



Tosohatchee

Wildlife Management Area

Recreation Guide

Your guide to hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing

What You Can Do

Indulge your passion for adventure at Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Winding creeks and trails, shady hammocks, and open vistas along the St. Johns River create a scenic backdrop for a range of outdoor pursuits. Everyone from hunters and anglers to hikers and birdwatchers shares a love of conservation and the outdoors, and a respect for the land and each other. Come explore!

Planning Your Visit

There is something to do year-round at Tosohatchee, but your favorite time of year may be a spring turkey hunt or fall warbler migration. Visit MyFWC.com/Recreation to plan your trip. Note that hunts occur on scheduled days, in specific areas and, in the case of turkey hunts, end at 1 pm. Wear bright orange clothing if you use trails during a hunt. Planning a picnic? Share your snacks with friends, not wildlife. Animals accustomed to human food can become dangerous.



David Moynahan

Wildlife Viewing

Tosohatchee's vast acreage, mix of wetlands and uplands, and location on the St. Johns River, create outstanding wildlife viewing opportunities. Unpaved Powerline Road runs east and west, ending at the St. Johns River. This narrow, raised roadbed affords excellent views as it slices through sand

cordgrass marshes. Vultures perch on powerline stanchions, while herons, egrets, ibises, limpkins and wood storks regularly congregate in ditches and wetlands. Raptors such as bald eagles, ospreys, red-shouldered hawks, owls and kestrels nest and hunt here. Scan the river marshes for rails, ducks and purple gallinules.

At Lake Charlie, admire bald eagles, ospreys, anhingas, herons and egrets. Many nest in the surrounding trees or in colonies in the center of the lake. Retreat to shady hammocks and listen for resident woodpeckers and owls. These and other uplands can be birding hotspots in the spring for neo-tropical migrants such as warblers, kinglets, thrushes and sparrows.

Pine flatwoods on the north and south end of the property are home to brown-headed nuthatches, northern bobwhites and warblers. Listen for the song of the Bachman's sparrow. Miles of rustic trails offer good opportunities to spot migratory songbirds. White-tailed deer and wild turkey prefer woodland edges or are attracted to clearings. Swallow-tailed kites are spring and summer visitors usually spotted in flight over open areas. Wildflowers attract numerous species of butterflies. Tosohatchee is a site on the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail (floridabirdingtrail.com). Find bird lists online or at the entrance kiosk.

Plant Study

Bromeliads and orchids cover tree trunks and limbs, ferns carpet the hammocks, and wildflowers such as spring-blooming irises add swaths of color to the landscape. Rare hand ferns, cutthroat grass, pitcher plants and a pocket of old-growth cypress trees find protection here.

Bicycling, Hiking and Horseback Riding

Sixty miles of trails and unpaved roads provide solitude and glimpses of Tosohatchee's finest habitats. Hikers, backpackers, bicyclists

and equestrians can enjoy day or overnight excursions on the area. Equestrians have established a scenic route along the multi-use trail system (see map). A segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) traverses Tosohatchee. Some trails lead to notable natural features such as a virgin bald cypress stand in Jim Creek. Carry a map and compass to navigate the intersecting roads and trails. As a courtesy to WMA managers and to check on trail conditions, through-hikers on the FNST should contact the Tosohatchee office (3365 Taylor Creek Rd., Christmas, FL 32709; 407-568-5893) before entering the WMA.



P.L. Jones

Camping

Primitive camping is available for organized youth groups, equestrians and hikers. Facilities include an equestrian camp, a group camp and a campsite located along the FNST. Reservations must be made in advance by calling the WMA office at (407) 568-5893. Car and RV camping are not available. During hunting seasons, camping is permitted only to through-hikers at the FNST site.

Boating

No improved boat ramps are provided on the WMA, but canoes, kayaks and small boats can be hand-launched in Lake Charlie and Peek-a-boo Pond. Only trolling motors or paddle craft are permitted.



