

RED BUG SLOUGH PRESERVE

5200 Beneva Road, Sarasota | Park Hours: 6 a.m. to Sunset

WELCOME!

Where does a name like Red Bug Slough Preserve come from? You might be surprised to learn there are several species of red bugs that inhabit this 72-acre site. Be on the lookout for the occasional scarlet skimmer dragonfly or the more elusive red cotton stainer beetle. As you explore the preserve's trail network, enjoy the variety of native and restored habitats found here, including areas of shady oak forest known as hammock, pine flatwoods, seasonal wetlands and even Red Bug Slough itself.



FACILITIES

A swing set and restroom facilities are located near the main parking lot. In addition, a small picnic shelter is located a short distance to the north of the parking area, and a second picnic shelter, along with a small fishing pier, are located alongside Red Bug Slough.

THE WILD SIDE

The diversity of habitats at Red Bug Slough Preserve support a variety of wildlife species. Look for animals such as raccoons, river otters, bobcats, alligators, wood ducks, marsh rabbits, red-shouldered hawks and an assortment of butterflies and wading birds. Native flowering plants, which can be found throughout the preserve during all seasons, include partridge pea, beautyberry, moonflower, loblolly bay and pickerelweed.

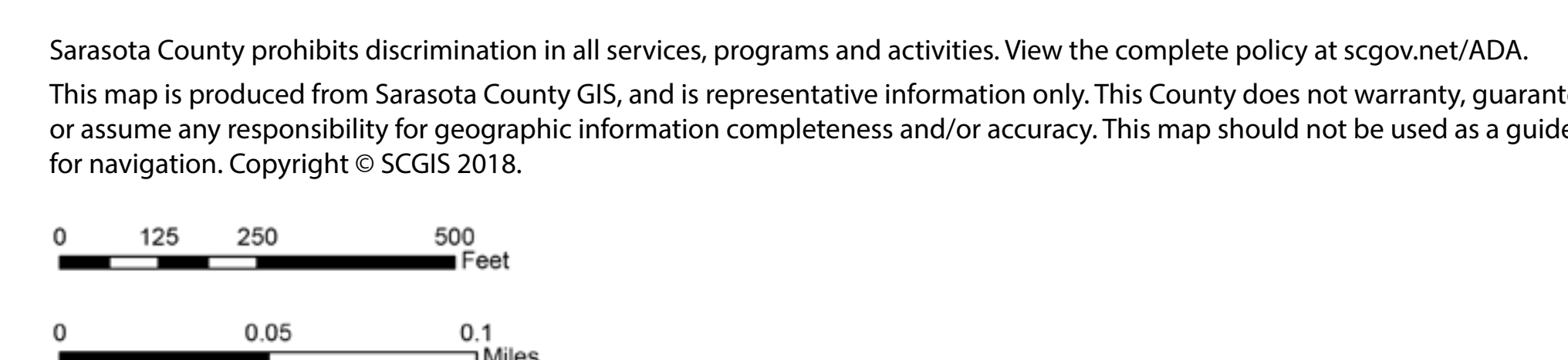
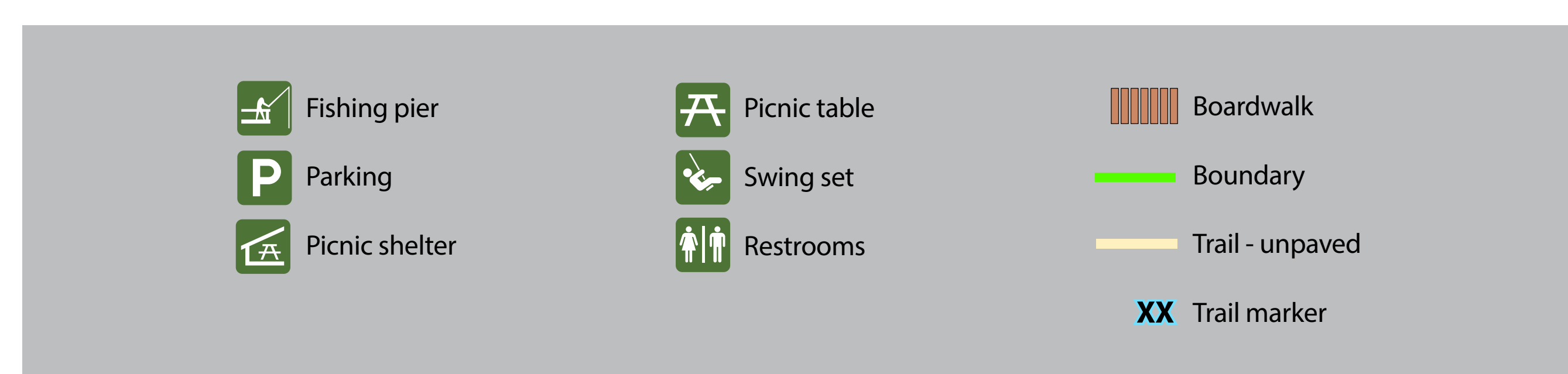
Historically, the slough was a series of isolated marshes that would overflow during the wet season and form a flowing waterway during periods of high water. Today, the slough has been channelized and flows continuously throughout the year.



HIKING AND BIKING TRAILS

You are just a few steps away from hiking and biking on natural surface trails that are rated easy. A short walk through shady hammock habitat leads to an area where Red Bug Slough forms into a small lake. A picnic shelter, several benches and a fishing pier showcase the beautiful views of the lake. Trails continue to the north and west providing access to seasonal wetlands and pine flatwoods habitats.

Some trails and public use areas are seasonally accessible and can be flooded during the summer's wet season or after extended periods of heavy rainfall. An accessible paver block walkway is located along the south boundary of the preserve.



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HISTORY

In the past, residents referred to Red Bug Slough Preserve as "Skeeter Drain," due to its prominent water feature, which flows through the site and into Phillippi Creek, which is 1.5 miles northwest of this location.

This preserve was purchased for environmental preservation in 2001 through Sarasota County's Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program and Florida Forever funds from the Florida Communities Trust. In addition, partial funding for amenities at this site was provided by the Nature Conservancy's Natural Heritage Fund for Sarasota County.



FOR YOUR SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF THE PRESERVE

- Leave natural features, plants and animals undisturbed.
- Pack it in, pack it out. Please do not litter.
- Take valuables with you and lock your vehicle.
- Sarasota Sheriff's Office:
Emergency: **911**
Non-emergency: **941-316-1201** (report crime or incident)

AMERICAN ALLIGATORS

The southeastern United States is the only place in the world where alligators exist naturally. They are an important part of Florida's aquatic ecosystems. Alligators may be present in all fresh bodies of water and reside in the lake at Red Bug Slough Preserve.

Learn how to keep alligators and visitors safe by following these tips:

- Do not approach or disturb alligators. Alligators can perceive movements as threatening, so stop until the alligator has moved back into the lake or turn around and walk in the opposite direction if you see one.
- Always keep your pets leashed.
- Do not feed alligators.
- Be aware of baby alligators. Female alligators are never far from their hatchlings.



DOGS IN THE PARK

Red Bug Slough Preserve is dog-friendly. This means dogs are welcome, but must be leashed at all times. They should remain on a maximum 6-foot leash for their own safety and to protect the preserve's sensitive habitats and resident wildlife.

TAKE A PHOTO OF THIS SIGN as a safety and informational reference!