

## **Pineland Trail**

Why do we feel better after a walk in the woods? Studies indicate that the conscious practice of being immersed in the sights, sounds, and smells of the forest (Forest Bathing) can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, boost the immune system and accelerate recovery from illness. This fragrant elevated habitat is usually dry and has abundant food. That's why people have often settled in pinelands.

In South Florida, pine forests often take root in exposed limestone substrate. This fire-dependent habitat boasts an understory of diverse flora, including numerous species that grow only in this area. Pinelands provide critical foraging and nesting habitat for a diverse array of wildlife, such as the endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpecker and Florida Panther. This habitat, so special to humans, is often the target of the logging, commercial development, conversion to agriculture, fire suppression, and exotic plant and animal invasions.