



University of Florida Conservation Area Land Management Plan
Bat House Woods

Introduction

Bat House Woods is the unofficial name for the 8.5 acre wooded area adjacent to Physical Plant greenhouses and across Museum Road from the northwest corner of Lake Alice. This area was identified in previous master plans as a Preservation Area (3), due to its relatively undisturbed natural character and its proximity to Lake Alice. However, it appears that since that time additional encroachment has occurred and portions of the understory have been converted to botanical maintenance facilities. Additionally, much of the area has been taken over by invasive non-native plants that cover most of the ground and our winding up many of the pines and oaks.

Natural Areas Inventory

Water Resources

Within Bat House Woods flows an intermittent creek / drainage canal that drains into a sink, adjacent to the University's golf course. It appears that most of the flow in the creek originates as irrigation water from the adjacent green houses operated by Physical Plant. Mapping completed by Causseau & Ellington, Inc. delineated a narrow wetland area adjacent to the stream and sink, as well as the 100-year floodplain that covers the western half of the woods and extends into the adjacent nursery. Basin mapping for the University's stormwater management master plan indicates that this Conservation Area is in a depressional basin, as is evidenced by the fact that the creek flows into the sinkhole. Recent flooding from the hurricanes of 2004 indicates that Lake Alice drains into the sink during times of high water levels. Additionally, historical information document that this sink and Sweet Sink were the primary drain outlets for Lake Alice before alteration in the basin took place.

Due to the presence of the adjacent nursery and golf course, there is concern about the quality of water entering the sink and aquifer. Both of these adjacent land uses have the potential of releasing large amounts of fertilizers and pesticides during rainfall events. Additionally, the sinkhole apparently drains slowly, thus maintaining potentially polluted surface water that is used by waterfowl and other wildlife. Therefore, some measures should be looked at to treat water before it enters the sink by placing some small detention areas in strategic upstream locations.



Green House intermittent creek / canal

Natural Communities

Bat House Woods is comprised primarily of a mesic / upland-mixed hardwood forest, although this site is a little more pine dominated than other sites on campus. Soils are generally sandy-clays or clayey sands with substantial organic and often calcareous components. In larger, less strenuous conditions, mixed forests typically support significant wildlife and plant diversity, which result from the nutrient rich nature of hardwood forests and flowering and fruiting plants. At present, a survey of Flora and Fauna is not planned for this conservation area.

Plant Species

The canopy in this area is comprised of pignut hickory, winged elm, sweet gum, loblolly pine, laurel oak, cabbage palm, longleaf pine, and slash pine.

Invasive non-native plant species

Future management of the site will need to address invasive plant management. The following invasive non-native plants have been documented on site: air potato vine, Japanese climbing fern, cats claw vine, coral ardisia, small-leaf spiderwort, glossy privet, loquat tree, English Ivy.

Animal Species

These woods are relatively small in size, which limits the amount of habitat for terrestrial species. Therefore, only common mammals well adapted to edge environments like raccoons, gray squirrels and armadillos have been documented on site. Additionally, a fox was seen during a summer site visit. 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.



Mixed pine-hardwood forest.

Soils Inventory

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

Arredondo Urban Land Complex (0-5% slope)

This soil complex consists of well drained nearly level to gently sloping Arredondo soils and Urban Land. About 50 to 85% of each delineation is open areas of Arredondo soils. These open areas are gardens, vacant lots, lawns or playgrounds. Typically, the surface layer of Arredondo soils is dark grayish brown fine sand about 6 inches thick.

Millhopper 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

As stated previously, this site has been heavily invaded by exotic plants that dominate the understory throughout the woods. This conservation area is not very well known or accessible from the main campus and there are no trails or benches for visitors to use. The primary physical assist of the site is the sinkhole, however in its current degraded condition enhancement of this area is of questionable value.

Southern portions of this site overlap with the potential archeological sites map. Although no known sites have been identified, future improvements to the site will take into account the location of known areas and follow guidelines by the Department of Historical Resources before sighting.

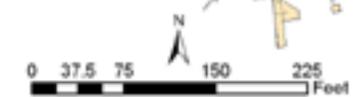
Future Improvements

Future management should focus on improving upstream water quality and removal of invasive plants. Currently, Physical Plant greenhouse operations are encroaching into the woods. In order to define the boundaries and discourage encroachment, boundary markers or fencing will need to be placed along the boundary edge, adjacent to Physical Plant greenhouses. Additionally, once invasive plants are under control, efforts should be made to enhance wildlife habitat with beneficial vegetative plantings and habitat structures. While this site has the characteristics of a Nature Park its remote location away from the main campus and since it is fenced off from the Bat House park lot makes it a low priority for physical improvements at this time.



