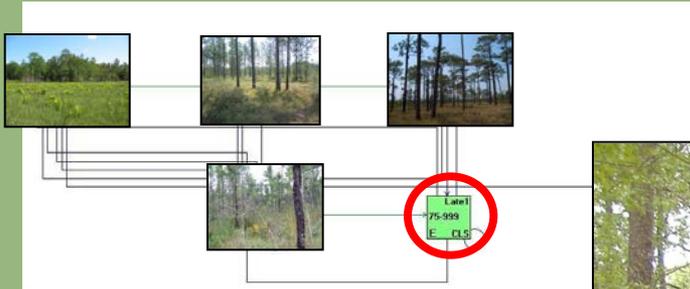
Wet Longleaf Savanna Model - Mid-Closed Class



Mid-Closed
Mid-aged canopy;
Closed underneath

Created by natural
growth and lack of
fire

Wet Longleaf Savanna Model - Late-Closed Class

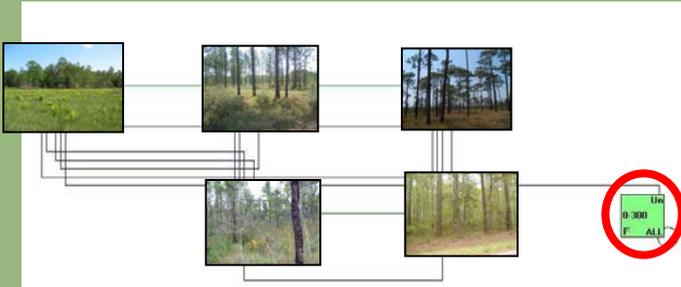


Late-Closed
Older canopy;
Closed
underneath

Created by
natural growth
and lack of fire



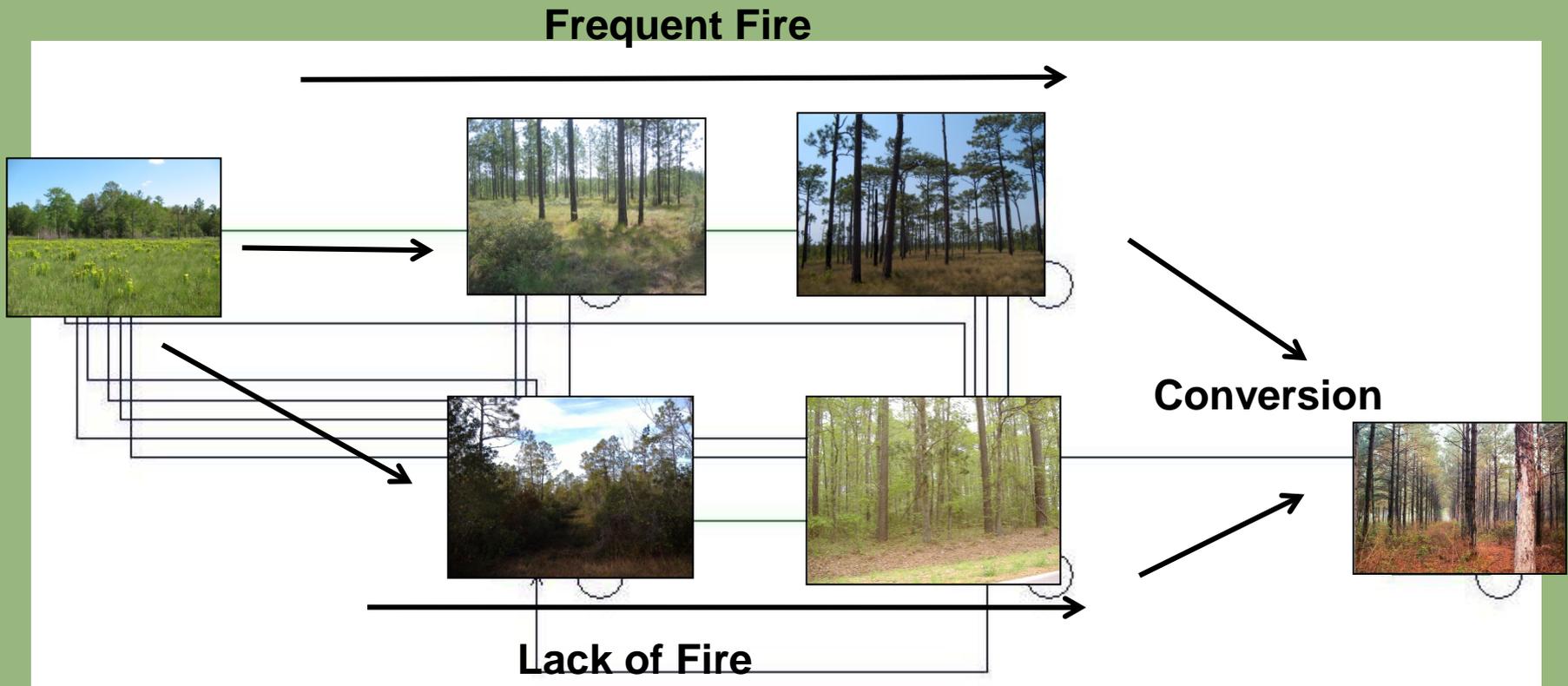
Wet Longleaf Savanna Model - Uncharacteristic Class



