



CASE STUDY

Chicot State Park - Happy Trails

Friends of Louisiana State Arboretum
Chicot State Park - Happy Trails Signage
Ville Platte, LA

Designers: Anne Darrah: Maps and soil information signage. Kate Ferry: Habitat, etiquette, donor and species informational signage.



Fifty years ago, the Louisiana State Parks and Recreation Commission created the nation's first state-supported arboretum, selecting 300-plus acres of Chicot State Park, located in central Louisiana near the town of Ville Platte, to be made into a showcase for the state's indigenous trees and plants. The arboretum has since expanded to some 600 acres, and a new visitor center with richly interactive exhibits was added in 2010. On January 2015, the Arboretum held a dedication ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Arboretum's "Happy Trails" signage project, which populated the Arboretum's nearly six mile trail system with beautiful and informative interpretive signage to enhance visitors' educational and nature appreciation experience.

In the Arboretum the newly interpreted nature trails take hikers deep into the wooded areas meandering through a varied terrain from steep slopes along terrace ridges to cypress swampland. Visitors walking the trails quietly will discover that sycamores, maples, beeches, magnolias, hickories, ferns, and crane fly orchids are not the only living things in the arboretum. There's a good chance to encounter some two-and four-legged critters, too: white-tail deer, wild turkey, raccoon, opossum, fox, skunk, squirrel, and numerous species of birds.

"As well as being a beautiful site, the Arboretum is geographically located at the interface of the delta's bottomland hardwood forest, the Cajun Prairie and the rolling pine savannah habitats," notes Jim Foret, a Louisiana arborist who serves as President of Friends of the Louisiana Arboretum, a support group that raised funds for the signage project. "With the installation of new signage, visitors to the Arboretum will have a richer educational experience while they are immersed in the environment."

A requirement of the new signs was that they showcase the unique designs created to attract and educate the park's many visitors. Also, the signs had to retain their beauty year after year, even in the hot humid Southern climate. The durability, graffiti resistance, and ability to withstand extreme conditions made iZone Imaging's custom high pressure laminate (CHPL) the perfect choice for the Happy Trails project.