

Greenway Trail: A Teen Perspective

Although the Village has only completed Phase I and a part of the Phase II of the Pinehurst Greenway System, if you take some time to observe and explore, you can discover a diverse and unique ecosystem along the path. The serenity of the woods and the natural beauty of the Sandhills will be an eye-opening experience.

All you need are a few hours in a morning or afternoon. You don't have to travel far; it's just a short jaunt to the Pinehurst Greenway Trail. If you are planning on using the trail for fitness, you can walk, run or bike the distance. Or take Rover along and get him some exercise, too. I liked the exercise, but found I was even more interested in the fascinating finds along the path.

I set off on my hike early in the morning so I could enjoy the start of the day. My trek began on the first phase of the trail near the FirstHealth Center for Health and Fitness in Pinehurst. Within the first few minutes of my walk, I came across manroot morning glories with their large white flowers opening in the sun. Longleaf pines and poplars, common in the Sandhills, line the path. Hiking farther down the trail, a boardwalk crosses a marshy area filled with many species of plants such as chain ferns, cinnamon ferns, and a variety of moisture-loving pines. At the end of the boardwalk, I was greeted by a host of baby toads that covered the ground, followed by a visit with a small brown tree frog.

The insects on my route were equally as interesting. Damsel flies, dragon flies, fishing spiders, waters striders and water boatmen were all asking to be discovered as they flitted, crept and swam in their habitats.

Farther along, the trail crosses Longleaf Drive and a second wetland area. As I crossed the boardwalk, I noticed that the birds seemed to enjoy this part of the trail the most as they flitted from tree to tree. Walking quietly, I was able to sneak up and get a good look at a banded water snake basking on a log in the sunshine. Meanwhile a predatory fish hovered stealthily in the water awaiting its next meal.

Walking back on the trail, I continued to spot sights that I overlooked on the way in: bracket fungus, sphagnum moss, and even some slime mold. In a very short distance, the complexity of nature inspired and amazed me. I look forward to return visits with the change of the seasons and urge you to take advantage of this unique natural resource.