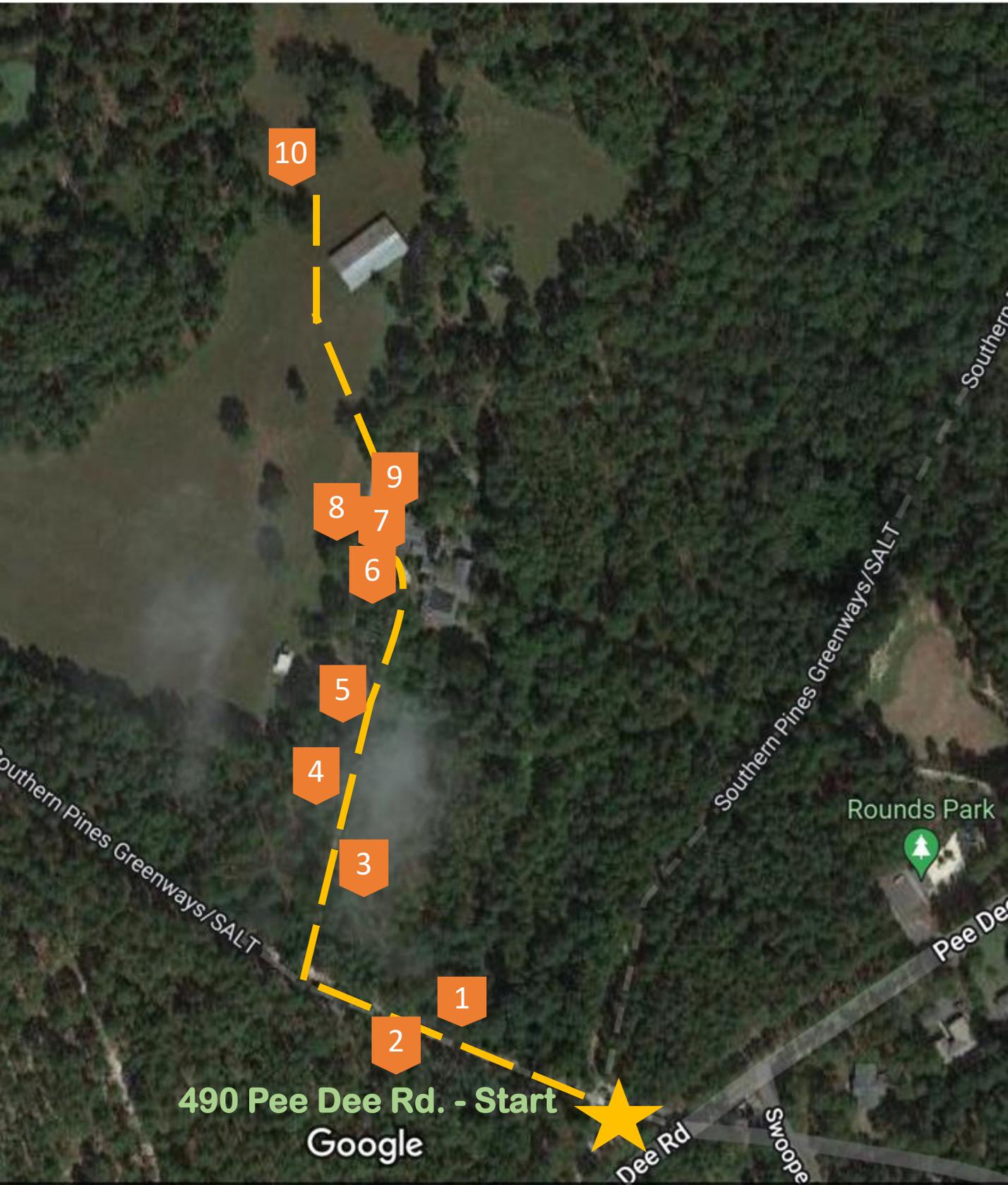


Arbor Day Tree Tour

White Hall Tract – 490 Pee Dee Rd.

Presented by the Southern Pines Appearance Commission



Welcome to the Southern Pines Whitehall Park! A recently acquired 157-acre tract where nature has been preserved and continues to flourish as a conservation area for all wildlife. This tour will showcase a few of the trees and how they house and feed several birds of this area.