David Moynahan

Fishing

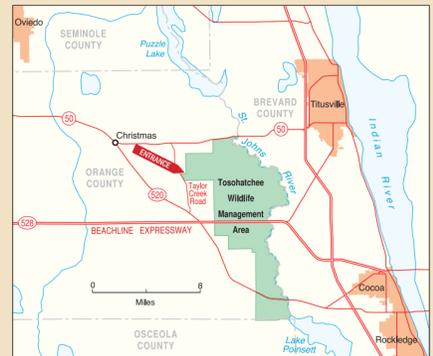
Anglers enjoy bank fishing on the St. Johns River and along numerous canals, ditches and creeks. Regular catches at Lake Charlie and Peek-a-boo Pond include Florida largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie and sunfish. A fishing platform, covered picnic area and vault toilet are located at Lake Charlie. Carry appropriate licenses and permits.



David Moynahan

Hunting

Quota hunts are held on a limited basis from September to March. The area boasts excellent hog hunting and good opportunities for deer and turkey. A hunting license, WMA Permit and Quota-Hunt Permit are required. Florida's quota-hunt program ensures a high-quality hunting experience by preventing overcrowding and controlling harvest.



How to get to Tosohatchee

Located in Orange County, about 25 miles east of Orlando, near the community of Christmas. From I-95, exit onto S.R. 50 and travel west approximately 9.9 miles to a left turn on Taylor Creek Road. The entrance is approximately 2.6 miles on the left. From Orlando, take S.R. 50 east and turn right on Taylor Creek Road; then follow directions above.

What it costs to visit

A Daily-Use Permit or WMA Permit is required to enter this area. For information on fees visit MyFWC.com/Recreation. To hunt or fish you must possess the appropriate licenses and permits.

Want to know more?

MyFWC.com/Recreation

Need a hunting or fishing license?

Toll-free at (888) HUNT-FLORIDA (486-8356) or (888) FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356), or go to MyFWC.com/License.

Area lodging, camping and restaurants

Titusville Area Chamber of Commerce (321) 267-3036; www.titusville.org/visiting

Tosohatchee

Wildlife Management Area



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Immerse yourself in wild Florida with a visit to Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Covering more than 30,000 acres along 19 miles of the St. Johns River in eastern Orange County, Tosohatchee's meandering creeks, cabbage palm hammocks, pine flatwoods, cypress swamps and freshwater marshes form an integral part of the 3,600-square-mile St. Johns River watershed. These habitats, and those of adjacent public lands, not only clean and store water that supplies the St. Johns River, they also support an abundance of wildlife and create outstanding recreational opportunities.



Museum of Florida History

The St. Johns was one of Florida's first tourist attractions — a 300-mile-long, north-flowing "highway" that connected the river's origins, in marshes near Vero Beach, with Jacksonville and the Atlantic Ocean. Between 1830 and 1920, close to 300 paddle wheelers traveled the river, carrying hunters, sightseers and cargo to and from numerous settlements along its shores.



Florida State Archives

The old pasture at the end of Beehead Road is a remnant of Tosohatchee's cattle ranching days, dating from the early 1900s. From 1925 until 1977, ranching was replaced by hunting, managed by the privately owned Tosohatchee Game Preserve, Inc., a family-style hunt club. William Beardall, mayor of Orlando from 1940 to 1952, was the club's last president. Three generations of Beardalls had been members, from the club's inception until the property was

sold to the state in 1977. Over the years, the club resisted outside pressures to log and develop the site and the sale fulfilled the founders' goal to preserve and protect the Tosohatchee property. In 2006, management of Tosohatchee was transferred from the Department of Environmental Protection to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



David Moynahan

Management

Fire and Water – Tools for Wildlife-Rich Landscapes

Historically, plant and animal communities at Tosohatchee were shaped by alternating cycles of fire and flood. Over the years, canal construction, logging, cattle grazing, road construction, introduction of nonnative species and fire exclusion changed the landscape. Hydrological changes diverted water from the WMA, resulting in drier marshes overgrown with cabbage palms, wax myrtles and other shrubs and hardwoods. Without regular burning, hardwoods displaced the pines and associated groundcover and the animals dependent on them.

To restore historic flows, some ditches and canals were filled, and culverts, bridges and low-water crossings were constructed on roads. Today, Tosohatchee's biologists work with adjacent landowners to ensure that the quality and quantity of water in the WMA remain at healthy levels.



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Controlled burn in pine flatwoods

Prior to human settlement, lightning-ignited fires crept across Tosohatchee nearly every year. These regular fires released nutrients, stimulated seed germination and prevented the build-up of plant material that can cause catastrophic wildfires. Today, managers mimic the ancient role of fire through controlled burns.