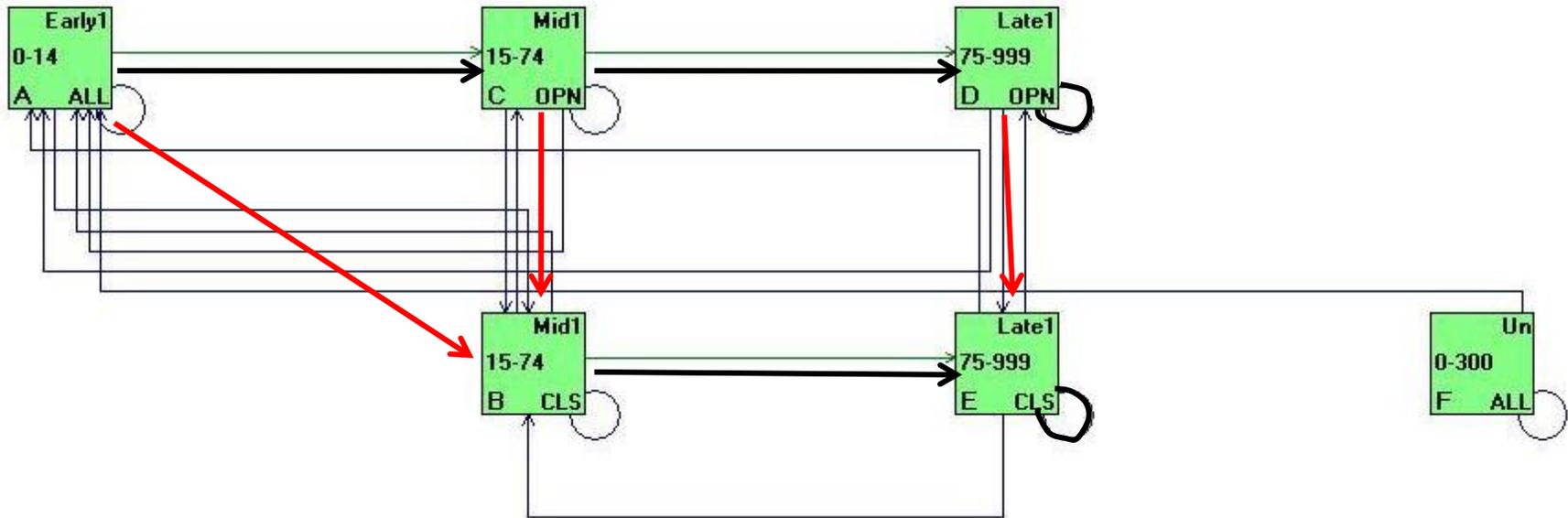
**Uncharacteristic
Class:
Pine plantation**



Wet Longleaf Savanna Model



Wet Longleaf Savanna Model – Deterministic Transitions



Black – Deterministic (successional) pathways
Red – Alternative succession (in absence of fire)

Various Types of Natural and Unnatural Disturbance

- Surface Fire (less than 25% canopy mortality)
- Mixed Fire (25-75% canopy mortality)
- Replacement Fire (greater than 75% canopy mortality)
- Insects/Disease
- Wind/Weather/Stress
- Prescribed Burning
- Restoration (pine plantations)

Wet Longleaf Savanna Model – Probabilistic Transitions

Class Properties for Class A: Early1 ALL

Deterministic transitions

Timing		To Class		
Start Age	End Age	Box	Cover	Stage
0	14	C	Mid1	OPN

Early1 - Early-Develop
ALL - AllStructures

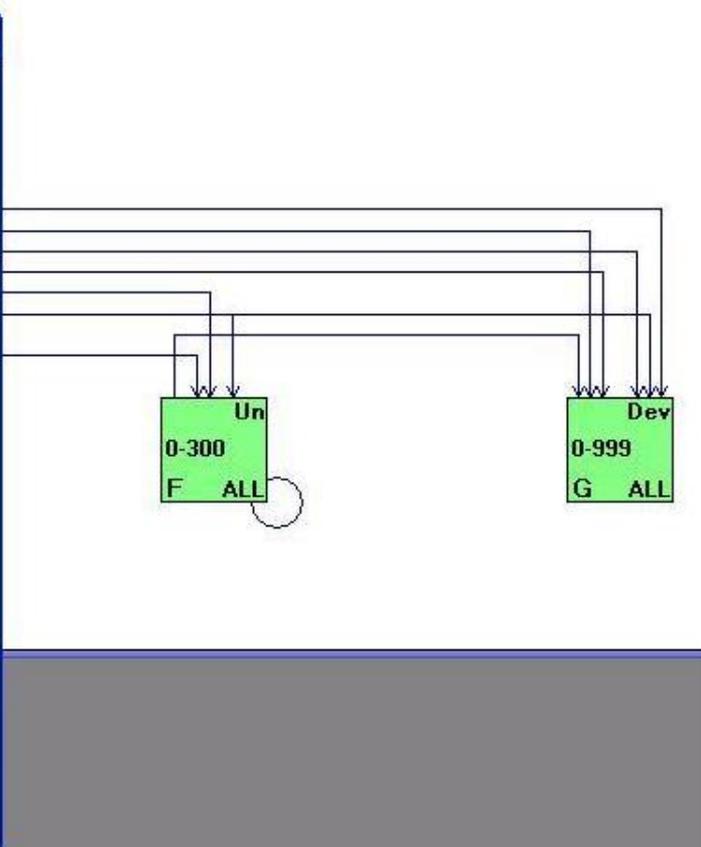
Display Pathways

From Class
 To Class

Probabilistic transitions

Transition Type	Min Age	Max Age	Min TSD	Max TSD	Prob	Propn	Prob x Propn	To Class		
								Box	Cover	Stage
ReplacementFire	0	14	0	9999	0.0200	1.00	0.0200	A	Early1	ALL
AltSuccession	0	14	10	9999	1.0000	1.00	1.0000	B	Mid1	CLS
SurfaceFire	0	14	0	9999	0.3000	1.00	0.3000	A	Early1	ALL
Conversion	0	14	0	9999	0.0010	1.00	0.0010	F	Un	ALL
Development	0	14	0	9999	0.0010	1.00	0.0010	G	Dev	ALL
Rx Fire	0	14	0	9999	0.0100	1.00	0.0100	A	Early1	ALL

TSD
 Ages



Assumptions about Transitions

What is the natural chance of an event occurring in a given place in any one year
(the range is spread among the S-classes)

- Surface Fire 30-33% 80% fire suppression
- Mixed Fire 0-5% 90% fire suppression
- Replacement Fire 0-2% 90% fire suppression
- Insects/Disease 0-2%
- Wind/Weather/Stress 0.5 -0.83%

