

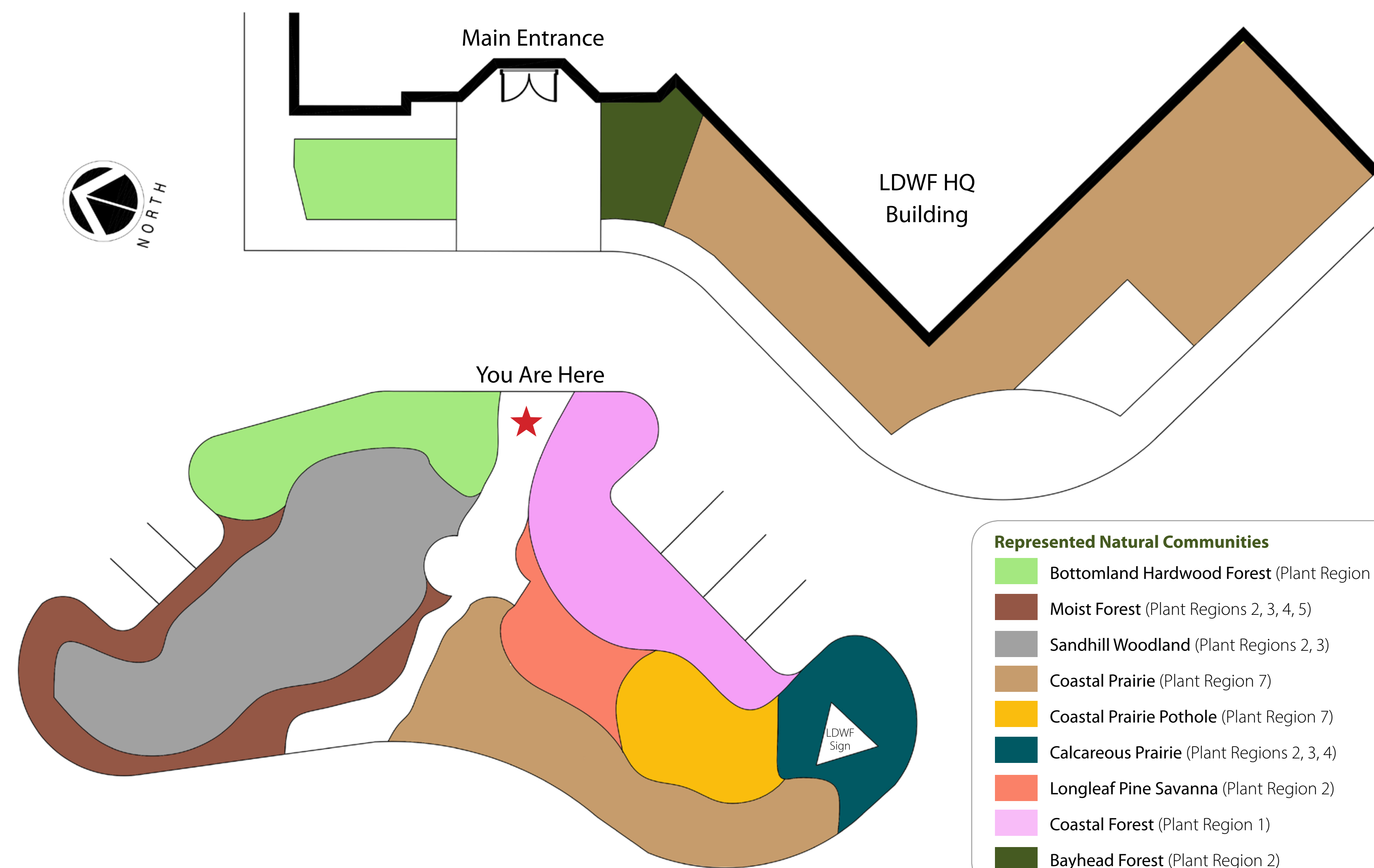
# Welcome!

## LOUISIANA NATIVE PLANT GARDENS



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has developed the Louisiana Native Plant Gardens to demonstrate and celebrate our natural heritage. Louisiana's landscape includes seven primary plant regions, which are made up of a wide range of natural communities. The seven plant regions are represented by nine natural communities in the gardens. The Louisiana Native Plant Gardens have been created for you to learn, enjoy, and showcase some of the state's natural beauty, while providing a place that benefits wildlife in the urban landscape.

### SITE PLAN



Background photo courtesy of Eric Vanbergen

## PLANT REGIONS OF LOUISIANA

Plant regions are broader organizations of natural communities occupying large landscapes. Each plant region is comprised of many variations of similar natural communities, which are shaped by geographically distinct environmental conditions and natural histories.



**Shortleaf Pine-Oak-Hickory Woodlands**

**Prominent Physical Features:** Occurs on dry hills and consists of mixed species stands with dry-sited hardwoods mixed with shortleaf pine. Canopy cover varies from open woodland with a grassy understory to more densely wooded stands. This community is maintained with beneficial forest fires approximately every five to 15 years.

