

## Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park

(Orange County)

### WET PRAIRIE



A wiregrass wet prairie depression

### LOCATION

The Hal Scott Regional Reserve and Park is located in east Orange County, southeast of the city of Orlando, within the northwest quadrant of the intersection of the Bee Line Expressway (S.R. 528) and Dallas Blvd. The property is owned and managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). Portions of the property were purchased using funds obtained as part of the mitigation for the beltway construction in the southern part of the county. The Econlockhatchee River flows through the center of this property. Several streams tributary to the Econlockhatchee River also occur on the property. The reference site is a wet wiregrass slough/prairie located in the eastern portion of the preserve, west of a large borrow pit.



### ACCESS

The Hal Scott Regional Reserve and Park may be reached from the expressway via the

Dallas Blvd exit. Travel north on Dallas Blvd approximately 2 miles and the entrance is on the left (west). Coming from the north, follow S.R. 50 south to S.R. 520. From S.R. 520 turn (south) into the Wedgefield subdivision on Maxim Parkway. From Maxim Parkway turn left onto Bancroft, then right on to Meredith Parkway to Dallas Blvd. Turn left (south) on Dallas Blvd. and the entrance to the park will be 1.6 miles south on the right side (west) of the road. Access information may be obtained from the SJRWMD Land Management Division at (407) 897-4311. The reference site wetland boundary is along the south edge of an *Aristida stricta* (wiregrass) slough/ wet prairie immediately west of the borrow pit.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

A wet prairie is a type of wetland which is maintained by a combination of fire and wetness. Frequent fires, by restricting the invasion of woody perennials, are an important factor in the maintenance of a prairie system. The vegetation of the prairie system is fire adapted. Wet prairies are routinely dry enough to burn, usually on a seasonal basis. Wet prairies are also either seasonally inundated or saturated. The wet prairie vegetative community must therefore also be tolerant of anaerobic soil conditions. Verification of a wet prairie and the wetland boundary is usually limited to the observation of the vegetation dominance and hydric soil indicators. Hydrologic indicators are often not apparent within a wet prairie system. Vegetative cover and dominance by hydrophytic species within wet prairie systems is subject to natural seasonal change. Within the reference site wet prairie, the dominant plants observed are *Amphicarpum muhlenbergianum* (blue maidencane, FACW) and *Aristida stricta* (wiregrass, FAC). Both of these species are present throughout the year. The species occurring with the dominant species at the time of observation (listed below) may not always be apparent.

Wiregrass is a dominant ground cover in several different vegetative communities where fire is a frequent occurrence. Wiregrass is also tolerant of a wide range of moisture conditions and is classified as a facultative species in Chapter 62-340, F.A.C. Dominance of wiregrass in the ground cover appears to be related more to the fire history of a site than to the hydrological regime.

## DELINEATION PROCEDURE

Wet prairie is a type of wetland identified in the wetland definition, but it is often not immediately recognizable as a wetland. At this reference site, subsections 62-340.300(2)(a) and (b), F.A.C., are used to establish that the central area is in fact a wetland. Wiregrass, as a facultative plant, while numerically dominant is not used in determining vegetative dominance for locating the boundary between the wetland and upland. Vegetative dominance by hydrophytic species is established at this reference site by obligate species within the wiregrass dominated community. The wetland nature of the site is confirmed by the presence of hydric soil indicators. At this reference site *algal mats*, a hydrologic indicator, are also present, further supporting the conclusion that the reference site is a wetland. Moving landward, the wetland boundary is established where vegetative dominance using subsections 62-340.300(2)(a) and (b), F.A.C., is no

longer present. Hydric soil indicators extend beyond the vegetative dominance in some areas but are not definitive of wetland conditions.

