



University of Florida Conservation Area Land Management Plan  
**President's Park**

## **Introduction**

President's Park is a 4.1-acre hardwood hammock located behind the President's house between University Avenue and S.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The property was classified as Conservation in the Campus Master Plan 2000 - 2010. Since the park is considered to be part of the President's residence, it is not generally open to the public, nor to students and faculty.

## **Natural Areas Inventory**

### **Water Resources**

President's Park is bisected by an unnamed creek, which flows for approximately 430 ft on the property. This creek is a tributary of Hogtown Creek, the primary drainage feature for most of the older portions of Gainesville. As with many of the creeks in the Gainesville area, Hogtown Creek is a seepage stream that receives almost constant flow from the surficial aquifer. Seepage streams are common in stream to sink watersheds, where streams cut through sands and clays and then empty into sinkholes that recharge the aquifer. Hogtown Creek drains into Sargarfoot Prairie (Haile Sink), a wetland sink where eventually most of Gainesville's stormwater recharges the Floridan aquifer. During rainfall events these creeks are augmented by sheet flow and routed stormwater, which is when major stream bank erosion and sedimentation occurs.

This unnamed creek receives much of its flow from the residential neighborhoods north of University Avenue. The creek's banks are fairly eroded around the entry into the Park, due to the high velocity of the water as it enters the property. This velocity results from the lack of upstream stormwater retention, which would help treat the water coming off of impervious surfaces and reduce in-stream sedimentation accumulation. In at least two areas fences that trap trash and landscape debris cross the creek. Regular maintenance is needed to keep these fences clear and to not back up water on upstream portions of the Park.



Unnamed Creek

## Natural Communities

President's Park is comprised primarily of a mesic / upland-mixed hardwood forest with a small area of bottomland forest running through it. Due to the relatively small size of the property, biodiversity is limited by substantial edge effects. Additionally, the site is impacted by non-native invasive plant species, resulting in a native under story that is being crowded out. In larger, less strenuous conditions mesic forests typically support significant wildlife and plant diversity, which result from the nutrient rich nature of hardwood forests and flowering and fruiting plants.

### Plant Species

The tree canopy of the park is made up of southern red oak, hackberry, laurel cherry, water oak, cabbage palm, winged elm, black cherry, pignut hickory, southern magnolia, sweetgum, Florida maple, red maple, devil's walking stick, redbud, eastern hophornbeam, loblolly pine, live oak, and swamp chestnut oak.

### Invasive – Non-Native Plant Species

The creek and surrounding residential neighborhoods have been the source for invasive, non-native plants, of which University staff have documented the following list on site: Cat-Claw Vine, Scratchthroat, Air Potato, Elephant Ear, White-flowered, wandering Jew, camphor tree, Chinese privet, Japanese privet, Glossy privet.

### Animal Species

Since the President's Park is surrounded by residential land uses and is relatively small in size, terrestrial usage by mammals is limited to cats, dogs, raccoons, gray squirrels and armadillos. Other animals typically found in mesic hardwood systems, but which have not been documented on the property, include: slimy salamander, Cope's gray treefrog, bronze frog, box turtle, eastern glass lizard, green anole, broadhead skink, ground skink, red-bellied snake, gray rat snake, rough green snake, coral snake, woodcock, barred owl, pileated woodpecker, shrews, eastern mole, wood rat, cotton mouse, gray fox, and white-tailed deer.



Hardwood Hammock

## Soils Inventory

In general, mesic upland mixed hardwood forests occur on rolling hills that often have limestone or phosphatic rock near the surface and occasionally as outcrops. Soils are generally sandy-clays or clayey sands with substantial organic and often calcareous components. The topography and clayey soils increase surface water runoff, although this is counterbalanced by the moisture retention properties of clays and by the often thick layer of leaf mulch which helps conserve soil moisture and create decidedly mesic conditions (FNAI).

The following soil information for on-site soils was gathered from the Soil Survey of Alachua County (1985).

### Arredondo Fine Sand (0-5% slope)

This nearly level to gently sloping, well-drained soil is in both small and large areas of uplands. Slopes are smooth to complex. Typically, the surface layer is dark grayish brown fine sand about 8 inches thick. The subsurface layer is fine sand to a depth of 49 inches.

### Blichton Sand (Urban Land Complex)(0-5% slope)

This gently sloping, poorly drained soil is on gently rolling uplands. Slopes are slightly convex. The areas are mostly irregular in shape and elongated and range from 10 to 40 acres. Typically, the surface layer is dark brown sand about 6 inches thick.

### Millhopper Sand (Urban Land Complex)(0-5% slope)

This nearly level to gently sloping, moderately well drained soil is in small and large irregularly shaped areas on uplands and slightly rolling knolls in the broad flatwoods. Typically, the surface layer is dark grayish brown sand about 9 inches thick. The subsurface layer is sand or fine sand about 49 inches thick.

## Cultural and Passive Recreational Resources

President's Park is not open to the public, thus the typical amenities like trails, benches and picnic tables are not applicable within the scope of this plan. There are no known archeological or historic sites within the Park.

## Future Improvements

As the name implies, this area is considered to be a Nature Park. However, the Park is part of the President's residence and is inaccessible to the general public. The primary management activity that needs to be addressed is dealing with the invasive non-native plants that are overtaking the under and over story of the property. These invasives are not only a problem on site, but since this site is upstream in the Hogtown basin, the site serves as a seed source for downstream areas. Habitat enhancements like bird and bat boxes and wildlife friendly plantings are recommended.

Maps on the following pages:

1. Aerial Photo
2. Water Resources
3. Natural Communities
4. Soils