



SANDY RIDGE SANCTUARY

- a natural habitat in the
middle of Coral Springs -

8501 NW 40TH STREET
(Between University
& Riverside Drive)

Guided tours are offered every 1st and 3rd
Saturday at 9 AM or by appointment.
Weekday or evening tours can be arranged.
For information please call
954 - 345 - 2112

History

Sandy Ridge was created on a 38-acre tract of land that was initially to be developed with 195 zero-lot homes. The site was bought by the City of Coral Springs in 1996 using funds from the 7.5 million dollar environmental bond issue approved by voters in 1994, as well as a grant from the Florida Communities Trust.

The terms of the referendum and the grant proposal make Sandy Ridge a nature preserve in perpetuity.

Plants and Animals of Sandy Ridge

A walk through Sandy Ridge Sanctuary offers the opportunity to observe, study and above all else enjoy an intact Florida ecosystem. All of the aggressive exotic nuisance plants have been removed and are kept at bay through regular maintenance.

Dominant among the trees at Sandy Ridge are the South Florida Slash Pines which are the most numerous and tallest of the trees in the park.

Other relatively common trees include Laurel Oak, Bald Cypress in the wetlands area and the Florida state tree the Sabal Palmetto.

The Satin Leaf Tree can easily be identified when the wind is blowing. The glossy green upper leaf surface and the contrasting brown, satiny lower leaf surface are a dead giveaway.

Some of the more prominent native shrubs planted throughout Sandy Ridge can be identified by their berries. Beautyberry has light purple berries, Wild Coffee red berries and Firebush black berries.

The vegetation of the wetlands area located adjacent to the lake includes Pickrel Weed, Duck Potato, Blue Flag Iris and White Water Lilly.

Scattered throughout Sandy Ridge you will see small Prickly Pear cactus gardens planted as a food source for the Gopher Tortoise.



A quiet approach to the wetlands/lake area might be rewarded by the spectacle of an Osprey skimming the surface of the lake and catching a fish. Great Blue Herons, Mottled Ducks and Belted Kingfishers are other birds frequently seen around the lake.

Away from the lake Turkey and Black Vultures dominate the skies while Barn Owls, Pileated Woodpeckers and a host of migrating warblers inhabit the trees in the sanctuary.

The sound of scurrying animals in the thickets adjacent to the walkway is well worth investigating. Small lizards are frequently seen flitting about. Occasionally a Black Racer snake can be seen and every once in a while even a Gopher Tortoise.



There are approximately 25 of these reptiles living at Sandy Ridge. It is federally protected and listed as a

Species of Special Concern by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The tortoise digs burrows that can be compared to an apartment building. Commensals (animals that live with but neither harm nor benefit the tortoise) use these burrows along with the tortoise. Some of these animals (e.g. Indigo Snake) are themselves endangered making these burrows an even more important ecosystem feature.

A truly special and unforgettable highlight of any walk through Sandy Ridge is the spotting of a Gray Fox crossing the trail or coming to the lake for a drink. These carnivores are top predator at Sandy Ridge and help to control the population of rodents and even raccoons.



If you find a Gopher Tortoise on your property or along the road and wish to relocate it read the following first.

Since 1991 some tortoises living in the wild have been diagnosed as suffering from an Upper Respiratory Tract Disease (URTD).

This is a highly infectious disease that ultimately leads to death through starvation and can wipe out an entire Gopher Tortoise population in a short time.

The population originally released into the Sanctuary was healthy and with your help we can keep it that way.

Should you find a Gopher Tortoise in need of relocation or care contact:

- Sawgrass Nature Center & Wildlife Hospital
954 – 752 – 7732
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Wildlife Alert
1-800-432-2046