

First Sunday at the Refuge

December 4, 2016 ~ 2:00 p.m. ~ Barred Owl Room

Burning for a Healthy Forest

By Dr. Chuck Hess, Wildlife Biologist



Once the dominant forest of the southeastern United States, today pyrogenic longleaf forests occupy less than 3% of its original range. Restoration of the ecosystem is a goal of public land managers in the mesic (periodically moist) pine flatwoods of the southern Coastal Plain. Fire shapes and maintains the southern pinelands. Without frequent fire, the longleaf ecosystem can become a “landscape trap,” where ecological processes can no longer maintain the original forest type.

Chuck Hess is a retired wildlife biologist with the U.S. Forest Service. He has studied the red-cockaded woodpeckers of the Apalachicola National Forest since 1989 and was instrumental in the development of the translocation program for this woodpecker to other conservation lands in the southeast. His primary areas of interest are forest management and the importance of fire on the landscape.

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

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