

# Cottonweed Nature Trail

This 1,300-foot accessible nature trail winds through dry scrub and scrubby flatwoods habitats. Keep a sharp eye out for Florida scrub-jays and gopher tortoises!



land and providing facilities for public use? We carefully design the parking lots and trails so that they have only minimal impact on the native ecosystems. The public use facilities are constructed in previously disturbed areas. The parking lot and observation towers on this natural area were built by the Town of Hypoluxo in a disturbed area that previously contained a commercial building and parking area.



From top to bottom: sand live oak, hog plum, Florida rosemary

## 1 Entryway to the Scrub

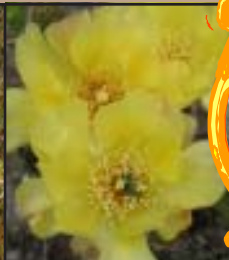
The Palm Beach County Natural Areas System protects historic native ecosystems and their biological diversity. The natural areas are open to the public for passive, resource-based recreation, environmental education, and scientific research. How

## 2 Florida's Desert

It is hard to imagine that a dry, desert-like habitat exists in tropical, humid South Florida. Scrub communities occur on sand ridges along former shorelines. The well-drained, nutrient-poor, sandy soil is a tough place for plants to thrive. Florida rosemary, sand live oak, and hog plum are common scrub plants. Their thick leaves and stunted growing habits help conserve precious water. The dry conditions and low risk of flooding make scrub sites attractive for residential and commercial development. The Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area was destined for development several times during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. It is estimated that there is less than 2% of scrub habitat remaining in Palm Beach County.

## 3 A Splash of Color in the Sand

At first glance the scrub appears to be a dull landscape of tan sand, brown grasses, and gray-green trees. If you look closer, patches of bright color can be found, courtesy of scrub wildflowers. The white blooms of cottonweed and Feay's palaflox, along with the vivid gold blossoms of coastalplain honeycombhead, can be found along the nature trail year-round. The show-stopper of the scrub is the pricklypear flower. The three-inch flowers bloom in the spring and summer and attract squadrons of flying insects, including bees, wasps, and flies.



Cottonweed Coastalplain Honeycombhead Feay's Palaflox Pricklypear

## 4 Running Out of Time

The Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. Some, like the slash pine, northern cardinal, and eastern gray squirrel, can be found in abundance throughout Florida. Others are not so fortunate. Five plant species and seven animal species recorded at the natural area are considered to be threatened, rare, or a species of special concern in Florida.

The Florida scrub-jay lives only in the Florida scrub biological community. The development of lands containing scrub vegetation has led to a decrease in the number of Florida scrub-jays. In the spring and summer, they feed on insects; in the fall and winter, they feed on acorns produced by scrub oaks. Florida scrub-jays form extended family groups - the young from the previous year's clutch help raise the newly-hatched chicks.

The gopher tortoise is another victim of Florida's booming growth and development. The gopher tortoise uses its strong front legs to dig a burrow up to 30 feet long. These cool underground tunnels shelter many other animals, including insects, snakes, lizards, and small mammals.

It is believed that the Hypoluxo Scrub's original population of giant airplants was destroyed by land clearing activities in the 1940s and 1960s. Giant airplants currently living on the natural area have grown from windborne seeds that recolonized the site. This species is now threatened by the Mexican bromeliad weevil.

The nodding pinweed is found only in scrub habitat. It is easy to miss when not in bloom. During the winter and spring it looks like every other scrub plant - small and green. But when summer arrives, the plant produces an abundance of small, white flowers.

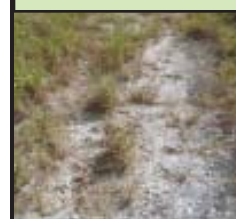
## 5 Wonders Underfoot

Visitors to the Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area should always use the marked trail system when exploring the site. This prevents visitors from getting lost and also keeps delicate scrub plants from getting crushed. Lichens make up part of the ground cover. Deer moss, resurrection cladonia, and jester lichen are found scattered throughout the site on bare, sandy patches of ground. Lichens are actually composed of several organisms working together to survive. Fungi form the structure, while algae or cyanobacteria produce food by photosynthesis.



