Boeing Partnership to Preserve Thousands of Acres of Threatened Wetlands in South Carolina

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C., July 14, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Boeing (NYSE: BA) received approval on Friday from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a comprehensive wetlands mitigation plan to preserve approximately 4,000 acres of land, including more than 2,000 acres of wetlands. The land is on three separate tracts near the Francis Marion National Forest in the South Carolina Lowcountry.

Boeing worked in partnership with federal, state and local agencies and conservation organizations to identify the tracts for preservation, which achieves conservation goals of regional and national significance. The result will be a substantial increase in public lands, public access, and protections of land, water quality and several rare, threatened and endangered wildlife species.

"This investment significantly advances a national effort to protect and restore the fire dependent native longleaf pine ecosystem," said Mark Robertson, South Carolina executive director of The Nature Conservancy. "Together, these acquisitions represent one of the largest private conservation investments in the Francis Marion National Forest and surrounding region."

The approved plan is part of the permitting process for 468 acres of land in North Charleston that Boeing previously announced it will lease from the State of South Carolina to protect for potential future growth. Included in that leased property is 153 acres of wetlands that date back to the property's former use as a phosphate mine.

"Working with our habitat protection partners on landscape scale conservation projects has been a priority of the Department of Natural Resources for the last two decades," said Alvin Taylor, director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "At DNR we are grateful for the opportunity to work with our partners in conservation the Lowcountry Open Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and the Open Space Institute in order to seek a mitigation solution that Boeing supports and meets the regulatory requirements and that will benefit fish, wildlife, their habitats and our citizens."

The three tracts of land were closed on earlier this year. Boeing funded the purchase of one tract by the Lowcountry Open Land Trust (LOLT). LOLT will hold the property for up to five years and then transfer it to the S.C. Department of Natural Resources for long-term ownership and management. Boeing funded the purchase of the other two tracts by The Open Space Institute (OSI) and The Nature Conservancy. OSI and The Nature Conservancy will hold the property for up to five years and then transfer it to the U.S. Forest Service for long-term ownership and management as part of the Francis Marion National Forest.

"This plan supports our business growth as well as our commitment to the environment and communities where we live and work," said Jack Jones, vice president and general manager of Boeing South Carolina. "It's exciting because it ensures our ability to grow while protecting the unique natural ecosystem of this state for future generations of South Carolinians and visitors."

Contact:
Rob Gross
Boeing South Carolina Communications
Boeing Commercial Airplanes
+1 843-789-8084
robert.g.gross2@boeing.com

Candy Eslinger
Boeing South Carolina Communications
Boeing Commercial Airplanes
+1 843-819-1488
candy.l.eslinger@boeing.com

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