

# Nathaniel P. Reed Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge



Christine Eastwick  
Refuge Manager



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**\*Please join using computer audio\***



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# Ground Rules

- Videos and microphone controls of participants will be restricted during today's session.
- Questions will be answered during the Q and A session at the end of the presentation.
- Official comments should be submitted through the project email or postal address, which we'll cover at the end.
- This webinar will be recorded and posted on our website: [fws.gov/hobesound](https://fws.gov/hobesound)

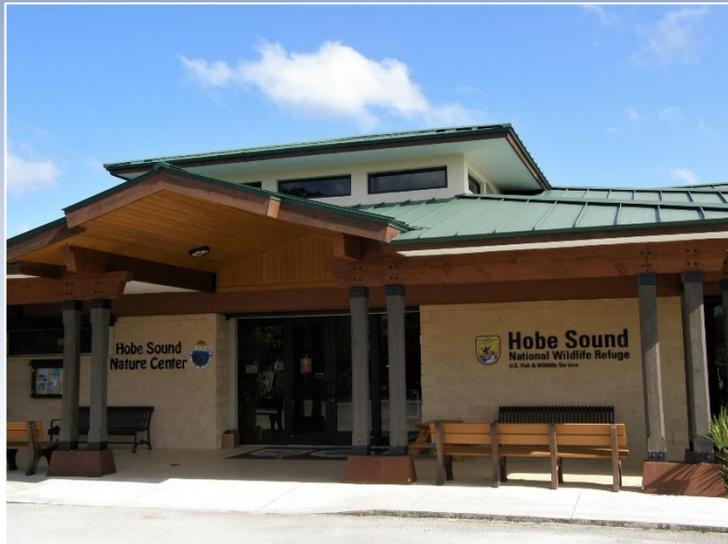


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# Refuge Introduction

- The Refuge totals approximately 1,100 acres
  - Island tract = 700 acres
  - Mainland tract = 400 acres
    - 300 acres of the mainland tract is sand pine scrub habitat
- Over 40 federal and state listed species



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# Why is scrub habitat important?

- 40-60% of scrub species are endemic
- Estimated 60% reduction in scrub habitat throughout Florida
- Dominated by woody shrubs including dwarf oak species, saw palmetto, and Florida rosemary
- The health of scrub habitat depends on infrequent large disturbances such as fire



Prickly Pear Cactus



Florida Rosemary



Lakelas mint



Gopher tortoise



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# Why are we doing this?

- Current overgrown and dense conditions do not reflect natural scrub habitat
- High fuel loads could cause catastrophic wildfires and damage to nearby infrastructure
- Imperiled and common species cannot thrive in sub-optimal scrub habitat



Photo credit: fsjconservation



# Strategies

Photo credit: JDSP



Photo credit: USFWS



Chainsaw

Brontosaurus

Roller Chopper



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# Objectives

- Reduce canopy coverage to < 20%
- Decrease and maintain understory height to 1-3 meters



- Increase unvegetated, sandy openings
- Maintain mosaic of multi-age oak coverage exceeding 60%
- Continue periodic, rotational management

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# Expectations



Photo credit: JDSP

Pre-treatment



Photo credit: JDSP

Post-treatment



Photo credit: JDSP

7 years post-treatment



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# 2020-21 Project Map



- ❖ Up to 300 acres broken into 5 units
- ❖ Mosaic pattern treatment areas
- ❖ Buffers - US1, residences, burrows, archeological resources



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# Benefits

- Improves habitat for plants and animals, including threatened and endangered species.
- Assists in the prevention or management of catastrophic wildfires within the wildland/urban interface.
- Expands habitat management options, including prescribed burns in areas previously too hazardous to burn and improves access for non-native plant treatments, wildlife surveys, etc.



Yourobserver.com



USFWS



RAY HENNESSY  
WILDLIFE



Georgiawildlife.blog



Worldlifeexpectancy.com



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# Steps to Success

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## Scrub Restoration

Florida scrub is a unique habitat, home to many protected species including Florida scrub jay, gopher tortoise and the endemic Florida mouse. As scrub becomes overgrown, the animals that live there will leave or die off and rare plants will disappear.