### Vegetation Interior To The Wetland Boundary - Vegetation List recorded March 6, 1995

|                               |          |                              |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|
| <i>Aristida spiciformis</i>   | FAC      | bottlebrush three awn grass  |
| <i>Aster</i> sp.              | FAC/FACW | aster                        |
| <i>Andropogon virginicus</i>  | FAC      | broomsedge                   |
| <i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>  | FAC      | salt bush                    |
| <i>Drosera</i> sp.            | OBL/FACW | sundew                       |
| <i>Eustachys</i> sp.          | FAC/FACW | finger grass                 |
| <i>Fuirena</i> sp.            | OBL      | umbrella sedge               |
| <i>Hypericum cistifolium</i>  | FACW     | St. John's wort              |
| <i>Hypericum fasciculatum</i> | OBL      | marsh St. John's wort        |
| <i>Mikania scandens</i>       | Vine     | climbing hempvine            |
| <i>Myrica cerifera</i>        | FAC      | wax myrtle                   |
| <i>Panicum scabrisculum</i>   | OBL      | wooly panicum                |
| <i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i> | FAC      | golden aster                 |
| <i>Sacciolepis indica</i>     | FAC      | Indian cupscale              |
| <i>Scleria</i> sp.            | FACW     | bald-rush                    |
| <i>Sonchus</i> sp.            | UPLAND   | sow thistle                  |
| <i>Quercus pumila</i>         | UPLAND   | running oak                  |
| <i>Xyris brevifolia</i>       | OBL      | short leaf yellow-eyed grass |

### Vegetation Upland Of The Wetland Boundary.

|                               |          |                             |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Aristida stricta</i>       | FAC      | wiregrass                   |
| <i>Aristida spiciformis</i>   | FAC      | bottlebrush three-awn grass |
| <i>Andropogon virginicus</i>  | FAC      | broomsedge                  |
| <i>Asimina</i> sp.            | UPLAND   | pawpaw                      |
| <i>Befaria racemosa</i>       | UPLAND   | tarflower                   |
| <i>Drosera</i> sp.            | OBL/FACW | sundew                      |
| <i>Eragrostis</i> sp.         | FAC      | love grass                  |
| <i>Euthamia</i> sp.           | UPLAND   | flat-topped goldenrod       |
| <i>Hypericum reductum</i>     | UPLAND   | Atlantic St. John's wort    |
| <i>Hypericum tetrapetalum</i> | FAC      | St. John's wort             |
| <i>Ilex glabra</i>            | UPLAND   | gallberry                   |
| <i>Lyonia fruticosa</i>       | UPLAND   | fetterbush                  |
| <i>Lyonia lucida</i>          | FACW     | fetterbush                  |
| <i>Penstemon australis</i>    | UPLAND   | beard tongue                |
| <i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i> | UPLAND   | golden aster                |
| <i>Quercus pumila</i>         | UPLAND   | running oak                 |
| <i>Rhexia</i> sp.             | FACW     | meadow beauty               |
| <i>Schizachyrium</i> spp.     | FAC      | bluestem                    |
| <i>Serenoa repens</i>         | UPLAND   | saw palmetto                |
| <i>Vaccinium myrsinites</i>   | UPLAND   | low blueberry               |

## SOIL DESCRIPTIONS

USDA - NRCS Orange County Soil Survey - Sheet 58 Section 22

Mapped as **Smyrna fine sand** (mapping unit #44)

**44 - Smyrna fine sand** is composed of:

|     |                |                      |
|-----|----------------|----------------------|
| 70% | - Smyrna soil  | non-hydric component |
| 5%  | - Pineda soil  | hydric inclusion     |
| 20% | - Smyrna soil  | hydric inclusion     |
| 5%  | - Wabasso soil | non-hydric inclusion |

### Soil Profile Descriptions

Point 1. Eight feet waterward of the saw palmetto edge. (Water table - 22 inches)

| Horizon | Depth (in) |                                     |
|---------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Oa      | 0-1        | black (10YR 2/1) mucky fine sand    |
| A1      | 1-2        | black (10YR 2/1) fine sand          |
| A2      | 2-4        | very dark gray (10YR 3/1) fine sand |
| E or C  | 4-12       | dark gray (10YR 4/1) fine sand      |

**Hydric soil:** Yes

**Hydric soil field indicators:** four inches of greater than 70% coatings on the sand grains.



Point 1

Point 2. Thirty feet upland of the saw palmetto edge - towards borrow pit. (Water table > 12 inches)

| <u>Horizon</u> | <u>Depth (in)</u> |   |
|----------------|-------------------|---|
| A1             | 0-1               | very dark gray (10YR 3/1) fine sand with many fine roots                |
| A2?            | 1-3               | dark gray (10YR 4/1) fine sand with common medium roots                 |
| A3?            | 3-12              | very dark gray (10YR 3/1) fine sand (50% coated) with many medium roots |

**Hydric soil:** No

**Hydric soil field indicators:** none



Point 2

