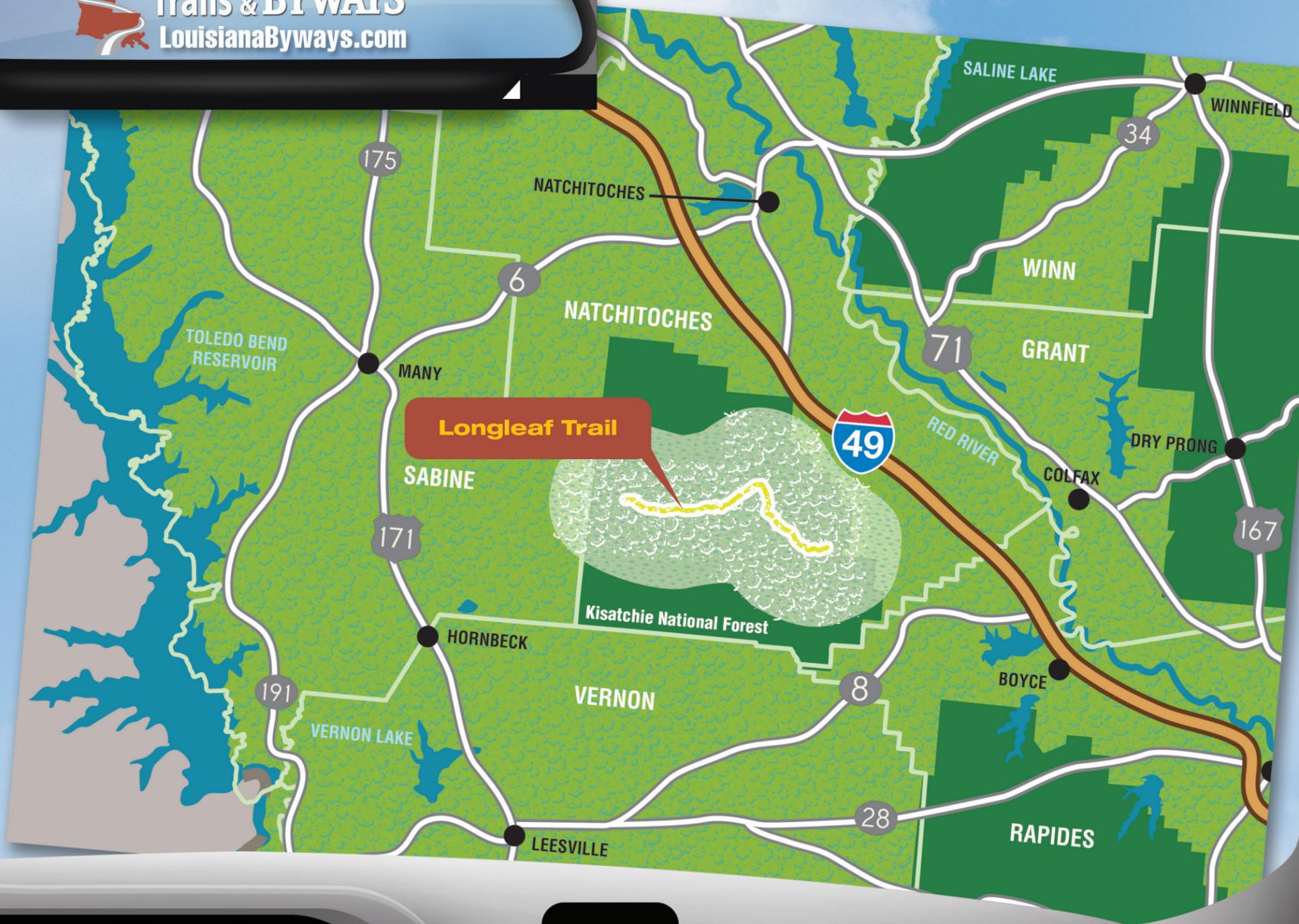


Nestled in the heart of the Kisatchie National Forest, the Longleaf Trail Scenic Byway is recognized as one of the most scenic stretches of road in Louisiana.