Wet Longleaf Savannas : Current Conditions & Goals

	Current	NRV
Early	26%	15%
Mid-open	16%	48%
Late-open	0%	29%
Mid-closed	31%	5%
Late-closed	0%	3%
Plantations	27%	0%

Ecological Departure = 64 (good 0 – 100 bad)

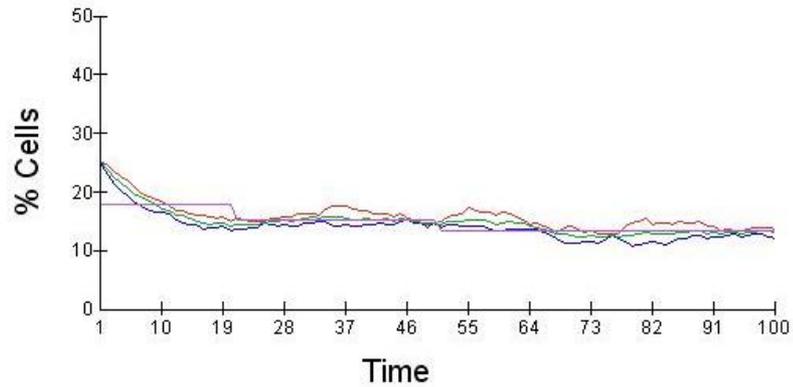
NRV = Natural Range of Variability (i.e. pre-settlement)

Ecological Departure

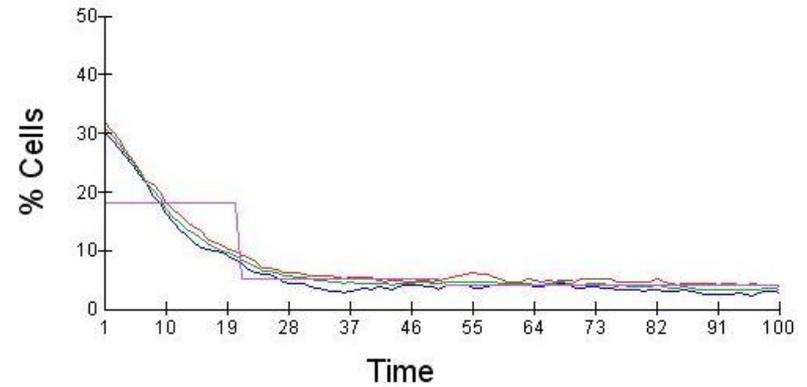
Ecological Departure Summary - Onslow Bight Conservation Managed Lands			
Ecological System (VDDT Model)	% Departure	Acres	% of Area
Central ACP Wet Longleaf Pine Savanna and Flatwoods	64	112,730	23.925%
ACP Peatland Pocosin and Canebrake	47	199,381	42.315%
ACP Upland Longleaf Pine Woodland	53	37,985	8.062%
Gulf and ACP Small Stream Riparian Systems	63	26,555	5.636%
Gulf and ACP Floodplain Systems	65	25,422	5.395%
Gulf and ACP Tidal Marsh Systems	83	24,159	5.127%
ACP Mesic Hardwood Forest	40	10,587	2.247%
Central ACP Nonriverine Swamp and Wet Hardwood Forest	92	5,922	1.257%
Gulf and ACP Swamp Systems	11	16,651	3.534%
ACP Clay-Based Carolina Bay Wetland	60	3,428	0.728%
Central ACP Maritime Forest	82	6,086	1.292%
ACP Dry and Dry-Mesic Oak Forest	49	653	0.139%
Southern ACP Maritime Forest	52	939	0.199%
Southern Coastal Plain Mesic Slope Forest	81	558	0.118%
ACP Fall-line Sandhills Longleaf Pine Woodland		114	0.024%
Southern ACP Dune and Maritime Grassland		4	0.001%
ACP Streamhead Seepage Swamp-Pocosin-Baygall		5	0.001%
Totals		471,179	
ACP = Atlantic Coastal Plain			