Bat House Woods Conservation Area

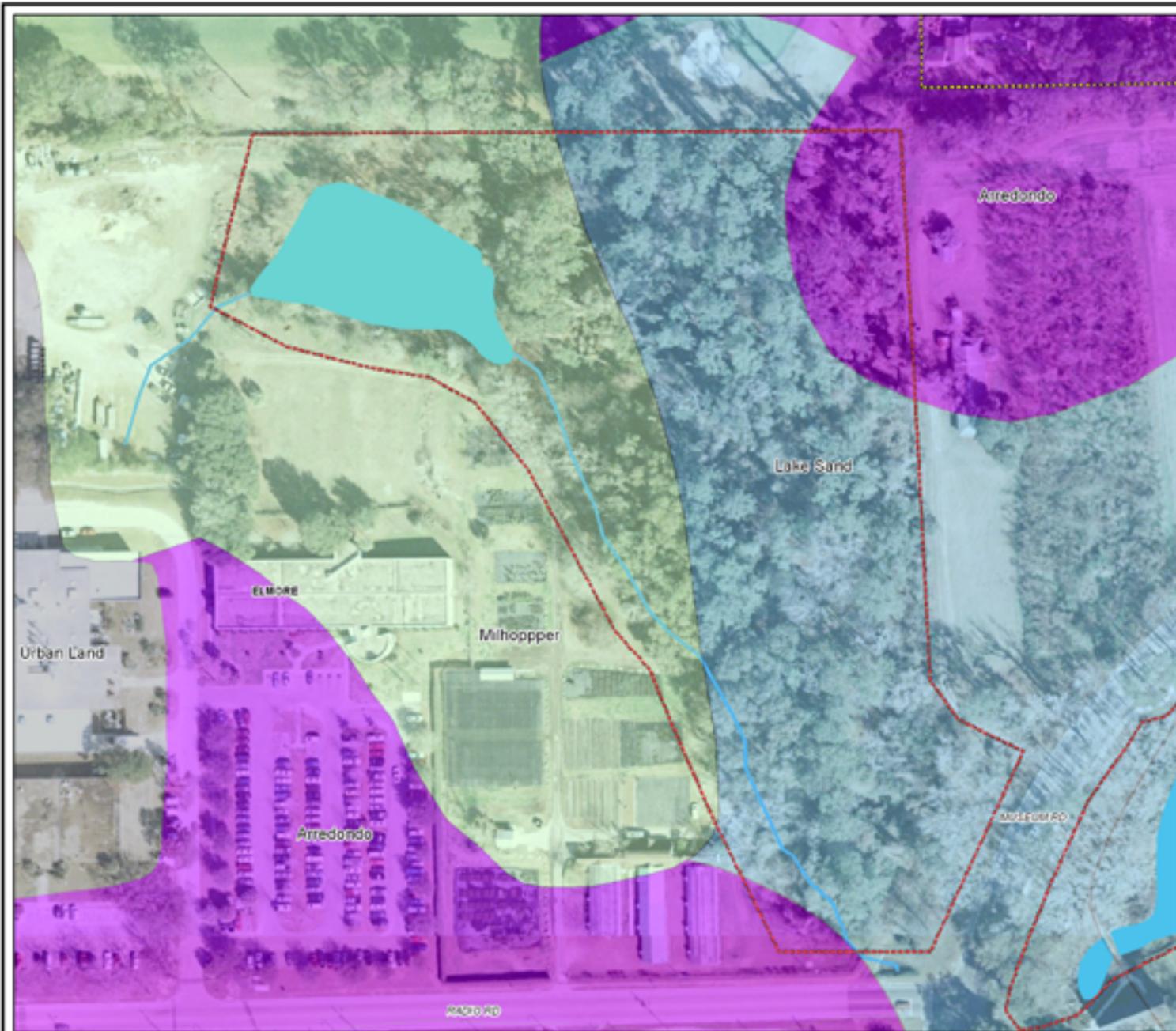
-  Conservation Area
-  Master Plan Boundary
-  Creeks



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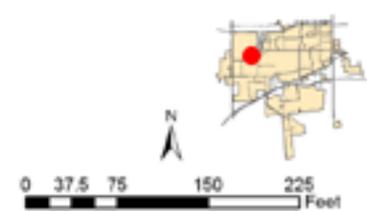


This map is intended for planning purposes only.



