Sense of Place

Jacksonville is home to the nation’s largest system of urban parks. These parks are within a one-half hour drive from the downtown area and include over 80,000 acres of city, state and national parks, preserves, conservation areas and forests—all with natural ecosystems that are teeming with life.

The parks reflect over 6,000 years of human history, ranging from prehistorics to present day and representing Timucuan natives, Spanish and French explorers, an American Revolutionary War skirmish site, an antebellum plantation, a Civil War encampment and a World War I training camp.

By foot, bicycle, canoe, kayak, boat, paddle board or horse, you can experience a “sense of wildness,” our community’s “sense of place,” just minutes from the bustle of city life. Some of these parks may be found right in the neighborhood where you live. This contrast of urban and natural settings creates a unique cultural and geographic identity for Jacksonville.

“Magic birds were dancing in the mystic marsh. The grass swayed with them, and the shallow waters, and the earth fluttered under them. The earth was dancing with the cranes, and the low sun, and the wind and sky.”

—MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS, “THE YEARLING”

This is our wild backyard. The REAL Florida. It is Jacksonville’s greatest asset— one to preserve, promote, enhance… and enjoy. Take the time to explore and appreciate these parks. Make them your paths to inspiration, reflection and renewal.

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Our natural areas are not only our heritage but the foremost legacy that we will leave to our children and grandchildren… Florida would not be Florida without its environmental treasures.”

—BOB GRAHAM, FORMER GOVERNOR AND U.S. SENATOR.

Timucuan Parks Foundation, together with our national, state, and city preservation park partners, finds strategies that weave our preserves into the social and economic fabric of our city, engaging and connecting all generations to where they live in a meaningful way. We assist in developing programs and projects that instill this sense of place by using our preserves to tell Jacksonville’s unique stories about its history and its culture:

• Arts in the Parks and Artist in Residence programs
• Education programming and community events
• Promotion of historical and cultural trails, water access trails, and natural resources trails
• Expansion of existing trail networks
• Promotion of the Great Florida Birding Trail
• Living history and historical reenactments
• Archaeological studies support

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