

Video	Audio
	<p>>> MALE NARRATOR: FROM THE TREE TOPS TO THE TORTOISE BURROWS, THE RED HILLS REGION OF SOUTH GEORGIA IS HOME TO A FANTASTIC AMOUNT OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS HERE, AND EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY THE ECOLOGY. NEXT ON GEORGIA OUTDOORS.</p>
	<p>>> FEMALE NARRATOR: FUNDING FOR GEORGIA OUTDOORS HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM MARY HALL SINGLETON, AND BY THE IMLAY FOUNDATION.</p> <p>>> MALE NARRATOR: GEORGIA'S ECOLOGICALLY AND GEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE COASTAL PLAIN DOMINATES THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE STATE. ITS EXPANSIVE LANDSCAPE STRETCHES ACROSS A VARIETY OF TERRAINS, FROM THE OKEFENOKEE IN THE EAST, TO THE BANKS OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE IN THE WEST.... NESTLED ALONG THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE REGION, STRADDLING THE BORDER OF GEORGIA AND FLORIDA LIE THE RED HILLS, A POCKET OF BIODIVERSITY LIKE NO OTHER IN THE STATE.</p>
	<p>FROM UNIQUE RAVINE SYSTEMS, TO THE LAST VESTIGES OF LONGLEAF PINE STANDS, THE REGION CONTAINS HABITAT FOR RARE SPECIES ONCE ABUNDANT IN OUR STATE...GOPHER TORTOISES...RED COCKADED WOODPECKERS...BACHMAN'S SPARROWS...AND MANY OTHER SPECIES CAN STILL BE FOUND IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS HERE.</p>
	<p>AT THE SOUTHERNMOST CORNER OF THE REDHILLS - THE FLINT, SPRING, AND CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERS MERGE TO BECOME THE MIGHTY APALACHICOLA. HERE LIES A RAVINE SYSTEM REVERED BY ECOLOGISTS WORLDWIDE FOR ITS ASTONISHING DIVERSITY OF PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE...THE TORREYAN RAVINES. DR. BRUCE MEANS IS ONE OF THE LEADING NATURALISTS IN THE RED HILLS, AND HAS SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE STUDYING THE PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE HERE. WE JOINED HIM TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE TORREYAN RAVINES, HOME TO MORE THAN 100 RARE SPECIES.</p>
	<p>>> Means: There are very deep ravines etched into these uplands you see behind me and they've been around probably for 10 or more million years, these ravines. They've been a refugium for all kinds of plants from the north and also from ancient times. They're botanically very, very valuable and very interesting because there are other ravines in the red hills and other ravines in the coastal plains, but this particular group along the lower Flint and Apalachicola River contain plants found nowhere else in the world!</p>
	<p>>> NARRATOR: SOME OF THE PLANTS FOUND HERE ARE TRULY PREHISTORIC.</p>
	<p>>> Means: Here we have a real interesting plant in these ravines in the Red Hills. It's found in Georgia and Florida. What's unique about this palm is—ouch!—their modified bracts that the palm grows around its whole trunk. And it serves a very important purpose: to prevent big, extinct animals that evolved with this thing that had teeth like this. This is a mastodon. Probably to keep them from putting their muzzle in their and going after the heart of palm. Mastodons, mammoths, tapirs, ground sloths, a whole host of large, giant mammals that only went extinct a few thousand years ago, evolved with this plant, and they're probably animals that this plant evolved the protective mechanisms against.</p>
	<p>When you go down the slope, you get into the bottoms of the ravines and you find some exquisite habitats there. You know, you have beautiful water coming out and feeding this little, pretty stream and the moisture there creates a wetland</p>

	<p>environment that has all sorts of plants, mosses, ferns, trees, certain trees rooted there, and animals that are specifically found in that kind of raviney wetland. This salamander is interesting because it evolved here. There are species that only are found here because they evolved here. This Apalachicola dusky salamander is one of them. I had a wonderful time 40 years ago as part of my graduate student research trying to figure out what all the species were in these ravines, and one of the conclusions was this one is only found here and nowhere else in the world. In addition to the animals, the plants are what make these ravines so fantastic, and one of the wonderful things about the ravines are the high diversity of trees. The forest type we're in is called the southern temperate hardwood forest. Some people call it the beech magnolia forest. There are more species of trees in this forest type than any other forest type in the United States and Canada. Not only does it have a huge diversity of trees, it also has species that are only found here and nowhere else in the world. This is a very, very rare plant. It's a conifer. This tree is called the Florida U and it's only found in the ravines right here, an area about 30 miles long and 5 miles wide, and it goes just up into Georgia. So it's a Georgia native plant.