



# *Seeing the Forest through the Trees*

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## A Framework for Restoration: Increasing the Success of Longleaf Pine Restoration Projects

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### Abstract

Longleaf pine restoration projects in the southeastern US have varied in their level of success. Projects can fall short of success due to a lack of adequate planning, improper implementation (often related to the sequencing of management actions) and a failure to detect and react to changing conditions or unexpectedly high costs. A poorly planned restoration project often results in unintended consequences, such as the elimination of desirable species or the spread of invasive species. In response to the growing interest in longleaf pine restoration, we developed a framework for ecological restoration that addresses many of these issues. The key components of a framework for restoration include a thorough site assessment of current conditions, development of desired

ecological conditions and a plan to achieve them, implementation of the plan and then adaptation. The framework emphasizes the need to develop realistic desired ecological conditions considering the initial starting point, landscape context, desires of the landowner and what is possible within the timeframe of the project. The framework also addresses the need to understand the relationship between the initial site condition and how to reach the desired ecological condition, stressing the importance of the proper sequencing of management actions. Restoration projects that follow the framework will be: 1) be site-specific; 2) address landscape context; 3) consider time as ecological factor; and 4) be based on realistic expectations. Four restoration case studies (Eglin AFB, FL; Jones Ecological Research Center, GA; St. Marks NWF, FL; and Cabin Bluff, GA) will be highlighted.