

WHY WE LOVE OUR

Longleaf Pines

AND WHY THEY LOVE (AND NEED) FIRE.



LONGLEAFS ARE RESILIENT

Longleaf pines can withstand high winds, tolerate drought, resist pests, and capture carbon pollution better than many other native trees. They start life as a grass and can live for several hundred years. They tower above us, almost perfectly straight, reaching 80-100' and growing to 3' in diameter.

CRITICAL WILDLIFE HABITAT

More than 30 endangered and threatened species rely on the longleaf for their habitat, including the red cockaded woodpecker (RCW). The RCW spends years carving its cavity and must have the very mature longleaf pines with thick heartwood. The sticky resin repels climbing snakes, their chief predator.



LESS THAN 3% REMAIN

Early settlers cleared the longleaf forests for development and agriculture and used the lumber for building ships and railroads. By the 1920s, nearly all 90 million acres had been depleted. Fire suppression has made it difficult for the longleaf to naturally regenerate. The longleaf prefers sandy, dry soil and its natural range is the southeastern U.S.

FIRE PROVIDES VITAL SUNLIGHT

Longleaf pines are not shade tolerant and must have sunlight to thrive. Fire helps eliminate other tree species that would create shady areas. When fire is introduced to the forest, longleaf pines thrive and possibly even form pure stands.



FIRE PROMOTES NATURAL REGENERATION

Longleaf pine seeds must come in contact with soil to germinate. Fire clears the pine needles and leaf litter that builds up and covers the soil.

FIRE PROTECTS OUR NATURAL LANDS

We've suppressed fire in ways nature never intended. Left unchecked, the heavy litter and debris builds and builds into layers of natural fuel. When drought, arson, or an accident then sparks a flame, the forest explodes into a hard-to-control wildfire.

