

Hiking Trails

Trails leading from the parking area will take you through and around the three dominant natural communities and seven (7) miles of nature trails.

Many trails offer no shade or shelter, so be prepared for sun, excessive heat, or sudden thunderstorms. Make sure you have plenty of water, snacks, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Trails may have uneven surfaces, so please be cautious and aware of your surroundings to ensure a safe hike. You may encounter an American alligator, feral hog, or a poisonous snake. Please observe all wildlife at a safe distance.

Wildlife Viewing

Pinelands is home to a variety of wildlife and offers plenty of opportunities to view a number of species in their natural state.

Common wildlife observed from the trails and observation tower include; the American Bald Eagle, American Alligator, White-tailed Deer, Barred Owl, Wild Turkey, Wood Stork, Ibis, Sandhill Crane, many other Waders, Quail, butterflies, and several species of snakes, including the Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake and Coral Snake.

Early morning and late evening are the best times to observe wildlife.

Please observe all wildlife at a safe distance.

Natural Communities

Pinelands contains 746 acres of relatively undisturbed natural communities, including Mesic Flatwoods, Wet Flatwoods, Wet Prairie, and Depression Marsh. Pristine areas are located further from the parking area and are well worth the exploration.

Areas around the parking area are remnant tomato fields which are being restored by plant succession back to wet prairie and depression marsh habitat. A trail through these areas is in the planning process.

Preservation

The St. Lucie County Environmental Lands project began in 1994 with the passage of a \$20 million local bond program. The mission of the program is to preserve, protect and restore eco-systems in their natural state while providing compatible public use.

- Natural plant communities are maintained though the use of fire.
- Wetlands are restored to historic levels and coverage.
- Non-native populations of plants and animals are controlled.

Pinelands and other County Environmental Lands are acquired with the assistance of Florida Communities Trust, South Florida Water Management District, Save our Rivers (SOR) and Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL).

St Lucie County is managing 7,355 acres of environmental lands.

Pinelands Preserve



Nature Trail



**St. Lucie County
Environmental Resources
Department**

2300 Virginia Avenue
Ft. Pierce, FL 34982

772-462-2526



http://www.stlucieco.gov/erd/environmental_lands.htm

Gates Open: Sunrise to Sunset (11/11)

Pinelands contains 746 acres of relatively undisturbed natural communities, including Mesic Flatwoods, Wet Flatwoods, Wet Prairie, and Depression Marsh.

The parking area is located at the end of VPI Grove Rd., 17 miles west of Ft. Pierce off of S.R. 70.

VPI Grove Rd. is an intermittent dirt and unimproved private owned road. Please be cautious of pot holes, washouts following rain, soft sand, and agriculture equipment along the roadway. Please be courteous to our neighbors and tread lightly when entering the site.

Guidelines and Safety Information:

- Be cautious of uneven trail surfaces.
- Please remain on the trails.
- Carry adequate drinking water, snacks, & insect repellent
- In case of lightning, seek a low area away from trees, fence lines and tall objects.
- In case of emergency, call 911.
- While hiking the trail you may encounter animals indigenous to this area (including snakes and alligators). Please observe from a safe distance.
- Leave all plant life intact.
- Please leave site cleaner than you found it. "Pack it in, pack it out."
- **Use at own risk.**

To learn more about St. Lucie County's natural heritage, there are more than 20 self-guiding interpretive trails located within the Natural Areas/Preserves. Each trail describes the most common plants, as well as significant geographical and historical features of the site.

