

Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park

Planning Region: Atlantic Coast

County: Duval

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 4074

Overview

Encompassing one of the largest contiguous conservation areas in Jacksonville, the park provides habitat for native wildlife and watershed protection for the region's important estuarine resources. The property provides opportunities for paddling, fishing, hiking, biking, equestrian, and nature appreciation, essential resource-based recreational needs in the greater Jacksonville metropolitan area.

Total Acreage: 4,318.13 acres

Natural Communities	Acres
Alluvial Forest	75.24
Bottomland Forest	18.85
Baygall	11.96
Basin Swamp	212.68
Blackwater Stream	4.84
Coastal Dune Lake	3.61
Coastal Strand	6.38
Depression Marsh	49.33
Dome Swamp	16.19
Estuarine Unconsolidated Substrate	4.27
Flatwoods/Prairie Lake	4.94
Floodplain Swamp	163.00
Hydric Hammock	193.37
Maritime Hammock	17.40
Mesic Flatwoods	1876.02
Salt Marsh	18.01
Scrubby Flatwoods	464.10
Sandhill	201.66
Shell Mound	2.35
Wet Flatwoods	609.23

Altered Landcovers	Acres
Artificial Pond	0.05
Canal/ditch	1.11
Clearing/Regeneration	0.69
Developed	4.89
Pine Plantation	66.33
Successional Hardwood Forest	50.62

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Acquisition: The first 2,655.09 acres of what is now Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park was initially acquired by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) and the St Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) on August 31, 1994. Since this initial acquisition, the Trustees and the SJRWMD have jointly acquired additional parcels. The most recent acquisition of 241 acres on Black Hammock Island was acquired by the Trustees on December 27, 2022 as amendment 4 to Lease Number 4074 which is a 50 year lease. The current lease will expire on June 28, 2045.

Resource Management Component Objectives

Hydrology

- Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Restore natural hydrological conditions and functions to approximately 2 acres of blackwater creek natural community via installation of low water crossings and mitigation of past alterations such as ditches.
- Evaluate and mitigate the impacts of soil erosion in the preserve via road stabilization, native groundcover restoration, and reforestation.

Natural Communities

- Within 10 years, have 2,268 acres of the park maintained within the optimum fire return interval.
- Conduct habitat/natural community restoration activities on 51 acres of successional hardwood forest. This will include removal of off-site hardwoods and reintroduction of native groundcover and overstory pines.
- Conduct habitat/natural community restoration activities on 66.4 acres of pine plantation via timber thinning and understory fuels management.
- Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on 1,775 acres of sandhill, mesic flatwoods, scrubby flatwoods, and wet flatwoods to prepare zones for the safe application of prescribed fire.
- Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on 26 acres of depression marsh and basin swamp.

Imperiled Species

- Develop/Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals.
- Monitor and document 7 selected imperiled animal species in the park (wood stork, striped newt, gopher tortoise, eastern indigo snake, pine snake, Macgillivray's seaside sparrow, and Worthington's marsh wren).
- Monitor and document 4 selected imperiled plant species in the park (pond spice, blue butterwort, hooded pitcherplant and rosebud orchid).

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Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually treat 20 gross acres or 1.7 infested acres of invasive plant species in the park.
- Implement control measures to remove sounders of invasive feral hogs in the park annually.

Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 11 of 11 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Bring 3 of 11 recorded cultural resources into good condition (Cedar Point Road (DU00079), Hog Plumb (DU00095), and Abandoned Picnic (DU11297)).

Land Use Component Objectives

Conceptual Land Use

Support Area

- Remove underutilized buildings.
- Construct a four-bay pole barn.
- Re-purpose former park office as a residence or consider new construction.

Park Entrance/Main Trailhead

- Construct a permanent restroom facility.
- Construct up to two picnic shelters.

Paddling Launch

- Grade and stabilize entrance loop.
- Resurface the tidally inundated portion of the kayak launch with oyster shell.
- Resurface kayak launch and approach path.

Parkwide

- Install low water crossings.
- Install fire line along the north boundary of the Black Hammock Island tract.
- Improve wayfinding along trail system.
- Install interpretive panels at appropriate locations.
- Secure park boundaries and access points.

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Optimum Boundary

Most of the undeveloped land surrounding the preserve is identified as optimum boundary. Acquisition of these areas would help protect one of the larger conservation lands left in Duval County and enhance the park's role as a natural buffer area for the Nassau and St. Johns Rivers and associated salt marshes. The main objectives of the recommended additions are to preserve water quality and hydrological function, establish access points which facilitate public resource based recreational use, facilitate the safe use of prescribed fire and wildfire safety, provide connectivity to adjacent conservation lands for wildlife corridors and development of a regional trail system, protection of archaeological sites, preserve and restore rare and threatened habitat types, and acquire outparcels to establish connectivity within the preserve boundaries.