

## **O'Leno State Park and River Rise Preserve State Park**

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**Planning Region:** North Florida Highlands

**County:** Columbia and Alachua

**Lease/Management Agreement Number:** 3638

### **Overview**

Located along the banks of the Santa Fe River, O'Leno State Park has been providing public resource-based recreation since 1940. As one of Florida's nine original state parks, it has a rich Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) history. Popular recreational activities at O'Leno include camping, hiking, and swimming. The group camp is used for family reunions, meetings, and training events. The natural land bridge, created where the Santa Fe River flows underground for several miles from River Sink to River Rise, served as the crossing point for major routes, including the Spanish Mission Trail and the Bellamy Road, the first federally funded highway in Florida.

**Total Acreage:** 3,844.43

<b>O'Leno Natural Communities</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Mesic Flatwoods	293.53
Mesic Hammock	189.61
Sandhill	190.68
Scrubby Flatwoods	183.67
Sinkhole	16.21
Upland Hardwood Forest	221.52
Upland Mixed Woodland	249.35
Upland Pine	151.85
Xeric Hammock	2.57
Alluvial Forest	134.26
Basin Swamp	48.39
Bottomland Forest	157.36
Depression Marsh	12.74
Dome Swamp	3.60
Floodplain Swamp	119.06
Sinkhole Lake	8.68
Swamp Lake	0.59
Blackwater Stream	29.36

  

<b>Altered Landcover</b>	
Developed	60.36
Borrow Area	4.51
Clearing/Regeneration	1.92
Restoration Natural Community	25.36
Spoil Area	0.83
Successional Hardwood Forest	264.56

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<b>River Rise Natural Communities</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Limestone Outcrop	0.98
Mesic Flatwoods	250.93
Sandhill	109.24
Scrubby Flatwoods	72.66
Sinkhole	12.46
Upland Hardwood Forest	857.22
Upland Pine	354.05
Xeric Hammock	40.52
Alluvial Forest	100.95
Basin Swamp	33.08
Bottomland Forest	613.45
Depression Marsh	3.99
Floodplain Swamp	127.01
Sinkhole Lake	3.94
Swamp Lake	4.94
Blackwater Stream	53.00
Terrestrial Cave	0.11
<b>Altered Landcover</b>	
Abandoned Field/Pasture	120.09
Borrow Area	4.12
Canal/ditch	1.37
Developed	5.15
Restoration Natural Community	26.82
Spoil Area	1.85
Successional Hardwood Forest	509.27

**Acquisition:** O'Leno State Park was initially acquired on September 4, 1934 with funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) under the original Lease Number 2324. Currently, the park comprises 2,372.41 acres. River Rise Preserve State Park was initially acquired on September 4, 1974, under O'Leno State Parks existing lease (Number 2324). Currently, the park comprises 3,844.43 acres.

On March 28, 1984 the Trustees amended the term of lease Number 2324 for O'Leno State Park and River Rise Preserve State Park to 50 years. On August 24, 1988 the Trustees assigned O'Leno State Park/River Rise Preserve State Park a new lease number (3638) without changing the conditions of the prior lease (2324). The current lease (Number 3638), which includes both units will expire on March 27, 2034.

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## **O'Leno State Park and River Rise Preserve State Park**

### **Resource Management Component Objectives**

#### **Hydrology**

- Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs by conducting dye trace studies to delineate the River Rise Springshed and determine groundwater sources for springs and aquatic cave systems.
- Restore natural hydrological conditions by assessing erosion and sedimentation of Bible Camp Road into the Santa Fe River and developing/implementing monitoring protocols for semi-annual SAV Assessments.
- Evaluate and mitigate the impacts of soil erosion by investigating best management options for additional mitigation of erosion at public access points in the parks.
- Monitor changes within the aquatic cave system.

#### **Natural Communities**

- Within 10 years, have 2,100 acres of the two parks maintained within the optimum fire return interval.
- Conduct habitat/natural community restoration activities on 227 acres of upland pine and upland mixed woodland communities.
- Conduct habitat/natural community restoration activities on 44 acres of sandhill community.
- Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on 265 acres of upland pine and upland mixed woodland communities.
- Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on 49 acres of sandhill community.
- Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on 15 acres of scrubby flatwoods community.

