

Greenways & Natural Lands

Seminole Tracks Newsletter



New Year, New Experiences...

Make 2024 the year for exploration, intrigue and adventure for you and your family with Natural Lands! Florida's Winter and Spring offer many cool days to roam our beautiful natural areas. This season also presents some of our favorite holidays like Arbor Day, Florida Gopher Tortoise Day and Earth Day!

Seminole County Natural Lands offers many opportunities to enjoy the season; search for migrating birds, celebrate Earth Day or spend time camping with your family! Whatever you're in to, Natural Lands has an outdoor event for you! We can't wait to see you out there!

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Location: Geneva Wilderness Area
3485 N. County Road 426
Geneva, FL 32732

Times: Saturday, 2:00pm to
Sunday, 9:00am

Dates: January 27-28
May 11-12 (Mother's Day!)

Cost: \$20 per person/per campout



Family Fun Campouts

This is one of our most popular Natural Lands events! Spend the night at the Geneva Wilderness Area and learn to camp with the experts.

This event is tailored for families with children ages 4-13 who want a crash course in camping. Meals included! We will have tent pitching assistance, cast iron cooking, a live animal program in the nature center, fishing, hiking, and cooking s'mores over a campfire.

This season, there are 2 dates to choose from. In January, enjoy crisp and cool nights by the fire. In May, celebrate Mom for a special Mother's Day camp out.



Spring Break Eco Camp!

Spring into nature at Spring Break Eco Camp!

Your kids will have a blast while learning about the natural world! Campers will explore the Geneva Wilderness Area through fishing, hiking, setting live traps, and learning about native wildlife and plants. Inside the nature center, they will create works of art, play games and meet our live animal residents.

Scholarships available.

Find out more by visiting the Eco Camp webpage!



Dates: March 18-22

Location: Ed Yarborough Nature Center
3485 N. County Road 426,
Geneva

Times: 9:00am - 4:00pm
(Extended Day Care available from
7:30am - 5:30pm)

Cost: \$132/week (Extended Day
Care an additional \$15/week)

Ages: 7-12



Classes and Programs

Come learn something new by experiencing it first-hand! Natural Lands' classes and programs offer learning opportunities for everyone. This Spring, we are offering some classic programs, and also a few new ones! Just make sure you register before you arrive. Classes fill up quickly, so sign up today by visiting:

recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov



Learn & Burn

Join our Program Manager to learn what it takes to be a Burn Boss! Gain insight into the process of planning and running a prescribed burn, and the benefits to our community. Meet some of the creatures who live in fire-dependent ecosystems and how they survive. See the tools land managers use while burning. If conditions permit, watch a live burn demonstration!

Date/Time: Saturday, **February 3**, 9am-noon

Location: Ed Yarborough Nature Center

Cost: \$8 per person

Ages: 10+ (children must be accompanied by an adult)



Nature Lovers

Looking for a unique and humorous Valentine's experience? Learn about the intriguing and downright bizarre courtship rituals of some of our wild neighbors. After the class and animal meet-&-greet, end the program with a guided evening stroll down scenic trails.

Date/Time: Saturday, **February 17**, 6:00-8:00pm

Location: Ed Yarborough Nature Center

Cost: \$8 per person

Ages: 18+ (adults only)



Bug Bash

Come party with bugs! This fun and informational class will show off the wide array of small crawly critters that share our wilderness, yards and even homes with. Meet and greet with insects and mollusks in the Nature Center, and end the program with a hike searching for wild bugs!

Date/Time: Saturday, **March 9**, 9am-noon

Location: Ed Yarborough Nature Center

Cost: \$8 per person

Ages: 7+ (children must be accompanied by an adult)



Tracks & Scat Class

Learn to read the clues animals leave behind! Practice deciphering bones, tracks, scat and more. Enjoy an informative class in the nature center and create a plaster track of your own. Test your new tracking skills with a hike in the wilderness in search of animal sign.

Date/Time: Saturday, **April 13**, 9am-noon

Location: Ed Yarborough Nature Center

Cost: \$8 per person

Ages: 5+ (children must be accompanied by an adult)



Snakes of Florida Program

Join a local expert from Seminole County Natural Lands as he introduces and dispels some of the myths about these often misunderstood cold-blooded residents. Visit live snakes in the Nature Center, then end with a hike on the trails in search of wild snakes!