A drive along this 18-mile Byway is the perfect adventure to include on your weekend agenda! Located 40 minutes north of Alexandria and 25 minutes south of Natchitoches from I-49 by taking Exit 119, Longleaf Trail Byway signs will lead the way to this unique and beautiful drive. The Byway runs entirely along Forest Road 59 between its intersections with La. Hwy. 117 to the west and La. Hwy. 119 to the east. You will want to stop at the frequent turnouts to get a good view of the mesas, buttes, sandstone outcrops and, of course, longleaf pines. Whether you are looking for trails, campsites, picnic areas, swimming or a relaxing drive, you will find it all and so much more along the Longleaf Trail Scenic Byway.





How to Identify a Longleaf Pine

A longleaf pine tree can be easily identified, by its 18-inch robust green needles, large end of twig and generally straight and stately shape. The thick bark is dark gray, with large blotches of cinnamon plates.



Kisatchie National Forest

Louisiana's only national forest, the Kisatchie National Forest, spans seven central and north Louisiana parishes and encompasses more than 600,000 beautiful acres of pine hills and lush, hardwood bottoms. The federal government began acquiring the land in 1911, when much of the area had been clear-cut by the timber industry, and in 1930 the Kisatchie National Forest was proclaimed. The Kisatchie is a diverse forest of trees, flowers, wild animals and birds that offers an intriguing getaway from fast-paced city life.

Not to Miss

A must see is the Long Leaf Vista. As you stand atop this breathtaking site, known locally as "Little Grand Canyon," you are overlooking the rugged Kisatchie hills wilderness. Visitors are surprised at the elevation and the expansive views that can be seen from this spot. And there always seems to be a breeze, even on the hottest days. If you have packed a lunch, the picnic area is a peaceful place to enjoy it. There is also a 1.5 mile hiking trail that is ideal for families and hikers of all experience levels.

There are six trails in all, located minutes from the Longleaf Trail Scenic Byway. With something for everyone, the trails run the gamut from a mile and a half long to the 36-mile Sandstone Trail. Visitors can use the trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and motorized ATV riding.

Treasured Forest

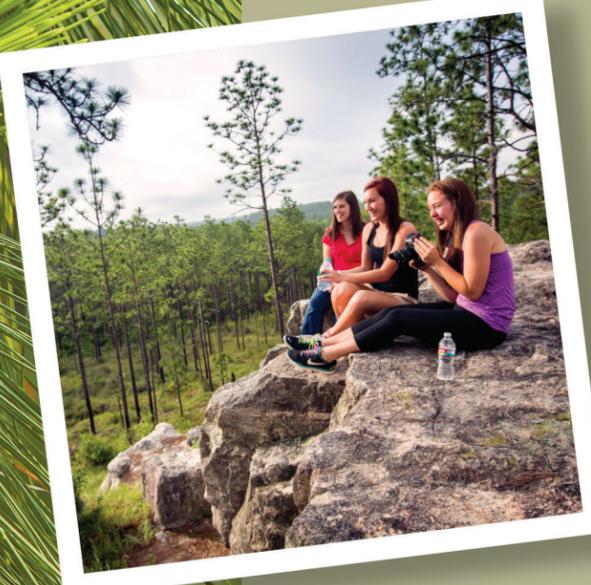
Longleaf pines are native to Louisiana and grow in abundance in Kisatchie National Forest. Genetically designed to enable foresters to harvest more lumber on less land, a designation found only in one in 350,000 tree species.



Wildlife within the Pines

The forest is an excellent habitat for deer, turkeys, squirrels and many other animals. Birds of many kinds thrive here and provide endless opportunities for birding. As you drive along the scenic byway you will notice pine trees with white bands painted around them. These markings indicate trees with activity from red-cockaded woodpeckers, an endangered species found in the Kisatchie National Forest. Red-cockaded woodpeckers live in "clusters" and the nests can easily be seen, typically located a bit more than halfway up the tree trunk.

Take your time and make plenty of stops along the way to take pictures from some of the most incredible overlooks in Louisiana. Take a deep breath, close your eyes and listen to the wind in the pine trees.



There are no gas stations, restaurants or shops located along the Byway, so plan ahead. However, restrooms are available at the Kisatchie Ranger Station on the west end and at scenic outlooks, campgrounds and picnic areas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LONGLEAF TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY

Kisatchie Ranger District
318.472.1840
Forest Supervisor's Office
318.473.7160

