

The Sea Pines Forest Preserve

"Our Natural Treasure"



Over fifty years ago, it was the vision of Charles Fraser that made Sea Pines what it is today. Realizing the land's potential uses other than for timber and private hunting preserves, Fraser began his quest to figure out how to develop and improve the land for human enjoyment *without disturbing the delicate balance between the environment and its inhabitants.*

Fraser enlisted landscape architect Hideo Sasaki who created the master plan for Sea Pines. Approximately one-fourth of the land was dedicated to open space, including the 605 acre Sea Pines Forest Preserve, a tract of land that was specifically set aside for its natural beauty and wildlife habitats.

The land has been sculpted by changing sea levels over the past 15,000 years and traces of the first inhabitants still remain. The Indian Shell Ring is 4,000 years old and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since 1700, the preserve was used to grow rice, indigo and cotton. As recently as the 1950's hunting and timber harvesting occurred in the Forest Preserve. In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew impacted thousands of trees. Extensive work is ongoing with a special emphasis on improving habitat and wildlife diversification.

The 605 acres of land are now a place of peace and tranquility for owners and guests. Covenants protect the Forest Preserve and prevent homes or commercial buildings from being erected on the land. It is the largest tract of undeveloped land on Hilton Head Island and provides a valuable oasis of habitat for wildlife as well as outdoor recreation for humans. Bird watching is a popular activity. The National Audubon Society designated the Forest Preserve an Important Bird Area in 1998. Other popular activities in the Forest Preserve include fishing, hiking, picnicking and photography.

Points of Interest

The Warner W. Plahs Wildflower Field by Lake Thomas blooms from March to June. At Old Lawton Rice Field, view marshes and wildlife from a boardwalk and two observation decks. The boardwalk through Vanishing Swamp explores a secluded forest, where surface water rises and falls through the seasons. Fish Island, the center of the Forest Preserve, offers prime views of the lakes for picnickers.

Guided Activities

A percentage of the revenue generated by the following services goes back to the Forest Preserve. These and other user fees (fishing and group outing permits) help offset the costs associated with operating the Forest Preserve. We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy this wild and wonderful place! Reservations may be required.

Alligator and Wildlife Boat Tours (843) 671-4386

H2O Sports provides guided tours of the pristine lakes of the Forest Preserve. Get a close-up view of Hilton Head's indigenous plant and animal life including native American Alligators.



Fishing and Wagon Tours (843) 842-1979



The Sea Pines Resort Recreation Department hosts several eco-adventures that discover the hidden treasures of the Forest Preserve. Relax on a wagon ride, catch a catfish in Lake Joe and learn about the 4,000 year old Indian Shell Ring or the 18th century Lawton Rice Field.

Trail Rides (843) 671-2586

Lawton Stables offers one-hour guided trail rides for adults and children eight years and older. Come experience the Forest Preserve from horseback while being immersed in the natural beauty of the Lowcountry. Trails wind at a leisurely pace beneath a canopy of moss covered oaks and are suitable for novice riders. Open 6 days a week.



Rules and Regulations

1. The Forest Preserve is open sunrise to sunset.
2. No smoking or open fires are permitted.
3. Feeding or harassing alligators is illegal and could result in the animal's removal.
4. Admire nature from a distance. Please stay on trails and boardwalks at all times; always remain aware of your surroundings.
5. The stocked fishing lakes in the Forest Preserve are reserved for Sea Pines property owners, their guests and resort guests. Fishing permits are required and can be obtained for a fee at the CSA Security Office located at 175 Greenwood Drive. Minnow bait is not allowed. Visit SeaPinesLiving.com/fishing for more detail.
6. Bicycles are not permitted on the walking trails. Please park your bicycles at the locations provided.
7. The picnic area on Fish Island is equipped with a shelter, picnic tables, grills, drinking water and portable toilets. Permits for group outings must be obtained by calling the CSA office at (843) 671-1343.
8. Swimming is not permitted in the Forest Preserve.

Contribute to the Cause

The Sea Pines Forest Preserve Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization. Your support allows us to fulfill our mission and insures this valuable and unique Sea Pines' gem is given the care it deserves. Contributions are tax deductible and can be sent to:

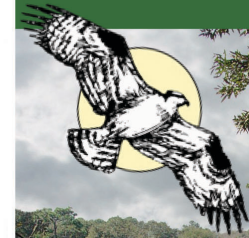
Sea Pines Forest Preserve Foundation
175 Greenwood Drive | Hilton Head Island, SC 29928

Being safe is always being aware of your surroundings!

- When walking near a body of water, always assume there is an alligator present; walk a safe distance from the water's edge; keep pets on a leash.
- When ascending a hill or approaching a blind curve, always assume there is an alligator sunning at its base or crossing your path; stay vigilant.
- When walking among trees, always assume there is a snake under the log or pile of leaves; wear closed shoes; walk around logs.

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Map & Activity Guide



HILTON HEAD ISLAND

32.1415, -80.7762



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Map Legend

HABITATS:



FACILITIES:



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

For a fire or medical emergency dial 911

For all other emergencies call
Sea Pines Security @ 843-671-7170

The road / trail intersections and attractions in the Forest Preserve are uniquely numbered. If possible during an emergency, describe your location by reporting the number that is closest to you.