</p> <p>It's like these ravines and a lot of things in them that are found nowhere else that somebody would come up with the idea that, "Wow! This is a real garden of Eden!"</p> <p>E.E. Callaway, a local preacher, came up with that notion himself. In fact he actually firmly believed that this was the Garden of Eden.</p> <p>3 rivers come together where Eden was formed: the Chattahoochee, Spring Creek and Flint River all come together to form the Apalachicola River. The ark was made out of gopher wood. Well one of these conifers, the Florida Torreya tree, one of the common local names is gopher wood. Aha! This has gotta be the Garden of Eden because there's all these wonderful plants and all these wonderful animals here.</p> <p>He preached it and he was convinced that, in the whole world, this is where the true Garden of Eden really lies.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: JUST NORTH OF THE TORREYAN RAVINES, THE UPLANDS OF THE REDHILLS BEGIN. OVER A CENTURY AGO, THIS LAND WOULD HAVE BEEN DOMINATED BY ONE TREE...THE MAJESTIC LONGLEAF PINE.</p>
	<p>>>Means: Throughout all of coastal plain Georgia, this is what you would have found on the higher, dryer parts of land, the longleaf pine ecosystem. It was the predominant ecosystem from Virginia to East Texas. It accounted for 60% of the landscape. This habitat was at one time the most important in the entire area from Virginia to East Texas. Now what's happened to it, there's less than 2% remaining of the longleaf pine forest. The best old growth stands left in the world are in the Red Hills of south Georgia.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: LONGLEAF PINETREES CAN LIVE AS LONG AS 500 YEARS, REACHING HEIGHTS OF UP TO 100 FEET. THE THICK BARK OF THE TREE MAKES IT RESISTANT TO FIRE. OVER THE CENTURIES FREQUENT FIRES HAVE HELPED TO SHAPE A DELICATE WEB OF LIFE AMONG THESE ANCIENT TREES</p>
	<p>>>Green: Sustainability of the longleaf pine ecosystem is tied directly to fire. It's absolutely</p>

	<p>dependent upon fire. Lightning strikes set the woods on fire. Native Americans set the woods on fire.</p> <p>>>NARRATOR: FIRE HELPS TO CLEAR AWAY DENSE BRUSH AND HARDWOODS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE CROWD OUT YOUNG LONGLEAF TREES. THIS NOT ONLY ALLOWS THE FOREST TO REGENERATE. IT ALSO CREATES HABITAT FOR A VARIETY OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS.</p> <p>>>Robertson: The longleaf pine ecosystem, most of its biodiversity, probably about 95 or more percent of the diversity is in the herbaceous understory. Up to four to five hundred species in one given property. Most of these plants are dependent on frequent fire to keep it open so they're able to regenerate, and the diversity of plant species also results in a diversity of insect species, which help to support the wildlife populations that have become rare.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: INTENSE LOGGING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES BROUGHT THE SOUTHEASTERN LONGLEAF ECOSYSTEM TO THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION. BECAUSE LONGLEAF TAKES SO LONG TO GROW, THE CLEARED LAND WAS PLANTED WITH FASTER GROWING TREES LIKE SLASH AND LOBLOLLY PINE.</p>
	<p>>>McGuire: But this new forest that they were planting had been the skeletons of this ancient longleaf pine forest was not resistant to the frequent fires that were seen in the primeval longleaf forest. This was reasons for groups like the Dixie Crusaders or Smokey Bear to preach that fire was evil, an evil function in these forest that needed to be excluded.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: The few remaining pockets of old growth longleaf pine in the red hills can be found on plantations preserved and managed for quail hunting. For decades, regular fires were used to maintain desirable hunting land, but land owners in the early 20th century ceased the practice...heeding the calls to prevent forest fires</p>
	<p>SOON AFTER, THE QUAIL POPULATION BEGAN TO DECLINE, AND ECOLOGIST HERBERT L. STODDARD WAS CALLED IN TO FIND OUT WHY.</p>
