"A Forest Without Fire"

This area was once **Upland Pine Forest.** The forest you see today is becoming **Upland Mixed Forest** due to the lack of fire. Fire is necessary for pinelands to maintain their open canopy. This piece of old **Upland Pine Forest** is now too small and isolated to be burned.

Some species still remain from the **Upland Pine Forest**.
If you look carefully, you see red oak, winged sumac,
and yellow jessamine.

Look up and look down. Do you see signs of old pine forest?

“Palmetto Paradise”

The saw palmettos are a prominent feature in this **Hydric Hammock**. Water oaks and other moisture loving plants thrive in the high humidity and organic soil layer here.

Birds and other wildlife thrive in the dense canopy of food-bearing plants and the many layers of the **Hydric Hammock**.

Look and listen.
Do you see or hear birds using the **Hydric Hammock**?

“Life in the Wildlife Condo”

Both hardwood and pine trees grow in the **Upland Mixed Forest**. Here magnolias and musclewood flourish with grapevines and a variety of shrubs.

This creates a multi-story shelter for a variety of animals that use the abundant food resources found here. You might see lizards, frogs, birds, or a box turtle here.

As you follow the trail, look for signs of change as you go uphill to the **Upland Pine Forest.**

"Where Does the Water go?"

Sinkholes form when tannic acid "tea" from rain water in the dead leaves eats large holes in the spongy limestone underground. When the water table is low, the pressure pushing up from underground stops and the surface collapses to form a **sinkhole**.

Sinkholes are damaged by curious people or large animals trying to climb down the sides. This damages tender plants and causes the soil to wash away in a process called erosion.

Do you see any evidence of erosion here?

"A Wetland in Disguise"

This area is slowly becoming a wetland. Human change of the topography (the lay of the land) has changed the hydrology (how water behaves) in this section of **Upland Mixed Forest**. As water collects in this depression, some of the trees and vegetation will die off and other wetland plants will replace them.

Come back to visit as the seasons change to see how the wetland develops!

“When your neighbor is a park”

Many of Gainesville’s Nature Parks are part of the urban interface. This term describes natural places that are in the urban (city) setting.- These pockets of natural Florida are welcome homes and rest stops for migrating wildlife. They must endure impacts from the surrounding city, like invasive exotic species, pets and pollution.

We all must work together to keep our natural places safe and healthy for wildlife, our spirits, and for future generations.

What can you do for your natural neighbors?