

STATE FOREST SPOTLIGHT

Goethe Giant

The Goethe Giant, a baldcypress tree nearly nine feet in diameter and more than 900 years old, can be found in the Cow Creek Tract.

As you meander the half-mile trail through natural communities from wet flatwoods to hydric hammock, you will encounter oaks, magnolias and loblolly pine trees. The trail leads to a boardwalk that carries you above the basin swamp community to the massive baldcypress tree.

Goethe State Forest is also home to 31 different orchids that may be spotted along road sides and trails throughout the forest.

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



Things to Know When Visiting Goethe State Forest

- Day use is allowed 1 1/2 hours before sunrise to 1 1/2 hours after sunset.
- Primitive campsites are by reservation only, visit FloridaStateForests.ReserveAmerica.com or call (877) 879-3859.
- Possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- Licensed vehicles are permitted on named and numbered roads designated as open only.
- Off-highway motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles are prohibited.
- Speed limit on all roads within the forest is 30 mph unless posted otherwise.
- Do not obstruct roads, gates or fire lines.
- Removal or destruction of cultural artifacts, plants or animals is prohibited (with the exception of legal game during scheduled hunts).
- Take all trash with you when you leave when a container is not available in the area that you visit.
- Pets must remain on a leash.
- All horses require proof of current negative Coggins test results.
- Horseback riders 16 and younger are required to wear a helmet when riding in the forest.
- Hunting requires a license and permit and is allowed only in designated areas during appropriate seasons. All visitors are encouraged to check the Wildlife Management Area website at www.MyFWC.com for regulations and season dates before visiting the forest.

For more information, visit:

www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests

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Florida Forest Service

Goethe State Forest



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND CONSUMER SERVICES



History

Goethe State Forest was named for Mr. J.T. Goethe, from whom most of the current forest land was purchased under Florida's Conservation and Recreation Lands Program in 1992. The Florida Forest Service was given lead management responsibility for Goethe State Forest.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, much of the original old growth pine and cypress was harvested. Railroads were built to haul out the timber and naval stores' turpentine. Evidence of raised railroad and tram beds can still be seen in Goethe's flatwoods. During the years of Goethe's ownership, the remaining residual timber was allowed to grow. Remnants of the turpentine industry can still be found on cat-faced trees, some still having the clay pots intact. In the 50 years prior to state acquisition, the land had been virtually left alone. Areas of longleaf pine remain on the forest with some trees reaching more than 200 years of age.

Forestry

At the time Goethe State Forest was purchased, it supported one of the highest density stands of longleaf pines remaining in Florida. Conservation and restoration of flatwoods and sandhills involves improving the density of pines through timber harvesting, reforestation and reintroduction of critical ecological processes, including prescribed fire.

Prescribed fire is used on the forest to maintain the pine ecosystem by reducing succession of hardwoods, reducing dangerous fuel loads, improving ground cover and creating openings where pine seedlings can naturally sprout. Prescribed burning is one of the most effective and frequently used tools in managing Goethe State Forest.

Many natural communities and their inhabitants are dependent on fire for their very survival. The absence of fire results in the loss or alteration of native plant and animal species composition and the possibility of uncontrollable, devastating wildfires. The Florida Forest Service manages the forest under the multiple-use concept.



Herty cup on a cat-faced tree



The large cypress tree known as the Goethe Giant



Equestrians enjoying the trails

For more information contact:
Goethe State Forest
9110 SE CR 337, Dunnellon, FL 34431
Telephone: (352) 566-5225
www.FDACS.gov/FLStateForests

Natural Resources

The majority of this 54,241 acre forest is located in the southeastern portion of Levy County. A smaller tract of forest land, called the Watermelon Pond Tract, is under Goethe's management but is located in both northern Levy County and southwestern Alachua County.

Goethe State Forest contains 19 different natural communities, each with unique plants and animals. Mesic flatwoods, dome swamp, wet flatwoods, basin marsh and sandhill are the primary community types. The forest also has two large flatwoods lakes and several seasonal creeks.

The natural communities found on the forest support a variety of wildlife including: Sherman's fox squirrel, Florida black bear, white tailed deer, gopher tortoise, gopher frog, bald eagle and wild turkey. The forest is also home to a growing population of red-cockaded woodpeckers. Red-cockaded woodpeckers make their homes in mature pine forests, preferably in Longleaf pines. This adorable bird is easiest to spot during the breeding season in May.

Recreation

Goethe's trails extend throughout the forest with access available at seven separate trailheads. The forest is open during daylight hours for visitors to enjoy picnicking, hiking, bicycling, fishing, wildlife viewing and horseback riding. Overnight camping is available. Many of Goethe's trails are included in the Florida Forest Service's Trailwalker and Trailtrotter Recreation Program.

The Great Florida Birding Trail through Goethe State Forest provides many opportunities to observe bird species in their natural habitats. More than 100 species of birds can be found on Goethe State Forest.

Goethe State Forest is open to regulated hunting and fishing under the direction of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. For more information, obtain a copy of the Goethe Wildlife Management Area and Watermelon Pond Wildlife and Environmental Area regulations that are available online at www.MyFWC.com.