

## Dr. P. Phillips Community Park

8249 Buenvista Woods Boulevard  
Orlando, Florida 32836

(407) 254-9038

Summer: 8am - 8pm

Winter: 8am - 6pm

Monday - Sunday

The LongHorn Steakhouse Loop Trail at Dr. P. Phillips Park is located Southwest of Orlando near the major Central Florida attractions. We welcome you to visit during normal operating hours. Please call or write our office for more information.

- Please do not remove, harass or feed wildlife
- Collection of plants prohibited



We embrace the power of diversity. Orange County Parks and Recreation does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of age, race, gender, national origin or disability. ANY SPECIAL NEEDS PLEASE CALL.



# Interpretive Trail Guide



This trail has been refurbished thanks to the financial support of the Darden Foundation and the involvement of LongHorn Steakhouse.

## PARK AND TRAIL INFORMATION



Named for Dr. Philip Phillips, (January 27, 1874-April 18, 1959) Dr. P. Phillips Community Park opened December of 2007. Dr. Phillips was a prominent businessman and philanthropist active in the Central Florida area. A citrus magnate, at one point he owned more than 5,000 acres and was considered the largest citrus

producer in the world.

Located on the shore of Big Sand Lake, the active portion of Dr. P. Phillips Community Park includes picnic areas, fields for baseball, basketball and soccer and features a playground, splash playground, rental pavilions and a dog park.

The LongHorn Steakhouse Loop features .6 miles of trail meandering through approximately 10 acres of upland habitat including Sand pine scrub and Xeric hammock communities.

This interpretive guide features ten stations, each designed to introduce or familiarize you with the natural community

around you. When you find a marked post, find the corresponding logo in this guide for interpretation of the area, plant or animal you have discovered.

Benches are scattered throughout the trail for rest or reflection and an observation area overlooking Big Sand Lake can be found at the waterfront.

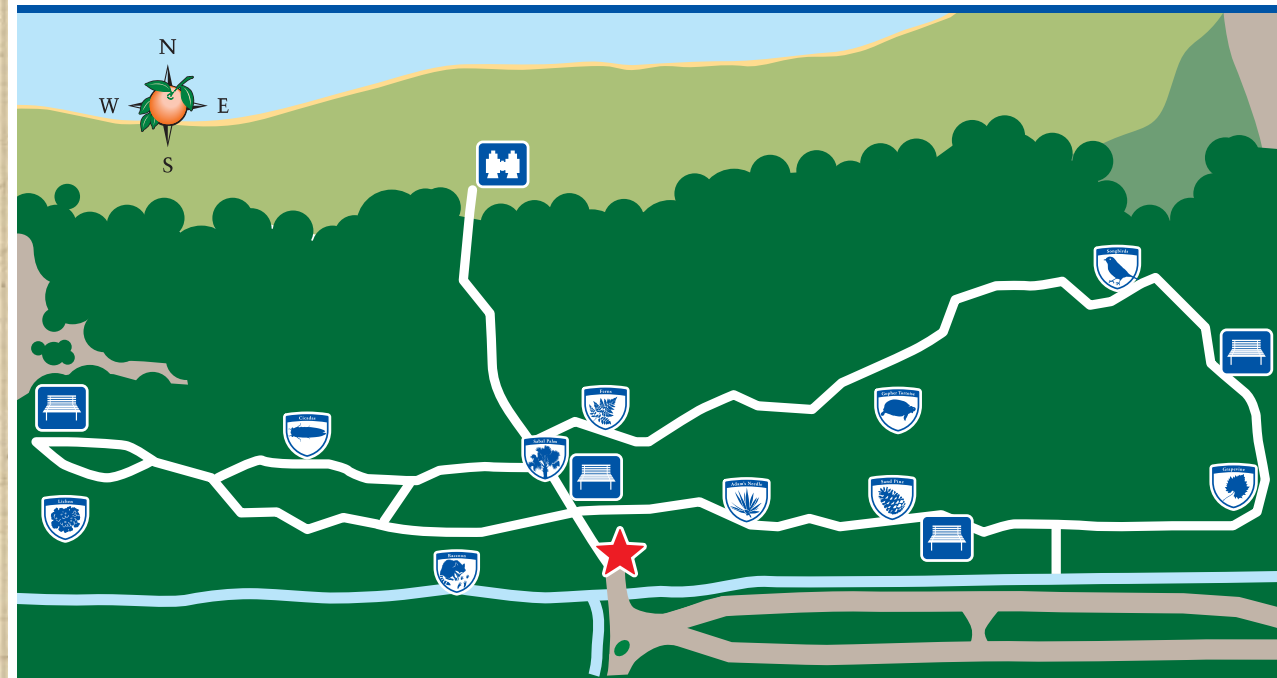
Because the majority of trail is in full sun, carry and drink plenty of water while on the Loop. Sturdy shoes are advised due to sandy terrain, roots and other trip hazards.

