

Sunday Oct 20, 2024

Sun-LGS Lower Green Swamp

Meet at Lower Green Swamp, 3536 E Knights Griffin Rd, Plant City, FL 33565

Time: 7:30 am to 11:30 am

Limited to 20 participants, plus 2 wheelchairs. No parking fees. Trip fee \$30

Leaders: Rebecca Winch 813-210-7019 Hillsborough County CELM, Charlie Fisher 813-495-7734

Bring water, snacks, hat, and insect repellent might be helpful. Some parts are shaded, but a lot is sunny. You'll be on an open wagon with no cover.

This is a long (about 6 miles) flat ride out to some of the backside of the preserve that walkers often don't get to! Lower Green Swamp Preserve was once a working cattle ranch, now being restored to native habitat by Hillsborough County's environmental lands staff. You will visit only a tiny portion of the 12,800 acres of this preserve, but they are glorious! From the parking area the trail crosses a grassland where Eastern Towhees whistle and bobwhites scurry in the early hours, Loggerhead Shrikes snag grasshoppers, and eagles perch on the power poles. Eastern Bluebirds and Red-headed Woodpeckers share the open wooded and pine areas with vireos and Common Yellowthroats. After crossing Itchepackesassa Creek you'll enter an open pine flatwoods where Sandhill Cranes, turkeys, and Bachman's Sparrows rule the roost. At the far side there is a large wetland with Purple Gallinules, Anhingas and Wood Ducks. Past that the drive crosses open grasslands, then into more pine and oak hammock. The trail loops back and follows the creek along an oak hammock dripping with Spanish moss to return to the bridge and then the parking area. Barred Owls and Wood Ducks are sometimes seen along the creek, and of course any migrating warbler will enjoy the insect life it offers. County staff overseeing the restoration will lead the tour to explain and showcase the restoration, while the bird leader will be pointing out the birds seen and heard along the route.

Directions from Tampa area:

Take I-4 East to Exit 21. Turn Left/North onto Alexander St., which is Rt 39.

Continue North on Rt 39 for 3.3 miles, to Knights Griffin Rd.

At stop light turn Right/East onto Knights Griffin Rd. Continue 3.8 miles to parking lot for Lower Green Swamp Preserve on Left.

Do not use the Google Maps directions for Lower Green Swamp unless you specify the Knights Griffin Parking area!