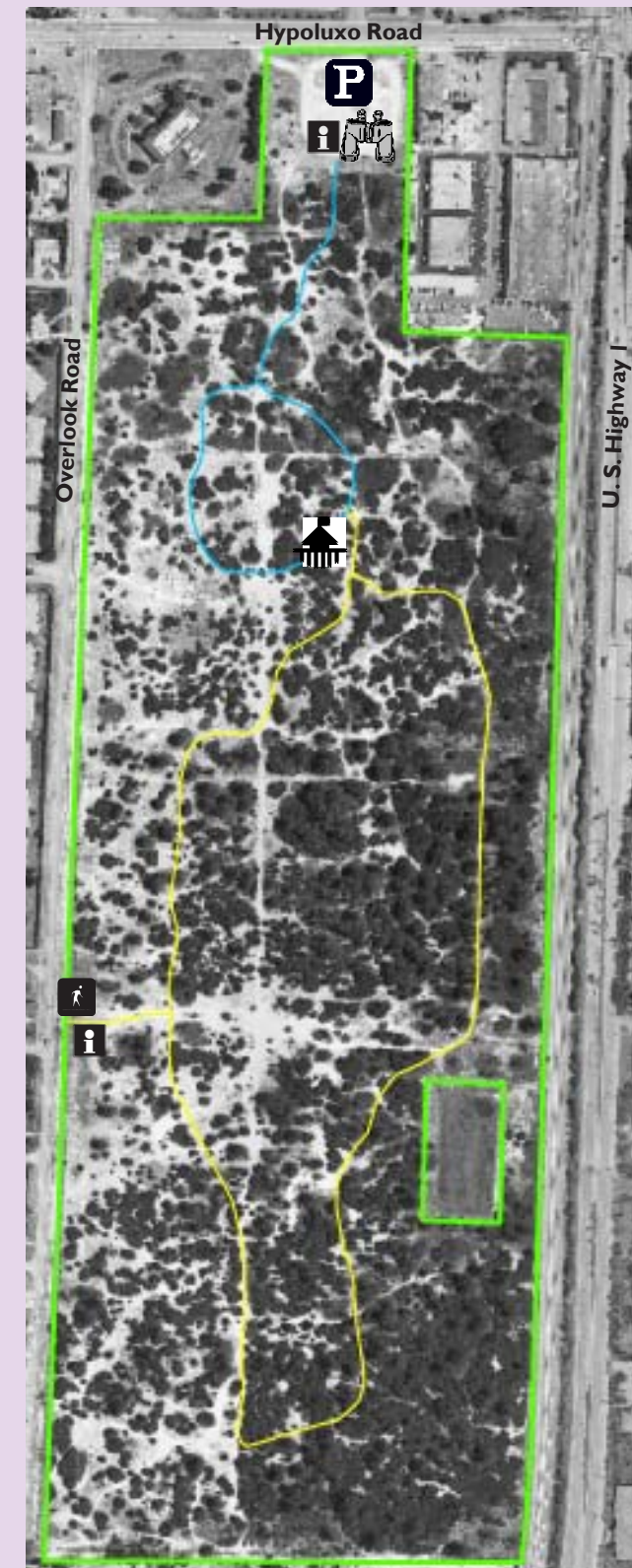
## 6 The Early Settlers

James Porter arrived in the area in 1885 from Cadiz, Kentucky. He was impressed by the agricultural potential of the area and homesteaded 160 acres, which included the northern two-thirds of the natural area. Porter grew pineapples on his property and built a 14-room wood frame home for his family on the northeast corner of the site. He eventually gave up growing pineapples and began building houses. Most of the northern portion of the natural area was cleared in 1914 and was then referred to as the Hypoluxo Subdivision. James did not have much success with this particular endeavor. Henry Porter inherited the land in 1937 after his father's death. He too was interested in developing the property. Although he was not able to develop the Hypoluxo Subdivision, he successfully platted several other subdivisions west of the natural area. Not much remains of the Porter homesite. The home was eventually destroyed, and the only visible features left are patches of asphalt road and a cement cistern.



Paved Road Remnant Cement Cistern

# Hypoluxo Scrub Trail System



The Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area is located on the south side of Hypoluxo Road, between Overlook Road and U.S. Highway 1, in the Town of Hypoluxo. This 97-acre natural area protects scrub and scrubby flatwoods habitats, two of the rarest natural communities in Florida. The site was acquired to preserve important habitat for protected plant and animal species.