Date/Time: Saturday, **May 18**, 9:00-11:00am

Location: Ed Yarborough Nature Center

3485 N. County Road 426

Geneva, FL 32732

Cost: \$8 per person

Ages: 7+ (children must be accompanied by an adult)

Guided Hikes

Did you know the Natural Lands Program manages over 6,600 acres of preserved land? Let our knowledgeable guides walk you through some of Seminole County's most beautiful wilderness areas. Hikes fill up quickly, so sign up today by visiting: recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov

All hikes are \$5 per guest. Children must be 7 years or older (unless otherwise noted) and accompanied by an adult to attend. All Natural Lands hikes require pre-registration. Call 407.665.2211 for more information.

JAN

19

Florida Tree Trek

Friday 9:00-11:00 am @ Spring Hammock Preserve

Celebrate FL Arbor Day by joining a NL guide for a hike through mixed forests of oak, pine, cypress and other mixed hardwood trees in this beautiful wilderness area. Learn to identify native trees and find out how these giants impact our ecosystems and our lives.

Hike Rating

EASY

MAR

2

Morning Birding Hike

Saturday 7:30-9:30 am @ Lake Harney Wilderness Area

Join an expert birder as you search for feathered friends. Learn how to spot birds by sight and sound. End your hike high above on the observation deck overlooking the floodplain.

Hike Rating

EASY

MAR

25

Flower Moon Hike

Monday 7:00-9:00 pm at Econ River Wilderness Area

Take a break on a Monday night to enjoy the splendor of this month's full moon and search for hidden night creatures.

Hike Rating

EASY

APR

6

Spring Foraging Hike

Saturday 8:00-10:00 am @ Geneva Wilderness Area

Hike in search of edible and useful wild plants. Learn to identify common edibles in your community.

Hike Rating

EASY

APR

13

Owl Prowl

Saturday 7:00-9:00 pm at Spring Hammock Preserve

Explore the park after dark in search of owls! Learn to identify owls by sight and hoots.

Hike Rating

EASY

APR

27

Frog Hop Night Hike

Saturday 7:30-9:30 pm @ Geneva Wilderness Area

Learn to identify frogs by their appearance and calls during this frog-tastic night hike! Explore the fascinating science behind amplexus and why these croaking creatures are essential to a balanced ecosystem.

Hike Rating

MODERATE

Property
Addresses

Econ River Wilderness Area
3795 Old Lockwood Rd. Oviedo 32765

Black Bear Wilderness Area
5298 Michigan Ave. Sanford 32771

Lake Jesup Wilderness Area
5951 Sanford Ave. Sanford 32773

Chuluota Wilderness Area
3895 Curryville Rd. Chuluota 32766

Lake Harney Wilderness Area
2395 Osceola Fish Camp Rd, Geneva 32732

Geneva Wilderness Area/Ed Yarborough Nature Center
3485 N. County Road 426, Geneva 32732

More Guided Hikes and Spring Open House

All hikes are \$5 per guest. Children must be 7 years or older (unless otherwise noted) and accompanied by an adult to attend. All Natural Lands hikes require pre-registration. Call 407.665.2211 for more information.

MAY

4

Butterflies & Blooms

Saturday 9:00-11:00 am @ Geneva Wilderness Area

Join a local expert in search of fragrant colorful flowers, and the many pollinators that visit them.

Hike Rating

EASY

MAY

11

Spring Migration Hike

Saturday 7:30-9:30 am @ Econ River Wilderness Area

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day exploring the Econ River Wilderness Area and its diverse ecosystems. Join an expert birder to spy migrating birds.

Hike Rating

EASY

MAY

18

Nocturnal Animals Hike

Saturday 7:00-9:00 pm @ Lake Proctor Wilderness Area

Explore the park after dark! Search for night creatures as you walk through diverse ecosystems.

Hike Rating

EASY

Spring Open House

The Ed Yarborough Nature Center and Seminole Audubon Society are teaming up to for a special Open House event this Spring! Meet-and-Greet with our animal residents and explore the exhibits and displays. Enjoy bird-inspired crafts, games, guided hikes and informational talks with master birders. Call 407-665-2211 for more info.

Free Program. No registration required.

When: Saturday, **March 30** – Backyard Birds Day

Where: Ed Yarborough Nature Center

3485 N. County Road 426

Geneva 32732

Time: 9 am-noon

FREE
EVENT



Private Hikes, Rentals and Programs

Location: Ed Yarborough Nature Center
Geneva Wilderness Area
3485 N. County Road 426
Geneva, FL 32732

Cost: \$170, includes 3-hour
facility rental and the Natural
Lands party host.

