

News Release

A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 5, 2019

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New Recreational Opportunities at the A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce several new and expanded wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The Refuge thanks the South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the public, and our other partners for their input, ideas, and contributions to the new Visitor Services Plan (VSP).

Beginning September 1, 2019 visitors are welcome to walk their leashed pets in designated areas. Ceremonies and instructor-led small groups will be allowed after obtaining a permit from Refuge staff. The Hillsboro Area in Boca Raton and 20 Mile Bend in West Palm Beach are now open 24 hours a day. There are no changes to the hours for the Headquarters Area in Boynton Beach; visitors may access trails, boat ramps, and other open facilities from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm daily. The Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Additionally, the entire Refuge Interior will be open to the public for non-motorized boating, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography. Boating is a great way to explore the backcountry areas of the Refuge, however, boaters must use extreme caution and awareness in these newly opened areas. Outside of the perimeter canal, boaters will need to watch for wildlife and other vessels while underway. Floating vegetation and changing water levels may block canals and hide boat trails. Airboats driven by Refuge staff, contractors, and permitted researchers will also be operated in this area. All boats operating outside of the perimeter canal must display a 10 inches by 12 inches bright orange flag at least 10 feet above the vessel's waterline.

The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge was established under a License Agreement with the South Florida Water Management District in 1951 as an inviolate sanctuary for migratory birds. The vision of the Refuge is to serve as an outstanding showcase for ecosystem management that restores, protects, and enhances a portion of the unique north Everglades biological community. This public asset provides for the enjoyment and enhanced quality of life for present and future generations. To learn more about the Refuge visit: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/arm_loxahatchee/ Connect with our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ARMLoxahatcheeNWR/>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

