

So what do you do during the pandemic when it is tough to go out? We are working on our house. It is August 2020 and 13 months since we moved into our new house. We planned on doing everything you are going to see, but it got accelerated a little with the pandemic since we couldn't go anywhere. Instead of going to eat Mexican food at Casa Maria, our favorite place, we stayed home, cut trees, cleared brush, built a deck, etc., and ate hot dogs. We thought we would share some of this with our family and friends who might want a little escape from 2020 through seeing some of the before and after of our fixer-upper. It has been a busy year on our 23-acre wetlands property. We figure we have another year or so to go before we are mostly through. You are never really done though right?

Hillwood Rd Jacksonville, Florida

4254 Hillwood Rd  
Jacksonville, FL 32223  
30.13°N, 81.60°W

This is what we saw when we drove up. The property was a mass of vines growing over dead trees and such. Believe it or not there is an Orange Tree in this picture and a mailbox. You couldn't see very deep into the woods.

2D



Same view now. It took months and months to get it to this point. We pulled and killed all of the vines and cut out all of the dead trees. The mailbox we made is Anabel's favorite part. I built it and she painted it. We are still working on the front portion of the lot, but it is much better.



This was the driveway. All of the dead branches you see on each side were from the hurricane in late 2017. Tree trunks were just stacked on the side. You can't see it, but there is also a cracked sewer pipe underneath the driveway. This is looking towards the street from the house. It is about 250 feet long.



This is now. We cut up the trunks, logs, branches, and hauled off the debris. We cleared a million sticker vines. Somehow, no matter how careful you are, they get you. We then put up a fence and did new gravel. I dug up and replaced the sewer pipe. We also expanded the width of the driveway. The next few slides show you coming down the driveway to the house.



This is at the top of the driveway. The mailbox is to my immediate right



You can almost see the house now. It's coming.



This was the house as we first saw it.



It needed a lot of work to give it curb appeal. But we could see the potential. Needs on what we saw from just standing in front when we drove up:

- New roof
- New paint
- New stairs. (The railing was being held by a few nails.)
- Landscaping
- Gutters
- Lights, etc.





We had it painted and the roof replaced, but we did everything else...including setting up the fountain. The fountain was heavy.



This is Anabel cleaning the windows like a BOSS! It had been years since their last cleaning.



This is the dock as we first saw it. It was not level, not finished, and we fell through some of the rotten boards. The lily pads and torpedo grass had taken over as well. We couldn't get our boat in.



This is looking back towards the woods. It was a little sketchy walking down here. The walkway is almost 1500' long through the forest.



Before pressure washing to see what boards are still good. Answer was none on this section. You can see I had already started on the grass as well.



This is a shot of our walkway. It is a seven-minute walk at a regular pace for us. Our sons walk a little faster and do it in about five minutes



This is after Anabel pressure washed this section and I replaced a ton of boards. I replaced so many boards that I finally said to hell with it and hired a crew. It took them four months to get the walkway done with adding/replacing stringers and boards. It took Anabel a week to pressure wash it. Our nephew Dawson did it for us last time. He only took four days.



Cool bird on the rotten dock. Notice how thick the vegetation is.



Before



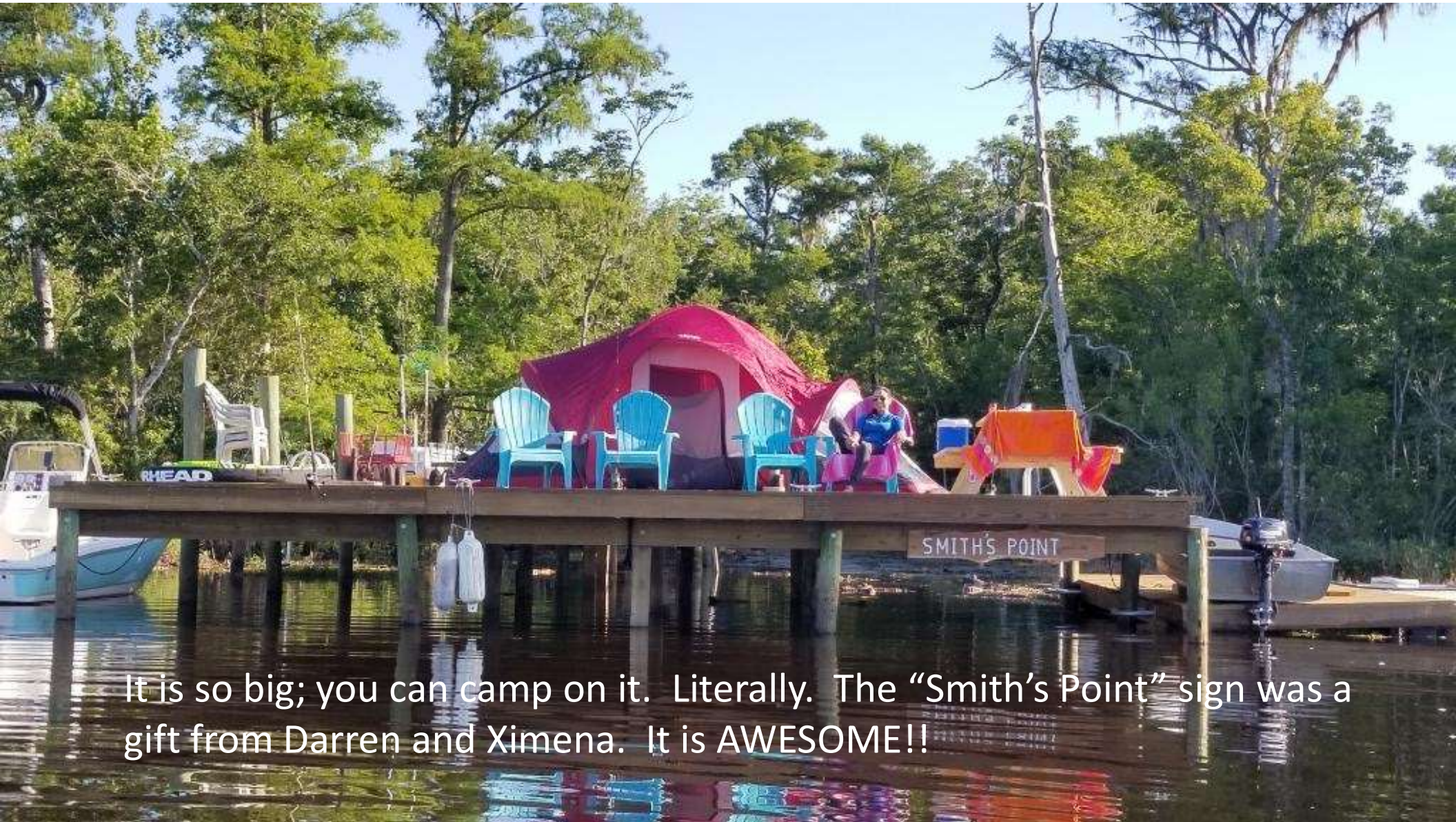
# After

The bathtub makes people laugh as they speed by on their boat. It is a 1922 clawfoot iron tub. We put it on one of our wagons and brought it down. It is heavy! We can get our boat in the slip now. It took a special tool to cut all the lily pads out. Took forever, but it was worth it. We built the bench and dock box from scrap wood.



Same dock post as where the bird was. No more invasive vegetation. We take our Gheenoe here.





It is so big; you can camp on it. Literally. The “Smith’s Point” sign was a gift from Darren and Ximena. It is AWESOME!!



This is the rear of the house. We do not have any pictures of before, but it was just a patch of dead grass.

More to Come!