

Withlacoochee State Trail

In the late 1800s, railroad entrepreneur Henry Plant established a rail line that ran from Croom to Inverness, Florida, thus completing the Plant System's West Coast Route. The Plant System eventually became the Atlantic Coast Line in 1902, the Seaboard Coast Line in 1967, and finally, CSX Transportation in 1980. In December of 1989, CSX Transportation sold their 46 miles of right-of-way between Gulf Junction (Citrus Springs) and Owensboro Junction, six miles north of Dade City, to the State of Florida to establish the Withlacoochee State Trail. The corridor was one of the first purchased under the Florida Rails to Trails Program, which has been incorporated into the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT). OGT also manages the trail.

At 46 miles in length, the Withlacoochee State Trail is presently the longest paved rail-trail in Florida. The trail corridor runs through small towns, ranches and natural areas as it makes its way south from Citrus Springs to Trilby. Like most rail-trails in Florida, the Withlacoochee State Trail is generally flat, offering an easy ride for all skill levels. Mile markers are located along the trail. An unpaved equestrian trail parallels portions of the paved trail.

Reminders of historic railroad activity include cement mileage and whistle markers, the Lake Henderson Trestle and the privately owned Inverness Depot, which was built in 1892. Along the trail, visitors will pass through a variety of habitats, including upland mixed forest, sand hill and wetland communities. The trail corridor also serves as a habitat for gopher tortoises and other native plant and animal species.

The trail traverses a region that offers many other outstanding recreational opportunities. Among the recreational highlights nearby are the unpaved trails in the Croom area of the Withlacoochee State Forest, Fort Cooper State Park and the Withlacoochee River (South) Canoe Trail.



Trail Safety and Etiquette

- Bicyclists and in-line skaters yield to other users; all trail users yield to equestrians.
- Obey all trail rules posted at trailheads.
- Stay to the right except when passing.
- Pass slower traffic on their left; yield to oncoming traffic when passing.
- Give a clear warning signal when passing.
- Always look ahead and behind when passing.
- Travel at a responsible speed.
- Keep pets on a leash.
- Do not trespass on private property.
- Move off the trail surface when stopped to allow others to pass.
- Yield to other trail users when entering and crossing the trail.
- Do not disturb the wildlife.
- Watch out for traffic when crossing the street.
- Obey all traffic signals.
- Helmets for children under 16 required, but recommended for everyone riding bicycles.

Local Contact Information:

Withlacoochee State Trail
315 N. Apopka Avenue
Inverness, FL 34450
(352) 726-2251 (Office/Voicemail)
(352) 302-0051 (Primary Ranger)
(352) 585-1487 (Alternate Ranger)

Office of Greenways & Trails
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 795
Tallahassee, FL 32399
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Toll Free: (877) 822-5208



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
GREENWAYS & TRAILS

FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com

Withlacoochee State Trail



Longest paved rail
trail in Florida

Withlacoochee State Trail

Major Activities:

Walking, biking, in-line skating, horseback riding and bird watching

Trail Length/Surface:

46 miles, paved (asphalt, 12' wide)

Fee: None

Counties:

Citrus, Hernando, Pasco

Nearby Towns:

Brooksville, Dunnellon, Inverness

Notes:

This trail's Citizen Support Organization (Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee) has developed a detailed guide to the trail. To purchase a copy of this guidebook, visit the organization's website at www.railstorailsonline.com/.

Access/Directions:

Gulf Junction Trailhead

South of Dunnellon, off US 41, west on Martinelli Blvd. to Magenta, then south approximately one-quarter of a mile. Trailhead on right.

South Citrus Springs Trailhead

In Citrus Springs, off of US 41, turn west on South Citrus Springs Blvd. approximately one-quarter mile. Trailhead on left.

Inverness Trailhead

Once entering the Inverness city limits on Hwy 41 South, proceed to North Apopka Ave., go left approximately 3/10 of a mile and look for kiosk and signage for the Withlacoochee State Trail.

Ridge Manor Trailhead

-From Interstate 75, take US 98/50. Head east on US 98/50 approximately one mile to Croom Rital Road. Take a left and proceed to trailhead.

-From Brooksville, take US 98/50 east to Croom Rital Road, approximately one mile past the Interstate 75 interchange. Take a left and proceed to trailhead.

Trilby Trailhead

Approximately 1 mile west of US 301, off US 98, on CR 575 in Trilby.

Owensboro Junction Trailhead/US 301
 -From Interstate 75, take Exit 301 and head east on US 98/50. At the US 98/50 Junction take US 98 South-East to US 301, then head south on US 301 approximately one mile to the parking area on the west (right) side of US 301.
 -From US 301, the parking area is on the west side of US 301 approximately one-mile south of the US 98/US 301 junction.

