



Seminole State Forest

LESS THAN AN HOUR'S DRIVE from Orlando, Seminole State Forest boasts more than 25,000 acres of natural springs, creeks, bottomlands, swamps, sand hills and beautiful pine woodlands. The forest attracts people for its abundant beauty and recreation opportunities. Adjacent to the Wekiva River Preserve State Park and Ocala National Forest, the Seminole State Forest plays a critical role in the largest contiguous undeveloped landmass in central Florida. Abundant sources of water, including Blackwater Creek, Lake Norris and the Wekiva River, are central to diverse ecosystems within Seminole and support the many different plant and animal species that thrive within the forest.

In May of 2007, extremely dry conditions set the stage for an intense wildfire that started north of Black Water Creek and ran south, jumping the creek. The Lee Fire burned approximately 2,200 acres, and the intensity severely damaged both mature and immature pine forest. Reforestation after these devastating wildfires is a critical part of forest restoration, which is one of the ecosystem management principles of the Florida Forest Service.

In late February, 102,000 containerized longleaf pine trees were planted by hand on more than 140 acres. The plantings not only covered the burn scar from the Lee Fire but also helped to restore about 30 acres lost to a pine beetle infestation from 2007. Reforestation following devastating wildfires and insect damage is a critical part of land management for the Florida Forest Service. This vital landscape provides habitat for several rare and threatened species such as the Florida black bear, scrub jay, gopher tortoise and bald eagle.

