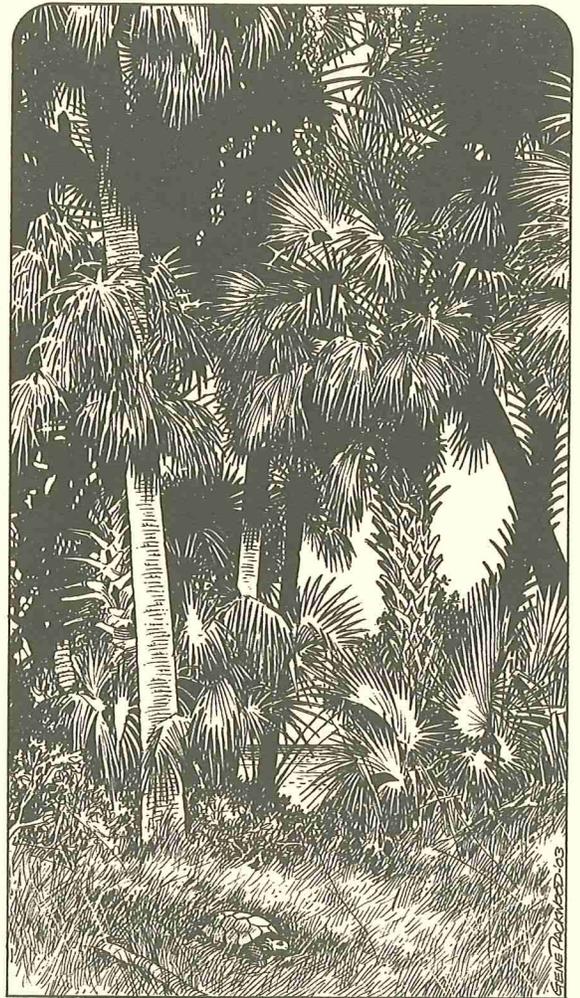


# SABAL BLUFF PRESERVE

LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA



**LCWA**  
 Lake County  
**WATER AUTHORITY**  
 107 North Lake Avenue  
 Tavares, FL 32778  
 (352) 343-3777  
 www.lcwa.org

Lake County  
**WATER AUTHORITY**

# SABAL BLUFF PRESERVE

The Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) accepted Sabal Bluff Preserve as a donation from the Arthur (Buddy) Bourlay III Trust. This 55-acre parcel and its companion parcel, the Bourlay Historic Nature Park in Leesburg, were given to the citizens of Lake County to be used as public parks in perpetuity. These properties donated to the LCWA's Land and Preservation Program brings the amount of lands under protection to approximately 6,600 acres. Of which, 71% are wetlands and the remaining 29% are uplands. Objectives of this program are to conserve the unique and irreplaceable natural resources by protecting the lands containing such diversity and to utilize these conservation lands for compatible public recreational activities. Long-term protection by LCWA will ensure the environmental health of the property and provide compatible recreational use for the residents of Lake County for years to come.

Prior to LCWA's taking ownership of the property, the site was used to grow citrus and slash pine. Land alterations and impacts to the upland communities have allowed the site to be invaded by exotic and aggressive or *invasive* species of plants such as lantana, asparagus ferns, and paper mulberry trees. The LCWA maintains a program of control and eradication.

## **BOURLAY TRAIL – 0.41 mi. (blue)**

This trail starts from the main parking area, and ends at the Bourlay monument on Lake Griffin. A shady canopy consisting of cedar,

oak and slash pine welcomes the visitor. The trail winds through the slash pine planted area. Staff has instituted a prescribed burn program and visitors may notice scorching on some of the pine tree trunks. The burn program allows staff to control the aggressive lantana through natural methods and maintains a manageable understory to protect against wildfires. As the trail continues to the west, visitors may notice the Zebra longwing butterflies attracted to the passionflower also known as maypop vines.