White Hall Tree Tour

1

This is a mature Long Leaf Pine Forest. Fire is a critical management tool to maintain a long leaf forest that can reproduce trees to replace declining trees and maintain an open forest attractive to the red-cockaded woodpecker which is an endangered species native to this area. Larger trees in this forest are at least 80 years old. Trees must be at least 30 years old before they produce pinecones. The cones that you notice took several years to mature. The seeds twirl down from the cones in the late fall and early winter. The young Long Leaf Pine tree emerges on bare soil in the winter as 2 pine needles. It cannot sprout through thick pine straw or grass. Thus, a forest must be managed with regular burning or raking with the removal of understory species not indigenous to Long Leaf Pine Forests. Over the next 5 – 8 years the grass-like tree increases the number of needles in the clump. During this period of growth, the tree is developing an extensive root system. The tree looks similar to the needle grass that grows in a Long Leaf Pine forest. The long leaf pine has a bright green color that distinguishes it from the tannish needle grass. As the tree matures it will develop a stem and the needles will grow along the stem.

2

This is a long leaf pine seedling

3

To the left near “gate” tag on long leaf pine denotes a Red Cockaded Woodpecker nest in tree. The Red Cockaded Woodpecker nests exclusively in Long Leaf Pine trees in an open Long Leaf Pine forested setting. Trees that have an active or inactive nest are identified on this property with a marker. The Red Cockaded Woodpecker is an endangered and protected species. They nest in trees at least 80 years old. It is easier for the birds to create cavities in the heartwood of an older tree but still may take several years for the birds to excavate nest cavity which is 1-2 feet deep. A cluster of trees with cavities for nests is in this area.

4

After 5-8 years in the grass-like stage, the Long Leaf pine enters the bottle brush stage. It produces needles along the trunk and then a pom- poms of needles in several locations along the trunk. During this stage it grows about 2 feet per year. After 9 – 15 years it starts to grow branches and becomes a sapling tree. The tree is tall and spindly during the sapling stage of growth.

The red-cockaded woodpecker is the only species that excavates cavities for nesting in living pine trees. There is a whitish sheen on the tree trunk beneath the hole that is from the Pine’s sap. The birds peck at the tree to make the sap seep onto the trunk. The sap is slick and makes it difficult for a snake or other creature to climb up the trunk to invade or occupy the nest. If a tree has the light-colored sap, it likely has an active Red Cockaded Woodpecker nest.

5

The Carolina Cherry Laurel is a native species. It is not a species in a Long Leaf Pine Forest that has been managed with regular burning that removes the mid-story trees and shrubs. The Carolina Cherry Laurel provides berries that birds and other animals eat. Insects visit the flowers when it blooms in late winter and early spring. Other mid-story species in these woods including privet, wax myrtle, holly and viburnum. Of these, privet is considered an invasive species. It is not native to North Carolina. Regular burning removes these species and makes the forest open and attractive to the Red Cockaded Woodpecker. The Carolina Cherry Laurel goes in and out of favor with the landscape industry.

6

American Holly is a native species with red berries that are visually attractive and eaten by a wide range of birds and other wildlife. It is widely used as an ornamental plant in the constructed landscape.

7

Southern Magnolia is a traditional landscape plant in the south. It is a large, hardy, evergreen with scented flowers in the spring. The seed heads provide food for wildlife.

8

The Red Cedar has a huge habitat from the mountains to the coast of North Carolina. It is a tough plant that provides locations for bird nests and seeds for birds to eat. Its aromatic wood deters moths and other insects and has been used for furniture to store textiles in. This native conifer has a wide range of genetic variation thus comes in many hues shapes and sizes which are on this property.

9

The flowering dogwood is the NC State flower. This adaptable plant is gorgeous in bloom. Among the many birds that enjoy its berries is the Eastern bluebird. It grows on the edges of woodlands and is a lovely ornamental small tree. There are other dogwoods native to the area including some that like wet areas and have red stems.

10

Although not native to North Carolina, the pecan tree has been an important food source for farm families in the area for generations. The nuts are high in protein and are easily stored. The holes in the tree were likely made by a Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker but do not appear to hurt the vitality of the tree. Several species of Hickory are native to North Carolina and closely related to the pecan.