Wet Longleaf Savannas – The Natural State

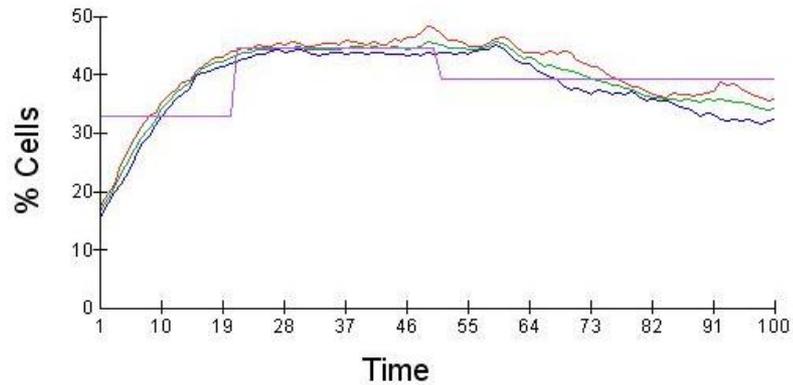
Class A: Early-Develop, AllStructures



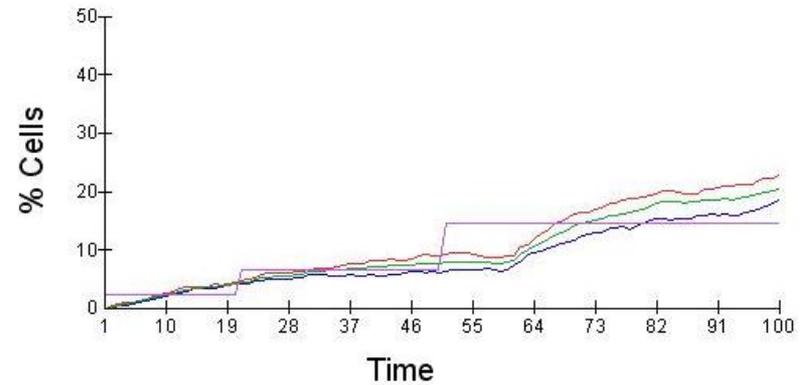
Class B: Mid-Develop, Closed



Class C: Mid-Develop, Open

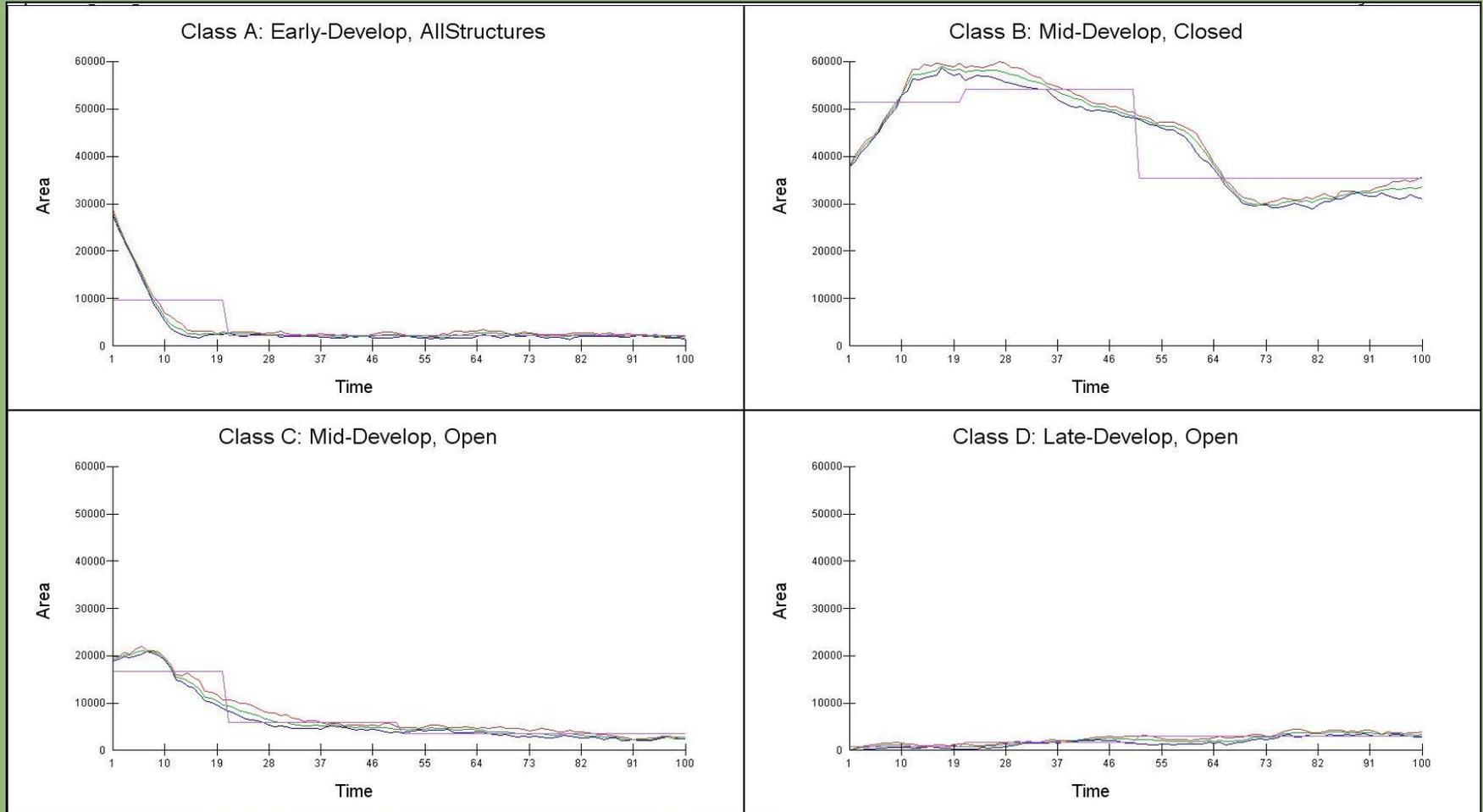


Class D: Late-Develop, Open



Running the Model

Minimum Management – Wildfire suppression, no Rx fire, no restoration



Strategy

Variables

Rx Fire

Number of acres; type of burns
(e.g. surface, mixed, replacement)

Restoration

Number of acres

Fire suppression

Percent of wildfires or escapes
suppressed

Time Horizon

Manipulating assumptions for Management Strategies

Vegetation Dynamics Development Tool (C:\Program Files\VDDT\VDDT.mdb)

Transition Probability Multipliers

Transition Type	Probability Multiplier
AllSuccession	1
Conversion	0
Development	1
Insect/Disease	1
MixedFire	0.5
ReplacementFire	0.75
Rx Fire	1
Rx Fire Mixed-Thin	1
SurfaceFire	0.1
Wind/Weather/Stress	1

Transition Group Filter: Change All Values To: 1

Update Probabilities OK Cancel

Run Settings

General | Initial Conditions | Options | Output

Use Time Since Disturbance (TSD) Select...

Disable some transitions Select...

Area Limits...

Multipliers

Transition Multipliers...

Temporal Multipliers...

Trend

Landscape

Feedback

Attributes

Calculated...

Categorical...

Numeric...

