



Raccoon



Eastern Cottontail



North American River Otter



Gray fox



Green Anole



Eastern Box Turtle



Racer



Six-lined Racerunner



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Immature)



Osprey



Eastern Screech-Owl



Pileated Woodpecker



Queen



Cicada



Halloween Pennant



Gulf Fritillary



Florida Rosemary



Hog Plum



Grant Wild Pine



East Coast Dune Sunflower



Netted Pawpaw



Sand Pine



Mammals

Reptiles

Birds

Insects

Plants

Jupiter Ridge Natural Area Photo Album

Welcome to one of Palm Beach County's natural treasures! Jupiter Ridge Natural Area preserves and protects Florida scrub habitat - one of Florida's most endangered natural communities. Scrub is found in small pockets along ridges in the middle of the state, as well as along the coastline. Scrub communities formed on old dunes, which became inland ridges as the sea level fell. Because lands with scrub vegetation are typically high and dry, they were the first areas to be developed. It is estimated that less than 2% of Palm Beach County's original scrub remains.

Jupiter Ridge Natural Area remained in a relatively natural state until the 1930s, when spoil from the dredging of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway was pumped onto the site, eliminating most of the freshwater wetlands. In 1950 a wildfire burned most of the natural area. By the late 1980s, efforts were under way to protect this property. By June 1993, Palm Beach County completed the purchase of Jupiter Ridge at a cost of \$23 million. The State of Florida provided more than \$11 million in Preservation 2000 matching funds for the acquisition of this site.

This 270-acre natural area 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 Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway flows along the western boundary of Jupiter Ridge Natural Area. Sandy shorelines, such as Ski Beach pictured here, form where the land meets the water. Red mangroves are the dominant plant species here. Other plants found here include coco plum, bushy seaside oxeye, and coinvine.

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 is no drinking water at this site.

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



Palm Beach County
 Board of County Commissioners

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

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Jupiter Ridge Natural Area Trail Guide

A Conservation and Recreation Lands Preservation 2000 Project

Little Blue Heron Nature Trail

This 1,020-foot accessible nature trail connects the parking lot to an observation platform overlooking the tidal swamp channels of Old Lake Worth Creek.



1 Entryway to the Scrub

The natural areas protect historic native ecosystems and their biological diversity. They are also open to the public for passive recreation. How do we solve the problem of saving the land while providing facilities for public use? We carefully design the parking lots and trails so that they have only minimal impact on the native ecosystems. The Jupiter Ridge Natural Area parking lot is located on a portion of the site that was a construction staging area for the adjacent Bluffs development.



Above: depression marsh during the wet season
Below: coastalplain willow; little blue heron



2 Wetland Wonderland

What's a wetland doing in the middle of a desert-like scrub? This depression marsh formed when sand slumped around or over a sinkhole and created a conical depression. Water collects in the marsh during the summer and fall rainy season and gradually dries out during the winter. The marsh is filled by direct rainfall, runoff, and seepage from surrounding uplands. Typical plants found here include chain ferns, willows, and spikerushes. Depression marshes are extremely important for wildlife as feeding and breeding habitat. Mottled ducks, egrets, and herons are frequent visitors to the marsh. The marsh is also home to some of the site's smaller creatures - dragonflies.