Registration: To coordinate times and
availability, please email:
nswanson@seminolecountyfl.gov



Eco Birthday Parties



Create a birthday party experience your child will never forget! A trained staff member will welcome your party guests, present an exciting live animal program and take the group for a hike on our 180-acre property. Enjoy time in the Nature Center for exploration and your refreshments.

Private Hikes

Do you want to take a hike with your favorite people? Schedule a private hike with Natural Lands! Great for scout groups, field trips, team building and family reunions.

One of our knowledgeable staff members will guide you through the trails of the wilderness area of your choice. Along the way, hikers can ask questions and the instructor will stop to point out notable sights. Hike takes approximately 2 hours. \$5 per person. Up to 25 guests.

Facility Rentals

Rent one of our amazing facilities for your party, family reunion, business meeting or other events!

- North Campsite/Pavilion @ GWA
- Ed Yarborough Nature Center
- Full & half days or overnight



Field Trips & In-School Programs

Field trips to the Ed Yarborough Nature Center can serve as a wonderful opportunity for your students to explore natural science first-hand. Program includes a nature program in the center with live animals, a hike around the property and time for lunch. Open to public, private and home school groups. Only \$5 per student!

Let Natural Lands come to you! During the 45-50 minute in-school program, students will learn about standards-based science topics and have opportunities to view and handle skulls, displays and live animals. This program is FREE!

For more information, please call 407.665.2211 or email nswanson@seminolecountyfl.gov

Next Season and Program Partners

Summer

During the Summer, Natural Lands hosts Summer Eco Camp for children 7-12 and Biology Boot Camp for 13-15 year olds.

Keep checking back on the Leisure Services registration page to sign up!

recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov



We look forward to welcoming everyone else back for hikes and programs in the Fall.
Happy Adventuring!

Program Partners



The Cuplet Fern Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society joins Natural Lands for Open Houses, plant-related hikes, plant rescue events and maintains the demonstration garden at the Ed Yarborough Nature Center. Cuplet Fern also provides several [scholarships](#) each season for children to attend Eco Camp. Thank



Seminole Audubon Society works closely with Natural Lands to lead birding hikes and programs, give informative presentations and hikes to our Eco Campers, provide [scholarships](#) for children to attend Eco Camp and help Natural Lands purchase materials for programming including Audubon Adventures educational materials and binoculars for Eco Camp.



More to Explore

Natural Lands— Wilderness Areas and Preserves

Did you know that Natural Lands manages 9 public wild lands for you to explore? No matter where you live in the county, there is likely a wilderness area close by.

Trails are open from sun rise to sun set every day of the year (unless otherwise noted). Parking and entry are always free!

Enjoy [recreational activities](#) like hiking, birding, biking, photography, horseback riding, fishing and more! Each location has a unique combination of plant communities, animals and ecosystems. We can't wait to see you out there!

Happy Adventuring!

Experience
Seminole County
Naturally



in our
Wilderness
Areas

The **Black Bear Wilderness Area**'s approximately 1,600 acres in northwest Seminole County features a 7 mile loop trail with boardwalks that showcase a variety of wetland habitats within the floodplain of the St. John's River. Wet prairie, Hydric Hammock and Cypress swamps form a mosaic of habitat diversity which host wildlife such as the White-tailed Deer, Swallow-tailed Kite and Florida Black Bear. Its large size and proximity to other public lands, make this site an important piece in a puzzle connecting natural areas between the Wekiva/St. John's basins and the Ocala National Forest.



