

# Forked Bluecurls Nature Trail



## 1 Parking Lot Pretties

As you step out of your car, be sure to stop and enjoy the flowers found along the parking lot edges. Bright forked bluecurls, delicate wireweed, and showy yellow milkwort are just a few of the flowers found at Delaware Scrub. Colorful flowers can be seen all year long, but peak blooming season is between April and November.



## 2 A Walk Through the Woods

It is not hard to find a South Florida slash pine in a flatwoods community. Just look up, way up! Prized for their high-quality lumber, these trees can reach heights of 100 feet or more. Other plants found in this habitat are saw palmetto, gallberry, shiny blueberry, and narrowleaf silkgrass. Animals found living among the pines and palmettos include the green anole, red-bellied woodpecker, and raccoon. Some of the smallest residents of the woods are insects. Butterflies and dragonflies soar through the air while cicadas sing from the tree tops. This area is also prime hunting grounds for the praying mantis. This insect uses its barbed front legs to snatch prey out of the air in the blink of an eye.



## 3 Swamp Stomp

Say the word "swamp" and most people think of a very wet area filled with mosquitoes. The cypress swamp of Delaware Scrub is so much more than that! Dominated by pond-cypress trees, this natural community contains standing water 200 to 300 days per year. Depending on the season, pond-cypress can either be covered with bright green needles or bare-limbed. They are one of the few native Florida trees that shed their leaves during the dry winter months. The pond-cypress trunk is enlarged at the base. This gives the tree support in the unstable mud. A check of the pond-cypress branches might reveal a bright red flower atop a long stalk. This is the bloom of a giant wild pine - an epiphyte (air plant). These plants obtain moisture and nutrients from rainwater. They are not parasitic - they use the pond-cypress only as support. Many of Florida's native air plants are in decline due to the introduction of the Mexican bromeliad weevil. This insect lays eggs in the base of the air plant and the young eat their way out, effectively killing the host.



## 4 A Seat Under the Trees

A bench in the woods is the perfect place to reflect and soak up the essence of Delaware Scrub. You can hear the cypress trees creak and groan as the wind pushes through their branches. You can follow the flitting of warblers as they hunt for insects. You can smell the earthiness of the swamp mud as dead vegetation is turned into nutrients for new life. Take the time to get to know nature!



## 5 A Desert in Florida?

You have only walked a short distance, but big changes have occurred in the landscape. There are no lush ferns covering the ground or lily pads floating in pools of standing water. In fact, the soil is dry and sandy - almost desert-like. You have entered the Florida scrub, a very rare community in Palm Beach County. Scrub is found on sand ridges along former shorelines. The well-drained, nutrient-poor soil makes it a tough place for plants to thrive. Sand pine, saw palmetto, gopher apple, and large-flowered rosemary are a few of the plants that thrive in scrub habitat. Much of the scrub lands of Palm Beach County are lost to development, making the preservation of Delaware Scrub that much more important.



Gopher Tortoise

## 6 Amazing Animals

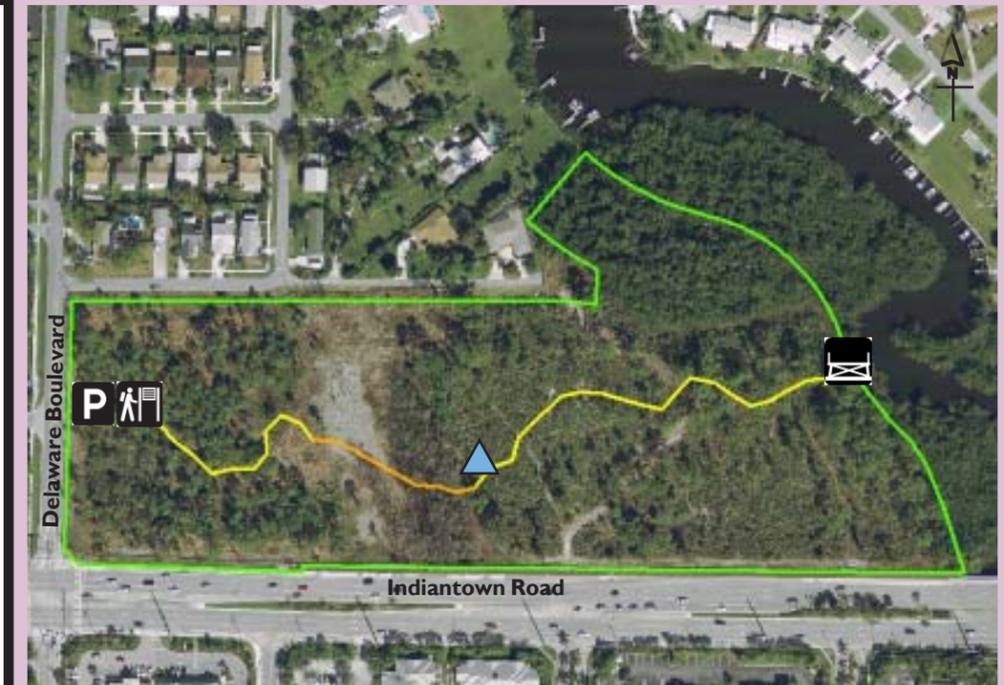
The Delaware Scrub Natural Area is an island of wilderness amid the hustle and bustle of the Town of Jupiter. Animals of all shapes and sizes can be found on the ground and in the air within the natural area. The gopher tortoise is the excavator of the scrub. These reptiles use their powerful front legs to dig burrows up to 30 feet long. Many animals make use of these underground tunnels to escape the summer heat or hungry predators. A much smaller resident is the green lynx spider. These bright leaf-green spiders are often seen sitting on tall grasses and flowerheads. The green lynx spider does not spin a web. It is a hunting spider that actively seeks its prey. One of the more colorful creatures of the woods is the pileated woodpecker. At 18 inches in length, the pileated is Florida's largest woodpecker. The pointed, red crest, thick bill, and black eye stripe make it easy to identify this bird. Females and males look very much alike. Pileated woodpeckers dig out nest holes in living or dead tree trunks. Their call is a rapid irregular series of *cuk* and *wucka* notes.



