



## Find Your FT Adventure

Threading its way from the sugar sand beaches of Gulf Islands National Seashore in the Florida Panhandle to the cypress domes of Big Cypress National Preserve in the Everglades, the Florida National Scenic Trail (or Florida Trail) connects the state's most outstanding scenic, natural, cultural, and historic resources.

## The Florida Trail

- Connecting Florida's public lands, the Florida Trail spans over 1,500 miles
- Hosted by more than 100 land management units
- Receives over 360,000 visitors a year
- Is the nation's only subtropical National Scenic Trail
- Located within a one-hour drive of many of Florida's major urban areas
- Weaves through 20 unique habitats across the state

Explore Florida's wild side and find your adventure on the Florida Trail!

The trail is marked with 2-inch-by-6-inch orange blazes! Blue blazes lead to campsites or special features.



**SPEEDY**  
THE GOPHER TORTOISE

PC: MICHAEL STRIVELLI

## Recreation on the Florida Trail



\*Please refer to local land manager rules and regulations to see if these activities are available and/or permitted on a trail segment near you.

PC: VAN TRAN (1), ROBERT JONES (2), SHAWN THOMAS (3), AND R. SEIDLER (4)

Whether you want to trek through the wilderness or explore a Gateway Community along an urban rail-trail, your adventure starts nearby on the Florida Trail.

### Trail Community

Outside of its nationally significant resources, the Florida Trail is known for its vibrant trail community. Florida Trail Gateway Communities offer support in the form of shuttling, lodging, shops, and more to trail users.

### Your Help is Needed

Volunteerism is integral to the mission and operation of the trail. From its inception, dedicated volunteers have played an important role in bringing the Florida Trail to life. To find out more on how to get involved, contact the Florida Trail Association (FTA).



PC: GUY EDISON

### Enjoying the Trail

For more information on how to enjoy the trail, check with the FTA, the land manager, or the U.S. Forest Service.

**Camping:** Overnight stays along the Florida Trail vary by trail section. Some land managers may require users to camp at designated sites or obtain permits.

**Hunting and Fishing:** Land managers may impose some restrictions on camping or access during hunting seasons. Check the local land manager website in advance for dates, requirements, and restrictions. Fishing is allowed with a valid Florida fishing license.

### National Scenic Trails

Congress passed the National Trails System Act in 1968. Today, the National Trails System consists of 11 National Scenic Trails, including the Florida Trail. There are also 16 National Historic Trails and over 900 National Recreation Trails. For more information about the National Trails System, please visit [www.NPS.gov/NTS](http://www.NPS.gov/NTS).



#### Permitted Uses

The Florida Trail is a non-motorized trail. Non-motorized uses, including bicycling and horseback riding, are permitted on specified segments.

#### Information and Publications

Online maps, itineraries, and other resources are available through the U.S. Forest Service and the FTA. For more information on trailheads, trail conditions, closures, and to purchase print materials, please visit the FTA website at [www.FloridaTrail.org](http://www.FloridaTrail.org).

Trail courtesy is urged for all FT users. Comply with all rules and regulations for the land managing units. Be sure to share the trail with other users.

#### Social Media

Follow the FTA and the National Forests in Florida on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

- Facebook: FloridaTrailAssociation
- Twitter: FloridaTrail
- Instagram: FloridaTrail
- Facebook: NationalForestsInFlorida
- Twitter: NFinFlorida

This publication was developed through collaboration of the U.S. Forest Service, National Forests in Florida, and the Florida Trail Association. The Forest Service and the FTA are equal opportunity providers and employers.



The Florida Trail follows Leave No Trace guidelines. Visit [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org) for more information.

#### Contact

U.S. Forest Service  
325 John Knox Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
850-523-8500  
[www.fs.usda.gov/fnst](http://www.fs.usda.gov/fnst)

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Gainesville, FL 32601  
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PC: CHRIS A. JOHNS





Top Destinations on The Florida Trail



Panhandle

Starting just south of the state capitol and reaching the Northern Terminus at Fort Pickens, the Panhandle is home to the world’s 5th largest biodiversity hotspot. Explore beach dunes, restored longleaf pine forests, and salt marshes in this remote section of Florida.