#### **Imperiled Species**

- Update baseline imperiled species occurrence list by conducting additional surveys.
- Continue existing monitoring protocols for 6 selected imperiled animal species in the two parks (3 imperiled butterfly species, an endangered mussel, southern dusky salamander, and gopher tortoise).
- Monitor and document 3 selected imperiled plant species in the two parks (incised agrimony, modest spleenwort, and plume polyploidy).

#### **Invasive and Nuisance Species**

- Annually treat 6 acres of invasive plant species
- Develop and implement measures to prevent the accidental introduction or further spread of invasive plants in the parks.
- Implement control measures on 3 nuisance and invasive animal species in the parks (feral hogs, stray cats, and dogs).

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### **Cultural Resources**

- Assess and evaluate 159 of 159 recorded cultural resources.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Bring 5 of 159 recorded cultural resources into good condition.

### **Land Use Component Objectives**

#### **Conceptual Land Use**

##### Santa Fe River Day Use Area

- Inspect and renovate suspension bridge
- Provide pavilion alternative(s) at a less flood prone location as necessary.
- Repair and renovate structures in main day use area.

##### Group Cabin Complex

- Add exterior lighting.
- Renovate bathhouses, dining hall, and craft building.

##### Campgrounds – Dogwood & Magnolia

- Upgrade utilities at both campgrounds
- Resurface campground roads.
- Renovate or replace bathhouses as needed.

##### Primitive Group Camp

- Address maintenance of supporting structures/infrastructure as necessary

##### Parkwide Trail System

- Develop a comprehensive park trails panel near the suspension bridge to serve as the gateway to the combined O'Leno and River Rise interconnected trail system.
- Improve interpretive and wayfinding signage along all trails to ensure consistency with the parkwide trail orientation panel.

##### Bible Camp Road and Boat Ramp

- Coordinate improvements of boat ramp and access road with Columbia County

##### Old Bellamy Trailhead

- Improve interpretation to provide for sense of arrival and orientation to the park's trail system.

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### Support Area

- Remove aged and adjunct shop structures and replace with two standard three-bay shop buildings.
- Add up to three pole barns.
- Consolidate volunteer sites within the support area (shop compound)
- Repair Park entrance sign

### River Rise East

- Formalize trailhead with improved delineation of parking and wayfinding.
- Update interpretive kiosk to better orient visitors to the trail system.

### River Rise West

- Develop a full equestrian campground with tent only sites included.
- Add one bathhouse.

### **Optimum Boundary**

Multiple parcels along the south side of Bible Camp Road are identified. These relatively small contiguous parcels total approximately 26 acres. Several of the parcels have active residences, but the majority of the land is undeveloped or forested. Acquisition of this block of parcels would provide continuity of park lands south of Bible Camp Road within the immediate watershed of the Santa Fe River.

Immediately north of Bible Camp Road is a large contiguous block comprised of over 60 parcels of forested or rural lands. This area would expand conservation lands that function as wildlife habitat and protect a significant portion of the Santa Fe River watershed.

Four other parcels are identified at the northwestern corner of the park along US Highway 441/41. These parcels are undeveloped, or in silvicultural use. Acquisition would provide much needed buffering from major roadways near the park entrance road.

A block of 10 contiguous parcels is identified along the western park boundary (south of Old Bellamy Rd and east of SE Brawley Terrace. These largely unoccupied, forested lands would expand the park's conservation boundary, providing increased buffering of sensitive karst windows and associated cave systems.

One parcel is identified farther south, along the park's western boundary (south of SE Happy Valley Glen). This forested parcel would expand wildlife habitat, watershed protection and buffering of the Santa Fe River Rise.

A large optimum boundary block of contiguous parcels is identified at the south end of the park. Acquisition would protect lands along both sides of the Santa Fe River.

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The block of five contiguous parcels located along the park's eastern boundary (west of NW Old Bellamy Road and north of NW 227<sup>th</sup> Drive) would expand protection/buffering of the karst features associated with the natural bridge of the Santa Fe River.

Just north of the lands described in the preceding paragraph, is a block of 10 contiguous parcels. These lands would extend the park boundary east to Interstate 75 and expand wildlife habitat and watershed protection.

There are several contiguous parcels that extend east of Interstate 75. Acquisition of these parcels would preserve undeveloped watershed along the north and south sides of the Santa Fe River and provide connection to existing SRWMD conservation lands.