

# Pine Glades Natural Area

## Birds of a Feather

Where there are wetlands, there are wading birds. Florida is home to more large wading birds than any other state - nearly 20 species. The great egret is a tall (3-1/2 foot) white bird with a yellow bill and black legs. During the breeding season these birds have long, lacy, white plumes on their backs. The endangered wood stork wades slowly in shallow waters, groping for fish, frogs, snakes, and baby alligators. Its grayish bare head and neck distinguish the wood stork from fellow wading birds. The Florida sandhill crane is not strictly a wetland bird. It also roams open woods and pastures looking for seeds, tubers, and insects. This bird can often be heard before it is seen. Their loud rattling *kar-rr-r-o-o-o* calls ring out across Pine Glades Natural Area.



## All Creatures Great and Small

The Pine Glades Natural Area is home to animals of all shapes and sizes. The greatest of them all is the American alligator. Males can grow to 12 feet long and tip the scales at 800 pounds! They feed on fish, turtles, and birds. Females lay between 20 and 80 eggs in nests made of mounded vegetation. One of the smallest creatures found in the natural area is the great pondhawk. This bright green dragonfly is only two inches long. Its four powerful wings move independently, allowing for forward and backward flight. Young dragonflies live in ponds and streams and feed on mosquito larvae, tadpoles, and small fish. Wild turkey are often seen moving through the slash pine and saw palmetto-filled woodlands. Unlike domesticated turkeys, these birds are very mobile - they can run up to 25 mph and fly up to 55 mph. Males are bigger and more colorful than the females. They also have a black "beard" that hangs from their chest. Wild turkeys feed on the ground during the day and roost in trees at night.



## The Benefits of Fire

Pine flatwoods cover more than 30% of Pine Glades. Dominated by slash pines, they are fire-dependent habitats. Periodic fires reduce hardwood competition, improve wildlife habitat, and remove dead vegetation. The Department utilizes prescribed burns to maintain a healthy forest ecosystem. Staff use drip torches to light fires that are carefully monitored to prevent the flames from spreading outside the burn area. Plants such as gallberry and saw palmetto burn quickly and intensely, but their roots remain alive. Days after a fire, fresh green shoots appear in the charred landscape. Look for black burn scars on tree trunks - signs that a fire swept through the area.



Indiantown Road

Public use facilities for the western portion of Pine Glades Natural Area are planned under a future phase of development.

- Flagfish Loop Trail - 0.8 miles
- Wiregrass Loop Trail - 4.4 miles
- Quail Trail - 1.5 miles
- Old Wire Trail - 0.6 miles
- Natural Area Boundary

