

vast expanse of black needlerush, a grayish plant tolerant of saltwater. Upstream the dominant marsh plants are sawgrass, a grass-like species with prominent seed heads that thrives in water with lower salinity. Here again, the road acts as a barrier, restricting the free mixing of water that under roadless conditions would lead to a much more gradual transition between salt- and freshwater habitats. Old logging roads restrict the normal flow of water throughout much of the Refuge's extensive low-lying lands. Refuge managers have initiated a multi-year project to restore more natural flow.



zebra swallowtail  
photo: Barbara Woodmansee

Wildlife frequents this area but may remain out of sight depending on the time of year and time of day. Deer are present, but not particularly abundant. Wild turkeys may be seen year-round. Feral hogs are a serious nuisance, and you are likely to see the evidence of their rooting, if not the animals themselves. Many resident birds may be seen, and spring and fall migrants come through in numbers. Alligators may be seen in roadside ditches and in McCormick Creek. The Refuge is a favorite of butterfly watchers with April and September being the peak times to see the largest number of individuals and diversity of species.

**Notes:**

- You can also hike counterclockwise by parking at Gate 31, but parking is limited.
- This road is named Barnett Creek Road from longtime custom, even though it actually crosses McCormick Creek.

**Become a FRIEND today so —  
the animals  
the Suwannee  
our way of life  
are here TOMORROW**



eastern bluebird  
photo: Larry Woodward

**WILDLIFE.  
Suwannee River.  
Your way of LIFE.**



Your support is crucial to preserve the Refuges and protect wildlife for us and for our children.



Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys NWRs is a voice for the wild animals. It is a voice for all nature lovers, hunters, fishermen, birders, kayakers, hikers, clambers and oystermen whose livelihood and way of life depend on the animals and the river.



Please consider becoming a member at [FriendsofRefuges.org](http://FriendsofRefuges.org). Your membership gifts may be deductible. Support from caring people like you lets us champion our wildlife and wilderness.

**[www.FriendsofRefuges.org](http://www.FriendsofRefuges.org)**

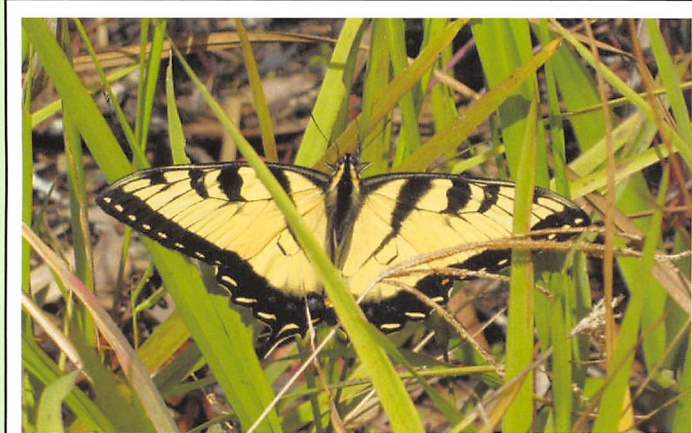
As a membership organization, through voluntary action, Friends supports the Refuges and their work to conserve the region's wildlife and the places they need to thrive. We invite you to enjoy their pristine and primitive beauty with us.

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**BARNETT CREEK ROAD  
LOOP TRAIL**

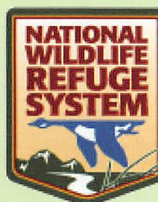
This 2.8-mile loop trail in the 54,000-acre Lower Suwannee Refuge traverses some of the best land and water scenery. Depending on your pace, allow 1.5–3 hours to complete the trail.

**Friends of the Lower  
Suwannee & Cedar Keys  
National Wildlife Refuges**



eastern tiger butterfly photo: Donna Thalacker

From the Lower Suwannee Nature Drive turn onto Barnett Creek Road and follow it one mile to the end where there is parking for several vehicles. Gate 34, on the north end of the parking area, is the trailhead.





The trail is wide and consists of well-mowed grass most of the way. In insect season, which is anytime except mid-winter, it is advisable to stay in the mowed portion of the trail and use insect repellent. From Gate 34 the trail leads north 7/10 mile, then turns to the east. Along the way there are a few prominent orange trail markers among the more frequent yellow blazes.



pileated woodpecker  
photo: Frank Morgan

Note the changes in vegetation as you walk along. The kinds of plants growing in particular sites are influenced by soil moisture—a product of elevation and topography. Low areas that have standing water much of the year are dominated by bald-cypress and swamp

tupelo trees with little understory. Other areas that are wet, but flooded infrequently, have a tree canopy with live oak, laurel oak, water oak, red maple and loblolly pine with understory species such as eastern red cedar, sweetbay, swamp bay, cabbage palm and swamp dogwood.

