

Bonita Nature Place Site Visit

Webpage: <http://www.bonitaspringsrecreation.org/natureplace.html>

Tasks: As you visit the location today, pay attention to our city officials and think about what they have to tell us. When you summarize the trip in your Nature Journal, answer the following questions in detail. Feel free to ask questions. Anything else you want to write about is encouraged.

- Explain the intersection of politics and environmental issues at the local level based on what you heard at City Hall
- Explain, in detail, one thing you found interesting during the City Hall visit.
- How is this recreation land important in maintaining the water quality of the Imperial River?
- Explain in detail the ecology of the gopher tortoise.
- Are gopher tortoises considered a “keystone species”? Why or why not?
- What is the river’s role in linking the Corkscrew Watershed to the estuarine areas?
- Why is fire important to the ecology of a pineland in SW Florida? Explain the processes related to secondary succession following a wildfire (refer to ecological succession in textbook and relate examples you saw to inhibition, facilitation, and tolerance). (Chapter 5, pages 115 - 119)
- What is the difference between commensalism, parasitism, and mutualism (use your textbook to help define these terms)?
- What is scrub habitat?
- What special adaptations do some plants use to conserve water in these drier habitats?
- What natural service(s) does this area provide?
- Name 5 plant species you saw and list the distinguishing features for each one.
- Name 5 animal species you saw and list the distinguishing features for each one.
- Are you “better off” for having visited this area?
- Explain how you connected to nature today.

Bonita Nature Place Species List

You need to read and familiarize yourself with the “Habitats” section of the Audubon field guide (pp. 28 – 47)

Pawpaw

Dog fennel

Beaksedge/Beakrush

Oak (oak hammocks)

Cypress

Love vine (Dodder vine)

Scrub rosemary

Rusty lonia

Scrub ground lichen

Pricklypear cactus

Gopher tortoise

Butterflies

Corn snake (rat snake)

Florida scrub-jay (Florida’s only *endemic* bird species)

Turkey vulture