



Hiking & Birdwatching Information Sheet

The Woodlands Trail Big Sandy Creek Unit of the Big Thicket Preserve

Trail Notes

Located within the Big Sandy Creek Unit of the Big Thicket National Preserve, the Woodland Trail offers hiking loops of 3.3, 4.5, and 5.4 miles. Beginning in an old pine plantation, the trail moves into mature bottomland hardwoods associated with the Big Sandy Creek floodplain. Mature hardwoods such as water oak, basket oak, water tupelo and sweetgum tower overhead. The ground cover is relatively open, consisting of American hornbeam and various hollies. The loop to the north travels through an upland area of loblolly pine, southern magnolia, and American beech.

Mammals commonly seen in the area include White-tailed Deer, Coyote, Bobcat, and Nine-banded Armadillo. Many species of amphibians and reptiles inhabit these woods, including Marbled Salamander, Speckled Kingsnake, and Coral Snake.

Different bird species abound within the upland and bottomland habitats traversed by the trail. Look and listen for Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers in the bottomlands. Also look for Blue Grosbeak, Painted and Indigo Buntings, and Yellow-breasted Chat in the open fields and Prairie Warblers in the pine stands. Look for dragonflies such as Needham's Skimmer, Great Blue Skimmer, and Black Saddlebags scattered about the pond area. Butterflies which can be seen near the trail include Giant Swallowtail, Silvery Checkerspot, and Red Admiral.

Directions

From Polk County Courthouse (Intersection of Hwy 59 Business and Highway 190)

Go East 12.5 miles on Hwy 190 to FM 1276; Turn right (South); Drive 3.3 miles; Turn left at the Big Thicket Preserve and Prairies and Pineywoods signs