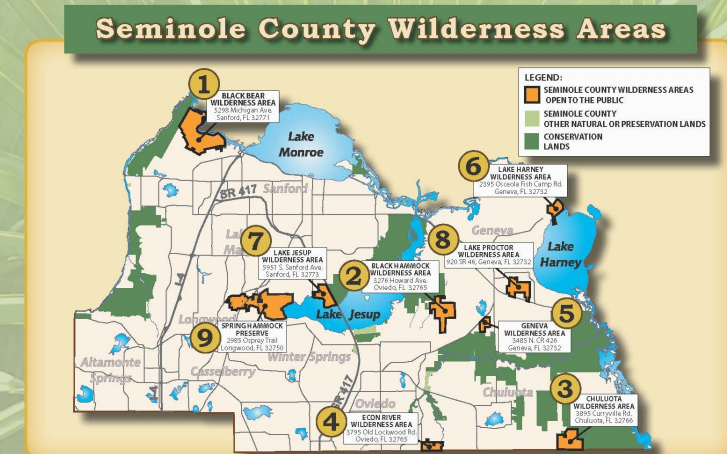
The **Black Hammock Wilderness Area** is a 700+ acre property located in east Seminole County, on the southeast side of Lake Jesup. A joint purchase with the St. Johns River Water Management District, this land was acquired as part of a comprehensive effort to preserve significant habitat along the shores of Lake Jesup. A walk on the 4.5 mile loop trail and boardwalks will take you through habitats such as hydric hammock, mixed hardwood swamp, pine flatwoods and sand pine scrub. Wildlife observed on this site includes the barred owl, white-tailed deer, bobcat and eastern coral snake.



The **Chuluota Wilderness Area** is a 625 acre site located to the east of the town of Chuluota in the southeast corner of Seminole County. This site has extensive and diverse natural communities such as pond pine flatwoods, sand pine scrub, and bayhead swamp. Its remote location and variety of habitats make it an excellent destination for bird watching, wildlife study and nature photography.



The trail system consists of two main loop trails totalling approximately 6 miles that offers visitors the chance to view an abundance of wildlife. See white-tailed deer, gopher tortoise, Sherman's fox squirrel and the eastern diamondback rattlesnake.



The **Econ River Wilderness Area** is a 240 acre property located on the Seminole/Orange County line, south of the city of Oviedo, on the west side of the Econlockhatchee River.

A scenic walking trail of approximately 3 miles leads visitors through habitats such as pine flatwoods, sandhill and river swamp. Wildlife observed on this site includes the great horned owl, white-tailed deer and golden mouse. Benches are provided at a bend in the river so you can rest and enjoy the quiet, serenity of this little piece of natural Florida.

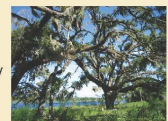


The **Geneva Wilderness Area** is a 180 acre property south of the Geneva community in east Seminole County. This site features a beautiful mosaic of flatwoods, ponds, sand pine scrub and bayhead swamp, all supporting an equally diverse collection of wildlife. A hike through approximately 2 miles of trails can reward visitors with sightings of gopher tortoise, white-tailed deer, wild turkey and gray fox.

This property has a fishing pier, large pavilion with a barbeque and the Ed Yarbrough Nature Center which features exhibits and displays that highlight the ecology of Central Florida. The facility hosts both school programs and public classes. The Nature Center is open by appointment only.



The **Lake Harney Wilderness Area** is approximately 300 acres located on the St. Johns River, and the northwest shore of Lake Harney. This site is home to a historic crossing of the Okeechobee Branch of the East Coast Railway, several bald eagle's nests, oak hammocks and mixed hardwood swamps. A viewing tower overlooks the floodplain of Lake Harney which serves as important feeding grounds for wading birds and as a natural filter improving water quality.



The **Lake Jesup Wilderness Area** is a 490 acre site located on the north shore of Lake Jesup, west of Highway 417. Purchased in cooperation with the St. Johns River Water Management District for the purpose of preserving significant habitat to aid in the restoration of Lake Jesup. Visitors can walk, ride their horse or mountain bike on approximately 3 miles of trails to view the extensive flood plain of this lake. Trails are seasonally flooded. Countless species of wildlife call this site home including the anhinga, bald eagle, and American alligator.



The **Lake Proctor Wilderness Area** is a 475 acre property located near the town of Geneva in east Seminole County.

A hike on approximately 6 miles of trail through habitats such as sand pine scrub, pine flatwoods, sandhill and bayhead swamp can reward visitors with sightings of wood duck, white-tailed deer, red fox and Florida worm lizard. The yellow trail provides the best opportunity for viewing a variety of wild flower species.



The **Spring Hammock Preserve** is a 1,500 acre property on the west shore of Lake Jesup in Longwood. It is a well-known landmark to both residents and visitors because of its oasis-like appearance in the midst of a rapidly growing urban area and includes Big Tree Park and Soldier's Creek Park. The property offers protection to listed species such as the gopher tortoise, bipinnate cuplet fern and Okeechobee gourd which occur in the following plant communities: pine flatwoods, hydric hammock and floodplain forest, respectively. The Seminole County School Board operates an Environmental Studies Center on the property for all grade 5 classes throughout Seminole County.