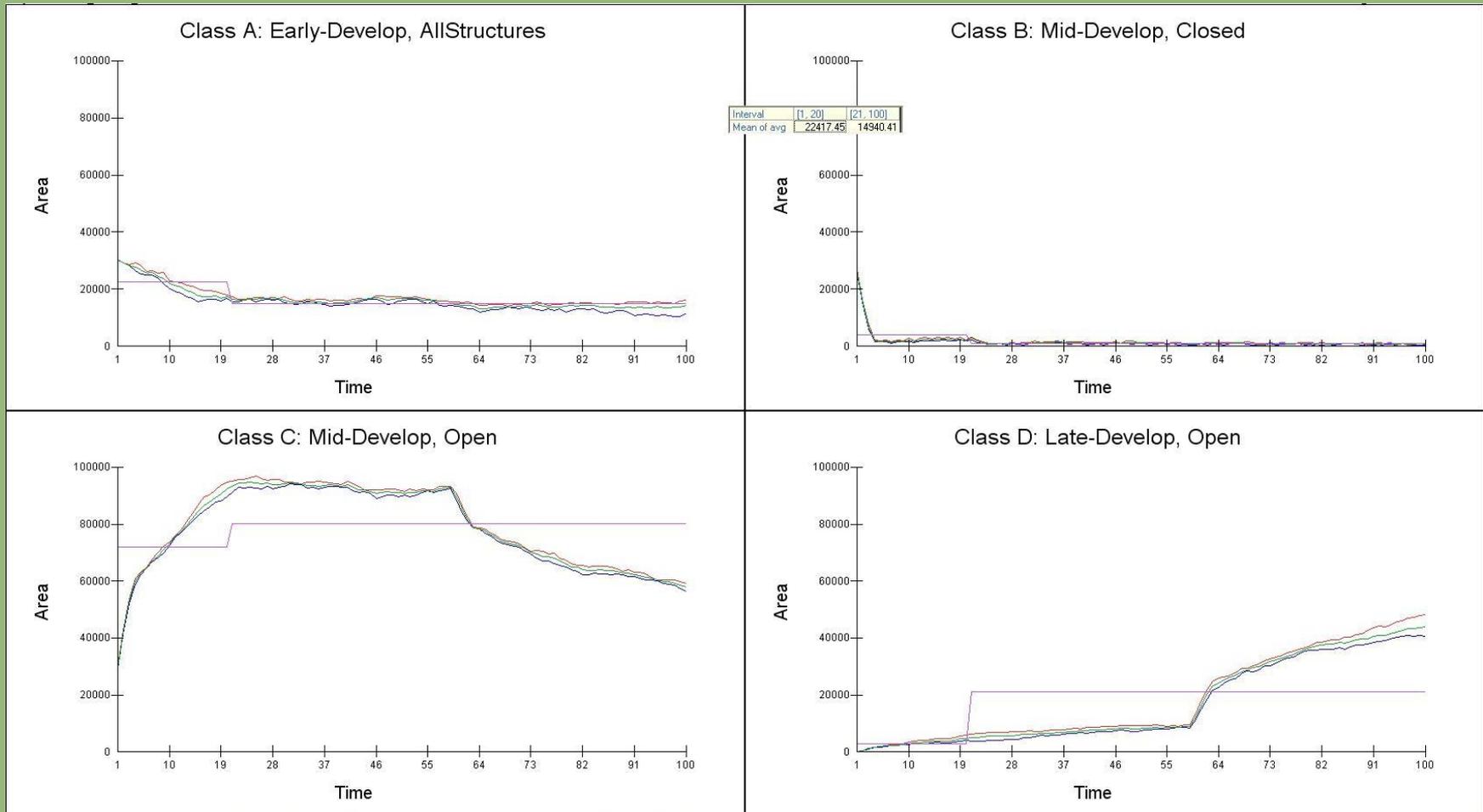
Show IDs and codes

Set random seed as: 1 Resample

OK Cancel Run

Running the Model

Maximum Management – Less suppression, Rx fire, Restoration



Upland Longleaf Pine Model



Very similar to Savanna Model with closely similar assumptions

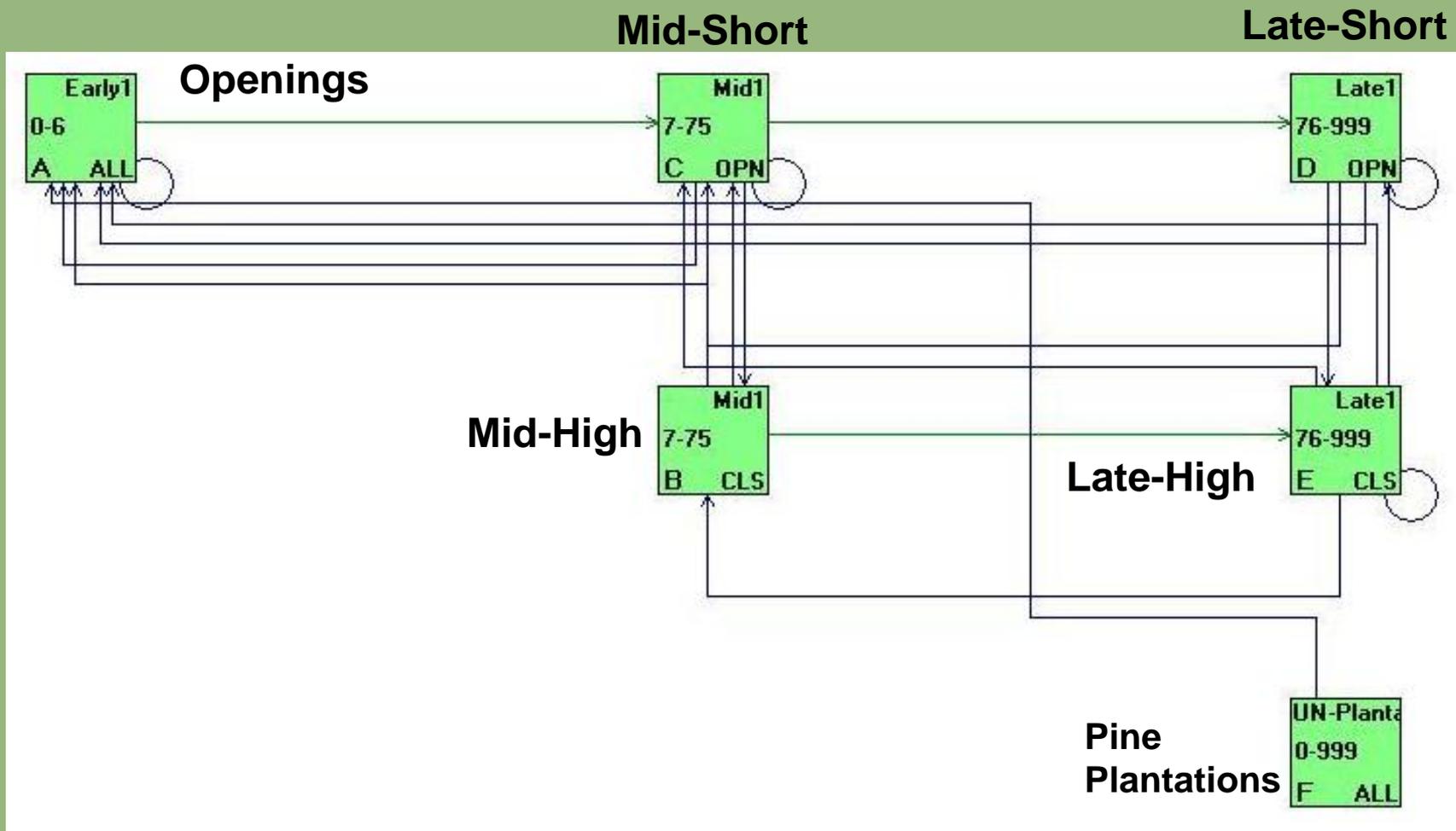
		Current	NRV
A	Early, open	2%	13%
B	Mid, closed	21%	5%
C	Mid, open	43%	40%
D	Late, open	0%	40%
E	Late, closed	0%	2%
F	Plantations	34%	0%