Soils
Bat House Woods
Conservation Area

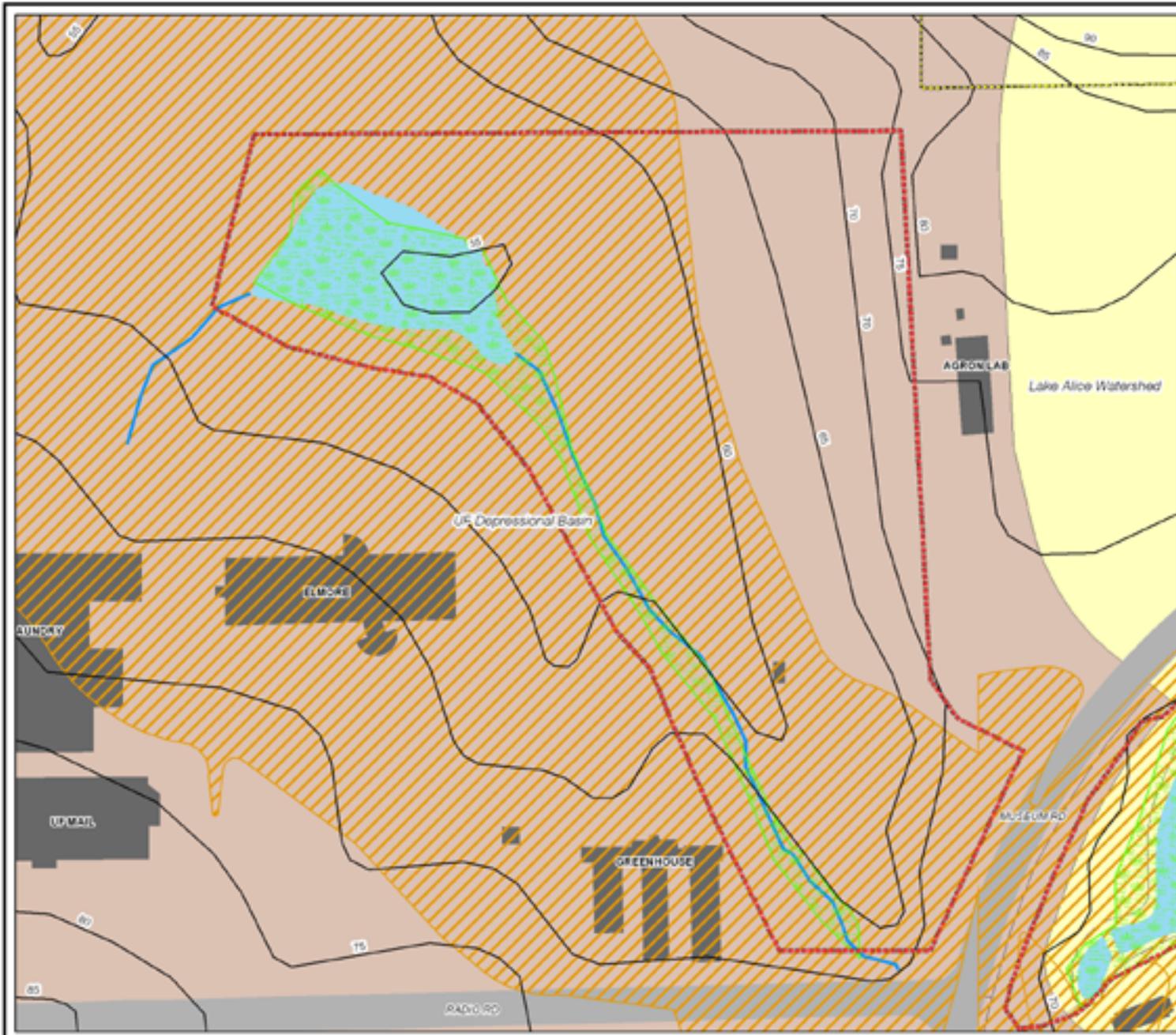
-  Conservation Area
-  Arredondo
-  Lake Sand
-  Milhopper
-  Urban Land
-  Water
-  Master Plan Boundary
-  Creeks



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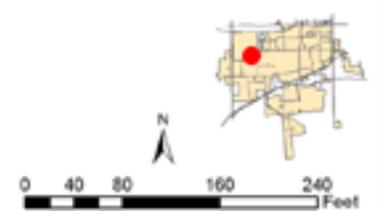


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Water Resources Bat House Woods Conservation Area

- Conservation Area
- Lake Alice Watershed
- UF Depressional Watershed
- Wetland
- 100-year floodplain
- UF building
- Water
- Master Plan Boundary
- Contour
- Creek



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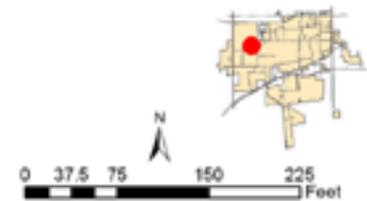


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Natural Communities Bat House Woods Conservation Area

-  Conservation Area
-  Pasture and Grass
-  Freshwater Marsh
-  Upland Mixed Forest
-  Mesic Flatwoods
-  Water
-  Bottomland Forest
-  Shrub Wetland - Basin Marsh
-  Emergent Aquatic - Marsh Lake
-  Urban
-  Utilities
-  Master Plan Boundary



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