



OCALA WETLAND Recharge Park

What is the Wetland Groundwater Recharge Park and where is it located?

The Wetland Groundwater Recharge Park is an important part of the City of Ocala's plan to fully use its water resources. Recharge is the water that drains through the soil to refill the groundwater and supplies the aquifer underneath. Development of this park will create wetland habitat, improve water quality and boost regional groundwater supplies.



The project site is a City-owned, 60-acre parcel next to the Pine Oaks Golf Course. This site contains oak canopies, lined irrigation ponds, trails and grassed fairways. The recharge park will conserve oak trees, use the ponds as deep marshes, and convert the fairways into wetlands.

What effect will the park have on the surrounding neighborhoods?

In similar wetland parks, the property value of the surrounding neighborhoods has actually increased. The overall response from the people living near the park is very positive, and the proposed park has been embraced by community members following its progress. Comments include, "I really like the concept," "this is great," and "we're thrilled with this project!"

Why is the City creating this park?

To meet its regulatory requirements. The City and many other users rely on the Upper Floridan Aquifer for water. This aquifer

also provides flow to the Silver Springs system. Regulations related to reduced spring flows and lesser water quality are becoming a reality. The City's forward-thinking strategy is to address both issues by creating a system that improves water quality, while increasing groundwater supplies.



Silver Springs State Park

To develop an educational facility for the community. The park will include a community area and overlooks, with kiosks about the recharge benefits, plant communities and wildlife habitat. The berm surrounding the wetlands will be paved with an asphalt trail that travels over two miles through the wetland park beneath beautiful oak hammocks.

How will the City proceed?

The City has evaluated, designed and permitted the park with the following project goals:

- Replenish the aquifer with treated reclaimed water and stormwater, removing nitrogen and phosphorus and providing benefits to the underlying Upper Floridan Aquifer and Silver Springs
- Create a setting that will attract wildlife and improve the natural value of the area
- Continue to involve the community to help develop education opportunities and park facilities

The design integrates the site's natural resources. The curving asphalt path winds around oak hammocks and includes a variety



Final Park Layout

asphalt path winds around oak hammocks and includes a variety of wetland and upland systems from open water ponds to deep and shallow marshes to wet prairies and upland oak hammocks.

When will the park be ready for visitors?

The design and permitting phase will be completed in 2017, and park construction began in 2018. Based on this schedule, the projected opening date is Spring 2020.

How do I get involved in this project?

The City is partnering with interested community organizations to develop the educational facility. Please visit the website at www.ocalaf1.org to find out more about the project and opportunities for involvement.

"The City ought to be complimented for a great vision that will develop into a great asset for our community."

Scott Hackmyer, Retired Educator

For more information, please contact **Rachel Slocumb, City of Ocala Water Resources Conservation Coordinator** at **352-351-6774** or email rslocumb@ocalaf1.org.