

STORY OF ARCH CREEK

▼ Conch shell tool artifact



Arch Creek Park is rich in history. Given the abundant natural resources in the area and proximity to Biscayne Bay, it is no surprise that an ancient Native American tribe known as the Tequesta once called it home. In 1975, archaeologists discovered a shell midden (refuse heap) within the park containing pottery, animal bones and conch tools.



▲ Alligator scute artifact

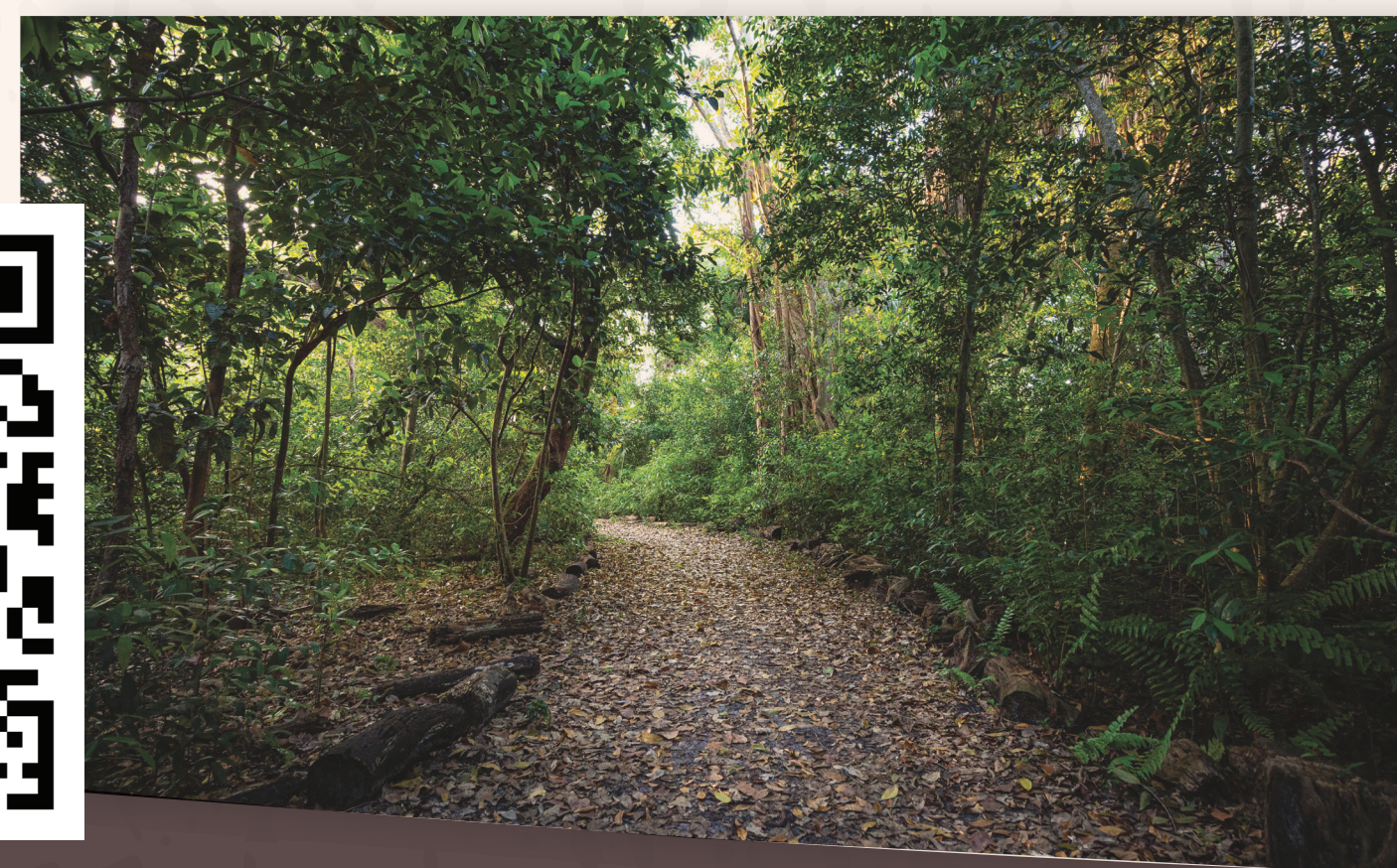
The original natural limestone bridge along Arch Creek was said to have been one of the greatest natural wonders of South Florida. It was a stopover for carriages and stagecoaches, as well as a popular place for community gatherings. During the Seminole Wars, the bridge was part of military trail, providing passage for military troops. In 1858, settlers built a mill at the natural bridge to grind coontie root into starch. It became part of the first county road in 1892, which later became Dixie Highway. The bridge collapsed in 1973, likely due to erosion and old age. A replica was built in 1986.

In the early 19th century, Arch Creek became a town which included a train depot, a post office, a school, a church, packing houses and stores. The community was primarily agricultural, growing tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapples. In the early 1970s, the property was slated to become a used car lot. After intense lobbying, concerned citizens convinced the State of Florida to purchase the land in 1973. These citizens formed the Arch Creek Trust in 1981. Miami-Dade County leased the land and built the museum, while nature trails were constructed by the Youth Conservation Corps (Y.C.C.). The park officially opened in April of 1982. The Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Department – Miami EcoAdventures unit, in conjunction with the Arch Creek Trust now work to restore, support, and preserve the park.



▲ Car driving north passing over the Arch Creek natural bridge.

▶ Tropical hardwood hammock trail, dense canopy with shrubs and vines at the ground level and its outer edges.



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Indigenous peoples of Florida, known as Florida's First People, include the Ais, Apalachee, Calusa, Creek, Miccosukee, Seminole, Tequesta, Timucua, and Yemassee. Their interactions with European settlers and Florida Homesteaders led to their death, enslavement, or removal from their native lands by these colonizers. The Seminole stewarded the park preserve as their hunting grounds until their forced removal from the lands under the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Present day tribes in South Florida include the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the unaffiliated Independent or Traditional Seminoles. The park recognizes and honors the Indigenous communities of this region, acknowledging that Miami and the park occupies Indigenous homelands and resources. We honor these cultures, their ancestors and their descendants as past, present and future stewards of these lands.



You are entering a natural area preserved and managed by Miami-Dade County DERM's Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program. In 1990, voters created the EEL Program to acquire, restore, and manage natural areas in an effort to conserve the county's endemic and diminishing native habitats for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

This project is sponsored in part by the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources and the State of Florida.



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