**Prominent Vegetation:** Shortleaf pine, post oak, southern red oak, blackjack oak, hickories and blackgum.



**Hardwood-Pine Flatwoods**

**Prominent Physical Features:** Occupies older flat to gently undulating surfaces, slightly up slope from bottomland hardwoods and are not directly influenced by flooding of nearby rivers and streams. Soils are typically poorly drained silt loams to clays. Several inches of standing water in the winter can cause soils to be saturated into early spring.

**Prominent Vegetation:** Oaks, elms, maples, loblolly pine, spruce pine (southeastern LA only), sweet gum and sugarberry.



**Longleaf Pine Savannas and Woodlands**

**Prominent Physical Features:** Occurs on infertile soils of both poorly-drained flatwoods and dry hills. The combination of infertile soils and frequent lightning-strike fires, occurring every one to three years, maintained open stands of longleaf pine with diverse prairie-like understories.

**Prominent Vegetation:** Longleaf pine with a rich herbaceous understory supporting little bluestem, slender bluestem, western bracken fern and many wildflowers.



**Coastal Marshes and Barrier Islands**

**Prominent Physical Features:** Includes freshwater, intermediate, brackish, and salt marshes; as well as barrier islands and fringing coastal forests. Due to a number of human activities, the Coastal Marshes and Barrier Islands plant region has endured significant losses.

**Prominent Vegetation:** Grasses (cordgrasses and maidencane), sedges and rushes in the marshes. Forested habitats support live oak, sugarberry, red bay, toothache tree and many other species.



**Coastal Prairie**

**Prominent Physical Features:** Extension of Midwestern tall-grass prairie, with a subtropical influence. Once covered approximately 2.5 million acres in Louisiana. Modern agriculture has reduced Louisiana's coastal prairie to less than one percent of its former extent. Today coastal prairie is limited to small remnants on grazing land, along railroads and a few small patches in urban areas. Fire, along with harsh soil conditions, restricts woody species to forests along streams dissecting the plant region.

**Prominent Vegetation:** A diverse mix of lush grasses; such as little bluestem, big bluestem, eastern gamma grass, switchgrass, and Indian grass; sedges, rushes and many wildflowers.



**Bluff Forests (Tunica Hills)**

**Prominent Physical Features:** Found only in the northwestern Florida Parishes, primarily in Tunica Hills. Occurs on windblown silt deposits that eroded over thousands of years to form a highly-dissected landscape of narrow ridges, steep slopes, and deep ravines, which creates a relatively cool, moist climate on the slopes and in the ravines.

**Prominent Vegetation:** Cherrybark oak, Shumard oak, tulip poplar, southern magnolia, American beech, bluebeech and hickories.



**Bottomland Hardwood Forests and Swamps**

**Prominent Physical Features:** Forested wetlands that occupy broad floodplains and depressions bordering large river systems. The soil, hydrology and plant community varies based on river influence and landscape position. Floodplain soils are fertile and desired for agriculture, so most of the original forests have been converted to agriculture. Flood control efforts have also degraded the forests of this region.

**Prominent Vegetation:** Oaks, cottonwood, sycamores, elms, maples and ashes in bottomland hardwood forests. Baldcypress, water tupelo and swamp tupelo occur in the swamps.

| Plant Regions of Louisiana             |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="color: #FF0000;">■</span> | Coastal Marshes and Barrier Islands    |
| <span style="color: #0000FF;">■</span> | Longleaf Pine Savannas and Woodlands   |
| <span style="color: #008000;">■</span> | Shortleaf Pine-Oak-Hickory Woodlands   |
| <span style="color: #800080;">■</span> | Hardwood-Pine Flatwoods                |
| <span style="color: #000000;">■</span> | Bluff Forests (Tunica Hills)           |
| <span style="color: #00FF00;">■</span> | Bottomland Hardwood Forests and Swamps |
| <span style="color: #FF00FF;">■</span> | Coastal Prairie                        |
| <span style="color: #FFFFFF;">■</span> | Parish Boundary                        |
| <span style="color: #00FFFF;">■</span> | Major Waterbodies                      |

### What is Natural Heritage?

Our natural heritage is composed of the native plants, animals, and physical components (soil, rocks, water, and air) of the landscape. Our natural heritage is important to our cultural identity, economic stability, and global biodiversity. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries works to preserve our natural heritage for future generations by studying, protecting, and managing Louisiana's habitats and species.

### What is a Natural Community?

Natural communities are groups of plants and animals interacting with each other and the physical environment (soil, rocks, water, and air). The way natural communities interact with the physical environment and processes such as climate and fire tend to group similar plants and animals together on the landscape. Natural communities are typically named for the dominant plants or geographically distinct environmental conditions, which provide a convenient structure for categorizing, mapping, and managing Louisiana's natural heritage.