	<p>>>Green: Herbert Stoddard was brought in in a joint project between landowners, and the forerunner of US Fish and Wildlife Service to look at what happened to the bobwhite quail. Well Stoddard came in for his first visit and looked around and said, "Well when did you stop burning? I think by returning fire to the land bobwhite quail will reappear."</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: WITH PROPER FIRE MANAGEMENT, THE QUAIL POPULATION REBOUNDED IN THE RED HILLS. THIS SMALL, GROUND NESTING BIRD, WHICH CONGREGATES IN TIGHT NIT GROUPS CALLED COVEYS, THRIVES IN THE SHORT BRUSH OF A FIRE-MAINTAINED LONGLEAF FOREST, AND FOR THIS REASON, THE BOB WHITE QUAIL HAS HELPED TO SAVE THESE POCKETS OF PRISTINE HABITAT.</p>

	<p>>>Palmer: Quail are critically important bird to the Red Hills region and have been for 100 years. They are the glue really that have held this giant landscape together. If we lost the quail or if people lost interests in the bob white quail, then I think they would lose interests in the land. And it's really their love of the quail that generates a love of the land, which keeps all these endangered species and these beautiful habitats intact.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: BECAUSE THIS BIRD IS A CORNERSTONE OF THE ECOSYSTEM HERE, QUAIL POPULATIONS ARE CLOSELY MONITORED. RESEARCHERS LIKE THESE FROM TALL TIMBERS RESEARCH STATION USE A VARIETY OF METHODS TO KEEP COUNT.</p>
	<p>>>Palmer: We go out with bird dogs and try to flush coveys to get an estimate of how many birds there are per cubby. But it's very difficult. The coveys view us as a predator and they run from us and fly from us and flush wild and the cover is very thick this time of year, so it's often hard to get a good number count that way. And that's why we evolved to the counting the coveys rather than trying to flush all the birds in the woods because you just can't do it.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: A MORE RELIABLE METHOD OF COUNTING QUAIL IS BY LISTENING</p>
	<p>>>Palmer: When we get up in the morning to do a covey call count, you get out in the woods. It's pitch black. You make your way to your flag point, and as the sun comes up, you start hearing the great-horned owls calling, the various species of birds like towhees and cardinals start to chirp. And you know soon after the quail will start to call. And just about the time you can read your watch and you looking out, the quail will start to call. A series of "queue-wee" calls, or 'queue-wee, queue-wee, queue-wee' three or four times.</p>
	<p>And that gives each individual a chance to locate the direction and time at which that covey called. After their calling is over, we all get together and compare our locations. And that give us the number of coveys within that sixty-acre area that we can then use to document the population level on that region.</p> <p>Trying to understand how the management influences the wildlife and we can use that information to provide land managers and property owners information on what to do best to manage what they're interested in.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: Quail are not the only species that benefit from the careful management of longleaf pine stands. In the 1800s naturalist, John Audubon reported an abundance of red cockaded woodpeckers in the southeast. Today, it's estimated that less than 15,000 of these remain...inhabiting approximately one percent of their historic range.</p>
	<p>>>Spivey: Red cockaded woodpeckers were at one time very common within the southeastern landscape. The Red Hills support the largest population on private land anywhere in the world.</p> <p>>>NARRATOR: RED COCKADED WOODPECKERS PREFER OLD GROWTH LONGLEAF PINE TREES TO BUILD THEIR CAVITIES. THIS IS BECAUSE OLDER TREES DEVOLOP A FUNGUS CALLED RED HEART, MAKING THE WOOD SOFTER. THE DECLINE OF RED COCKADED WOODPECKERS HAS PARALELLED THE DECLINE OF LONGLEAF PINE IN THE SOUTHEAST.</p>

	<p>>>Spivey: Originally, we think there may have been between four and six hundred family groups in the Red Hills. The current population of about 183 family groups is actually a slight increase over the last few years.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: TO MONITOR THE POPULATION OF THESE WOODPECKERS, MANY BIRDS ARE BANDED WITH UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION TAGS. BANDING THESE BIRDS REQUIRES AN EARLY WAKE-UP CALL.</p>
	<p>>>Cox: The birds go into their cavities each night and they come out their cavities in the morning and that's the only opportunity we have to catch them predictably when they come out. We raised up very long, essentially large butterfly nets on poles and place them over the entrance to the cavities. Yesterday we had to come out and measure the height from the ladder we have to climb to get up to the cavities during the daylight hours to know how much to extend your pole up so that it's adequately covering the cavity. And then you come out in dark and you've got your pole marked properly and extended up and then you can put it right over the cavity and have it up so you can capture the bird.</p>