## **LAKE GRIFFIN TRAIL – 1.02 mi. (red)**

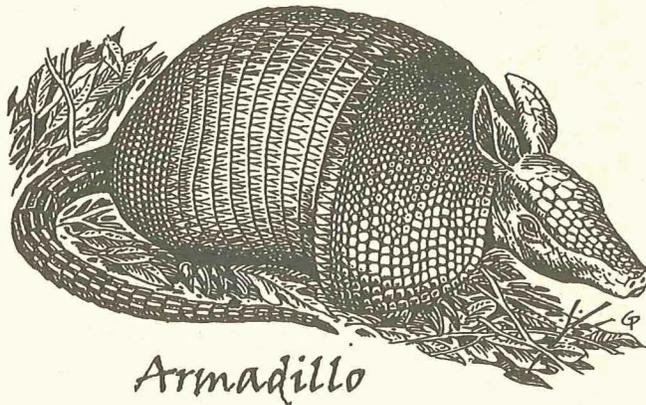
This loop trail runs around the perimeter of the property. As the trail runs parallel to Lake Griffin it provides visitors with the most spectacular views of the lake. Towards the southwest of the property, along the shore, visitors will note that the land is at the same level or elevation as the lake. As visitors move in a northeasterly direction the trail increases in elevation and is farther from the water. This elevated area or bluff is a unique feature within the Preserve and on Lake Griffin. Not only does the bluff provide a nice view of Lake Griffin, but also the geological effect of the bluff supports a type of microclimate allowing for ferns and aquatic plants to thrive in this unique environment. Unfortunately, some of the plants that inhabit this special area are invasive exotics such as asparagus fern and wandering Jew. Another unique aspect of this property has been the temperature buffer provided by the lake and bluff for the exotic fruit trees planted by the previous owner, Mr. Arthur "Buddy" Bourlay. Fruit trees such as avocado, key lime, banana, guava, and papaya reside side by side with natives such as cypress, hickory and cedar trees. The buffering effects of the lake have allowed these cold sensitive fruit trees to survive the winter freezes. The LCWA has undertaken restoration projects on the shoreline, bluff, and

uplands to revitalize the native communities that might have existed on the Sabal Bluff Preserve prior to human settlements. A shoreline project focused on removing invasive exotics and replanting with native wetland vegetation.

The Lake Griffin Trail follows along the edge of the forested wetlands. The wetlands represent the least-impacted community on-site. The hydric hammock contains a mix of bald cypress, swamp tupelo, red maple, and loblolly bay. Peering into the wetlands, one can see the stately buttressed tree known as swamp tupelo or black gum. The buttressing allows the tree to be stable in wet soils. Fruits from the trees provide food for birds and other animals, as well as materials for nesting and cover. Another favorite of hydric or wet communities is the loblolly bay. This attractive flowering tree loves moist, acidic soils. The large, white fragrant flowers bloom in spring and early summer. Alongside these trees are a variety of plants such as bracken, royal and swamp ferns. The wild taro located along the perimeter of the hydric hammock was brought to America from Africa as a food crop for slaves. This invader is under constant control by the LCWA.

#### **HAMMOCK TRAIL – 0.07 mi. (green)**

The Hammock Trail runs between the Bourlay Trail and the Lake Griffin Trail as it



skirts along the wetlands. It traverses the planted slash pines that will be harvested in the future to provide income for the management of the property and to replant longleaf pine which is more appropriate for this type of habitat.

#### **WIREGRASS TRAIL – 0.22 mi. (yellow)**

The Wiregrass Trail also connects the Bourlay Trail and the Lake Griffin Trail. It runs between the area of planted pines and a large grassy field which was once planted with citrus. The Water Authority has created sandhill restoration plots in the grassy field in order to reintroduce native species that would have been found here prior to the agricultural activities. These plots are mostly wiregrass, the dominant groundcover in sandhill communities, as well as other woody and herbaceous species.

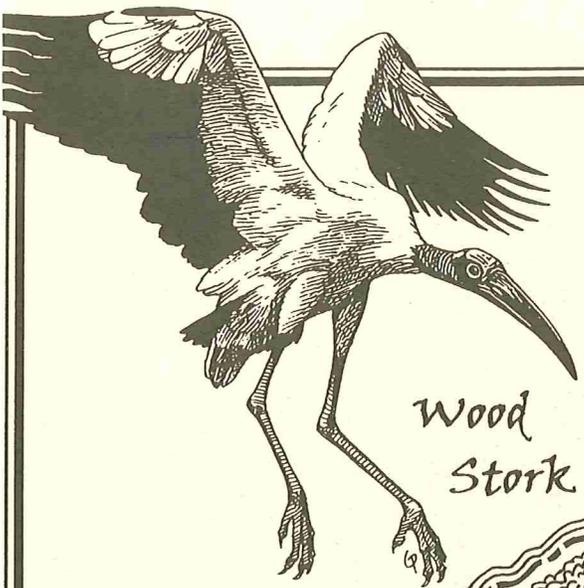
A kayak rack is located in the southwest corner of the property near Lake Griffin. Kayaks, paddles and flotation vests are available by making prior arrangements through the LCWA office. Sabal Bluff Preserve is one of the stops on Lake County's Blueway Trail, a self-guided paddling trail that takes visitors around the county by water.

Sabal Bluff Preserve is the only LCWA property that allows golf carts. No other unauthorized vehicles are permitted on the Preserve.

**Sabal Bluff Preserve** is open daily from 8:00 a.m. until sunset.

**The following are not allowed** – pets, alcohol and trapping devices; removal of plants, animals, archeological or cultural resources.