- 1 **Gulf Islands National Seashore** is the Northern Terminus of the Florida Trail and home to the only National Scenic Trail beach hike in the nation. Get immersed in colonial history at Fort Pickens, search for wildlife along Santa Rosa Sound, or simply enjoy the white quartz beaches on the Gulf of Mexico.
- 2 **Econfina Creek Wildlife Management Area** travels along bluffs, deep ravines, and first magnitude springs. Cross two of the trail’s largest suspension bridges, while strolling along beautiful, spring-fed Econfina Creek.
- 3 **St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge** is world renowned for the more than 300 species of migratory birds who find habitat here. A trip here is not complete without a visit to the 2nd oldest lighthouse in Florida, or a hike along the abundant salt marshes throughout the refuge. Make sure to bring binoculars!



North Florida

North Florida is a window into the past, passing through 1700s plantations and civil war battlefields. The region is known primarily for its flatwood forests and hilly terrain along spring-fed, tannin-rich rivers.

- 4 **Aucilla River Sinks** is one of the more unique geological features on the trail. Follow the Aucilla River as it is swallowed underground and reappears in a series of massive sinkholes.
- 5 **Suwannee River** is considered an artery of Northern Florida, providing stunning views of sandy beaches, Florida springs, and even whitewater rapids. The Florida Trail follows conservation lands along the river for more than 60 miles, intersecting with everything from Florida folk culture to secluded swimming holes.
- 6 **Rice Creek Conservation Area** was originally an 18th century indigo and rice plantation. Now the trail is connected by a series of boardwalks and bridges that highlight a Florida Trail shelter and one of the state’s largest cypress trees.



Central Florida

Circling conservation areas around the Greater Orlando Metro Region, the Florida Trail splits into its Eastern and Western corridors. Travel through palmetto and pine flatwoods, creekside hammocks, rolling sandhills, and floodplain forests.

- 7 **The Ocala National Forest** is known as the heart of the Florida Trail. From shady wilderness hikes through hydric hammocks or open prairies filled with wildflowers, the Ocala NF is known for its diversity of ecosystems and recreation experiences. Don’t leave without jumping into sparkling Alexander Springs.
- 8 **Little Big Econ State Forest** provides hikes along the narrow and winding Econlockhatchee River. Trek through historic turpentine distilleries, a railroad bed built by Henry Flagler, and jungle-like riverside views in this state forest.
- 9 **Withlacoochee State Forest** is known for its abundant wildlife and challenging loop hikes, which have helped many outdoor enthusiasts train for the Appalachian Trail. The “crooked river” connecting its three large tracts helped this location earn the title of “10 Coolest Places You’ve Never Been in North America” by the World Wildlife Fund.



South Florida

Explore the wet wilderness of sawgrass prairies, hardwood hammocks, and dwarf cypress swamps of Southern Florida. Start your journey at the Southern Terminus in Big Cypress National Preserve, trek through swamps, and follow the winding Kissimmee River through historic cattle country.

- 10 **Kissimmee Prairie Preserve** is one of South Florida’s premier locations for birding, wildlife viewing, and stargazing as a designated Dark Sky Park. Discover this successful restoration project and the vast biodiversity of the state’s largest dry prairie by foot, bike, or horse.
- 11 **Lake Okeechobee** is the 2nd largest freshwater lake in the continental United States, encircled by 113 miles of the Florida Trail. Whether you take a paved levee walk around its eastern shore or explore the more remote marshlands to the west, make sure you’re there in time for an unforgettable sunrise.
- 12 **Big Cypress National Preserve** is often noted as the most remote wilderness hike on the Florida Trail. Get your feet wet while you trek through cypress groves in search of rare ghost orchids, migratory bird populations, or even a glimpse of the endangered Florida panther.



Check out our Natural Community Ecology on the Florida Trail story map for an interactive journey of all the plants and animals on the trail!



As Florida’s official statewide non-motorized trail, the Florida National Scenic Trail is made possible through the efforts of our partners including:

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Water Management Districts
- Florida Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- County government, city government, private landowners, and university partners