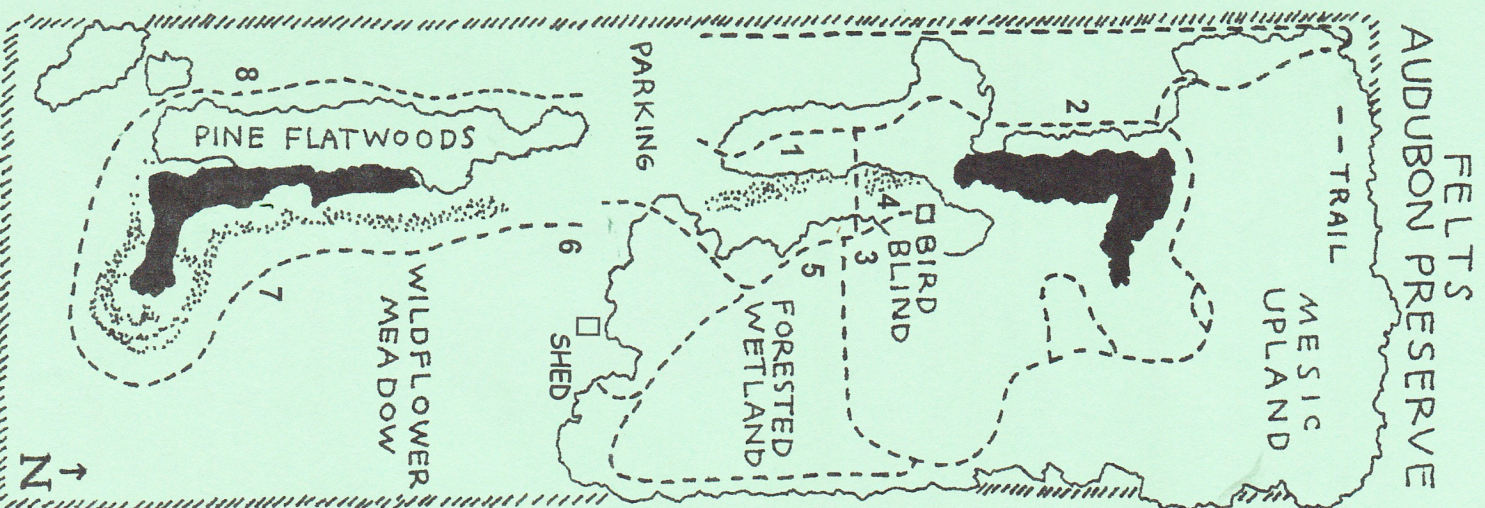


### 7. Littoral Shelf

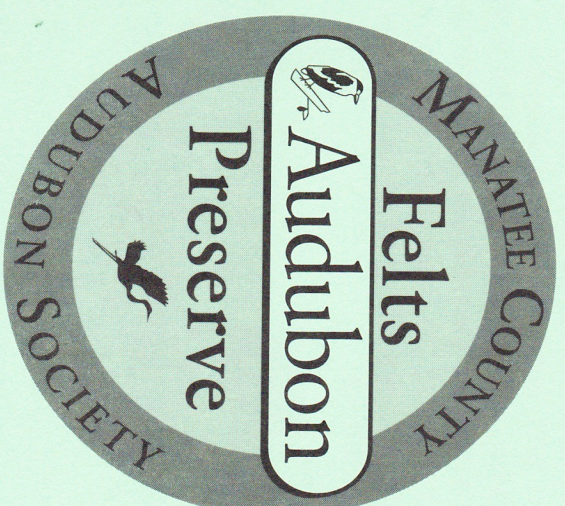
The gently sloping perimeter of earth surrounding this wetland is called a littoral shelf. These mild changes in elevation provide more habitat for wetland plants, which greatly assist in filtering out pollutants and stormwater runoff. A quiet approach to this rich area may reveal approach to this rich area may reveal birds and waterfowl such as the great blue and little blue heron, roseate spoon-bill, wood stork, great egret, snowy egret, wood duck, blue-winged teal, moorhen, and hooded merganser, to name a few!

### 8. Restoration

This property was once used by Otis Felts for grazing cattle. Upon his passing, Mr. Felts donated this 30-acre parcel of land to the Manatee County Audubon Society so that it would remain undeveloped. Restoration efforts here, such as the planting of pine trees, are designed to regain the ecological integrity of natural ecosystems historically found here at Felts Audubon Preserve.



