



THE LONGLEAF LEGACY PROJECT WITHIN SAM HOUSTON JONES STATE PARK

Heritage. Restoration. Rebirth.



LESSON 9

Rebirth: The Return of Native Animals, Grasses & Other Plants

The goal of most restoration projects or efforts is rebirth. After more than a century of longleaf losses, the restoration efforts of many diverse partners have increased longleaf acres by 8% over the past decade to an estimated 4.4 million acres. The restoration and rebirth efforts underway in Sam Houston Jones State Park in Lake Charles, La. are an important piece of the overall effort.

When the proper restorative steps are taken, longleaf pine ecosystems can thrive. Healthy longleaf pine forests are home to many plants and animals, some of which are endangered. Rebirth is an important goal because it supports the return of native plants and animals. In this lesson, we learn about the rebirth that follows restoration efforts.

Although the prescribed burning phase of the restoration process (detailed in Lesson 8) may appear to be destroying habitat, the new vegetation that grows will be what grew in this area historically and what the local wildlife are best adapted to. As noted by our friends with [America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative](#), longleaf pine forests represent an extraordinary wealth of cultural, ecological, economic and social values – all on the same acres.

Objectives:

- To define key terms, including “restoration” and “rebirth”
- To understand how restoration efforts lead to rebirth in longleaf pine forests
- To list some of the plants and animals native to Louisiana longleaf pine forests

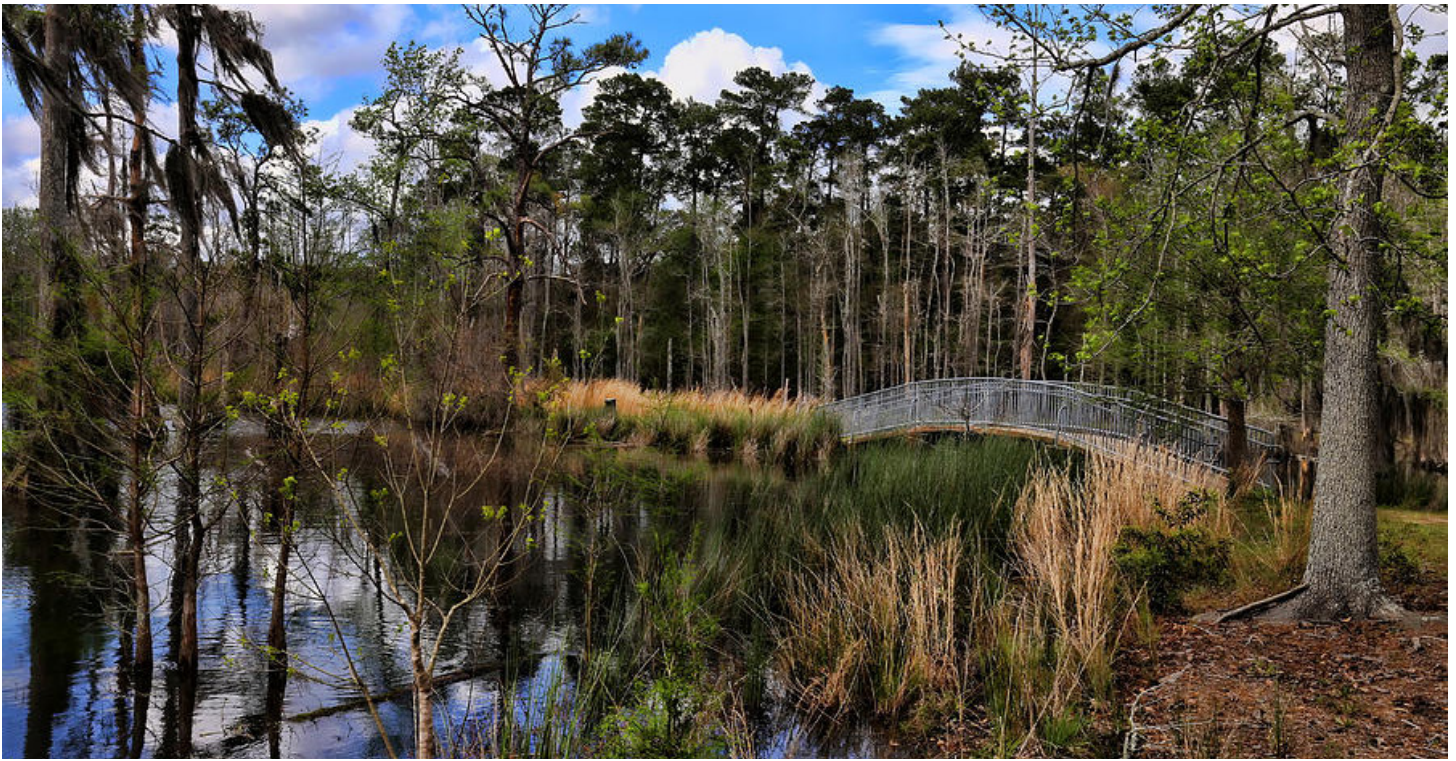
Restoration Leads to Rebirth: A healthy longleaf pine forest supports a healthy habitat for thriving wildlife and vegetation. Restoration efforts strive to bring longleaf forests back to a healthy and flourishing state. Following restoration efforts, native animals, grasses and other plants return to the forest. This is known as rebirth.

Restoring longleaf pine forests takes a partnership of many public and private individuals and organizations. The road to recovery for the longleaf pine forest continues to be long and difficult. The Longleaf Legacy Project is one of the many partnerships underway across the country. The goal of the project is restoration and rebirth of the treasured longleaf pine ecosystem in Sam Houston Jones State Park.

Plant Growth Flourishes: Restoration efforts lead to the return of native plants, including blue stem, switchgrass, sunflowers and American chaffseed. With an open canopy and the presence of native plants and grasses, native wildlife including birds, butterflies and the Louisiana pine snake will also return to the restored area.

Native Animals Return: Plants and animals in longleaf pine forests have adapted to fire and are able to benefit from the effects of controlled burns. Planned, or prescribed, fires help to create an open forest, making it easier for animals to graze. Birds, like the bobwhite quail, are able to find seeds on the forest floor more easily when it is clear of excess leaves and branches. The bobwhite quail, wild turkey, white-tailed deer, gopher tortoise and red-cockaded woodpecker are examples of animals that depend on fire in longleaf pine forests.

continued



Ecosystem

Key Words & Concepts:

Ecosystem: Plant and animal communities, their environment and the resulting interactions. An ecosystem can be as simple as a mud puddle or dead log or as complex as a forest containing thousands of acres.

Fauna: The animals of a particular region, habitat or time period.

Flora: The plants of a particular region, habitat or time period.

Habitat: An animal's environment (where it lives). This area must supply all of the animal's life needs.

Rebirth: The action of reappearing or starting to flourish or increase after a decline.



Fauna



Flora



Rebirth

LongleafLegacy.com



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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

Lead students in a creative writing activity where they describe a healthy forest.

- Students will describe characteristics of a longleaf pine forest and identify plants and animals typical of this environment. Students will synthesize and apply knowledge of a healthy longleaf pine forest.
- Provide students with a worksheet to lead them through the creative writing process. Have them fill out the columns below to organize their thoughts on the types of plants and animals in longleaf pine forests and their characteristics.
- Next, have students transform their lists from the chart below to craft a story about walking through a longleaf pine forest.

LIST CHARACTERISTICS					
PLANT	PLANT	PLANT	PLANT	PLANT	PLANT
ANIMAL	ANIMAL	ANIMAL	ANIMAL	ANIMAL	ANIMAL