

# STATE FOREST SPOTLIGHT

## *Flowing Creeks*

Belmore State Forest plays an important role in the protection of the Black Creek / Lower St. John's Watershed by providing a recharge area free from future development pressures. Several water systems originate and flow through the forest including Ates, Devil's Den and Bull Creeks.

These creeks, along with their many tributaries, not only help to provide clean water for the citizens of Florida, they also help to provide a natural environment ideal for native flora, fauna and outdoor recreation.

## *Love the state forests? So do we!*

The Friends of Florida State Forests is a direct-support organization of the Florida Forest Service dedicated to ensuring Florida's state forests are available for future generations to enjoy. Make a difference by joining today to help protect Florida's forests.

Membership dues go to the forests for conservation and improvement projects. To join Friends or for more information, visit:

[www.FloridaStateForests.org](http://www.FloridaStateForests.org)



## Things to Know When Visiting Belmore State Forest

- Day use is allowed 1 1/2 hours before sunrise to 1 1/2 hours after sunset.
- Drive only on designated open roads.
- Off-highway vehicles are prohibited .
- Foot traffic, bicycles and horses are welcome on designated trails.
- Creating new roads or trails is prohibited.
- Please take all garbage with you when leaving the forest, where containers are not provided.
- Visitors may be required to pay entrance or recreation use fees in designated areas. Annual Day Use Entrance Passes are available by contacting Belmore State Forest office for information at (904)529-2357.
- Hunting is allowed with proper permit and license in designated areas during appropriate seasons. We encourage all visitors to check the Wildlife Management Area regulations and hunting season dates before visiting the forest at [www.MyFWC.com](http://www.MyFWC.com).

For more information, visit:

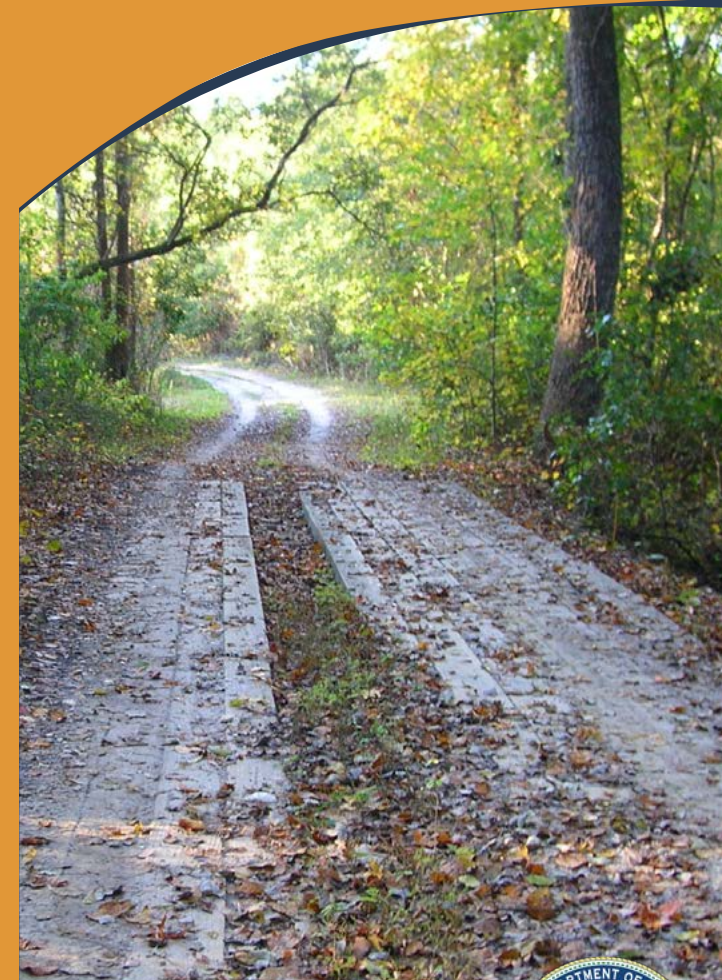
[www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests](http://www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests)

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Florida Forest Service

# Belmore State Forest



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AND CONSUMER SERVICES





# History

Prior to acquisition by the State of Florida, Belmore State Forest was most recently managed for pine timber production. Before timber production, as in much of Northeast Florida, this forest was managed for naval store industries to produce tar, pitch, turpentine and rosin. Evidence of these industries can be seen with the many cat face trees and Herty cups still present in the forest. Cattle, agriculture, and camphor tree farming were additional opportunities that early Floridians practiced on this property.

Currently, Belmore State Forest is comprised of two primary tracts: the Ates Creek Tract and the Satsuma Tract. The Ates Creek Tract was acquired in 2004 under the Northeast Florida Timberlands Project of the Florida Forever Program. The Satsuma Tract, was acquired in 2007 through the St. Johns River Water Management District's Forest Legacy Program.

# Forestry

The goals of the Florida Forest Service are to protect and manage ecosystems, to restore and maintain biological diversity and to integrate public use through multiple-use of the forest resources. Multiple-use resource management and the practice of sustainable forestry provide for the greatest public benefit in perpetuity, while at the same time protecting the values and resources of the land. Sustainable forest management is an important component of how Belmore State Forest is managed. Thinning of overstocked pine stands, in combination with the use of prescribed fire, improves overall forest health while increasing the diversity of groundcover. All harvest operations strictly adhere to Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Silviculture Best Management Practices in order to protect water quality. In addition to the ecological benefits of timber management, the economic benefits are also vital to the economy of local areas.



Bull Creek



Skidder pulling cut trees to the loading deck



Pitcher plant

**For more information contact:**  
**Belmore State Forest**  
**4980 State Road 16 W**  
**Starke, FL 32091**  
**(904) 529-2357**  
**[www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests](http://www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests)**

# Natural Resources

The natural community types present on Belmore State Forest include mesic flatwoods, wet flatwoods, sandhills, bottomland hardwoods, baygalls, dome swamps, and depression marshes. Although most of the areas suitable for pine timber production have been converted to pine plantations, the stream terraces and swamps have remained largely unaltered.

Several named and many unnamed creeks and tributaries can be found on the forest. On the Ates Creek Tract, the namesake creek emerges from a large baygall in the south to flow five miles through the forest. Devil's Den Creek can be found here as well, while Bull Creek and several unnamed tributaries can be found on the Satsuma Tract.

The natural communities found on the forest support a variety of wildlife including: Florida black bear, white-tail deer, gopher tortoise, Sherman's fox squirrel, and a diverse assortment of birds, among other species.

# Recreation

Belmore State Forest provides opportunities for nature-based, outdoor recreation. Some of the more popular activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, bird watching, and fishing. In addition, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has designated the Ates Creek Tract as a Wildlife Management Area for hunting game species.

Three parking areas with trailheads exist on the forest: Coot's Shanty, Huckleberry, and Old Hunt Camp Recreation Areas. Each of these trailheads have developed trails for either hiking, horseback riding, or both. Construction of primitive camping and a wildlife viewing tower is also anticipated in the future. Please check forest kiosks for more information on new and future recreation development.