



## Bladen Lakes State Forest

BLADEN LAKES STATE FOREST is the largest state-owned forest in North Carolina. The more than 32,000 acres of forest terrain near Elizabethtown ranges from swamplands to old abandoned farmland. It is an active partner in the Forest Stewardship Program, significantly contributing to the region's clean water and air, soil management, wildlife habitat, recreational resources and timber supplies.

On average, 2,500 schoolchildren a year visit Bladen Lakes to learn about trees, soils, water and wildlife. The forest also offers educational and research opportunities for college students and private landowners who want to learn more about maintaining a healthy and productive forest.

In January of 2015, our partners with North Carolina Forest Service planted more than 170,000 longleaf and loblolly pine trees, covering more than 400 acres. The longleaf pine trees were planted in areas previously stocked with slash pine, a species which is out of its natural range in SE North Carolina. Most of the areas planted went through mechanical and/or chemical site preparation in order to help with the survival of the planted trees and to accelerate growth to better help them compete against invasive species. Thanks to generous Arbor Day Foundation partners, this year's plantings will create critical habitat for species such as neotropical song birds, deer, turkey, bear and the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.

