

Welcome to the University of Florida's Living Laboratory and Its Nature Trails

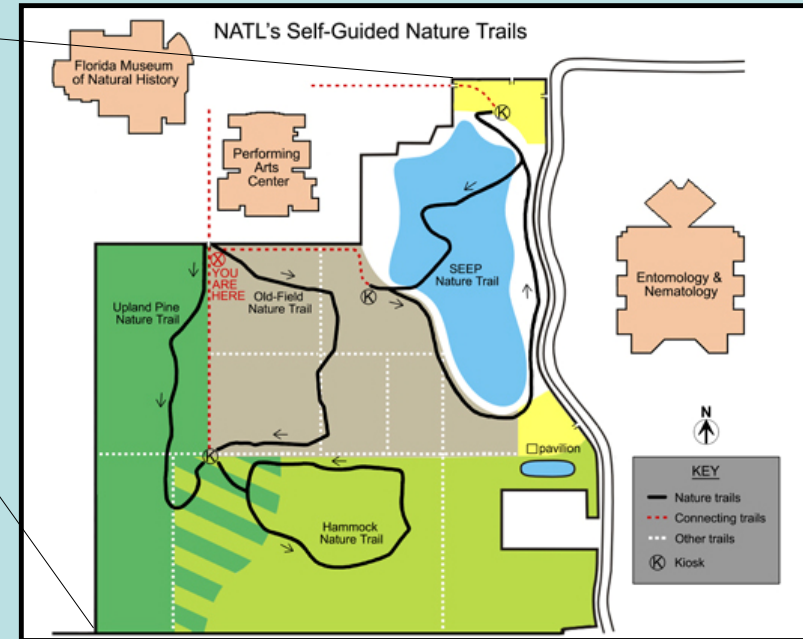
UF's NATURAL AREA TEACHING LABORATORY

NATL (pronounced "natal") was founded in 1994 to provide an on-campus site for teaching students and the public about ecology and biological diversity. NATL is used by nine UF departments for teaching more than 60 formal courses and for student projects. The Florida Museum of Natural History helps manage the 27-acre public area.

NATL has significant samples of three ecosystems characteristic of uplands in north peninsular Florida: *hammock*, *upland pine*, and *old-field succession*. It also has a large retention basin (SEEP), a four-acre marsh, and other, smaller wetlands. Its public area has four self-guided nature trails (see maps and guidelines to the right).



Almost half of NATL's 60 acres is open to the public.



A Living Lab for Education & Research...

University of Florida University of Florida students and faculty use NATL's natural diversity for a variety of studies.



ABOVE: Zoology researchers use the blind pictured above to hide from gray squirrels while watching their behavior.

BELOW: Ecology students make measurements at NATL's pond.



ABOVE: Entomologists use this trap to monitor populations of southern pine beetle, a species that kills mature pines.



LEFT: A class takes a field trip to capture insects.

RIGHT: Students look for microscopic life in the waters of the SEEP wetland.



Walking NATL's Trail System

Before you begin: Taking all four trails and returning here is a walk of about 1.2 miles. If you skip the SEEP trail, the distance is slightly less than 1.0 mile. These distances are not great, but you may find it more rewarding to enjoy the details of each ecosystem rather than to rush to do all trails in a single session. If you choose to explore the trails individually, here are their respective round-trip distances:

- **Upland Pine Trail:** 0.3 mi [take trail to right]
- **Old Field Trail:** 0.3 mi [take trail to left]
- **Hammock Trail:** 0.4 mi [take center lane to reach starting point]
- **SEEP Trail:** 0.7 mi [take trail behind Phillips Center]

Please Remember:

- You are welcome to walk any trail in NATL's public area.
- Take care not to disturb the subjects or the stakes at the points of interest along the nature trails.
- Your chances of viewing wildlife will improve if you remain quiet.
- Please do not wander from the trails.
- Please do not disturb any markers or equipment you encounter.
- Please do not litter: take out anything you bring in.
- Please return trail guides when you are finished with them.

Enjoy NATL!