A leisurely walk on the entire trail, using this guide to help you, will take approximately 30 minutes.

For your safety and that of the environment around you, please do not collect plants, seeds or flowers. Please do not remove, harass or feed any wildlife. Please take pictures and make memories while enjoying the LongHorn Steakhouse Loop!

**Please recycle unwanted brochures at the trailhead, marked with a star on the map**

## SYMBOLS AND ICONS





## Sabal Palm

The Sabal Palm (*Sabal palmetto*) is Florida's state tree. It is also known as the Cabbage palm.

Cabbage palm is so called because of its edible terminal bud. The bud, also called swamp cabbage, is good both raw and cooked and is commercially canned and sold. Removal of the bud kills the tree because the terminal bud is the only point from which the palm can grow.

The Sabal Palm flowers when many other plants do not, hence, it has become a significant nectar source for bees. The resulting honey is very mild and light in color.

Sabal palms were historically used for making bread meal from the fruit, fronds used to thatch huts and scrubbing brushes and for basket making. Additionally, the trunk was used as wharf pilings (due to their resistance to degradation) and as hollowed-out pipes for carrying water. Perhaps the most important use of Sabal palm is as an ornamental and source of wildlife food. Its annual fruit crop is such that it provides a substantial part of the diet for animals such as deer, bear, raccoon, squirrel, quail and wild turkey.



## Ferns

According to fossil records, ferns appeared on Earth approximately 360 million years ago and are among the oldest living plants on Earth. These ancient plants possess primitive traits. For example, ferns produce spores instead of seeds. Because spores need to land on wet dirt to propagate, Florida's climate and abundant moisture create excellent growing conditions for them.

Tropical storms and winds have transported fern spores to Florida from Caribbean islands resulting in a high diversity of species. Consequently, Florida has more species of ferns than any state except Hawaii. There are an estimated 123 native fern and fern-like species, and at least 21 exotic and hybrid (crossbreeding of two species) species of ferns found in Florida. Florida has 43 species of ferns listed as endangered, seven as threatened, and three as commercially exploited.



## Gopher Tortoises

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) occur in all of Florida's 67 counties but prefer high, dry sandy places like here in at Dr. Phillips Community Park.

They dig burrows, like the one seen here, that average a depth of 6.5 feet and a length of 15 feet. Because the burrow maintains a constant temperature and protects the tortoise from fire and predators, up to 350 other species may seek refuge in the burrow alongside the tortoise!

Burrow openings are half-moon shaped and are the size of the tortoise found within. The sandy area in front of the burrow mouth, where females lay their annual clutch of eggs, is called the apron.

Gopher tortoises have a life expectancy of 40 to 60 years in the wild, however, despite surviving thousands of years as a species, Gopher tortoises are under threats ranging from habitat loss to high levels of predation. In Florida, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has listed them as a threatened species.

It is against the law to kill, harass or destroy gopher tortoises, their eggs or burrows.



## Songbirds

There are 196 species of breeding birds in Florida and over 500 bird species have been documented in the state. Songbirds (better known as passerine birds), are those belonging to the category of perching birds, typically having a well developed vocal organ and the ability to produce elaborate and diverse songs. Passerine birds make up more than half of all bird species.

As you walk the LongHorn Steakhouse Loop, listen for the well developed songs of flycatchers, towhees, swallows, wrens, vireos, warblers, thrashers, mockingbirds and even crows! The majority of songs can be heard in early morning and late afternoon. Calls, while not as musical as songs, are used for communication between birds and are heard throughout the day.

Songbirds burn tremendous amounts of energy as they migrate through Florida via the path of the Atlantic Flyway. They stop in places such as this park where they can rest in sheltered areas where food and water are plentiful. Billions of birds make this trip north each spring and south every fall and protected areas are vital to their survival.



## Grapevine

Native to the Southeastern United States, the muscadine grape (*Vitis rotundifolia*) is a commonly occurring woody vine growing to 40 meters (approx. 131 feet) in length. The leaves are heart shaped, deciduous (lost seasonally) and occur alternately along the stem.

The muscadine has inconspicuous yellow-green flowers from April through June and fruits ripen between July and September. If fruit is present, it is at first green but turns red and then purple to black as it ripens.

Muscadine grapes have been used commercially for making wine beginning in the 16th century. They are tolerant of insects and disease and homeowners can successfully grow this species with little to no maintenance and without spraying damaging pesticides.

In the wild, muscadine grapevines provide wildlife habitat and cover. The vine and fruit is consumed by white-tailed deer, raccoon, squirrel, crows, opossum, quail, coyote and wild turkey.