Because the WMA is quite wet in the summer, controlled burns are conducted in spring and early summer when conditions permit. Native groundcovers, important to wildlife, grow vigorously in these burned areas when summer rains begin. Fire also keeps Tosohatchee's wetlands healthy, eliminating excessive cattail growth and recycling nutrients. As rain refills wetlands, native plants take root and fish and wildlife populations rebound.



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Burning wetlands during the dry season



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Managers use equipment such as roller choppers to reduce thick underbrush.



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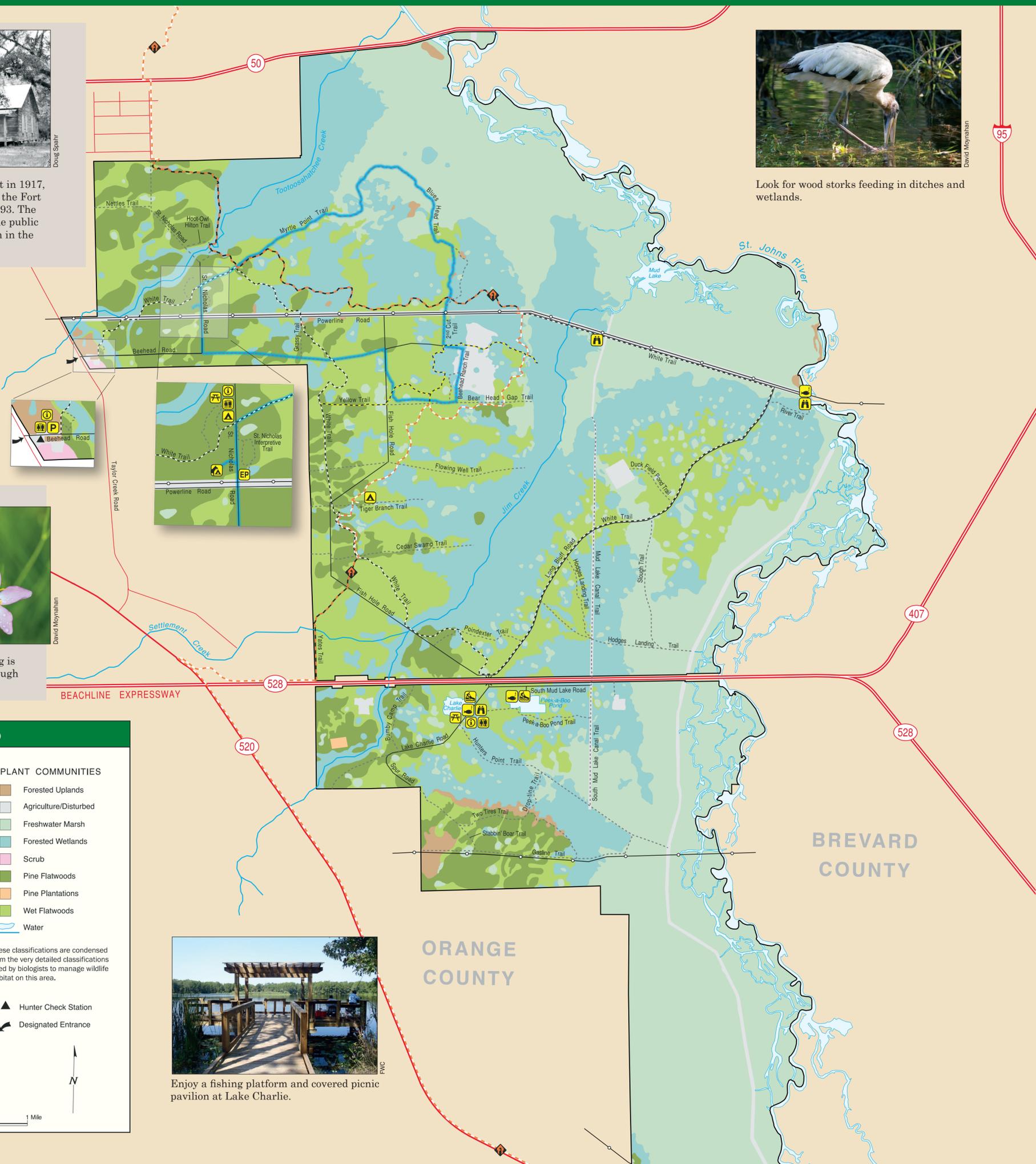
Nonnative feral hogs cause great harm to native wildlife populations and vegetation when they uproot plants in search of food. The population is controlled through hunting.



