The Wayback Machine - https://web.archive.org/web/20250208144826/https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/government/public-services/divisions/conservation-collier/pre...

English

Pepper Ranch Preserve



Address/Location: 6315 Pepper Rd., Immokalee, FL 34142

Google Map

Directions from I-75 and Immokalee Road



Public Access Status: **Open November 1, 2024**

The preserve is open to the public November- June on all Fridays and on non-hunt Saturdays and Sundays from 7:30 A.M.- 4:00 P.M. Public are welcome to hike, picnic, bird-watch and take a scenic drive through the preserve after obtaining a free daily use permit from the visitor's center.

Visitor Center Phone Number: 239-657-1999
Naples Office Phone Number: 239-252-2961

Dogs are not allowed on this preserve.

Current Trail Conditions: All trails open

Camping: Available November-April on Friday and Saturday nights with reservation.

Please visit our camping page for more information**: Camping at Pepper Ranch**



Volunteer Opportunities:

To become a Conservation Collier volunteer, you will need to fill out a volunteer application and complete a background check. Please email us at Conservationcollier@colliercountyfl.gov or call 239-252-2961 for more information on how to sign up.

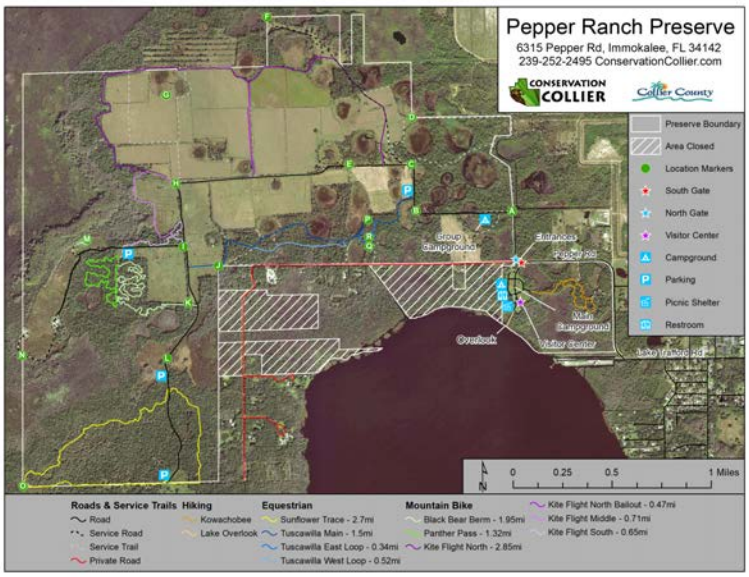
Mountain Biking Volunteers: We are seeking volunteers to help maintain the current trails in October-June of each year. See Bike Trail Map. Please call 239-252-2495 for more information.

Equestrian Volunteers: We are seeking volunteers to help with trail marking and maintenance. Please call 239-252-2495 for more information.

General Volunteers: Please call 239-252-2961 for more information.

View our Interactive Trail Map through Google Maps

View and Download the Trail Map:



Preserve Manager Contact Information:

E-mail: conservationcollier@colliercountyfl.gov **Phone:** 239-252-2961

Preserve Size: 2,655 acres

Trails: 17.6 miles total including hiking, shared hiking, shared biking and shared horseback

Date Acquired: February 6, 2009, with additional parcels acquired in 2023 and 2024

Cost of Acquisition: $33,703,600

See the Pepper Ranch Hunt Program Page for more information and Hunt Program materials.

Available printed materials:

Pepper Ranch Final Management Plan
Pepper Ranch Historical Brochure
Pepper Ranch Features Preserve Brochure

Public Access Facilities:



Public restrooms are available at the ranch.

The picnic pavilion (pole barn) is available for rent on days that the preserve is open to the public. The visitor center is available to rent for meetings on Thursdays from 9-3:30. Call (239) 252-4449 for more information.



Guests to the Pepper Ranch Preserve must register at the Visitor Center



The Pepper Ranch picnic pavilion is available for rental.

The Pepper Ranch Preserve was an outstanding nomination that met all of the criteria Conservation Collier uses to evaluate potential acquisitions. These criteria include those relating to protection of water resources, preservation of biological values, including presence of unique and endangered plant communities and wildlife, potential for nature base recreation and education, and how a property fits in with the larger matrix of County lands to provide a buffer for,
corridor to or ecological link with other conservation lands.

Acquisition of the ranch offered multiple opportunities for protection of water resources, including recharge of aquifers, protection of wetland dependent species habitat, protection of the Corkscrew swamp and marsh complex and protection of wetlands associated with Lake Trafford. Located within the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed, the property adjoins more than 42,000 public and private acres already held in conservation status and further protects the Corkscrew Marsh, the headwaters for Collier County's drinking water supplies.

The ranch is home to many species of native wildlife, including those listed as threatened, endangered, or of special concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Florida. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission considers this location to be "Priority One " habitat for Florida panther conservation. Panther sightings, telemetry points and abundance of prey species all indicate that panthers are present. Many other native wildlife species have also been documented on the ranch, including numerous species of threatened and endangered birds. Acquisition of the ranch provides connectivity for wildlife between the Corkscrew wetlands, Lake Trafford wetlands and the Camp Keais Strand, extending south into the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and Everglades National Park.

At least ten (10) distinct types of vegetation communities exist on the ranch, including vast oak forests, untouched cypress strands, and freshwater marshes teeming with plant and animal life.



In addition to its many environmental attributes, there are historical and archeological features to the ranch. This beautiful property had been a farm, hunting grounds, cattle ranch, fishing camp and home for one local family since 1926, until it was sold to Collier County in 2009 and provides a living window into local history. It also borders Lake Trafford, the largest natural lake in Collier County and the location of early settlements by Native Americans. Artifacts discovered in and around the lake have been dated to 550 A.D.

Management Goals:

Management goals at the Pepper Ranch Preserve include the following: significantly reducing human impacts to indigenous flora and fauna, developing a baseline monitoring program, removing or controlling populations of invasive, exotic or problematic flora and fauna, creating a prescribed fire plan, restoring native vegetation, developing a plan for public use, facilitating use of the site for appropriate recreational and educational purposes, providing a plan for security and disaster preparedness and establishing a panther conservation bank to reduce costs of mitigation for County projects.