

NATURAL LANDS PROGRAM

SEMINOLE TRACKS

NEWSLETTER



So Much to Celebrate...

In 2025, we continue to celebrate the Natural Lands Program’s 35th anniversary. Over the years, we’ve provided nature-inspired programs for thousands of Seminole County residents and visitors, and we’re just getting started!

As the seasons change, there’s no better time to connect with the great outdoors through our exciting hikes, classes and events. Whether you’re a seasoned nature enthusiast or just beginning your adventure, we’ve got something for everyone this fall! Join us to discover what’s good to eat in nature, take a peaceful birding hike to spot local feathered friends, or get crafty with our festive wreath making workshop. Dive into nature, learn new skills, and make lasting memories with us this season!

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Last Season...

Summer 2025



During summertime, Natural Lands suspends most hikes and events to welcome campers back to Eco Camp at the Geneva Wilderness Area. This summer was full of fun, friendships and learning about the natural world!



Compass navigation



Hanging out



Fishing fun



Building fires



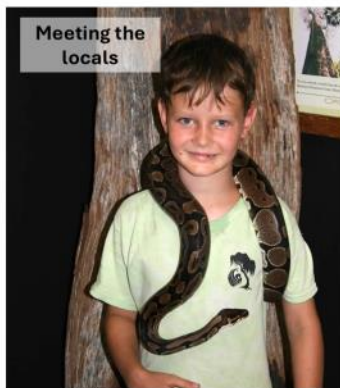
Investigating



Creating a spark



Special guest speakers



Meeting the locals



Bug candy?!



Dip netting



Exploring



Learning with experts

A BIG thank you to all of our amazing guest speakers and volunteers who donated their time for our campers this summer!

- Patti Smith- SSC: Wetland Delineation Lab and Hike
- SERV Team: Macro-Invertebrates lab and Poisonous Plants presentation
- Seminole County Fire Department: Wilderness First Aid
- Dr. Rosie Stanbrook- BCU: Dung beetle safari & presentation
- Dr. Sarah Krejci-BCU: Explore the Shore, marine organisms stations
- Adeemir Dacenay- Solid Waste Management: recycling games
- UCF Bug Closet: Insect Investigation presentation with specimens
- Creations from the Sand: sand art with Eco Artists week

Junior Counselor

Volunteers:

- Annabel Broggy
- Jackson Broggy
- Kathleen Judge

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

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

Dates: Oct. 11-12 (Haunted Woods)
Nov 15-16 (Fall Festival)

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 4-12 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, hiking, and treats by the campfire.

This season, there are 2 dates to choose from. In October, enjoy a fun and spooky night in the Haunted Woods. In November, celebrate the season during the Fall Festival.



Winter Break Eco Camp!

Winter Break Eco Camp is like Summer Camp, just without the heat and bugs!

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 animals. Scholarships available. Find out more by visiting the Eco Camp webpage!



Dates: December 29, 30, 31 & Jan 2

Location: Ed & Imogene Yarborough Nature Center

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

Register online at recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov



Classes and Programs

Come learn something new by experiencing it first-hand! Natural Lands' classes and programs offer learning opportunities for everyone. This Fall, we have a variety of events to choose from. Just make sure you register before you arrive. Classes fill up quickly, so sign up today by visiting: recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov



Crocodilians of the World

Join local expert, Jessie Yates as she introduces you to familiar and not-so-familiar crocodilians! Learn the fascinating evolution of this group of reptiles and the incredible adaptations that have helped them survive for hundreds of millions of years. Find out how we can live alongside these ancient animals in Florida. End the class with a live alligator encounter!

Date/ Time: Saturday, **August 30**, 9:00-11:00 AM

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

Cost: \$8 per person

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



Wild Animal Thanksgiving

What would a gopher tortoise eat for Thanksgiving? Explore what Florida animals eat, how they find food and who join them at their Thanksgiving table. Meet and greet with live animals at the nature center and create a pinecone turkey craft before heading out for a hike to spy wild creatures on the trails. This program is designed for learners ages 4-8 and their parents.

Date/ Time: Saturday, **November 22**, 9:00 –11:30 AM

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

Cost: \$8 per person

Ages: 4+ (Children must be accompanied by an adult)



Nature Crafts: Living Grapevine Wreath

Create a fun wintry craft from nature! We will begin the morning with a hike through the woods collecting natural treasures. From the items you collect, you'll weave a beautiful grapevine wreath that you can give as a gift or decorate your door with!

Dates: Saturday **December 6**, 9-11 AM

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

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. Call 407.665.2211 for more information.

SEPT
6

Nature BINGO Hike

Saturday 9:00-11:00 am @ Econ River Wilderness Area
Explore the park while playing nature BINGO! The more you observe, the more chances to win!

Hike Rating
EASY

SEPT
20

Fall Frog Hop Hike

Saturday 7:30-9:30 pm @ Lake Harney Wilderness Area
Learn to identify frogs by sight and sound 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

SEPT
27

Tracks & Scat Hike

Saturday 9:00-11:00 am at Geneva Wilderness Are
Hike in search of nature's clues. Discover how to identify wildlife sign and test your detective skills during this exploratory experience. End the hike at the Nature Center to explore even more!

