

STATE FOREST SPOTLIGHT

Salt Marsh Lands

The undisturbed salt marsh lands that border the east side of the forest are a unique feature on Matanzas State Forest. The estuarine tidal marsh and maritime hammock along the entire Intracoastal Waterway perimeter are particularly notable for their ecological, archaeological and natural beauty.

A portion of this area has been designated as an Important Birding Area. Matanzas State Forest is also included in the Eastern Region of the Great Florida Birding Trail. Matanzas State Forest has been an important nesting area for wood storks. Along the salt marsh is an excellent place to see a wide variety of wading birds, gulls, terns and shorebirds.

Love the state forests? So do we!

The Friends of Florida State Forests is a direct-support organization of the Florida Forest Service dedicated to ensuring Florida's state forests are available for future generations to enjoy. Make a difference by joining today to help protect Florida's forests.

Membership dues go to the forests for conservation and improvement projects. To join Friends or for more information, visit:

www.FloridaStateForests.org



Things to Know When Visiting Matanzas State Forest

- Drive on designated roads only.
- Unlicensed vehicles, unlicensed motorcycles and ATVs are not allowed on the forest.
- Horses and bicycles are allowed only on named or numbered roads, firelines and designated trails.
- Do not make new roads or trails.
- Take all garbage with you when you leave the forest.
- Plants and animals are protected. Do not remove or destroy these natural resources.
- Primitive camping is available at the Cedar Creek Campground and Matanzas Group Camp. Authorization is required for camping. Campsites can be reserved through Reserve America online at FloridaStateForests.ReserveAmerica.com or by calling (877) 879-3859 or (800) 373-3851 (TDD).
- We encourage all visitors to check the Wildlife Management Area regulations and hunting season dates before visiting the forest. For further information visit: www.MyFWC.com.

For more information, visit:

www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests

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Florida Forest Service

Matanzas State Forest



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Commissioner Wilton Simpson

History

Matanzas State Forest is rich in archaeological significance. There is evidence of numerous Native American settlements, as well as remains of more recent activity, such as naval stores operations and turpentine camps. The Florida Forest Service began managing this parcel in 2003 when Matanzas State Forest was created from the Matanzas Marsh Northeast Florida Blueway Florida Forever project. The forest protects the last remaining undisturbed salt marsh within the Guana-Tolomato-Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Currently comprising 4,699 acres, the initial acquisition was completed in 2003. Since then, additional parcels have been acquired, including a 20 acre linkage to Moses Creek Conservation Area. Matanzas State Forest is owned by the State of Florida and managed by the Florida Forest Service in cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and St. Johns River Water Management District.

Forestry

The Florida Forest Service manages for multiple uses of forest resources which include sustainable timber and ecosystem management, wildlife management, natural resource based recreation and watershed management. Prescribed fire is used on the forest to promote forest health, reduce peat accumulation in ponds, and create openings to promote natural pine regeneration. Prescribed fire is a management tool that allows managers to mimic the historical fire regime in a controlled fashion. Based on assessment of the historical natural communities of Matanzas State Forest, 60 percent of the forest acreage is made up of ecosystems maintained by frequent fire. The absence of prescribed fire can lead to catastrophic wildfires and eventually cause the alteration or loss of native plant and animal communities.

Timber thinning is also conducted to manage pine plantations for optimum forest health and maintain proper timber densities for sustainable regeneration over the long-term.



Saltmarsh Land



Gopher Tortoise



Bird Watchers

For more information contact:
Matanzas State Forest
6840 US 1 South
St. Augustine, FL 32086
www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests

Natural Resources

Matanzas State Forest is part of a 16,000-acre continuous conservation corridor beginning in the north with Moses Creek managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District, and continuing south through the Forest into Faver-Dykes State Park, Pellicer Creek Conservation Area and Flagler County's Princess Place Preserve.

Matanzas Marsh was deemed an Important Birding Area by the Audubon Society. In addition to many song birds and wading marsh birds, bald eagles, deer, otter, turkey, hogs, and gopher tortoises inhabit the forest. Most of the forest area is dominated by pine flatwoods with the remainder being basin swamp, tidal marsh, maritime hammock, cypress domes, depression marsh, wet prairie and mesic hammock.

Planted slash pines dominate the majority of the pine flatwoods, ranging in maturity from young stands established in 2003 to plantations established in the early 1980's.

Recreation

Recreational features include roads for horseback riding, hiking, and bicycling. The forest has abundant wildlife and diverse ecosystems for nature study, viewing, and photography. Facilities include camping areas, equestrian access and parking, and regulated hunting and fishing. The 3.5-mile Flatwoods Loop Trail is comprised of three sections. The first two being the Hammock Trail (Yellow), 0.7 miles, and the Cedar Creek Trail (Blue), 0.4 miles. The 2.4-mile Loop (Red) is the third section. The main trailhead is located at the end of Evans Road.

Hunting requires a license and permit, and is allowed only in designated areas during appropriate seasons. For more information on hunting and fishing regulations contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at www.MyFWC.com.