- Parking
- Information Kiosk
- Kayak / Canoe Launch

- Covered Observation Platform
- Fishing Pier
- Restroom

## Restoring the Wetlands

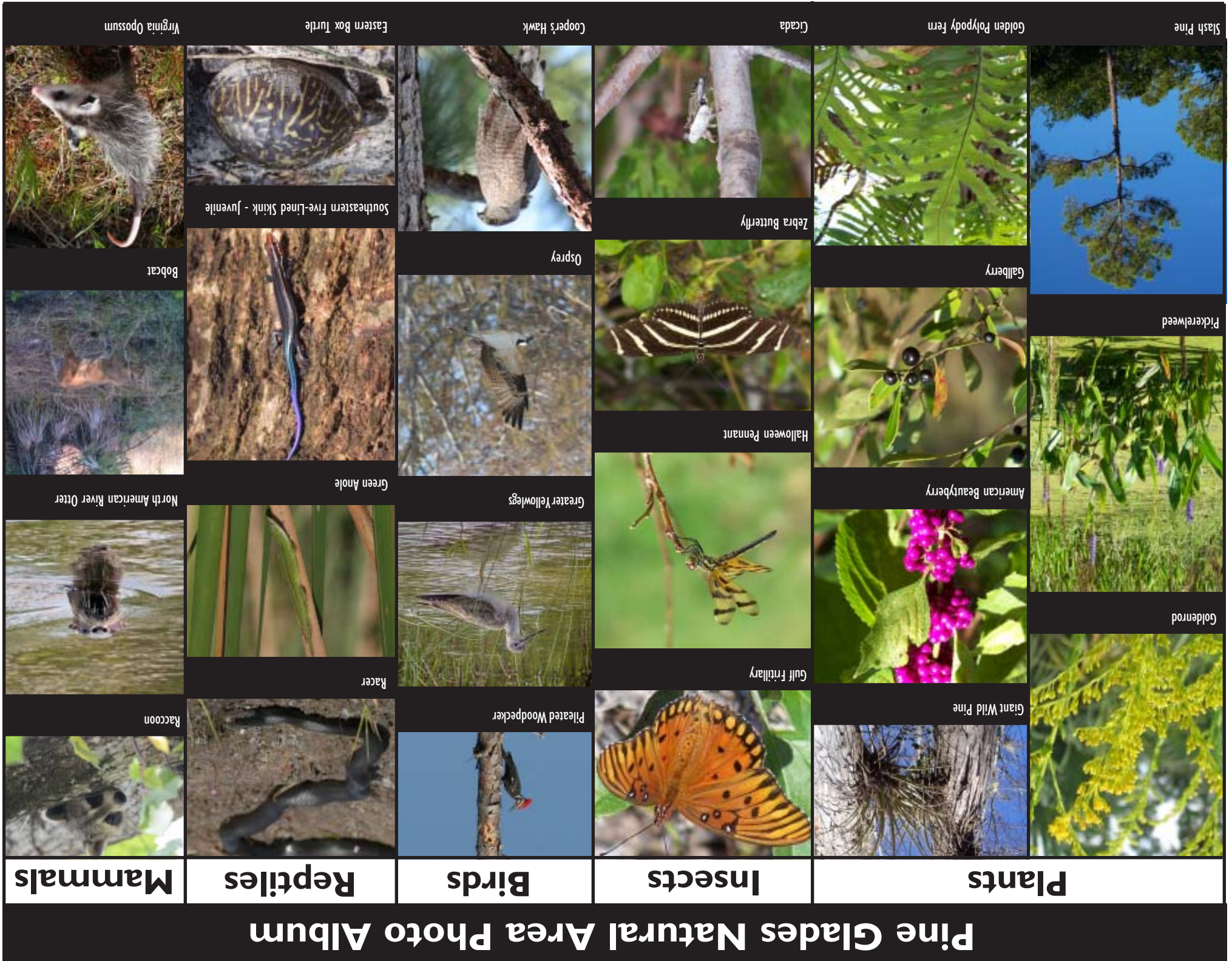
Restoration work at Pine Glades Natural Area focused on removing invasive nonnative vegetation and improving hydrology to 1,280 acres heavily impacted by agriculture and drainage activities. Restoration activities were conducted during the dry season in winter and spring. Through 2013, restoration activities include:

- ❖ Removed 576 acres of melaleuca, a nonnative invasive tree.
- ❖ Installed a 36-inch culvert to divert water away from the project area.
- ❖ Removed over 3 miles of berms and 1.5 miles of asphalt roads.
- ❖ Installed 3 miles of seepage barrier to restore the natural hydrological cycle.
- ❖ Minor grading to maximize restoration potential.
- ❖ Created 35 acres of wetlands and 40 acres of uplands.
- ❖ Conducted prescribed burns in 2009, 2010 and 2012 to reduce invasive nonnative vegetation and stimulate native vegetation to seed itself.

The three photos at right show the dramatic improvement to a section of Pine Glades Natural Area from pre-restoration to post-restoration. The top photo shows an area overrun with melaleuca. The middle photo shows the same area, now melaleuca-free. The bottom photo was taken after all restoration work was completed.







**Preserving Palm Beach County's Good Nature**

Welcome to one of Palm Beach County's natural treasures! The Pine Glades Natural Area protects environmentally sensitive pine forest and wetland habitat. The natural area also provides recreational opportunities for residents and visitors who want to explore the good nature of Palm Beach County.

This 6,651-acre natural area is part of a system of natural conservation areas that are 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 Pine Glades Natural Area is located within the Northeast Everglades Natural Area (NENA). NENA stretches from Southern Boulevard in Palm Beach County northward to Bridge Road in Martin County and from Lake Okeechobee to the Atlantic Ocean. NENA 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 NENA, visit [www.pbcgov.com/erm/nena](http://www.pbcgov.com/erm/nena).**



**The Pine Glades Natural Area is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. One of the many birds found among the slash pines is the great horned owl. This large bird of prey can reach a length of two feet and have a 4 1/2 foot wingspan. Owls fly silently; the leading edge of their wing feathers are fringed. This breaks down turbulence and reduces the sound of the air rushing over the wing surface. Great horned owls do make some noise - listen for 3 to 8 deep hoots, with the 2nd and 3rd rapid and doubled.**

**Rules and Regulations**

Prohibited on the Site:

- Pets
- Smoking
- Hunting
- Feeding wildlife
- Alcoholic beverages
- Discharging firearms
- Collecting plants or animals
- Motor vehicles and bicycles

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

There is no drinking water at this site. Portable toilets are present in parking area.

**In an emergency, call 911. For non-emergency issues contact the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office at 561-688-3000.**



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



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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