	<p>>>Spivey: Standing on that ladder for half an hour to forty-five minutes can be torturous almost. Your muscles are cramping up and you trying to make sure the net is being held steady and is squarely over the entrance of the cavity, but when the sun starts to come up, the bird comes out, it seems to be worth it.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: ONCE THE BIRDS ARE NETTED, DATA IS COLLECTED ON THE HEALTH OF EACH WOODPECKER. MUCH CARE IS TAKEN TO INSURE NO HARM COMES TO THE BIRDS. THOUGH THE BIRDS COLLECTED TODAY ALREADY HAVE BANDS, THERE IS MUCH TO BE LEARNED FROM THEM.</p>
	<p>>>Cox: This is the dominant male for this group. These birds that we caught today were three adult males. There was the dominant male who was the father of the other two individuals. The two young were banded as nestlings in one of the cavities here and have been hanging around their father for two years helping to feed, helping to raise additional young. The woodpecker is very much tied to the cavities that it comes in and spends the night in. Young birds often times will stay in their territory if they have a good cavity and help the parents raise additional young rather than disperse. It's not as nice a family setting as you might expect. Those young birds are actually looking around prospecting, looking to see if there is a vacant territory nearby, that has good cavities. If they find a vacant territory, they'll move in there and try to establish their own territory. Another option they have is just hoping that dad passes away soon. In which case one of those young birds will inherit the territory from its father. At that point the female, who's now the breeding female with this group will typically disperse, and the male who's here will try to attract a new mate.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: A RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER CAVITY CAN TAKE UP TO FOUR YEARS TO FINISH. FOR THIS REASON, MANY BIRDS SEEK OUT ESTABLISHED CAVITIES TO MOVE INTO. RECENTLY, SCIEN TISTS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT RED</p>

	COCKADED WOODPECKERS AREN'T TOO CHOOSY ABOUT THEIR ARCHITECT.
	>>Spivey: One of the very important tools is the ability to create artificial cavities by creating cavity inserts which we basically climbed the tree and cut out a block of wood out of the tree and actually insert a nesting cavity into the tree. And we can also create drilled artificial nest cavities. Both of those techniques have been used to increase red cockaded woodpecker populations throughout the range of the bird. We can go out and create a cavity at a half of hour to forty-five minutes that it might take that bird one to three years to create the same cavity. We can accredit most of the success of the recovery of the bird to the ability to create artificial cavities.
	>> NARRATOR: THIS CAVITY WAS INSERTED IN A TREE ON THE RALPH AND ALEXANDRA KAUKA RIVER CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA OUTSIDE THOMASVILLE
	THIS WELL PRESERVED PLANTATION WAS RECENTLY PURCHASED BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA AND OFFERS A RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY THE DIVERSE ECOLOGY OF THE RED HILLS.
	>>Spivey: One of the main reasons that we wanted to purchase River Creek was the fact that it has 450 to 500 acres of very mature longleaf pine habitat.
	>>Green: This is the first public ownership of land that was private land here in the Red Hills ever. So it's very unique and it gives the public an opportunity to get out on some of the most magnificent properties in the southeast.
	>> NARRATOR: RIVER CREEK ALSO HOSTS A NUMBER OF GAME SPECIES INCLUDING QUAIL AND DEER. THE PROPERTY HOLDS ORGANIZED HUNTING DAYS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON PRIMITIVE WEAPON HUNTS SUCH AS BOW HUNTING FOR DEER.
	>>Ruckel: Well it's a good area for any type of hunting really, but bow hunting, we can sustain a little more hunting pressure because the kill rate's not as high, so you can allow a little bit more of it, but it's well-suited. The habitat's broken up. We've got openings scattered about. Some of these openings we plant and food plots that attract deer. And of course with archery you have to have them fairly close, within 30 or 40 yards to be able to make a good shot with a bow and arrow.