Ecological Departure = 53 (good 0 – 100 bad)

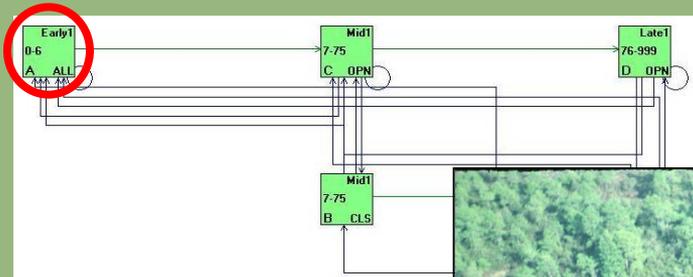
Upland Longleaf Pine Model

Strategy Worksheet		Upland Longleaf						
		Enter percentages from "Final Conditions" as a whole number						
Vegetation Class (describe) <i>type x in left box if high-risk</i>	NRV	Current Condition	Minimum Mgmt - 20 yrs	Minimum Mgmt - 50 yrs	Minimum Mgmt - 100 yrs	Max Mgmt 20 yrs - RxFire	Max Mgmt 50 yrs - RxFire	Max Mgmt 100 yrs - RxFire
A - Early	13%	2%	1%	1%	1%	9%	8%	8%
B	5%	21%	45%	41%	14%	35%	24%	21%
C	41%	43%	9%	5%	3%	47%	56%	46%
D	36%	0%	4%	1%	1%	7%	10%	21%
E	6%	0%	8%	18%	47%	1%	2%	3%
Plantation	0%	34%	34%	34%	34%	0%	0%	0%
Development	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ecological Departure		52	75	82	84	37	34	22
High-Risk Classes		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Cost			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,625,000	\$ 8,625,000	\$ 8,625,000
ROI (vs. Min. Mgmt)				-	-	0.4	0.5	0.6
High-Value Class (D)			4%	1%	1%	7%	10%	21%
		Enter Notes		Enter Management Strategies, Number of Acres/Year, Costs & Number of Years				
Scenarios (enter name below)	Transitions	Multipliers	High Intensity Restoration	Rx Fire				
Minimum Mgmt - 20 yrs	Turn off Rx Fire and restoration	30% mixed and repl. Suppr.; 80%						
Minimum Mgmt - 50 yrs	Turn off Rx Fire and restoration	30% mixed and repl. Suppr.; 80%						
Minimum Mgmt - 100 yrs	Turn off Rx Fire and restoration	30% mixed and repl. Suppr.; 80%						
Max Mgmt 20 yrs - RxFire	650 restored; 10000 in each Rx	40% suppression - all fire types	650	5000				
Max Mgmt 50 yrs - RxFire	650 restored; 10000 in each Rx	40% suppression - all fire types	650	5000				
Max Mgmt 100 yrs - RxFire	650 restored; 10000 in each Rx	40% suppression - all fire types	650	5000				
Cost of Strategy (per acre)			\$ 400	\$ 35				
Number of Years			20	20				

Peatlands & Pocosins – the Onslow Bight Model



Pocosin Openings Class



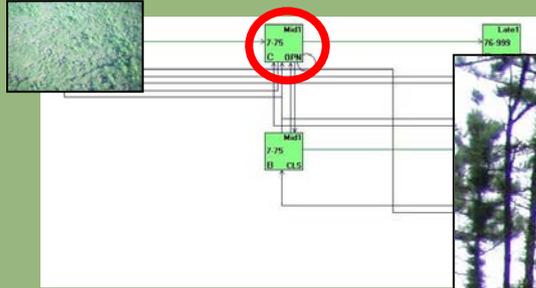
Openings

Created by peat
(Severe) burns or
hydrology

~10% are
hydrologically
maintained in a
semi-permanent
condition
(e.g. the “Soups” in
the Green Swamp)



Mid-Aged Trees, Short Understory Class

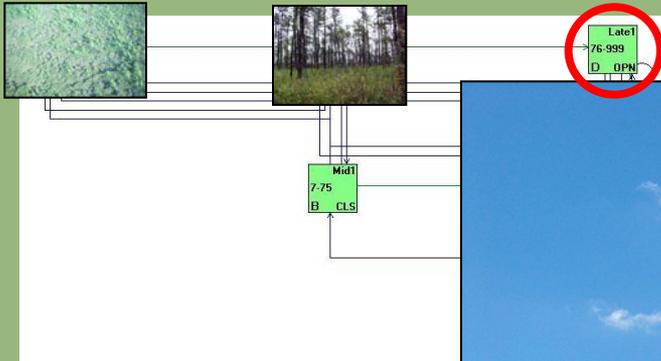


Mid-Short
(alternative)

