

Branan Field Mitigation Park

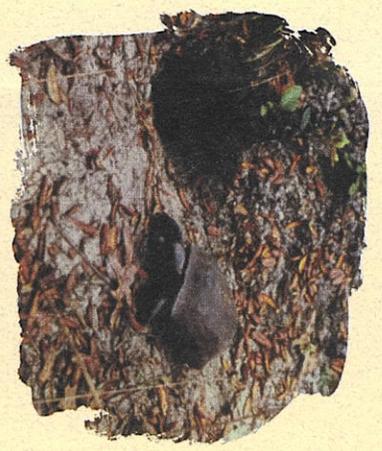
Welcome to Branan Field Mitigation Park! Here, you'll find about three miles of marked trails, open year-round for birdwatching, nature study and hiking.

Be on the lookout for gopher tortoises lumbering through the open woodlands, or perhaps munching on wiregrass or gopher apple. Just off the trail, throughout the park, you can spot the tortoises' large burrows, which offer refuge from hot sun, predators and fire to more than 80 animal species, including mice, snakes, lizards and insects.

And do you notice sandy mounds of soil without entry holes? They are the work of the seldom-seen, southeastern pocket gopher. Huge front feet and long claws adapt this little mammal perfectly for a solitary, subterranean lifestyle.

Notice subtle transitions in habitats as you move along the trail, and how the plant communities change in response to elevation, soil, proximity to water, and prescribed fire (look for signs of charring on the trunks of trees).

On the western loop of the trail, you'll pass through an oak hammock. Throughout the park, keep your eyes open for fox squirrels, Eastern bluebirds, wild turkeys and white-tailed deer—a few of the other special animals that live here.



LEGEND

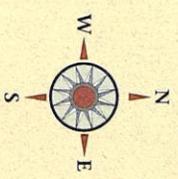
-  Entrance/Parking
-  Trail Head
-  Trails
-  Roads/Fire Lanes
-  Park Boundary



- TRAIL LENGTHS:**
- East Loop 1.8 mi
 - West Loop 2.3 mi
 - Branan Loop 2.8 mi



APPROX 1/2 MILE



PARK LOCATION: FOUR MILES WEST OF ORANGE PARK OFF BRANAN FIELD ROAD (DUVAL AND CLAY COUNTIES)

ABOUT BRANAN FIELD MITIGATION PARK

Branan Field Mitigation Park is a 386-acre preserve managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to protect gopher tortoises and other wildlife listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern.

This park largely consists of regenerating pine flatwoods, with an understory of wiregrass, palmetto and many native wildflowers and grasses. Like much of Florida, Branan Field has been logged several times since the turn of the century, so many of the pines here are quite young. We are using prescribed fires and other management techniques to improve habitat for wildlife.

WHAT IS MITIGATION?

When natural habitats are bulldozed and converted to shopping centers or other intensive uses, wild animals are displaced from their living spaces.

"Mitigation" measures are intended to soften the impacts of development on wildlife. In Florida, developers whose projects adversely impact wildlife listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern can choose to "mitigate" by contributing to a fund that is used to purchase and manage other high quality wildlife habitats, such as mitigation parks.

PARK RULES (ch. 68-17.005 F.A.C.)

Help protect the animals and plants that live here by following a few simple rules:

- Enjoy wildlife from a distance; please don't feed or disturb
- Don't remove wildlife or plants from the park, nor release wildlife here from other places

The following are prohibited:

- weapons/hunting
- pets
- bicycles and motorized vehicles
- fires
- camping

For your safety and comfort, please follow these guidelines:

- Carry drinking water
- Protect yourself from the sun
- Prepare for rain and wet trails
- Avoid contact with poisonous plants and animals

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission does not allow discrimination by race, color, nationality, sex or handicap. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility of this agency, write to:

Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission,
620 South Meridian Street,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600,
or to Office for Human Relations, USEFWS,
Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

TRAIL GUIDE



Branan Field Mitigation Park

WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AREA



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Commission