	For quail hunting, the potential on this place is just endless because the habitat is similar already what you see on a lot of the other plantations surrounding the area that manage primarily for quail. And we're going to allow small groups by quota only, so it will remain a quality type hunt. We're not just going to open it up for everybody to come in here and get in each other's way and end up not being a good hunt for anyone
	>> NARRATOR: RIVER CREEK ALSO HAS A LAKE FOR PUBLIC FISHING EVENTS.
	>>Ruckel: The lake is approximately 15 acres. It's a manmade lake. Nice area. If someone wanted to have a picnic or that type of thing, they could have a very good outing. We have largemouth bass, various species of bream, probably a few catfish in there primarily. There's tremendous potential on this area.
	One of the things we want to guard against is over-utilization. We think there's a lot of potential for wildlife observation, hiking trails, just the overall aesthetics of the area and the opportunity to see a typical South Georgia plantation much the way it probably was years ago.

	<p>>>FEMALE NARRATOR: GEORGIA'S DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES HELPS LANDOWNERS ACHIEVE GOALS FOR PRESERVING WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS BY IDENTIFYING INCENTIVES THAT PROVIDE TAX RELIEF, DIRECT PAYMENTS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR COST SHARING. <u>THE LANDOWNER'S GUIDE TO CONSERVATION OPTIONS</u> IS A BOOKLET PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES THAT COMPARES THE VARIOUS INCENTIVES AND PROVIDES LANDOWNERS WITH THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO PURSUE THOSE PROGRAMS. SOME INCENTIVES PROMOTE REFORESTATION, PROTECTION OF RARE SPECIES OR IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES LIKE PRESCRIBED BURNING. CALL THIS NUMBER OR VISIT THIS WEBSITE FOR A FREE COPY OF <u>THE LANDOWNER'S GUIDE TO CONSERVATION OPTIONS.</u></p>
	<p>>>MALE NARRATOR: THE RED HILLS REGION OF GEORGIA IS HOME TO A STARTLING NUMBER OF RARE AND ENDANGERED ANIMALS. ONE OF THE OLDEST, AND MOST REVERED IS THE GOPHER TORTOISE....A TRULY PREHISTORIC REPTILE, THE GOPHER TORTOISE BELONGS TO A GROUP OF LAND TORTOISES WITH ORIGINS DATING BACK 60 MILLION YEARS. THOUGH NORTH AMERICA WAS ONCE HOME TO AT LEAST 23 SPECIES OF LAND TORTOISES, ONLY 4 REMAIN.</p>
	<p>>>BIRKHEAD: THESE BURROWS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR THE TORTOISES AND FOR LOTS OF OTHER ORGANISMS IN THE ECOSYSTEM. BURROWS ON AVERAGE ARE ABOUT 15 FEET LONG AND 6 FEET DEEP. THERE ARE 362 SPECIES OF VERTEBRATE AND INVERTEBRATE ANIMALS THAT UTILIZE TORTOISE BURROWS. A LOT OF TIMES THESE BURROWS ACTUALLY PERSIST IN THE ENVIRONMENT FOR YEARS, EVEN AFTER THE TORTOISE HAS ABANDONED THE BURROW AND MOVED ON, A LOT OF OTHER SPECIES WILL COME IN AND UTILIZE THESE BURROWS.</p> <p>>>NARRATOR: THE GOPHER TORTOISE IS FEDERALLY LISTED AS A THREATENED SPECIES, MAINLY DUE TO HABITAT LOSS. ADULT TORTOISES CAN LIVE UP TO 75 YEARS IN THE WILD, BUT AS JUVENILES THEY ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE.</p>
	<p>>>Birkhead: Most of them get eaten while they are eggs. A female will produce—about one offspring will make it to adulthood every 10 years.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: REED BINGHAM STATE PARK JUST OUTSIDE THE RED HILLS IS HOME TO A HEALTHY POPULATION OF GOPHER TORTOISES, BUT THE PARK HAS ALSO TAKEN A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO ENSURE THE GROUP THRIVES HERE. THESE BABY TORTOISES WERE RESCUED AS EGGS AND HATCHED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE PARK STAFF.</p>
	<p>>>Powell: The program that we have right now goes back to 1999. We decided that the predation was so bad here that we needed to try and at least do a little something to help the population along. So we started out with three nests and worked up from there. And this year I think we had 28 gopher tortoise clutches of eggs this year.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: THE PROJECT WAS SO SUCCESSFUL, REED BINGHAM BEGAN INVITING VOLUNTEERS FROM THE PUBLIC TO COME OUT AND HELP.</p>
	<p>>>Glover: I started volunteering here back in the beginning of the year helping dig the eggs for the gopher tortoises.</p>
	<p>They are extremely precious little babies when they hatch. They are just totally</p>