Hike Rating
EASY

SEPT
27

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

OCT
4

Swamp Walk

Saturday 9:00– 11:00 am @ Spring Hammock Preserve
Follow your guide through the unmarked trails of a real hydric hammock! Wade waist-deep in the murky waters of a swamp while learning about the amazing plants and animals that call this habitat home. This program is designed for adventurous and agile hikers. Ages 10+.

Hike Rating
STRENUOUS

OCT
4

Nocturnal Reptile Ramble

Saturday 7:00-9:00 pm @ Black Bear Wilderness Area
Join our popular NIGHT hike in the Black Bear Wilderness Area! Search for hidden swamp creatures including nocturnal snakes and alligators. This program is designed for adventurous and agile hikers. Ages 10+.

Hike Rating
MODERATE

Property
Addresses

Econ River Wilderness Area	Chuluota Wilderness Area
3795 Old Lockwood Rd. Oviedo 32765	3895 Curryville Rd. Chuluota 32766
Black Bear Wilderness Area	Lake Harney Wilderness Area
5298 Michigan Ave. Sanford 32771	2395 Osceola Fish Camp Rd, Geneva 32732
Lake Jesup Wilderness Area	Geneva Wilderness Area/Nature Center
5951 Sanford Ave. Sanford 32773	3485 N. County Road 426, Geneva 32732

More Guided Hikes

OCT

11

Butterflies & Blooms

Saturday 9:00-11:00 am @ Lake Harney Wilderness Area

Discover the colorful world of butterflies and wildflowers, and learn how these beautiful creatures and blooms depend on each other.

Hike Rating

EASY

OCT

25

Owl Prowl

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

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

Hike Rating

EASY

NOV

1

Fall Foraging Hike

Saturday 8:00-10:00 am @ Econ River Wilderness Area

Learn to identify seasonal wild edible plants and mushrooms while strolling through diverse habitats in the Econ River Wilderness Area.

Hike Rating

EASY

NOV

8

Morning Migration 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

DEC

4

Full Moon Hike

Thursday 7:30-9:30 pm @ Chuluota Wilderness Area

Take a break on this Thursday night to see the splendor of December's Cold Moon and search for hidden night creatures. Enjoy views of the moon in this remote wilderness area.

Hike Rating

MODERATE

Special Event Hikes

NEW
PROGRAM!

Special event hikes occur seasonally to offer free guided hikes for the community. Just like our regularly scheduled guided hikes, make sure to bring water, bug repellent and wear comfortable closed-toed shoes. Children must be at least 7 years of age and accompanied by an adult. Please call ahead if your group of 6+ plans to join. Call 407-665-2211 for more information.

Free Program. No registration required.

Spooky Safari

Thursday, October 30 7:00– 8:30 pm @ Econ River Wilderness Area

Get into the Halloween spirit with a spooky night hike in the woods! Search for creepy creatures like spiders, bats, snakes and more. You may want to bring a flashlight. Ages 7+

FREE
EVENT

Private Hikes, Rentals and Programs

Location: Ed & Imogene Yarborough Nature Center, Geneva

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

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



Eco Birthday Parties

(Click [HERE](#) for more information)



Give your child an unforgettably wild birthday celebration! A Natural Lands party host will greet your guests, present an exciting live animal program, and guide the group on a scenic hike through our 180-acre property. Plus, enjoy time to explore the Nature Center and relax with 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
- Yarborough Nature Center
- Full & half days or overnight



Field Trips & In-School Programs

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

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, biofacts and live animals. This program is FREE!

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

Open House & Program Partners

FREE
EVENT

Fall Open House

Seminole County Natural Lands and Cuplet Fern Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society are teaming up for a special Open House event this Fall! Meet-and-Greet with our animal residents and explore the exhibits and displays. Enjoy plant-inspired crafts, guided hikes, and a native plant sale! Sale proceeds fund Eco Camp scholarships.

Call 407-665-2211 for more info.

Free Program. No registration required.

When: Saturday, **September 13** – Native Plant Day!

Where: Ed & Imogene Yarborough Nature Center

3485 N. County Road 426

Geneva 32732

Time: 9 am-noon



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 you for all your support!



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. Thank you for your continued support of our programs!



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.

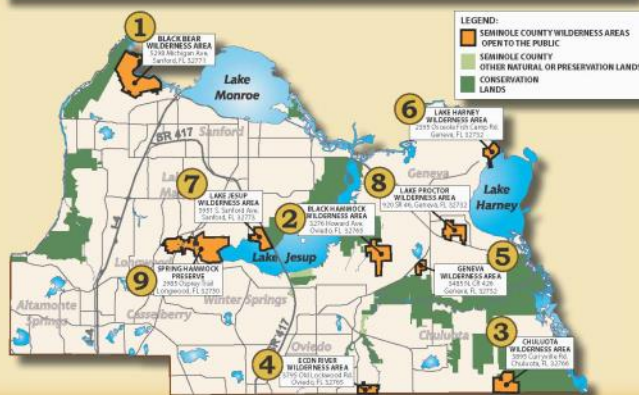


The **Chuluota Wilderness Area** is a 625 acre site located to the east of the town of Chuluota in the southeast corner of Seminole County. This site has extensive and diverse natural communities such as pond pine flatwoods, sand pine scrub, and bayhead swamp. Its remote location and variety of habitats 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.

Seminole County Wilderness Areas



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.