The Beehead Ranch House, built in 1917, was moved to Tosohatchee to the Fort Christmas Historical Park in 1993. The restored house is now open to the public and depicts life on a cattle ranch in the early 20th century.



Look for wood storks feeding in ditches and wetlands.



Wildflower and butterfly viewing is especially good from March through October.

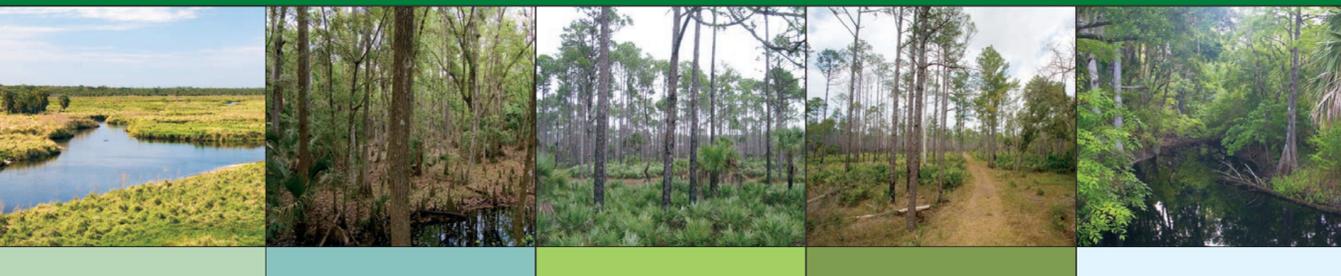
LEGEND

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — WMA Boundary — Divided Highways — Major Roads — Other Roads — WMA Roads Open to Motorized Travel - - - Multi-use Trails Closed to Motorized Travel — Florida National Scenic Trail (Hiking Only) — Florida National Scenic Trail (Multi-use Portion) — Scenic Equestrian Trail — Powerline — Interstate — State Highway — County Road — Interpretive Kiosk — Parking — Restrooms — Picnic Area — Camping — Equestrian Parking — Equestrian Camping — Wildlife Viewing — Canoe/Small Boat Launch — Fishing | <h3>PLANT COMMUNITIES</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Forested Uplands — Agriculture/Disturbed — Freshwater Marsh — Forested Wetlands — Scrub — Pine Flatwoods — Pine Plantations — Wet Flatwoods — Water <p>These classifications are condensed from the very detailed classifications used by biologists to manage wildlife habitat on this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Hunter Check Station ➤ Designated Entrance |
|---|--|



Enjoy a fishing platform and covered picnic pavilion at Lake Charlie.

What does this wild land grow?



Freshwater Marsh

This is the predominant community at Tosohatchee and includes the seasonally inundated lands adjacent to the St. Johns River. Extensive stands of sand cordgrass are broken by slightly deeper depressions and sloughs where pickerelweed, duck potato, sawgrass and other aquatic species grow.

Forested Wetlands

Hardwood swamps grow along the creeks, creating a dense canopy of bald cypress, pond cypress, black gum and other hardwoods. Hammocks of cabbage palms, red cedars and live oaks occur on the edges of marshes and swamps and in low areas in wet flatwoods. Isolated dome swamps have a canopy of pond cypress, sweetgum and red maple.

Wet Flatwoods

Stands of slash pine with a dense understory of cabbage palm characterize the wet flatwoods. Groundcover is sparse in areas with heavy shade and pine needle drop, while sand cordgrass, sugarcane plume grass, blue maidencane and several panicum species grow in areas with more open canopies.

Pine Flatwoods

Higher, drier flatwoods along the WMA's western edge contain dense stands of slash pine and pond pine. Groundcover is a diverse mix of wiregrass, toothache grass, bluestem and other herbs. Protected species such as cutthroat grass, Catesby's lily, rain lily and several species of orchids occur here. Longleaf pine grows in isolated areas.

Rivers and Streams

The St. Johns River forms the eastern boundary of the WMA. Extensive freshwater marshes extend several miles east and west of the river channel. Tootoosahatchee Creek, Jim Creek and Taylor Creek, originate in private lands west of the WMA and flow eastward through the WMA to the St. Johns River.

