



MYAKKA RIVER STATE PARK
SEPTEMBER 2018
EDITION 1, VOLUME 1



THE DRENCHED, DRY PRAIRIE?

Myakka River State Park has large expanses of a rare and gorgeous ecosystem: the Florida Dry Prairie. Filled with saw palmetto, grasses, wildflowers, and cabbage palms, the Florida Dry Prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey, “Dry prairie can be thought of as the endpoint along a forested to treeless continuum of flatwoods to savanna landscapes.”¹

While the lack of trees and evidence of fire gives a barren impression of these scrub-dominated lands, the Florida Dry Prairie is bursting with life and biodiversity. Barred owls, Caracaras, and the endangered Grasshopper Sparrow all find refuge in these treeless oases. Diamondbacks race through

the brush as gopher tortoises dig their underground homes in the fertile soil.

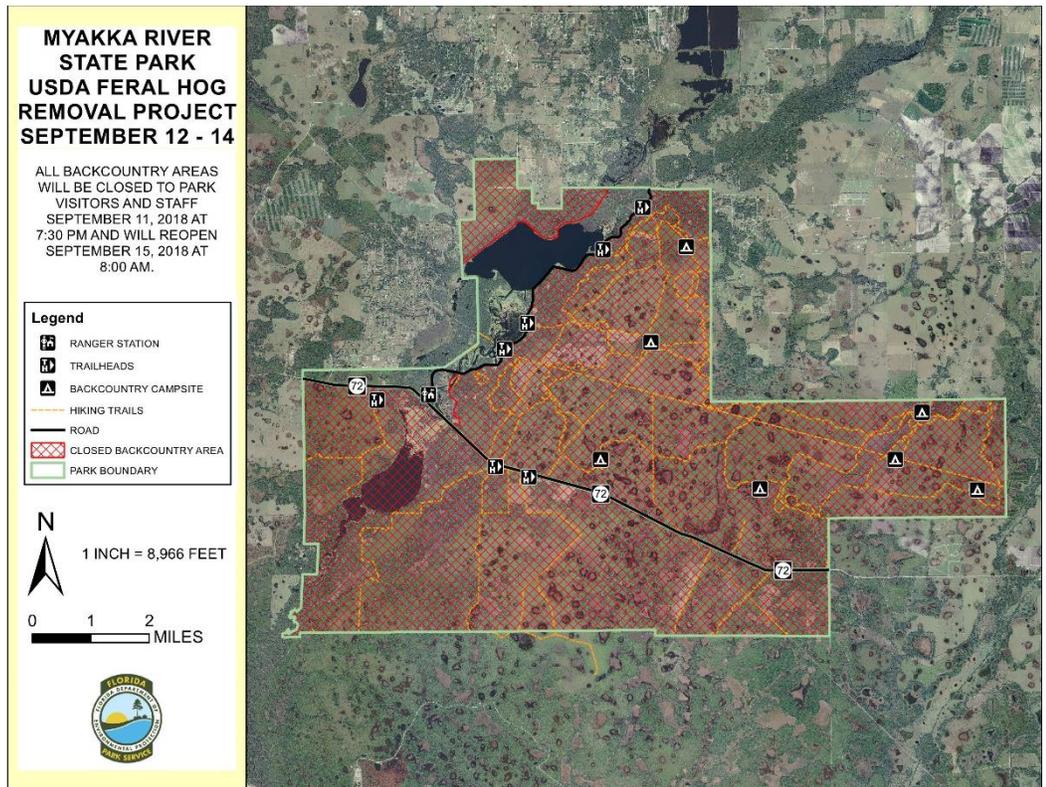
Those visiting the park this month will notice one peculiar aspect of the Florida Dry Prairie: it isn't very dry! Summertime rain make the ecosystem name seem like a misnomer. Summer is the high-water season for the dry prairie. The low, flat plains become saturated and water levels rise above the ground level.

Plants and animals rely on this fluctuation of water levels for survival. Swamp hyacinth blooms, and many animals come closer to our main road, as it can be the only dry spot in the park. Grab a pair of boots and a camera to experience Myakka's drenched, dry prairie!

