

# Natural Communities of Morningside



Natural Community - group of plants, animals, and other organisms that share an environment. Soils, moisture, climate, and fire frequency shape the natural community. The following seven Natural Communities seen at Morningside Nature Center are typical of Alachua County.

## Mesic (Moist)

### Flatwoods -

pine forests with thick groundcover, a high water table causes periodic flooding.

Frequent fires reduce oak and shrub growth and trigger herb and grass reproduction.



### Longleaf Sandhill -

a savannah of longleaf pines.

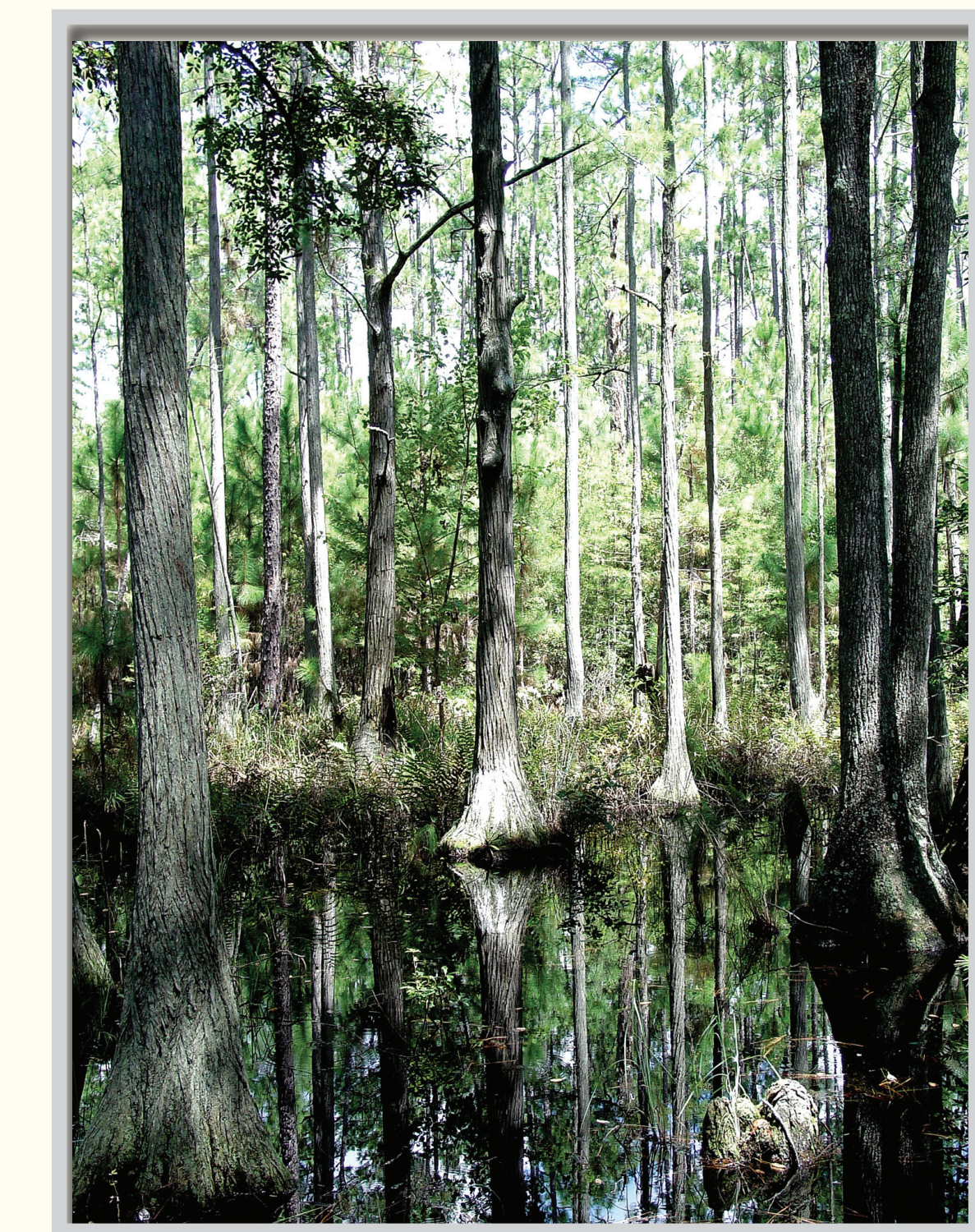
Frequent fires here prevent oak dominance. This community is an excellent home for burrowing animals such as gopher tortoises and pocket gophers.



## Hydric (Wet)

Flatwoods - pine forests with slash pine, herbs, and grasses. A layer of clay holds water for long periods during the rainy season.

Frequent fires prevent hydric flatwoods from becoming hardwood forests.



### Dome Swamp -

a round depression in the Flatwoods, forested with cypress trees

The Dome appearance occurs when the tallest trees are located in the center of the depression with smaller trees along the edges.



### Basin Swamps -

large wetlands with wet peat soils supporting Pond Cypress and Swamp Tupelo trees and other wetland plants. Wildlife often seek water and shelter in basin swamps.



