



# Rescuing Biodiversity

The Protection and Restoration of a North Louisiana Ecosystem

**JOHNNY ARMSTRONG**

Foreword by **KELBY OUCHLEY**

Restoration ecology is a vital tool to mitigate the crisis caused by the global destruction of biodiversity, one of the most powerful existential threats to future generations. Johnny Armstrong's *Rescuing Biodiversity* tells the story of one man's attempts to preserve a vanishing Louisiana ecosystem and restore the animal and plant species that once lived there.

As a grandfather and perpetual student, Armstrong witnessed the speed at which the timber industry pillaged local landscapes, and he resolved to protect and revitalize the old-growth forest of Wafer Creek Ranch in north central Louisiana. This fascinating tale recounts his efforts to reclaim the shortleaf pine-oak-hickory woodland ecosystem, once dominant across a wide stretch of land spanning at least four southern states but now virtually extinct. Accessibly written, *Rescuing Biodiversity* acts as a field guide to the historic upland ecology of the region, with descriptions and photographs of its overstory, salient upland grasses, and brilliant wildflowers. Armstrong takes the reader on a journey through this fragile environment, demonstrating what science-based restoration can look like on land that serves as the prime example of a native plant community in the state.

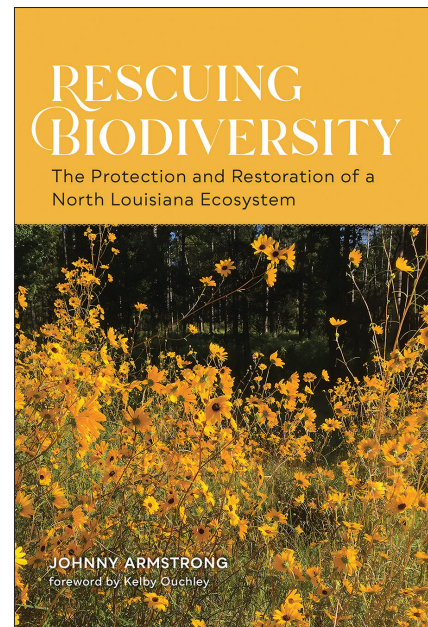
Author, conservationist, and retired medical doctor **JOHNNY ARMSTRONG** lives with his wife, Karen, in an old-growth forest and woodland protected by the Nature Conservancy outside of Ruston, Louisiana.

**KELBY OUCHLEY** is a former U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologist. He is the author of several books concerning natural history, including *Bayou-Diversity: Nature and People in the Louisiana Bayou Country*.

## PRAISE FOR *RESCUING BIODIVERSITY*

"An avowed student of life and restoration ecology, Johnny Armstrong expertly teaches us how to restore an imperiled southern ecosystem based on deep research, firsthand experience, and delighted observation of the species that return to his beloved Wafer Creek Ranch. Driving his devotion is the alarming truth that loss of biodiversity poses a threat on par with climate change and his impassioned belief that society can alter that trajectory, one acre at a time."—Cindy Brown, executive director of Land Trust for Louisiana

"In *Rescuing Biodiversity*, Armstrong passionately describes global hazards to biodiversity, as well as our interdependence on all, including many rapidly diminishing, species. He calls for urgent action and offers hope through a thoughtful and loving description of the restoration of Wafer Creek Ranch. Armstrong's detailed information on native plant species helps us envision how we can contribute to biodiversity on Earth, whether it be a backyard garden or efforts on a grander scale."—Karen Gautreaux, Louisiana state director of the Nature Conservancy



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**JUNE 2023**

240 pages, 6 x 9, 218 halftones, 1 map

978-0-8071-7950-5

Paperback \$29.95

LSU Press Paperback Original

Environmental Studies

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