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Squadron of Martins intercept The Dragonfly



The Dragonfly camera views the landing pad, which is the hood of the news Jeep that serves as part of the *HardisonInk.com* fleet, as well as a personal transportation vehicle for hobbyist missions and the like.

Story, Photos and Video By Jeff M. Hardison © July 21, 2017 at 9:17 a.m.

TRI-COUNTY AREA -- A squadron of Martins intercepted The Dragonfly on Thursday morning (July 20) when the Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) was on a hobby-oriented practice flight in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties.

Hobbyist UAS Pilot Jeff Martin Hardison said this was his first experience where birds appeared to take an interest in the flying machine.

<https://youtu.be/8IHMINbADmQ>

This narrated 2-minute video shows a launch from the news Jeep's hood, a flight up, a look around over a pasture, some Martins buzzing the drone and then a return to the launch pad of Thursday morning.

"Martins are great birds," Hardison said. "They eat mosquitoes. They must have perceived the drone as a competitor for food. They did not fly too close to it for safety. They probably used the gang method of attempted bird intimidation. No birds were injured. It really was rather interesting, like a ballet in the air."

The pilot mentioned that his middle name is from his late great uncle and godfather Martin Forsyth of St. Petersburg (Florida, not Russia).

Hardison said he was visiting a friend who has some pasture that provides a good place for flying. The friend prefers not to let the location be known.

The drone never flew above 400 feet, and it remained in view of the operator at all times.

Below are some still shots taken during the two-minute flight over a pasture in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties.



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A Quick Aerial Tour Of Fort Fanning



A section of sidewalk is seen as it goes parallel with the Suwannee River. There are benches next to the river there too.

<https://youtu.be/1bkC210IA3E>

This 3-minute 16-second narrated video shows part of historic Fort Fanning, which is near the crossroads for Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties. Fort Fanning was an important United States Army post built on the southern banks of the Suwannee River during the Second Seminole War. That war was also known as the Florida War. That conflict was from 1835 to 1842 in Florida between the United States of America and various groups of Native Americans collectively known as Seminoles. Florida became a state in 1847.

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This view of where one sidewalk intersect with another one shows some of the attractive layout of the park next to the Suwannee River.

The fort was often visited by Brig. Gen. Zachary Taylor, who later became President. The site is now preserved as Fort Fanning Historic Park in the City of Fanning Springs. The fort was named for Col. Alexander Campbell Wilder Fanning. He was one of the first graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. He came to Florida in 1818 as a major under the command of Gen. Andrew Jackson. When the fort was built in 1838, it was named in his honor. Fort Fanning Historic Park is now a beautiful memorial to the individuals who served there. The gate of the fort has been reconstructed along with a small section of stockade. Visitors can walk on sidewalks that lead to overlooks along the Suwannee River. There is no charge to visit the historic site. It was developed through a Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program grant and it opened in the early 2000s to the general public after Fanning Springs Mayor Carol McQueen and the Fanning Springs City Council had a ribbon-cutting ceremony back then.

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