



# Restoration of the Longleaf Pine

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“Extremely rare and critically imperiled,” according to the [Virginia Department of Natural Heritage](#), the Longleaf Pine, was once the dominant tree species on an estimated 60 million acres along the coastal plain from east Texas, to the mountains of Alabama, northwest Georgia and up to the Virginia piedmont region. Longleaf pine stands have declined over the past 100 years and today occupy fewer than four million acres of the historic range.



*A 1912 postcard depicting harvesting pine resin for the turpentine industry.*

Virginia Farm Service Agency, in cooperation with other conservation partners, has been working to restore the native Longleaf pine to the Virginia landscape. Through various initiatives and programs, Virginia partners have restored approximately 5,000 acres of longleaf pine stands in Virginia over the past 5 years. One of the keys to success is the [Virginia Department of Forestry's](#) (VDOF) aggressive Longleaf research and restoration program. At the New Kent Forestry Center in New Kent County, VDOF is working to preserve and grow the native Longleaf Pine gene pool in Virginia. At the forestry center, native Longleaf pine branches are collected and grafted to a non-native root. The resulting grafted plant is grown in a greenhouse to produce seeds of the native tree. Producing seed is one of several methods underway at the Forestry Center to preserve and regenerate the native gene pool.

[Farm Service Agency's](#) (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has also played a role in restoration effort in Virginia. In October 2006, FSA unveiled a CRP [Longleaf Pine Initiative](#) designed to restore longleaf pine forests in nine southern states, including Virginia. The program offers participants financial incentives, such as annual rental payments and cost-share assistance, to the replant and restore the Longleaf pine on eligible land within the native range.

The longleaf pine ecosystem is a long-term, resource-conserving characterized by a relatively sparse tree canopy and a very diverse herbaceous understory. This well adapted species can be successfully established on a variety of sites from dry ridges to wet, low flatwoods, and in sand, loam or clay. The longleaf pine ecosystem provides valuable wildlife habitat and many other environmental benefits.

One of the most effective management techniques for successfully growing Longleaf pine is understory burning to control competing vegetation. Landowners considering planting Longleaf pine on their land want to consider the suitability of the site as well as the management techniques involved in [creating a successful stand](#).



If you are interested in learning more about Longleaf pine restoration, or are interested in programs that are available to assist you with your conservation goals, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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## Longleaf Links

- [“Longleaf Pine in Virginia: History, Ecology and Restoration”](#)  
By: Rick Myers, DCR
- [“Future Longleaf Pine Forests in Virginia”](#)  
By: US Forest Service Southern Research Station
- [The Longleaf Alliance](#)
- [“Virginia Working to Restore Longleaf”](#)  
By: Rex Springston, Richmond Times-Dispatch