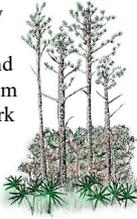


1 Pine Flatwoods

This plant community is dominated by needle-leaved slash pine. It is the highest and driest wildlife habitat found at CREW. The trees get their name from the early settlers who "slashed" the bark of the pines and collected its sap to make turpentine and rosins.

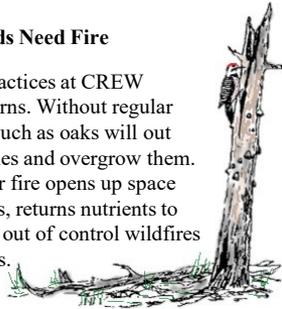


2 The Pond That's Not A Pond

This pond only has water in it during the summer/fall rainy season. It's called a seasonal pond or depressional marsh. The pine flatwoods are dotted with ponds like this one. Notice the wetland plants grow in the middle where it is wetter, while the slash pine and saw palmettos ring the higher and drier edge.

3 Pine Flatwoods Need Fire

Land management practices at CREW include prescribed burns. Without regular fire, hardwood trees such as oaks will out compete the slash pines and overgrow them. Low intensity, regular fire opens up space for wildlife and plants, returns nutrients to the soil, and prevents out of control wildfires by reducing fuel loads.



4 Lots of Animals Use CREW

White-tailed deer, wild hogs, armadillos, bobcats, black bear, and Florida panthers all call CREW home. You may not see the animals, but tracks, scratchings, or scat are all signs the animals have been here. You may hear red-bellied woodpeckers, blue jays, and red-shouldered hawks calling.



5 Downhill Means It's Getting Wetter

Notice anything different about the plant community that surrounds you now? The shade, the cooler air, the sprawling live oak tree limbs overhead all mean you are going downhill. This oak hammock is closer to the marsh so the soil is different, allowing moisture-loving plants to grow. Warblers gather here during migration and Florida's state butterfly, the zebra longwing, can often be seen flying by.



6 The Corkscrew Marsh: Land Protecting Water

Look out over the 5,000-acre sawgrass marsh that is the headwaters of the Imperial River. This expanse of land holds water until it flows southwest and south, eventually ending up in Estero Bay or the western Everglades. This marsh and its surrounding wetlands provide water for wildlife as well as people.

7 Florida's Aquifers Store Water

The CREW lands sit atop the Floridan aquifer system. The aquifer is a layer of porous limestone rock that holds water in its numerous crevices. Undeveloped land allows rainfall to percolate into the aquifer and replenish our drinking water. The marsh receives most of the 55 inches of annual rainfall in the summer and fall, so depending on what time of year you are here, you may see water or the marsh may appear dry.



8 The Liquid of Life

Sawgrass is not the only living thing that depends on the marsh's water. It also provides a safe place for alligators, otters, apple snails, dragonflies, herons, and egrets to feed, nest, and raise their young. Vultures, snail kites, hawks, and swallow-tailed kites can often be seen circling the marsh.

9 CREW Is Rich with Wildflowers

April is the peak of wildflower season at CREW, but you can find something blooming any time of year. Look for arrowhead and pickerelweed in the marsh and lobelia, tickseed, and goldenrod where it is dry. Slow down and search for subtle ground orchids growing along the edges of the trail.



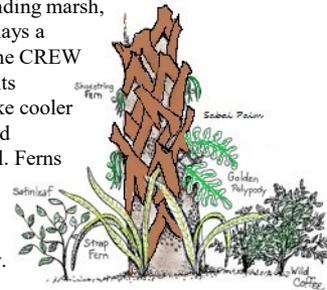
10 A Forested River

This boardwalk crosses a slough, a shallow forested river. During the wet season water flows very slowly between the spreading bases of these pop ash trees. Air plants clinging to the trees' branches use their roots only to hang on. They get all the moisture and nutrients they need by absorbing them through tiny hairs on their leaves.



11 This Jungle Is Really an Island

The hammock, an area of higher ground in a low-lying area, is actually a tree island. Wetter than the pine flatwoods but drier than the surrounding marsh, the hammock plays a unique role in the CREW ecosystem. Plants growing here like cooler temperatures and moister fern soil. Ferns growing on the trees benefit from the higher humidity.



12 This Oak Could Tell a Lot of Stories

If this oak could talk, oh the tales it could tell! This live oak may be 200 years old. It is one of the largest oaks within the CREW Project. The resurrection fern blanketing its branches curls up and turns brown during dry spells, then resurrects its lush green appearance after a rain.



13 This Water Comes From the North

Water in this ditch comes from runoff along Corkscrew Road and flows south into the 5,000-acre sawgrass Corkscrew Marsh. Once there, the marsh plants slow it down and filter the water to make it cleaner. Do you see frogs or fish in the ditch? Sometimes even small alligators will show up here, so mind your step and keep your distance.



14 CREW Is a Watershed With a Purpose

Now that you've visited the Corkscrew Marsh and some of its surrounding habitats, you can see why it is so important to both people and animals. This watershed provides a clean water supply, flood protection, food and shelter for a variety of wildlife, and a peaceful place for people to enjoy natural Florida.