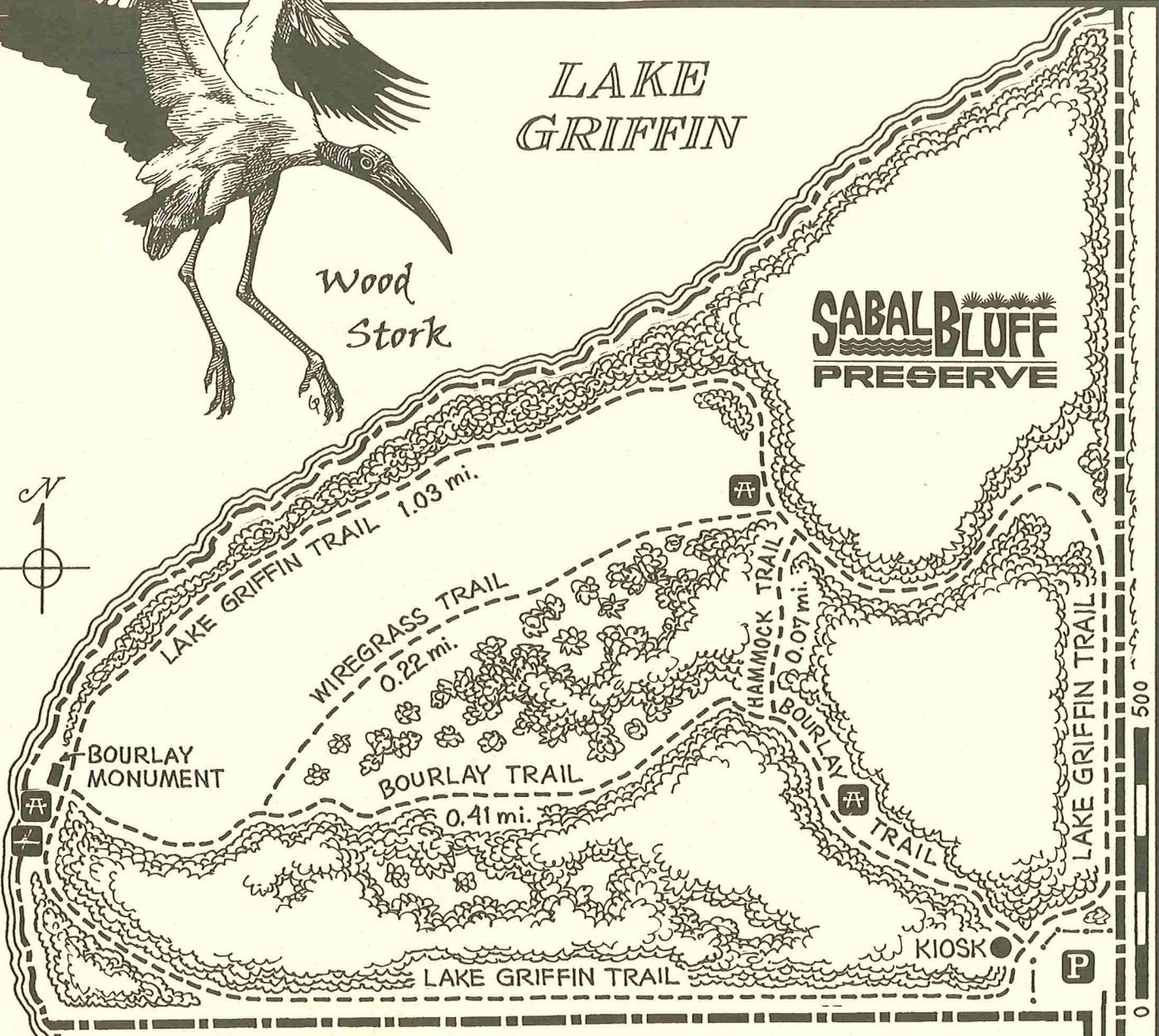
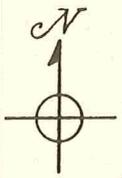
**Visit the Lake County Water Authority** website at [www.lcwa.org](http://www.lcwa.org) for additional recreational opportunities on other Preserves.



Wood Stork

# LAKE GRIFFIN

## SABAL BLUFF PRESERVE



LEGEND		TRAIL MARKERS	
	PRESERVE BOUNDARY		PARKING
	TRAILS		PICNIC AREA
	WOODED AREAS		KAYAK LAUNCH
			BOURLAY TRAIL ..... BLUE
			LAKE GRIFFIN TRAIL ..... RED
			WIREGRASS TRAIL ..... YELLOW
			HAMMOCK TRAIL ..... GREEN

TO GATE AND ACCESS TO CR 44 AND US 441.

SEE DETAIL MAP ON BACK COVER.



SCALE IN FEET: 0 500