Canebrake

Natural
(Ombrotrophic)
Low Pocosin
would persist in
a Mid or Late
Short class

Late-Aged Trees, Short Understory Class

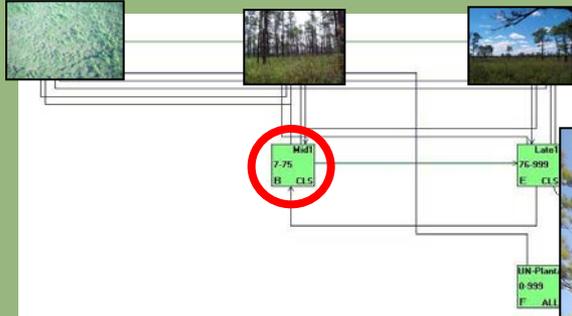


Late-Short

Created &
Maintained
by fire

Some trees
>75 years old

Mid-Aged Trees, High Shrub Understory Class



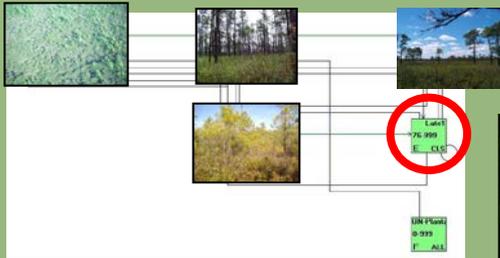
Mid-High

Results from
Fire Exclusion

Trees <75 years
Thick, tall shrubs



Late-Aged Trees, High Shrub Understory Class



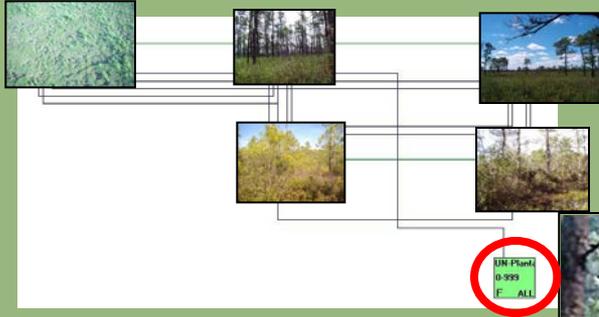
Late-High

Results from
Fire Exclusion
& Tree growth

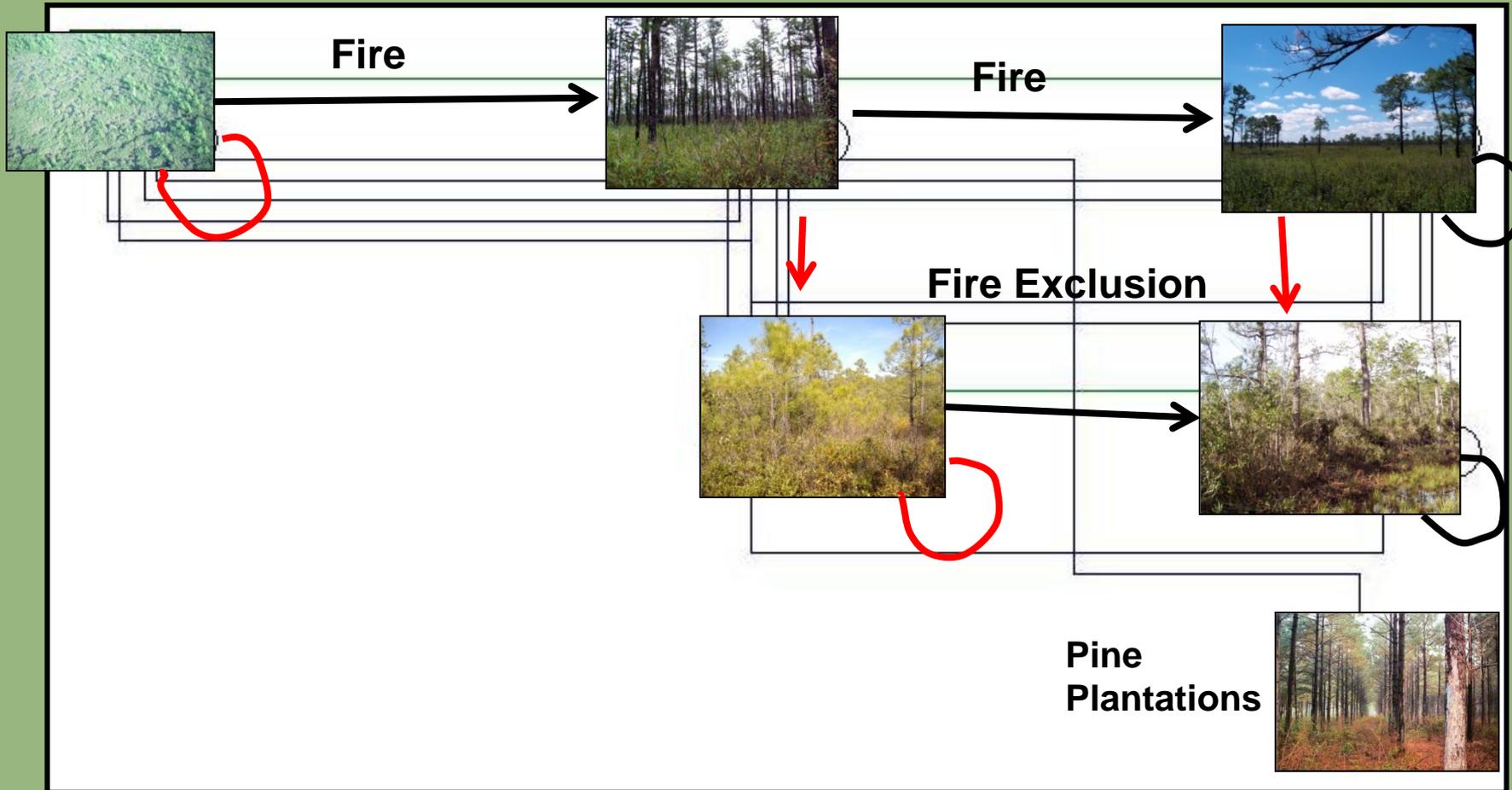
Trees >75 years



Pine Plantations - Uncharacteristic Class



Deterministic & Alternative Succession Transitions



Assumptions about Transitions

What is the natural chance of an event occurring in a given place in any one year (the range is spread among the S-classes)