### Depression Marshes -

small round, temporary wetlands in the Flatwoods dominated by grasses, herbs and shrubby plants.



## Seepage stream -

Moccasin Creek is a shallow seepage stream that floods from heavy rains. Rainwater and groundwater seepage is carried to Lake Forest Creek and eventually to Newnan's Lake.



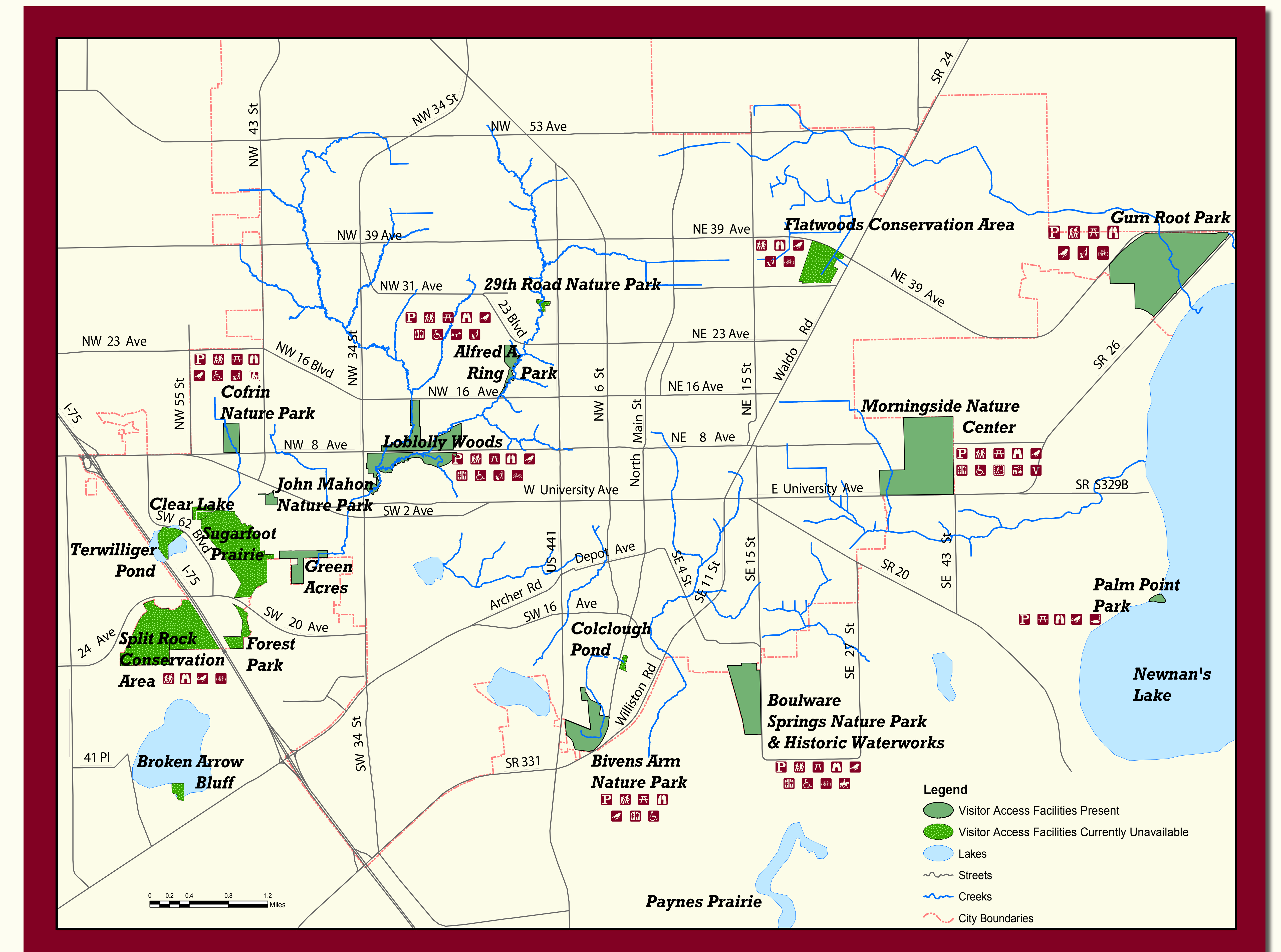
Prescribed fire is a tool used to manage and restore natural communities at Morningside.



## Discover Gainesville's Natural Treasures

Gainesville's Nature Parks are located throughout the city offering activities and programs about this unique part of Florida.

There are lots of ways to get involved with your nature parks, just ask a staff member, visit our website, [www.natureoperations.com](http://www.natureoperations.com), or call 352-334-2170 for more information!



International Symbol Key: **P** Parking **🚶** Hiking **🏠** Picnic area  
**🦋** Watchable Wildlife **🐦** Birding **🚻** Restrooms **♿** Wheelchair Accessible  
**🚲** Bike Trail **📖** Interpretive Trail **👤** Nature Study Area **🏠** Visitor Center  
**🎣** Bank Fishing **🎮** Playground **🐕** Leashed Pets **🐎** Horse Trail