From left to right: narrowleaf silkgrass, pricklypear, Feay's palaflox



Above: ballmoss
Below: powder-puff lichen



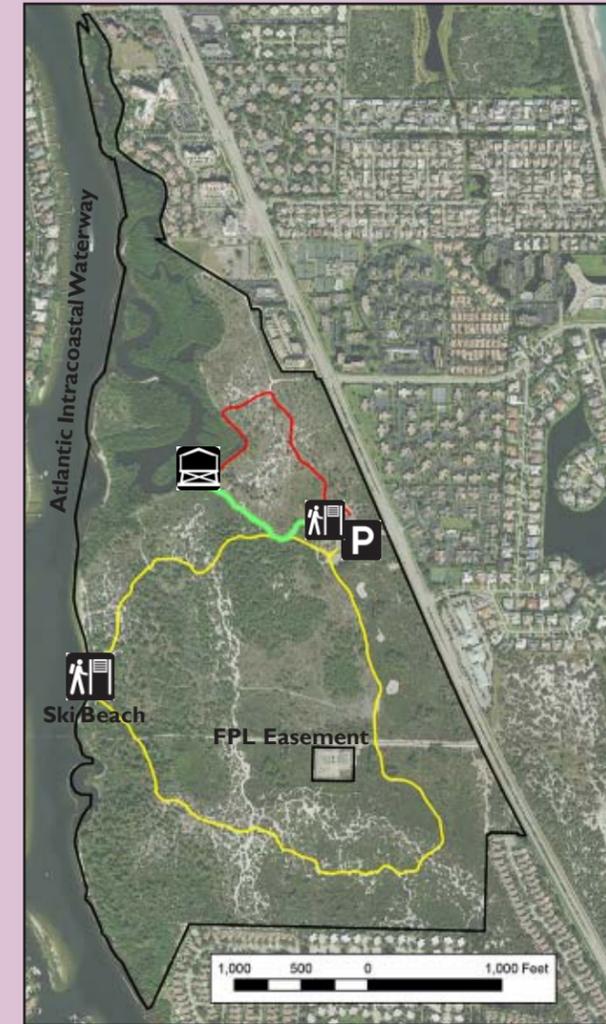
4 A Fragile and Colorful World

In the past, off-road vehicle traffic and logging, hunting, and trash dumping activities created a network of trails throughout the site. Although these activities are no longer allowed, they have left a lasting impression on the fragile scrub. Scrub plants live in a harsh environment. They grow slowly compared to plants found in wetter areas. When scrub is disturbed, it takes many years for the damage to be healed. Some of the first plants that may colonize a disturbed area are the scrub wildflowers. The white blooms of Feay's palaflox, along with the gold blossoms of narrowleaf silkgrass, can be found along the nature trail year-round. The show-stopper of the scrub is the pricklypear. Its three-inch flowers bloom in the spring and summer and attract squadrons of flying insects.

5 Airplants and Lichens

From the strange but true file: some plants can grow without soil and some plants form partnerships with other living organisms. The Jupiter Ridge Natural Area is home to both types of unique plants. Airplants, such as the ballmoss, are found on the limbs of scrub oak trees. Although they appear to be parasitic, they only use trees as a place to grow. They obtain water and nutrients from rainwater runoff. Other airplants found here include the giant wild pine and Spanish moss. The powder-puff lichen is a puffy-looking, grayish-green groundcover. A lichen is actually two organisms (an alga and a fungus) working together to survive. The alga produces food and the fungus provides shelter. Lichens are very sensitive to air quality and rarely survive in polluted areas. They are often found on trees or patches on the ground.

Jupiter Ridge Trail System



- Parking
- Information
- Observation Platform
- Natural Area Boundary
- Nature Trail 0.2 miles (one way)
- South Hiking Trail 1.7 miles
- North Hiking Trail 0.6 miles

Jupiter Ridge Natural Area is located on the west side of U.S. Highway 1, one mile south of Indiantown Road, in the Town of Jupiter. This 270-acre natural area is one of the best remaining examples of the Florida scrub ecosystem in Palm Beach County. Small areas of scrubby flatwoods, tidal swamp and depression marsh communities also are present. Public-use facilities include a parking lot, bicycle rack, informational kiosk, accessible nature trail with an observation platform, hiking trails, and a portable toilet. There is no drinking water available on the site.

Please use the designated nature and hiking trails as you explore the natural area. Do not feed the animals. When wild animals become dependent on handouts, they may lose their natural fear of humans and become aggressive and dangerous. Please dispose of your trash responsibly.

3 The Spark of Life

Some residents of Palm Beach County, including the gopher tortoise, Florida scrub-jay, and sand pine, depend on fire for their very existence. Periodic fires reduce hardwood competition, improve wildlife habitat, and remove excess underbrush and dead vegetation. The seeds of some species may remain in the soil for years until a fire triggers their germination. Plants such as gallberry and saw palmetto burn quickly and intensely, but their roots remain alive. Days after a fire, fresh green shoots make an appearance in the charred landscape. The natural area is divided into management units, which are prescribed burned periodically to maintain the community and to reduce the possibility of destructive wildfires.



6 Protecting the Rarest Plants and Animals

Thirty-one plant species and fourteen animal species recorded at the natural area are considered to be threatened, rare, or a species of special concern in Florida. The large-flowered rosemary is a member of the mint family. Its delicate, pale lavender flowers bloom year-round. The gopher tortoise is threatened by loss of habitat due to Florida's booming growth and development. The gopher tortoise uses its strong front legs to dig a burrow up to 30 feet long. The Florida scrub-jay feeds on insects and acorns. This bird forms extended family groups - the young from the previous year's clutch help raise the newly-hatched chicks.



Large-flowered rosemary



Gopher tortoise



Florida scrub-jay

7 At Home in the Swamp

Tidal swamps are characterized as dense, low forests growing along relatively flat shorelines. They are extremely valuable as nursery grounds for most of the commercially important fish and shellfish species. Other animals found here include the endangered West Indian manatee, raccoon, and many species of wading birds. Tidal swamps in South Florida typically contain four tree species: red mangrove, black mangrove, white mangrove and buttonwood. This area was once covered with the nonnative invasive Australian pine. After the pines were removed, Department staff and local volunteers planted native red mangroves and buttonwoods.



From top to bottom: red mangrove, great blue heron, West Indian manatee