The main entrance is off of Hypoluxo Road at the north end of the natural area. Public use facilities available at this entrance include a parking lot, observation tower with historical information for the Town of Hypoluxo, an informational kiosk, and an accessible nature trail. A pedestrian entrance is located off of Overlook Road along the western perimeter of the natural area. This entrance connects to the 1.5-mile hiking trail.

Please use the designated nature and hiking trails as you explore the natural area. Do not feed the animals. When wild animals become dependent on handouts, they may lose their natural fear of humans and become aggressive and dangerous. Please dispose of your trash responsibly.

- Parking
- Information
- Observation Tower
- Pedestrian Entrance
- Shade Shelter
- Natural Area Boundary
- Cottonweed Nature Trail 0.25 miles
- Eastern Pondhawk Hiking Trail 1.5 miles

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



The Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. One of the smaller scrub inhabitants, the silver garden spider, is found in areas with tall grasses and bushes. The female rests head down at the center of an orb web. The web is eye-catching, with zigzag cross strands forming an X-shaped mark at the center. Although spiders are often feared, the silver garden spider is not poisonous to people and performs a valuable service by eating pesky flying insects.

## Preserving Palm Beach County's Good Nature

This 97-acre natural area is part of a countywide system of natural areas, protected to maintain the diversity of biological communities and species in Palm Beach County. The natural areas are open to the public for educational use and passive recreational activities such as hiking, nature photography, and bird watching.

In 1998 the Palm Beach County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Selection Committee agreed to purchase the Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area with County environmentally sensitive lands bond funds. The County purchased the site from the Gran Central Corporation for \$4.5 million in December 1999.



Welcome to one of Palm Beach County's natural treasures! The Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area preserves and protects scrub habitat - one of Florida's most endangered natural communities. The natural area's scrub and scrubby flatwoods habitats have been greatly modified by human activities, including fire exclusion, off-road vehicle traffic, land clearing, road construction, and illegal dumping.

# Unqnpq Scrub Photo Album

<p>Coachwhip (<i>Masticophis flagellum</i>)</p>	<p>Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)</p>	<h2>Mammals</h2> <p>Eastern Gray Squirrel (<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>)</p> <p>Virginia Opossum (<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>)</p>
<p>Green Anole (<i>Anolis carolinensis</i>)</p>	<p>Six-lined Racerunner (<i>Cnemidophorus sexlineatus</i>)</p>	<p>Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)</p> <p>Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)</p>
<p>Queen (<i>Danaus geryon</i>)</p>	<p>Halloween Pennant (<i>Celithemis eponina</i>)</p>	<p>Northern Cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)</p> <p>Killdeer (<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>)</p>
<p>Eastern Pondhawk (<i>Erythemis simplicicollis</i>)</p>	<p>Crows (<i>Tibicen sp.</i>)</p>	<p>Pileated Woodpecker (<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>)</p> <p>American Kestrel (<i>Falco sparverius</i>)</p>
<p>Paintedleaf (<i>Poinsettia cyathophora</i>)</p>	<p>Saw Palmetto (<i>Serenoa repens</i>)</p>	<p>Beggaricks (<i>Bidens alba</i>)</p> <p>Spurred Butterfly Pea (<i>Centrosema virginianum</i>)</p>
<p>Love Vine (covering Florida Rosemary) (<i>Cassytha filiformis</i>)</p>	<p>Gopher Apple (<i>Licania michauxii</i>)</p>	<p>Netted Pawpaw (<i>Asimina reticulata</i>)</p>
<h2>Plants</h2>	<h2>Insects</h2>	<h2>Birds</h2>
<h2>Reptiles</h2>	<h2>Amphibians</h2>	<h2>Mammals</h2>

## Rules and Regulations



**Prohibited on the Site:**  
 Smoking  
 Hunting  
 Firearms  
 Feeding wildlife  
 Alcoholic beverages  
 Pets or domestic animals  
 Bicycles or motor vehicles  
 Collecting plants or animals

Use only existing trails.  
 This is a "no trash" area.  
 All items taken in must be taken out.

The natural area is open from sunrise to sunset, seven days a week, including holidays.

There are no toilets or drinking water at this site.

**In an emergency, call 911 or the Lantana Police Department at 561-540-5700.**



Palm Beach County  
 Board of County Commissioners

In accordance with the provisions of ADA, this brochure may be requested in an alternate format.

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## Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area Trail Guide



A Florida Communities Trust  
 Florida Forever Project