	<p>cute and they just—they eat away at your heart.</p>
	<p>>>Powell: Well it's pretty amazing every year. This is our fourth year and it's still an amazing thing to watch even after you've done it that many times. From the time that they emerge from the egg, they are basically on their own so they're ready to go. We feed them a combination of zucchini, squash and turnip greens usually. And that seems to be their preference. And they'll use their little feet to rip it apart if they get a piece too big, but we dice it up pretty well.</p> <p>>>Glover: We have to chop it real small for them since their mouths are so little. We do have to put the extra vitamin supplement on it as well, the powder, to help them get the nutrients they need. We also check their sand. We have to level it out everyday or else they'll build up a pile and try to climb out. And as long as everybody is looking good and they're all active, they're good for the day.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: NOT LONG AFTER THE TORTOISES HATCH, THEY ARE RETURNED TO THEIR ORIGINAL BURROWS.</p>
	<p>>>Hart: We've got the holes of each tortoise GPS tracked and everything. And we've got the certain boxes with the tortoises in it and they're all numbered and they're in line with the GPS numbers out there with the little flags next to the holes. So we go take the little tortoises and take them back to the hole and drop them off right there at the same spot that they was born in, or supposedly was going to be born in. And they usually track right there down in their little gopher hole.</p>
	<p>>>Powell: One of the things that we would like to study more here is when do they move out on their own? Most herpetologists and biologists that I've talked to remark that they never see tiny babies in the wild or the burrows under a certain size. And our thinking from what we've observed here for three or four years is that the babies live in the hole of the parent and eventually they will dig their own burrow, but what we see here is that it usually doesn't occur until they're about three or four years old and at that point they dig their own burrow.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: THE SPECIAL CARE OF THIS TORTOISE POPULATION DOESN'T END HERE.</p>
	<p>>>Lockheart: We're testing the tortoises for the presence of a bacteria that can be potentially devastating for gopher tortoise populations. It's very similar to flu in humans. It's an upper respiratory tract disease.</p>
	<p>I think that at Reed Bingham State Park they have a very healthy gopher tortoise population and they're getting some fantastic breeding success. I think they're going to have an exploding population of gopher tortoises out here in the future.</p>
	<p>>>Narrator: TO HELP THESE TORTOISES FLOURISH, REED BINGHAM IS RESTORING A TWENTY-ACRE LONGLEAF PINE STAND BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE.</p>
	<p>>>Powell: Well we've lost a lot of habitat statewide. And what we're trying to do is preserve what we do have here on the park. And we have a lot of natural longleaf habitat here, but what we're going to do is we have a lot of area where we can actually make it more productive and put in longleaf in place of some of this slash pine and other trees that are not as beneficial.</p>
	<p>>>Aisler: Today, we're beginning our first process of our restoration project out here. We're beginning by spraying the area to basically control and get rid of the</p>

	<p>bahaya grass out here. We're looking at one to two years to have our ground cover restored back. As far as the timber and the over story, the longleaf over story, you're looking at a very long-term restoration.</p>
	<p>>>NARRATOR: THIS PROJECT IS BUT A SMALL EXAMPLE OF HOW WE CAN HELP TO REVERSE THE IMPACT WE'VE HAD ON THE ECOSYSTEM HERE. THE RED HILLS REGION OF GEORGIA AND FLORIDA CONTAINS A UNIQUE AND FRAGILE TAPESTRY OF LIFE, AND WITHOUT A CONSCIOUS EFFORT OF PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION, MANY OF THESE PLANTS AND ANIMALS MIGHT DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY. BUT FOR NOW, THESE SPECIES CONTINUE TO FLOURISH AMONG THE RED CLAY SOILS AND LONGLEAF PINES OF SOUTH GEORGIA.</p> <p>>>FEMALE NARRATOR: FUNDING FOR GEORGIA OUTDOORS HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM MARY HALL SINGLETON, AND BY THE IMLAY FOUNDATION</p>