

STATE FOREST SPOTLIGHT

Hydrological Restoration

The Picayune Strand is critical to the health of the Everglades ecosystem. Historically, the wetlands that composed the Strand contributed to groundwater recharge and regulated the flow of freshwater through the landscape and into the estuaries to the south. The canal system established in the 1970s altered the hydrology of the Strand and surrounding areas by draining the wetlands and increasing freshwater point source discharges into the estuaries. Consequently, former wetlands were invaded by upland and non-native vegetation and the delicate balance of fresh and saltwater in the estuaries was disrupted. The result was an extensive loss of wildlife habitat. Restoration of Picayune Strand was planned as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

Love the state forests? So do we!

The Friends of Florida State Forests is a direct-support organization of the Florida Forest Service dedicated to ensuring Florida's state forests are available for future generations to enjoy. Make a difference by joining today to help protect Florida's forests.

Membership dues go to the forests for conservation and improvement projects. To join Friends or for more information, visit:

www.FloridaStateForests.org



Things to Know When Visiting Picayune Strand State Forest

- Drive on designated roads only.
- Unlicensed vehicles, motorcycles and ATVs (all terrain vehicles) are not allowed on the forest.
- Foot traffic, bicycles, and horses are welcome on trails designated for their use.
- Do not make new roads or trails.
- Take all garbage with you when you leave the forest. Containers are not provided.
- Primitive camping requires a State Forest Use Permit. Permits are available at Picayune Strand State Forest Headquarters, Monday-Friday, 8a.m. - 5p.m.
- Visitors may be required to pay entrance or recreation use fees in designated areas. Annual Day Use Entrance Passes are available.
- Hunting requires a permit and license and is allowed in designated areas during appropriate seasons.
- We encourage all visitors to check the Wildlife Management Area regulations and hunting season dates before visiting the forest. For further information visit: www.MyFWC.com.

For more information, visit:

www.FloridaForestService.com



Florida Forest Service

Picayune Strand State Forest



Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services

Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner

History

Picayune Strand was logged for cypress and pine trees in the 1940s and 1950s. After logging was completed, the land was purchased by developers and drained for the construction of what was intended to become the largest subdivision in the world. This area became the setting for the infamous “swampland in Florida” scam. Potential buyers were shown the land from the air during the dry season, and many lots were sold to people who never saw their land from the ground. Few homes were built in the subdivision named “Golden Gate Estates” due to the lack of electricity and high summer water levels.

By the 1970s, it was obvious that the extensive canal system was having an adverse effect on the natural communities of Picayune Strand and associated ecosystems, including Faka-Union Bay and the Ten Thousand Islands area.

The first parcels of land in Picayune Strand were purchased in 1985 and acquisition of the remaining 52,000 acres of swampland accelerated in the following years. The Picayune Strand State Forest was officially named in May of 1995.

Forestry

The mission of the Florida Forest Service is to protect and manage the forest resources of Florida, ensuring that they are available for future generations. The FFS manages more than 1 million acres of state forest land for multiple uses including timber production, recreation and wildlife habitat. Picayune Strand State Forest is managed by the FFS for the primary purposes of ecological restoration, wildlife habitat preservation, water quality improvement, generating forest products and public use. A variety of management strategies and tools are used to achieve these objectives.

The application of prescribed fire is used to reduce fuels and mimic the natural fire regime that historically maintained the natural communities on the Forest, removal of invasive exotic species, preservation of historical and archaeological sites, maintenance of recreation facilities, reforestation and tree harvesting are just a few of the integral components of the Picayune Strand State Forest management plan.



Pond Apple Slough



Longhorn False Rein Orchid



Recreational pavillion and horse paddocks

**For more information contact:
Picayune Strand State Forest
2121 52nd Ave. SE
Naples, FL 34117
(239) 348-7557**

Natural Resources

Picayune Strand State Forest is a critical link within the network of publically managed lands that include Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, and Collier Seminole State Park. Picayune Strand State Forest provides habitat to many unique species of flora and fauna, including the only stable population of panthers east of the Mississippi River. Other wildlife with confirmed sightings on the forest currently listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern include the bald eagle, eastern indigo snake, Florida black bear, Florida panther, gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpecker and wood stork. The Picayune Strand provides foraging and nesting habitat for a large, diverse wading bird population.

Rare plants of special importance occurring within the Forest include numerous epiphytic orchids and bromeliads, Florida royal palm and Everglades palm. The Forest contains some of the best hydric pine flatwoods in southwest Florida.

Recreation

Picayune Strand State Forest offers a number of recreational opportunities, including horseback riding along the 22-mile Belle Meade Horse Trail; it is accompanied by 10 paddocks, non-potable water and an equestrian camping area. Picnic and restroom facilities are available. Hiking the 3.2-mile Sabal Palm Hiking Trail provides plant and wildlife viewing opportunities in a pine flatwoods community. The trail is very wet during the rainy season, please call ahead for trail conditions. Picnic and restroom facilities available. Fishing at the Port of the Islands Recreation Area provides an opportunity for freshwater fishing in the Faka-Union Canal.

Go camping at a limited number of primitive tent and RV campsites that are available; camping fees apply. Cycling over an extensive road system provides excellent terrain for off-road biking. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission coordinates hunting activities on the forest. Visit www.MyFWC.com for information.