

Sawmill Slough Preserve Expansion Proposal



The Sawmill Slough Preserve is a living laboratory which not only promotes student and faculty research and education, but also, serves as a safe harbor and protects a unique biodiversity within a developing urban island environment. Many students choose UNF not just for the academic environment, but for the surrounding natural environment as well. The natural habitats and wildlife that reside on campus foster education and greatly enhance the experience of UNF students. The recommended expansion areas are fundamental in fulfilling the mission of the Preserve to encourage natural biodiversity, and the values of the University, such as "community engagement" and "responsibility to the natural environment." The Preserve helps to make students; faculty and staff feel that there truly is "No one like you. No place like this."



- Loftin Trails
- UNF Boundary
- Existing Sawmill Slough Preserve
- Gopher Ridge Expansion
- Loftin Trails Expansion
- Wildlife Corridor Expansion



Protecting this sandhill habitat ensures the survival of a large population of gopher tortoises, wildflower diversity, and one of the most popular nature trails. Destroying this habitat undermines years of restoration efforts conducted in the area, 20+ years of gopher tortoise research by Biology faculty and students, educational programs, and threatens the quality of water and habitat in adjacent areas.

- ≈75% of the biodiversity in the Preserve
- 20+ years of gopher tortoise research (most long-term study of the species)
- 5+ years of prescription burns and invasive plant control
- Biology curricula, Eco-adventures education programs, community events



The Robert W. Loftin Nature Trails were designated a National Recreational Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1978 through efforts of UNF students and faculty. The nature trails and surrounding natural areas are one of the highlights of student life on campus. The recommended area for expansion is the heart of the nature trails and connects all contiguous loops. Without this area the trail system would be gutted.

- Originally maintained by Dr. Robert W. Loftin and John Golden for over 20 years
- Utilized by students, faculty, education programs, community organizations
- Connects main trail loops



This area provides connectivity for wildlife and is the only underpass access on all surrounding roadways. If this area is not protected the risks of impeding gene flow between populations and chances of roadkill events increase. This is an active wildlife monitoring area as part of the Campus Natural Assets Inventory (CNAI).

- Connectivity between UNF Preserve and Skinner property
- Wildlife monitoring for CNAI
- Contains a loop of the Goldenrod trail through wetlands

Proposed by the
**UNF Environmental Center and
 UNF Sustainability Committee**
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