- Surface Fire 5-15%
- Mixed Fire 4-10%
- Replacement Fire 3-5%
- Severe Fire 0.5-0.8%
- Wind/Weather/Stress 0.3%

95% of all potential acres burned from wildfires and escapes are suppressed

Pocosin Current Conditions & Goals

		Current	NRV
A	Early, open	0%	1%
B	Mid, closed	56%	15%
C	Mid, open	18%	59%
D	Late, open	14%	19%
E	Late, closed	7%	6%
F	Plantations	6%	0%

Ecological Departure = 47 (good 0 – 100 bad)

NRV = Natural Range of Variability (i.e. pre-settlement)

Results and Return on Investment (ROI)

Strategy Worksheet		Pocosin						
		Enter percentages from "Final Conditions" as a whole number						
Vegetation Class (describe) <i>type x in left box if high-risk</i>	NRV	Current Condition	Minimum Mgmt - 20 yrs	Maximum Mgmt - 20 yrs	Streamlined 1 - More Rx	Streamlined 2 - Less Rx	Streamlined 3 - Least Rx	Streamlined 4 - Current Rx
A - Early	1%	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
B	15%	56%	53%	7%	23%	31%	40%	26%
C	59%	18%	4%	66%	47%	37%	27%	43%
D	19%	14%	2%	21%	16%	13%	9%	14%
E	6%	7%	36%	3%	11%	15%	20%	13%
Plantation		6%	5%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Ecological Departure		47	73	11	15	28	42	21
High-Risk Classes		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Cost			\$ -	\$ 14,384,000	\$ 7,342,000	\$ 3,842,000	\$ 1,042,000	\$ 5,592,000
ROI (vs. Min. Mgmt)				0.4	0.8	1.2	3.0	0.9
		Enter Notes		Enter Management Strategies, Number of Acres/Year, Costs & Number of Years				
Scenarios (enter name below)	Transitions	Multipliers	Rx Fire - Additional	Restoration - Hydrology (number of plugs)				
Minimum Mgmt - 20 yrs	Turned off conversion,	95% suppression (.05 in multipliers)						
Maximum Mgmt - 20 yrs	Area limits: 20000 acres for	40% suppression of every fire type	20000	120				
Streamlined 1 - More Rx	Area limits: 10000 acres for	70% suppression (.3 for all)	10000	60				
Streamlined 2 - Less Rx	Area limits: 5000 acres for Rx fire;	70% suppression (.3 for all)	5000	60				
Streamlined 3 - Least Rx	Area limits: 1000 acres for Rx fire;	70% suppression (.3 for all)	1000	60				
Streamlined 4 - Current Rx	Area limits: 7500 acres for Rx fire;	70% suppression (.3 for all)	7500	60				
Cost of Strategy (per acre)			\$ 35	\$ 160				
Number of Years			20	20				

Evaluating ROI for all Systems

ROI Across Ecosystems			Enter Whole Numbers				Enter Multiplier (1, 10 or 100)	10
BpS Name	# Acres	Preferred Scenario	Minimum Management		Preferred Scenario		Additional cost	Ecosystem Wide ROI (calculated)
			Ecol. Departure	High Risk %	Ecol. Departure	High Risk %		
Wet Longleaf	112,730	Streamlined 2 - Surface rx	81		37		\$ 1,550,000	32.0
Upland Longleaf	37,985	Stream 1 - less suppression	75		43		\$ 3,000,000	4.1
Pocosin	199,381	Streamlined 4 - Current Rx	73		21		\$ 342,000	303.2
							Total Cost	
Wet Longleaf	112,730	Streamlined 2 - Surface rx	81		37		\$ 6,000,000	8.3
Upland Longleaf	37,985	Stream 1 - less suppression	75		43		\$ 5,500,000	2.2
Pocosin	199,381	Streamlined 4 - Current Rx	73		21		\$ 5,592,000	18.5
							Additional cost per year	
Wet Longleaf	112,730	Streamlined 2 - Surface rx	81		37		\$ 77,500	
Upland Longleaf	37,985	Stream 1 - less suppression	75		43		\$ 150,000	
Pocosin	199,381	Streamlined 4 - Current Rx	73		21		\$ 17,100	
							Additional cost per year per acre	
Wet Longleaf	112,730	Streamlined 2 - Surface rx	81		37		\$ 0.69	
Upland Longleaf	37,985	Stream 1 - less suppression	75		43		\$ 3.95	
Pocosin	199,381	Streamlined 4 - Current Rx	73		21		\$ 0.09	

Implications for Onslow Bight Management

Having a “let burn” option available for wildfires and escaped prescribed burns on conservation lands and using it when prudent may provide the most cost effective means to return to presettlement conditions at the landscape scale. Plan current land management with this in mind.

Increasing the amount of prescribed burning may not yield a great deal of ecological improvement assuming a “let burn” wildfire approach and that we’re burning the right acres.

The model does not address seasonality of burns.

Restoration of pine plantations, including the hydrology where impacted, using proceeds from the timber sales is important to minimize ecological departure.

The models and ROI spreadsheet allow a great deal of flexibility in predicting outcomes from diverse permutations of management strategies

The “biggest bang for the buck” is not always what you have been doing

Expect Surprises

Best suited for large landscapes and non-aquatic systems

Refine & improve your starting data if possible

Fire Needs on Onslow Bight Conservation Lands

<u>System</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Fire freq.</u>	<u>Ave. annual burned</u>
Pocosin	200,000	~10 years	20,000 acres
Savanna	117,000	~3 years	39,000 acres
LLP fltwds	39,000	~3 years	<u>13,000 acres</u>
			72,000 acres

72,000 total acres should be burned each year on partner lands through RX or wildfires.