

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park

Planning Region: North Florida Highlands

County: Alachua

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 2515

Overview

Designated as the Florida state park system's first preserve and a National Natural Landmark, Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park protects a 16,000-acre sinkhole valley and 139 recorded prehistoric and historic sites. The park preserves the largest and most biologically diverse freshwater marsh in northern Florida which sustains one of the most diverse assemblages of bird species in the state.

Total Acreage: 21,561.71

| Natural Communities | Acres |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Aquatic Cave | Unquantified |
| Alluvial Forest | 162.31 |
| Bottomland Forest | 154.35 |
| Baygall | 322.41 |
| Basin Marsh | 12,877.52 |
| Basin Swamp | 105.83 |
| Blackwater Stream | 20.29 |
| Clastic Upland Lake | 167.24 |
| Depression Marsh | 137.13 |
| Dome Swamp | 42.20 |
| Floodplain Swamp | 134.57 |
| Hydric Hammock | 51.75 |
| Mesic Hammock | 1,239.69 |
| Mesic Flatwoods | 1,023.10 |
| Marsh Lake | 960.89 |
| Scrubby Flatwoods | 160.05 |
| Sandhill | 10.55 |
| Sinkhole | 39.03 |
| Sinkhole Lake | 24.91 |
| Spring-Run Stream | 0.95 |
| Seepage Stream | 1.12 |
| Upland Hardwood Forest | 1,713.18 |
| Upland Mixed Woodland | 30.35 |
| Upland Pine | 361.18 |
| Wet Flatwoods | 147.25 |
| Xeric Hammock | 15.77 |
| Altered Landcovers | Acres |
| Abandoned Field/ Pasture | 315.75 |
| Canal/ Ditch | 114.41 |
| Clearcut Pine Plantation | 40.22 |

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| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Developed | 82.30 |
| Impoundment/ Artificial Pond | 189.64 |
| Improved Pasture | 131.09 |
| Pine Plantation | 15.34 |
| Semi-Improved Pasture | 155.03 |
| Spoil Area | 173.38 |
| Successional Hardwood Forest | 427.95 |
| Utility Corridor | 8.07 |

Acquisition: Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park was initially acquired on September 29, 1970, under the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) and Land and Water Conservation Funds. Currently, the park comprises 21,561.71 acres. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on January 27, 1971, the Trustees leased (Lease Number 2515) the property to DRP under a 99-year lease. The current lease will expire on January 26, 2070.

Resource Management Component Objectives

Hydrology

- Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Restore hydrological conditions to approximately 5,000 acres.
- Monitor and evaluate the impacts of the historic cattle dipping operations at Paynes Prairie.

Natural Communities

- Maintain 6800 acres within the optimum fire return interval.
- Conduct natural community restoration activities on 135 acres for large areas of abandoned pasture and successional hardwood hammock.
- Conduct natural community improvement activities on 30 acres of the scrubby flatwoods community.
- Conduct natural community improvement activities on 100 acres of the mesic and wet flatwoods communities.

Imperiled Species

- Update baseline imperiled species occurrence list.
- Monitor and document 4 selected imperiled animal species (Gopher tortoise, Whooping crane, Snail kite, and other imperiled bird species).
- Monitor and document 5 selected imperiled plant species (Silver buckthorn, Godfrey's swampprivet, Hooded pitcherplant, Mexican tearthumb, and Catesby's lily).

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Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually treat 600 acres of invasive plant species.
- Survey 4800 acres of Paynes Prairie for invasive plant populations annually.
- Develop and implement measures to prevent the accidental introduction or further spread of invasive plants in the park.
- Continue control measures on 3 nuisance or invasive animal species. Remove a minimum of 250 feral hogs per year.

Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 140 of 140 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Bring 9 of 139 recorded cultural resources into good condition (Camp Ranch Bunkhouse 2 - Building #6 (AL05560), Camp Ranch Bunkhouse - Building #1 (AL05555), Wauberg Livery - Building #13 (AL05564), Wauberg Barn - Building #10 (AL05562), Hickory Ranch Hay Barn - Building #47 (AL05572), Camp Ranch Barn (AL05561), Hickory Ranch Corn Crib - Building #49 (AL05573), Bison Pen Windmill (AL05569), and Paynes Town (AL00366)).

Land Use Component Objectives

Conceptual Land Use

Parkwide

- Repair and resurface park roads.
- Conduct park boundary survey.
- Install boundary fencing where needed.

Puc Puggy Campground

- Repair the bathhouses.
- Improve flood prone tent sites using permeable materials and implementing stabilization measures.
- Enlarge up to four RV sites and widen road aprons.
- Improve wayfinding signage to each campsite.
- Improve site delineation with vegetative buffers.

Lake Wauberg South Use Area

- Repair boat ramp with durable materials.
- Install floating dock.
- Improve amphitheater structure.

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Lake Wauberg North Use Area

- Upgrade and repair restroom.
- Develop a semi-primitive group camp.
- Provide parking.

Chacala Trailhead

- Formalize parking area and access road.
- Provide equestrian facilities.
- Consider providing more equestrian trails.
- Consider installing two pavilions.

Visitor Center Area

- Conduct a structural assessment of the Visitor Center.
- Provide any repairs needed.
- Update, repair, or replace interpretive exhibits.
- Conduct a structural assessment of the observation tower.
- Relocate the drain field away from the basin.

Hickory Ranch Support Area

- Install a pole barn.
- Construct an additional park residence if a residence is not added at Bolen Bluff

La Chua Trail

- Conduct a structural assessment for Camp Ranch Barn.
- Improve appearance of Camp Ranch Barn.
- Construct a permanent restroom and connect to municipal sewage system.
- Remove observation platform at the end of the La Chua Trail.
- Collaborate with Friends of Paynes Prairie to extend the La Chua Trail boardwalk.

District 2 Office

- Provision for relocating the district office.

Prairie Creek

- Prevent use of paddling launch.
- Provide convenient parking for the bridge across Prairie Creek.

McKenzie Property

- Conduct assessments of the historic structures.
- Renovate the existing house to serve as a staff residence.
- Provide up to four volunteer sites.
- Provide necessary AmeriCorps support structures.

Bolen Bluff

- Construct a residence here if the McKenzie property house is not renovated to for this purpose.

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Optimum Boundary

Many parcels surrounding the park's boundary, approximately 4,760 acres in total, have been identified for acquisition to provide valuable watershed protection for the basin and continue vital wildlife corridors to nearby water bodies and bordering conservation lands. Preserving these large tracts of land will also provide a critical buffer from the extensive development surrounding the park like U.S. Highway 441, Interstate 75, and a copious number of residential communities. To the east, a Florida Forever Board of Trustees Project for the Strategic Managed Area Lands List is also proposed for acquisition to protect numerous rare and endangered species and high-quality surface waters.