¹ Multi-Species Recovery Plan for South Florida: “Dry Prairie.” <https://www.fws.gov/verobeach/MSRPPDFs/DPrairie.pdf>

PARK UPDATE: TRAIL CLOSURE

From **September 12th-14th**, the entire backcountry of Myakka River State Park will be closed. The United States Department of Agriculture will be conducting a feral hog removal project, a crucial part of our resource management plan. Feral hogs are an exotic, invasive species, and they cause severe destruction to the Florida Dry Prairie ecosystem. All trails east of the main road and south of State Road 72 will be inaccessible to the public during this scheduled time. The main paved drive and concessionaires will remain open. Please make your recreational plans in accordance with this exciting environmental project!



Species of the Month: Roseate Spoonbills (*Platalea ajaja*)

While commonly mistaken as the Flamingo, Roseate Spoonbills are an even more peculiar-looking pink bird! Roseate Spoonbills use the shape of their bill to sort through mucky water, seeking insects, small plants, minnows, and crustaceans. Scientists believe that their bright pink plumage is the result of the pigments in the crustaceans they eat.



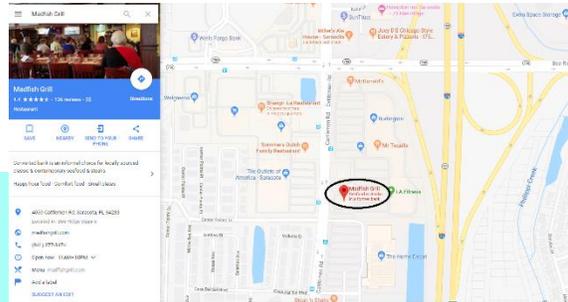
FRIENDS CORNER!

The Friends of Myakka River State Park is proud to announce that it has raised enough funding to build an equipment pole barn! Land management requires a large quantity of expensive equipment. Staff members do everything they can to protect and maintain our equipment; however, Florida weather is less cooperative. Having a pole barn will extend the life of all equipment and save money on repairs.



The Friends have provided funding for the Canopy Walkway (pictured here), the Bird Walk, the Palm Log Restoration Project, and many other vital purchases and activities for the park. They run an annual concert series and create programs to help restore natural habitats throughout Myakka River State Park.

Interested in joining? Fill out the bottom portion of this page and mail it to the Friends of Myakka River State Park, 13208 SR 72, Sarasota FL 34241. The Friends meet on the second Monday of the month at Madfish Grill. This month's meeting is on September 10th at 4:30 p.m. Next month's will be on October 8th at 4:30 p.m.

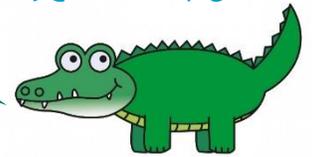


Volunteer at Myakka!

Myakka River State Park is always looking for volunteers to help us in our mission of protecting the environment, providing recreational opportunities, and educating the public about the natural world. A few hours a week can make a huge difference for the plants and animals that call Myakka their home. Whether you like battling invasive species, helping visitors, or anything in between, MRSP needs your help!

For information on volunteering, please visit the [Florida State Parks Volunteer Page](#). All applications can be submitted through the [Volunteer Portal](#). You can also contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle Keirse, at (941) 373-7839 or Michelle.Keirse@floridadep.gov.

Thank you!



Learn more at www.FriendsOfMyakkaRiver.org

YES! I/WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP BY JOINING THE FRIENDS OF THE MYAKKA RIVER!

DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: INDIVIDUAL (\$25) FAMILY (\$35) CORPORATE (\$100)

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP: INDIVIDUAL (\$350) FAMILY (\$500)

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

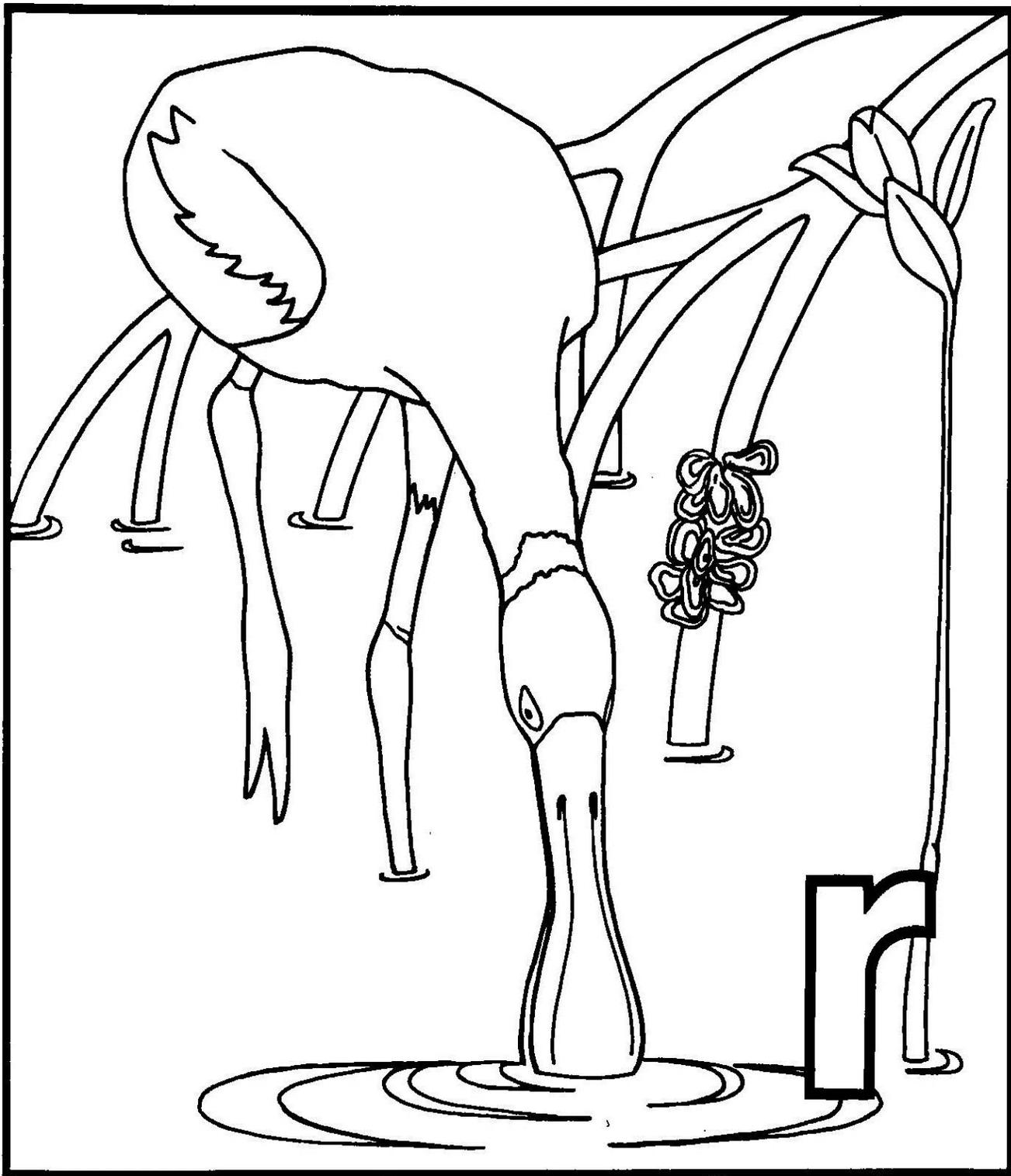
PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

OPTIONAL: I/WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN ADDITIONAL DONATION OF \$ _____

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KIDS' CHALLENGE!

Kids of all ages can compete in our monthly Kids' Challenges! Our species of the month is the **Roseate Spoonbill**. Come to the park, see one of these beautiful birds, color the picture, and write a new fact you learned about them! Entries must be delivered to the Ranger Station by the end of September. The winner in each age group will receive a one-day FREE pass to a Florida State Park! Please write your name, phone number, email address, and age on the back.



I learned that: