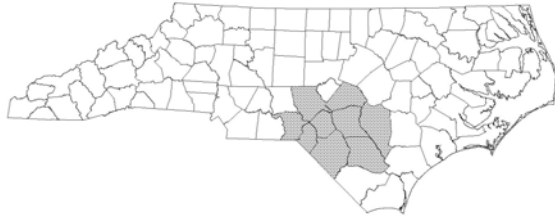


Sandhills Region



Regions M & N: *Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, – and Moore*

- Total land area: 5,899 square miles
- Agriculture: 5,021 farms, \$1.6 billion receipts
- Eight rural and one urban counties
- Agriculture and military-based economy

Projected Population Growth in Sandhills Counties

2000	2010	2020	2030
836,143	923,296	1,049,853	1,777,098

Natural Resources: The Sandhills region includes dry sandy uplands laced with narrow wetlands, and a portion of the inner Coastal Plain. The most extensive longleaf pine communities remaining in the state thrive in the sandy soil, and the region has extensive wetlands. The world's largest concentration of Carolina bays collect rainwater in oval-shaped depressions throughout the year and provide habitat for many amphibians and unusual and rare species. Outstanding ecological features include the Lumber River, a wild and scenic blackwater wilderness.

Specific Growth and Conservation Concerns:

The military presence at Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base brings special concerns regarding land use, both inside and adjacent to these installations. Providing training grounds for military operations while also maintaining safe habitat for endangered species such as the red cockaded woodpecker presents a special challenge. Residential development has spilled over into the counties near the Triangle, revealing the need to plan ahead of the growth in order to preserve natural areas, along with working farms and forestlands.

Regional Conservation Planning

Sustainable Sandhills is a regional partnership involving many parties throughout Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Richmond and Scotland counties, along with Fort Bragg. This group is working to become a stand-alone nonprofit organization. There are five community resource teams (Air, Energy, Land Use, Materials Use & Waste, and Water) working on separate projects. The Land Use Team is focused on development of a regional sustainability plan, beginning with a "land suitability" analysis using GIS maps and community workshops to prepare priorities for the regional community. The North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership is completing a conservation strategy for the Sandhills that includes a mapped reserve design structured to protect, restore and enhance important natural habitats in specific buffer and corridor areas within the Sandhills landscape. www.sustainablesandhills.org.