

Suwannee River State Park

Planning Region: Suwannee River

County: Suwannee, Madison, and Hamilton

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 3643

Overview

Suwannee River State Park protects cultural resources representing portions of Florida history from the Paleo-Indian period to the historical era, including thirteen archaeological sites and a Confederate Earthworks. The park is home to eleven springs, one of the longest aquatic cave systems in the world (the Cathedral Falmouth system), and the confluence of the Suwannee and Withlacoochee rivers.

Total Acreage: 1,932.77

Natural Communities	Acres
Alluvial Forest	44.33
Alluvial Stream	3.39
Blackwater Stream	7.53
Bottomland Forest	340.15
Floodplain Swamp	0.46
Mesic Hammock	104.83
Sandhill	173.43
Sinkhole	3.85
Sinkhole Lake	0.73
Spring-Run Stream	4.59
Upland Hardwood Forest	617.48
Upland Mixed Woodland	275.13
Upland Pine	46.31

Altered Landcovers	Acres
Developed	40.44
Spoil Area	1.25
Successional Hardwood Forest	255.91
Utility Corridor	12.95

Acquisition: Suwannee River State Park was initially acquired on November 6, 1945, by the Florida Board of Forestry.

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Resource Management Component Objectives

Hydrology

- Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Restore hydrological functions to approximately 5 acres of bottomland forest and 3.5 acres of spring-run stream natural communities.
- Evaluate and mitigate the impacts of soil erosion in the park.

Natural Communities

- Maintain 550 acres within the optimum fire return interval.
- Continue natural community restoration activities on 54 acres of sandhill and upland mixed woodland communities.
- Conduct natural community improvement activities on 15 acres of upland pine community and 14 acres of sandhill community.

Imperiled Species

- Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists.
- Monitor 2 imperiled animal species in the park (Pallid Cave Crayfish and Southeastern American Kestrels).
- Monitor 2 imperiled plant species in the park (Florida mountain mint and Angle pod).

Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually treat 22 gross acres equivalent to 1 acre of invasive plant species in the park.
- Implement measures to prevent the accidental introduction or further spread of invasive plants in the park.
- Implement control measures on 1 nuisance species in the park.

Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 27 of 27 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Compile documentation for historic and archaeological resources.
- Bring 10 of 27 recorded cultural resources into good condition (Confederate Earthworks (SU00035), Columbus Cemetery (SU00362), Suwannee River Pavilion 2 (SU00410), Suwannee River Pavilion 3 (SU00411), Suwannee River Workshop (SU00413), Suwannee River Storage – Equip (SU00406), Suwannee River Laundry-Camp (SU00412), Suwannee Pumphouse/Storage (SU00409), Suwannee River Pumphouse (SU00414), and the Suwannee River Restroom - Group Area (SU00408)).

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Land Use Component Objectives

Conceptual Land Use

Parkwide

- Modify facilities to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Explore interpretive opportunities.
- Improve wayfinding with directional signals.
- Conduct a boundary survey and install fencing where needed.

Earthworks Area

- Improve wayfinding from picnic area along the Earthworks Trail.
- Install two detailed interpretive signs near Confederate earthworks.
- Prevent makeshift paths from Earthworks Trail.
- Complete a structural assessment for wooden boardwalk and observation platform.

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Hickory Bend Primitive Camping Area

- Designate paths from parking area to campsites.
- Stabilize and expand parking.
- Delineate campsites with appropriate signage.
- Install a larger bathhouse in a less flood-prone location.
- Recontour and maximize camping space.
- Remove residence.
- Remove concrete slab.

Lime Sink Run Primitive Camping Area

- Pave a road connection from cabin's road to bathhouse.
- Install a larger bathhouse with showers.

Boat Ramp

- Investigate a solution for temporary boat docking.

Drew Mansion Picnic Area

- Communicate with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to install directional signs east and westbound on U.S. Highway 90.
- Develop a maintenance and interpretation plan for the Hillman Bridge.
- Consider formalizing paddling launch.
- Resurface Northeast Drew Way.

Florida National Scenic Trail

- Remove the gate where the trail enters the Five Sister Springs area.
- Reduce the width of the gate opening to allow pedestrian-only access.

Little Gem Springs

- Develop trail to Little Gem Springs and an observation platform.

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Optimum Boundary

Many parcels, approximately 330 acres in total, have been identified for Suwannee River State Park's optimum boundary. Several of these parcels are surrounded by agricultural fields and should be acquired to buffer residential and agricultural pollution away from the Suwannee River and surrounding karst windows. Many parcels proposed for acquisition are designated by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory as priority 1 and 2 habitat conservation sites, adjacent to the Suwannee River that would provide watershed protection and ecological connectivity. Desirable natural resources would be protected and buffer any future private development.