A healthy scrub ecosystem is maintained by large periodic disturbances such as wildfire. Wildfires have largely been suppressed and controlled burns are difficult to administer in some heavily populated areas.

In order to mimic a natural disturbance, the refuge is methodically administering mechanical trimming. This will return the scrub to better conditions for plants and animals to thrive.

Gopher tortoise: USFWS  
Florida scrub jay: USFWS

- Section 7
- Archeological Review
- NEPA
- Restoration Plan
- Public Outreach
- Scope of Work
- Implementation

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## INFORMATION SESSION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is hosting an information session and accepting public comments on the upcoming scrub habitat management activities that include mechanical trimming and mulching using large equipment and controlled burns on Nathaniel P. Reed Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge.

**When:** August 27, 2020 11:00 AM Eastern Time  
**Where:** Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**For Zoom Meeting and additional information visit:**  
[fws.gov/hobesound](https://fws.gov/hobesound)

### How To Submit Comments?

**During the Public Meeting**  
**By Email:** [hobesound@fws.gov](mailto:hobesound@fws.gov)  
**By Mail:** 13640 SE Federal Hwy, Hobe Sound, FL 33455  
**Deadline to submit comments: September 30, 2020**

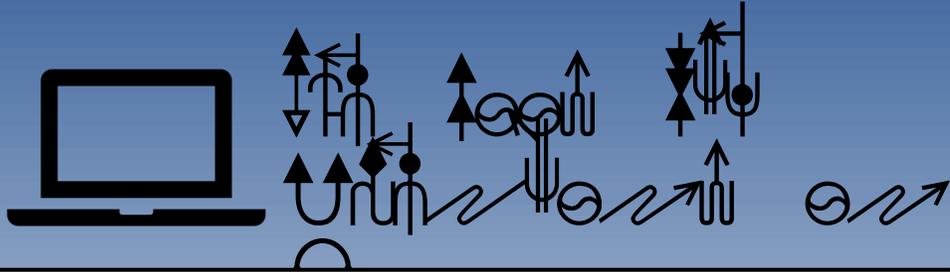
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for close captioning, or other accommodation needs to Christine Eastwick, Refuge Manager (Christine\_eastwick@fws.gov, 772-546-6141), by close of business August 21, 2020.



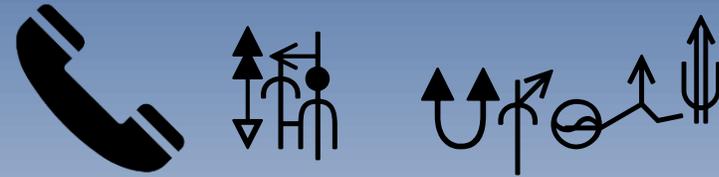
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# Question & Answer Instructions



- If you have a question, please click on the “chat” icon at the bottom of your Zoom screen to write and send your question to the host of the meeting (Amy Lewis).
- The moderator will read the question aloud for all participants to hear.
- A USFWS staff member will respond to your question aloud for all participants to hear.
- We will try to answer questions in the order they are received.
- Please limit questions to those related to the NEPA process.



- If you are calling in through your phone and you have a question, please press \*9 to “raise your hand” to let staff know you have a question. The moderator will then unmute you so that you can ask your question.
- You will be identified by the last four digits of your phone number.



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# Closing Remarks

Comments can be submitted via email or mail:

**Email:** [hobesound@fws.gov](mailto:hobesound@fws.gov)

**Mail:** 13640 SE Federal Hwy, Hobe Sound, FL 33455

**Deadline to submit comments: September 30, 2020**

All questions received will be posted on the website with answers from the USFWS.

A recording of this meeting will be available on the website: [fws.gov/hobesound](https://fws.gov/hobesound)

**The public information session has now ended.**



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