Green Lynx Spider

Pileated Woodpecker

# Delaware Scrub Trail System



- Parking
- Information
- Bench
- Observation Platform

- Natural Area Boundary
  - Forked Bluecurls Nature Trail 0.35 mile
  - Cypress Swamp Boardwalk
- 0 0.20 0.4 Miles



## 7 The Life and Death of a Tree

A stately slash pine in its prime offers food and shelter to countless animals - insects, spiders, reptiles, birds and mammals. A dead slash pine is just as valuable for the same reasons - it offers food and shelter to countless animals. Many of the snags found in Delaware Scrub are the handiwork of the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes. Many of the mature pines could not withstand the winds and eventually died. Most snags are left in place unless they present a hazard to visitors or structures.



## 8 The Magic of Mangroves

Tidal swamps are characterized as dense, low forests growing along relatively flat, low-energy shorelines. The most common tree found along the water's edge is the red mangrove. Easy to identify with its interlacing prop roots, these trees thrive in salty, watery environments. Tidal swamps are extremely valuable as nursery grounds for most of the commercially important fish and shellfish species. West Indian manatees, great blue herons, and fiddler crabs are just a few of the animals found here.

# Delaware Scrub Natural Area Photo Album

Mammals	Reptiles	Birds	Insects and Arachnids	Plants
 Gray fox	 Racer	 Wood Duck	 Atala	 Feay's Palatfox
 Eastern Gray Squirrel	 Green Anole	 Great Egret	 Gulf Fritillary	 Large-flowered Rosemary
 Raccoon	 Six-lined Racerunner	 Turkey Vulture	 Halloween Pennant	 Myrtle Oak
 West Indian Manatee	 Gopher Tortoise	 Osprey	 Spinybacked Orbweaver	 Lindenleaf Rosemallow
			 American Pokeweed	 Coastalplain Staggerbush
			 Pricklypear	

## Delaware Scrub Natural Area Trail Guide



A Florida Communities Trust  
Florida Forever Project

## Preserving Palm Beach County's Good Nature

Welcome to one of Palm Beach County's natural treasures! The Delaware Scrub Natural Area preserves and protects pine flatwoods, cypress swamp, scrub, and tidal swamp habitats. The upland areas contain slash pine, sand pine, gallberry, and saw palmetto. The wetter areas contain pond cypress, pond apple, and redroot. Red mangrove trees are found along the tidal swamp shoreline.

Delaware Scrub was identified as environmentally sensitive land worthy of preservation as part of the County's 1999 Bond Referendum for Land Acquisition for Conservation Purposes. In 2004, the Town of Jupiter passed its own \$17 million land acquisition bond referendum and created its Jupiter Open Space Program. The Town of Jupiter and Palm Beach County signed an interlocal agreement for the joint acquisition and management of Delaware Scrub and acquired the site in May 2005. State Florida Forever matching funds in the amount of \$1,760,775 were provided by Florida Communities Trust for the acquisition of the site.

The 16-acre Delaware Scrub is part of a system of natural areas, protected to maintain the diversity of biological communities and species in Palm Beach County. The natural areas are open to the public for educational use and passive recreational activities such as hiking, nature photography, and bird watching.



**The Delaware Scrub Natural Area is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. One of the more colorful plants found in the natural area is blazing star. These easy-to-identify plants produce showy elongated clusters of bell-shaped, rose-purple flowers. The flowers bloom from June through November. They are found in pinehills, dry open woods, sandhills, and along roadsides.**

## Rules and Regulations

### Prohibited on the Site:

- Smoking
- Hunting
- Feeding wildlife
- Alcoholic beverages
- Discharging firearms
- Pets or domestic animals
- Bicycles or motor vehicles
- Collecting plants or animals

The natural area is open from sunrise to sunset, seven days a week, including holidays.

There are no toilets or drinking water at this site.

**In an emergency, call 911 or the Town of Jupiter Police Department at 561-746-6201.**



This natural area is located within the Northeast Everglades Natural Area (NEMA). NEMA stretches from Southern Boulevard in Palm Beach County northward to Bridge Road in Martin County and from Lake Okeechobee to the Atlantic Ocean. NEMA contains approximately 165,000 acres of conservation lands that provide a wide range of nature-based outdoor recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. For more information about NEMA, visit [www.pbcgov.com/ern/nema](http://www.pbcgov.com/ern/nema).



Connect with the Department of Environmental Resources Management and download our natural areas mobile map.



In accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, this brochure may be requested in an alternate format.

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