Designed by Evan Neal for the  
Manatee County Audubon Society



[www.manateeaudubon.org](http://www.manateeaudubon.org)

## Self-Guided Trail Brochure

The topics in this brochure correspond to numbered markers along these trails.

### 1. Snags & Nurse Logs

Did you know that dead trees and fallen logs provide great habitat? Standing dead trees, called snags, play a vibrant role in the ecosystem here at the Felts Audubon Preserve. Snags serve as ideal sites for cavity nesters such as wood ducks, bluebirds, chickadees, tufted titmice, screech owls, kestrels, and woodpeckers (look for large round holes!). Raptors take advantage of the clear view provided by snags to hunt, feed, and build their nests. Bats roost under loose bark. Rotting wood provides



a plentiful food source for insects, which in turn feed many other animals. A fallen, rotting tree is called a nurse log because of the moisture and nutrients it contributes to new seedlings, giving them an advantage at becoming healthy adult trees.



Wood Duck

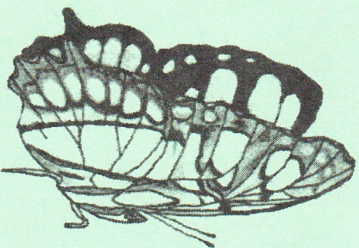
## 2. Native Plants

Aside from their aesthetic value, the native plants of Florida such as a cabbage palm, bald cypress, wax myrtle, or red maple draped with Spanish moss provide ecological benefits to any local landscape. Because of their adaptations, every native plant is specialized to flourish in Florida's climate, soil, and biological community. Native plants attract butterflies and other wildlife, require no pesticides or additional fertilizers, and protect water quality. Naturally, native plants highly recommend themselves for landscaping purposes!

In contrast to native plants, invasive plants are characterized by their exotic origins, aggressive growing habits, and displacement of native species. Whether introduced for ornamental use or by accident, the potential for an exotic plant to become invasive poses a great threat to Florida's native plant and animal community.

## 3. Bird Blind

The Gulf coast of Florida's unique orientation along the Atlantic flyway, a primary migratory bird route, makes for a great place to encounter birds otherwise uncommon to the rest of the state. This route narrows along the eastern coast of the Appalachian mountains and continues southward through coastal Florida, accounting for the variety of migratory birds seen here. An opportunity to view these birds in an intimate setting is provided by the bird blind; it is constructed such that expert and novice birdwatchers alike can view birds up close, and is complete with photography slots. A list inside the blind features all species seen at Felts Audubon Preserve.



Malachite  
Butterfly

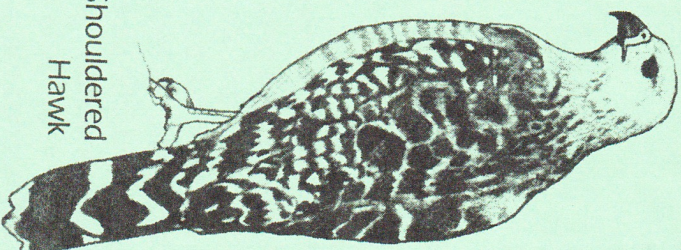
## 4. Butterflies & Wildflowers

Flowering plants, or angiosperms, are the most widespread group of plants on Earth, and a majority of angiosperms are pollinated by insects. Butterflies and moths, remarkable for their splendid coloration and dramatic metamorphosis, have co-evolved with angiosperms by pollinating flowers in exchange for nectar, their primary food source. Flowers that attract butterflies generally have bright colors, clusters of flowers, a place for a butterfly to land, and no scent.

In the butterfly garden host plants for native butterflies have been established to provide egg laying opportunities and food for specific species.

## 5. Raptors

Raptors, or birds of prey, are predatory birds that have sharp, curved beaks for tearing flesh, strong talons on their feet for grasping prey, and keen senses of sight, hearing, or smell. Hawks, falcons, eagles, owls, osprey, and vultures are all considered raptors. Here at the Felts Audubon Preserve, kestrel falcons may be viewed



Red-Shouldered  
Hawk

perching atop posts or barn owl boxes; the expansive wingspans of black and turkey vultures are commonly sighted soaring overhead; the vocal red-shouldered hawk may be heard before it is seen!

## 6. Bird and Bat Houses

As mentioned earlier, snags provide excellent habitat for cavity dwelling animals to take shelter, feed, and raise young. In the absence of snags, bird and bat boxes provide a hospitable alternative for these particular creatures. Houses for wood ducks, purple martins, bluebirds, barn owls, and bats have all been established here to attract wildlife and provide habitat.