## Sand Pine

Sand pine (*Pinus clausa*) is found almost exclusively in Florida. Two geographic races are recognized, the Ocala race, found here in Central Florida, and the Choctawhatchee race which occurs in northwest Florida. The Ocala race is distinguished from the Choctawhatchee variety by its pine cones which either remain closed for many years or open only after high-intensity fires or sometimes, high temperatures. The root of the Sand pine's Latin name "clausa" means "closed."

Sand pine is confined to very infertile, well-drained sandy soil where competition from other larger-growing vegetation is minimized by the harsh growing conditions found here. Trees reach an average height from 16 to 33 feet.

Because it is densely branched, Sand pine is unsuitable for wood production, but its pulpwood is commonly used for paper production. They are sometimes used as Christmas trees.

Many native species including Wild turkey, Bobwhite quail, Gray squirrel and Mourning dove eat Sand pine seeds, which can be found on the scales of the cone itself. Look closely—if you can find an open or semi-open cone, pull back on the individual scales and if it has not yet fallen out, you may be able to locate a Sand pine seed!



## Adam's Needle

Adam's needle (*Yucca filamentosa*) is a slow-growing native plant found scattered throughout woods in the southeastern United States. Leaves appear as though they have been shaved because leaf margins bear curved, filamentous threads of leaf tissue. Plants stay small, growing no more than about three feet tall.

Adam's needle looks a little like a small palm, but is actually more closely related to lilies. The leaves of this plant contain the strongest fibers native to North America. Fibers were used to make rope for baskets, fishing nets, fishing line and clothing. The thickened root can be beaten into pulp used for soap, shampoo or used to treat sores on skin. Pounded roots thrown into fishing waters can intoxicate fish, making them easier to catch.

Hummingbirds visit yucca flowers during the day. At night, the fragrant flowers are pollinated only by small, white, female Yucca moths. The yucca dies after flowering and fruiting, but produces offshoots that develop into new plants at the base of the plant.



## Raccoon

Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are found statewide in Florida in ever-increasing numbers. Adult raccoons are two to three feet long and weigh anywhere from 10 to 30 pounds. Males are called boars, females are called sows and young raccoons are called kits. Raccoon life expectancy in the wild is only from 1.8 to 3.1 years.

It is common to see raccoon tracks on the LongHorn Steakhouse Loop—keep your eye out for tracks looking like

tiny human handprints! Raccoons are often found in trees and are normally active after dusk and throughout the night. However, it is not unusual to see them out during the day.

Raccoons are omnivores, feeding on fruits, plant material, eggs, crustaceans, small animals, and garbage. Wild raccoons accustomed to being fed will generally lose their natural fear of humans and seek to move closer to a reliable food source—your house. Once raccoons take up residence in your attic or outbuildings they can become very destructive and difficult to remove. Keeping pet food and garbage secured will keep raccoons away, preventing significant property damage.



## Lichen

Along the LongHorn Steakhouse Loop you will find clusters of a gray-green moss on the ground. It is known as Deer moss (*Cladonia evansii*) but it is not a moss, or a plant, but lichen. Very simply, lichens are an association of fungi and alga or cyanobacterium. Some lichens have the aspect of leaves (foliose lichens); others cover the substrate like a crust (crustose lichens) others adopt shrubby forms (fruticose lichens), and some are gelatinous.

Lichens grow very slowly and large mats take decades to develop. Large carpets of Deer moss indicate that the area has not been burned for a long time. Because they are sensitive to environmental disturbance, lichens are useful in assessing the effects of air pollution, ozone depletion and metal contamination.

Lichens are poikilohydric, meaning they have little control over their hydration. Lichens desiccate and remain dormant (known as cryptobiosis) but can rehydrate when water becomes available again. In this cryptobiotic state, lichens can survive wider extremes of temperature, radiation and drought in the harsh environments they often inhabit.



## Cicadas

In Florida, 19 species of cicada are best known for their loud buzzing calls heard during the day, usually issuing from trees.

Most cicada males produce these calls with timbals (or tymbals), which are drum-like structures on the sides of the cicada abdomen. Female cicadas are mostly mute.

The cicada life cycles from an egg, to nymph to adult stage. All cicada nymphs live in underground burrows where they feed on xylem sap (water and dissolved minerals from woody plant tissue). All cicada nymphs molt four times underground. When the last nymphal instar is ready to molt, it makes its way to the surface, climbs a short distance up a tree trunk or stem, anchors itself with its claws and molts for the fifth time to its adult form. Adult cicadas are strong fliers, are visually alert and they do not bite or sting. Cicadas are a valuable food source for many animals including birds, small mammals and other insects. Newly emerged adults are easily caught and many people around the world eat them, especially the meatier females.