After the trail turns south it emerges on the Barnett Creek Road. As you turn right and proceed toward the parking area, note that the road, an old logging road built before the Refuge was established, acts as a dam, interrupting water that otherwise would



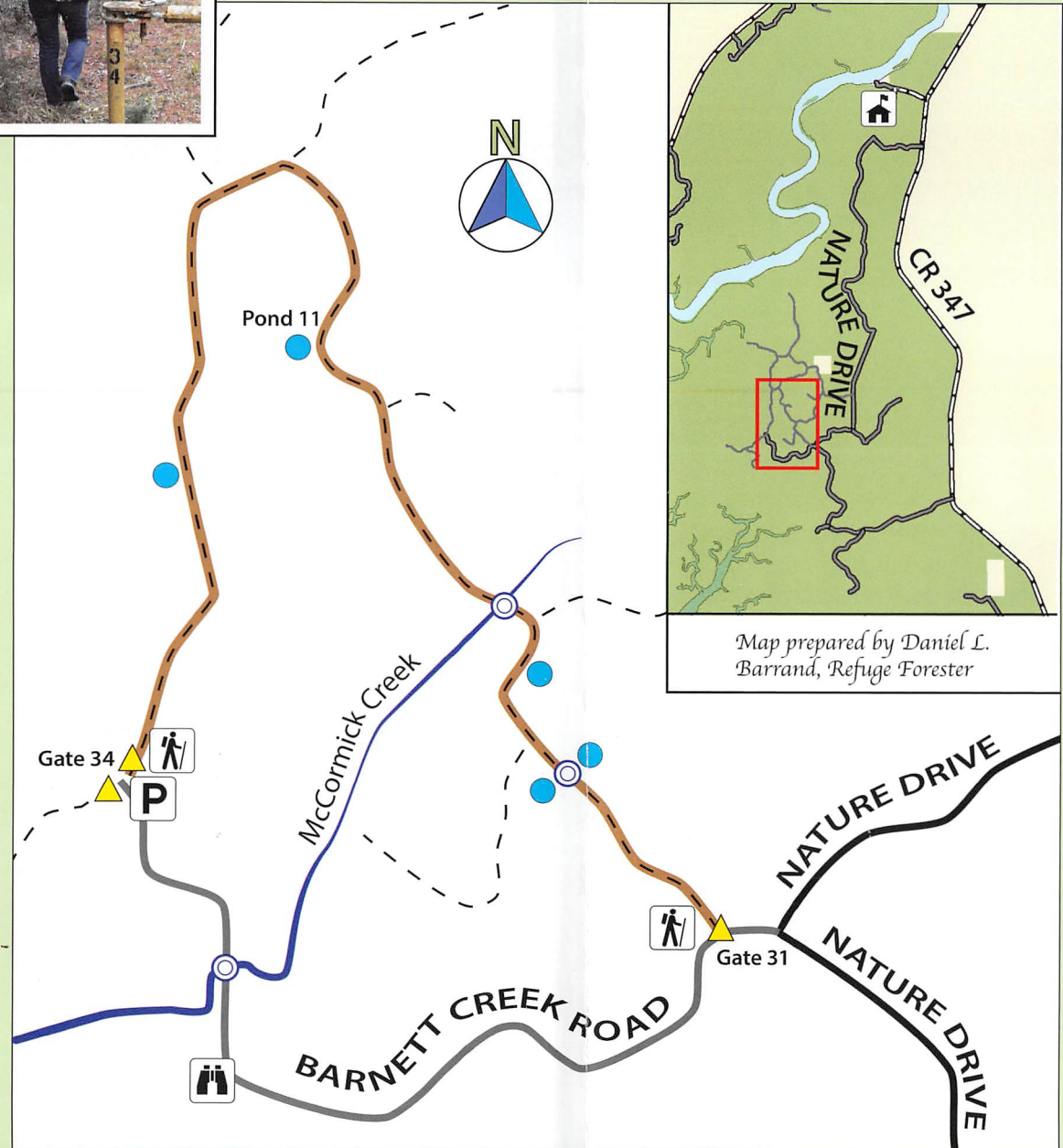
queen butterflies  
photo: Larry Woodward

flow across the land. Note also the roadside ditches. They are a byproduct of road construction and act as conduits that accelerate drainage, making the forests bordering them drier than they would be naturally.

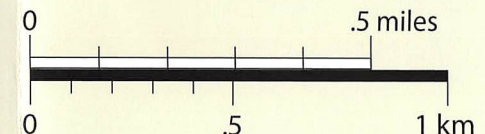
Continuing toward McCormick Creek, the landscape changes from hardwood forest to salt marsh. At the culvert that carries the creek under the road, note that downstream (to your left), the marsh is dominated by a



To enjoy any of the secondary Refuge roads, visitors are welcome to walk or ride bicycles around the yellow Refuge gates that are closed to prevent vehicular access.



- |                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| Trailhead/end    | Culvert |
| Parking          | Pond    |
| Salt Marsh Vista | Gate    |



Caution: Be aware that this is a wildlife refuge. Wear bright colors during hunting season. You might encounter alligators or snakes. Ticks are common in tall-grass areas and poison ivy vines grow on many trees along the trail.

Visit the Friends website, FriendsofRefuges.org, for more information and downloadable GPS file.

