Natural Bridge Longleaf Preserve

Only a handful of reserves in the entire range of longleaf combine the attributes of this property. Very few privately held properties anywhere, and precious few public lands, can claim longleaf forest of this caliber.

The Natural Bridge property is an emblem of all longleaf can be:

- A nursery and shelter for some of North America’s rarest and most beautiful plants and wildlife.
- A sustainable resource of the finest mature sawtimber, planking, poles and masts that North America has to offer, ready to be managed in perpetuity as a low-risk, high-value, multi-aged longleaf woodland.
- A forest of light and space meant to be lived in, loved and passed on to new generations.

This rare combination of qualities is the result of a family’s caring stewardship for the better part of a century and Benton Hester’s 25-year effort to make this a longleaf showpiece.

Though the Natural Bridge property stands alone in its unusually high quality forests and the exceptional care it has received, it is not isolated.

This property sits at the crossroads of the biggest and most ambitious longleaf conservation effort in North America.

Many have envisioned a longleaf corridor stretching from Alabama’s largest state forest, which is just a few miles north of Natural Bridge, westward across Rayonier timberlands to the largest contiguous acreage of longleaf forest in North America—some 700,000 acres of state and national forest lands.

Thirty minutes south at Nokuse Plantation, the owner has embarked on the largest private longleaf restoration effort in the country, hoping to connect more than 1.5 million acres of longleaf forest across the Panhandle.
The Natural Bridge property could serve as the critical hinge in those efforts, becoming an outstanding model for all who are passionate about longleaf.

Starting with an intact core of roughly 3500 acres, it is not difficult to imagine amassing, in a few short years, a Natural Bridge longleaf preserve of 10,000 or more acres. It would rival the largest and most celebrated longleaf reserves in the country and become the centerpiece of longleaf conservation nationally.
The property’s unusual resources

- This property offers some of the best quail habitat remaining in this part of the world. Burgeoning populations of deer, turkey and rabbit combine to make this one of the most sought after hunting preserves in the area.
- Wood quality is sufficiently high to allow the development of a specialty marketing program, offering the kind of high grade and hard-to-find timbers sought by boatwrights and other fine builders.
- A high quality intact understory, combined with an increasingly multi-aged stand of timber, makes this forest one of the premier teaching tools within the range of longleaf. The value of this property as a learning campus has already been recognized by the Longleaf Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, the Florida and Alabama departments of conservation, and the National Forest Service.
- If the longleaf remains intact, this property’s value as a conservation resource will continue to grow, making it very attractive to conservation buyers.

3533 acres  $10,000,000
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