



Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners
Department of Environmental Resources Management

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History of John Prince Park

Originally the John Prince Park was part of an extensive wetland/lake system derived from trapped rainwater on the western slope of the Atlantic Coastal Ridge. With acquisition of the land by the Palm Beach County, the area was earmarked for development as a county park. John Prince Park came into being in the mid 1930s and subsequently the majority of the wetlands were filled with clean filled dredged from Lake Osborne.

Some of the remnant wetlands remain, i.e., Custard Apple Slough, but for the most part, the wetlands are gone and the lake shores have long since been demucked and filled. Custard Apple Slough remains but is severely challenged with a multiplicity of exotic vegetation species. The Custard Apple Slough south of the Park and north and west of Lantana Airport was originally open water habitat. When LWDD lowered the water level to 9 feet from 15 feet, aquatic vegetation colonized this area. In the early 1970's there was still some open water to be seen from the boardwalk observation platform, but most of the slough was mixed cattail and sawgrass. Willow rapidly invaded there areas and became the dominant vegetation by the mid 1980's. The boardwalk was abandoned when the wood rotted and the willow blocked the view.

The remainder of the Park was developed and landscaped. The 6-acre wetland remains from the original wetland system that is now Picnic Island, Square Lake and its oxbow. Square Lake and its oxbow were dredged from the fill originally placed when the area was demucked. John Prince Park is a popular park with heavy usage by visitors and anglers alike.