

What happened to the trees at Washington Oaks?

- During Hurricane Matthew on October 7th, 2016 we experienced a 100-year flood event at Washington Oaks.
- The trees which were in these flooded areas experienced salt intrusion into their root systems for several months.
- After the storm, we had no significant rain in the area for months.
- We waited until springtime to give the trees every chance to bud and show signs of life; however, the trees did not survive.
- The dead trees represented a fire hazard and a safety risk so plans were made to remove the trees (approximately 120 acres).
- Historic aerial photographs from the 1940's indicate that from the beach to the remaining tree line near the ranger station, the property was relatively treeless, indicating that we are now back to a more historic state.
- Prescribed fire will be reintroduced into several areas that have burned naturally but due to habitat fragmentation and development, natural fire has been suppressed. Reintroducing fire will help the ecosystem return to a more historic condition and remove hazardous debris.
- Nature will do amazing things with this process! Dormant seeds of our Florida native plants, shrubs and trees will begin to take hold from deep within the soil.
- Feel free to contact the park at any time should you have any questions, and thank-you for supporting Washington Oaks!

Washington Oaks Gardens State Park

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