

Seminole Ranch Conservation Area

Courtesy of the St. Johns River Water Management District



Description

This was the first acquisition in Florida funded by the Save Our Rivers program. the property includes 12 miles of the St. Johns River and is part of a large group of publicly owned conservation lands in the area that includes the Little-Big Econ State Forest, the Tosohatchee State Reserve and the St. Johns National Wildlife Refuge. The 29,223-acre property helps to filter nutrients during seasonal flooding; 96 percent of the area is part of the St. Johns River floodplain. The unique plant community is supported by naturally salty water, which flows from small springs near Harney and Puzzle lakes. The salinity of small lakes in the area approaches one-third that of seawater. Many salt-tolerant and marine-dwelling organisms present here are not found anywhere else in the St. Johns River.

Wildlife viewing

Please respect Florida's wildlife and use caution while visiting district lands. These are wild animals. For your safety, do not approach or feed any wild animal. A diversity of migratory and resident wading birds and waterfowl is frequently found at the conservation area. Occasional sightings include white ibis, roseate spoonbills, white pelicans, southern bald eagles and sandhill cranes.

Recreational activities

1. The southwestern 6,000 acres of this conservation area comprise the Seminole Ranch Wildlife Management Area, which is seasonally hunted.
2. Year-round activities include fishing, horseback riding, primitive camping east of the river, hiking (4.3 miles of Florida National Scenic Trail — hikers, please check hunt dates), canoeing, boating, bicycling, wildlife viewing, picnicking and nature study.
3. The trails are seasonally flooded.

Access

Vehicle access from SR 46 along Hatbill Road; from SR 50 to County Road 420 and right onto Wheeler Road. Boat access from SR 50 at Midway Fish Camp, the Orange County public boat ramp on the St. Johns River and from the Hatbill Park boat ramp.