

## **Review: Conserving Southern Longleaf: Herbert Stoddard and the Rise of Ecological Land Management**

By Albert Way

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Way, Albert. *Conserving Southern Longleaf: Herbert Stoddard and the Rise of Ecological Land Management*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2011. 300pp. ISBN 9780820340173. US \$24.95, paperback.

Author Albert G. Way sweeps readers to the Red Hills of Georgia and Florida during the years of 1880-1960 to show how ecological conservation developed amidst the towering longleaf pines found there. The driver of the movement, Herbert Stoddard, worked tirelessly to understand local traditions and to integrate those into his management plans. As Way describes his professional work, we see how Stoddard became nationally recognized as a founding figure for wildlife management. In addition, we gain a bigger picture of how the Southern landscape of plantations and tenant farms, along with its social context, influenced Stoddard's work.

Way describes Stoddard as a self-starter, and by the end of the book, readers are left wondering if there is anything he couldn't do. His sound judgment in the field landed him a position with the Biological Survey in the Red Hills to study bobwhite quail for landowners. This led him on a path of promoting the benefits of fire to the southern coastal plain, urging the need to study regional effects on prey/predator relationships, and, along with his friend Aldo Leopold, developing wildlife management as a profession. Later, he delved into forestry from an ecological perspective and helped form the Tall Timbers Research Station to educate the public on habitat management and to bring experts together to study the effects of fire.

Perhaps Stoddard's greatest achievement was linking land management and ecological principles to people's roles and needs. As the South became more industrialized in both its agricultural and forestry practices, Stoddard pushed for a patchwork of landscapes that integrated farms, fields, edges, and other land uses for maximum species diversity. Way depicts the mounting tension between Stoddard's principles and those accepted by government and big businesses, which supported mono-crops for economic gain.

Just as Stoddard recognized that "the environment could not be treated outside of its social, cultural, and economic context," (p. 147), Way shows through his writing that the telling of Stoddard's story would not be complete without providing background in these areas. The first chapter introduces the Red Hills as a health tourism destination and describes the environmental problem that brought Stoddard to the area in the first place. Many other asides, including a description of the Dixie Crusaders who "educated" people on the no-fire policy and the movement of the pulp and paper industry to the South, give depth to the book and allow readers to see firsthand some of the obstacles Stoddard faced. Way's background as a history professor at Kennesaw State University and as the coauthor of *The Art of Managing Longleaf: A Personal History of the Stoddard-Need Approach* (University of Georgia Press, 2010) lends credibility to his work.

The book draws on a long list of primary and secondary research found in the bibliography. Part of the Environmental History and the American South series, this book would make an ideal text for undergraduate or graduate environmental history courses. The book's purpose as a historical telling of the development of ecological land management also makes it relevant to those working in this field, as well as to those interested in Aldo Leopold and others who shaped this movement. Finally, the book will appeal to general readers interested in the environmental movements of the past or present.

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**Electronic Green Journal, Issue 33, Spring 2012, ISSN: 1076-7975**