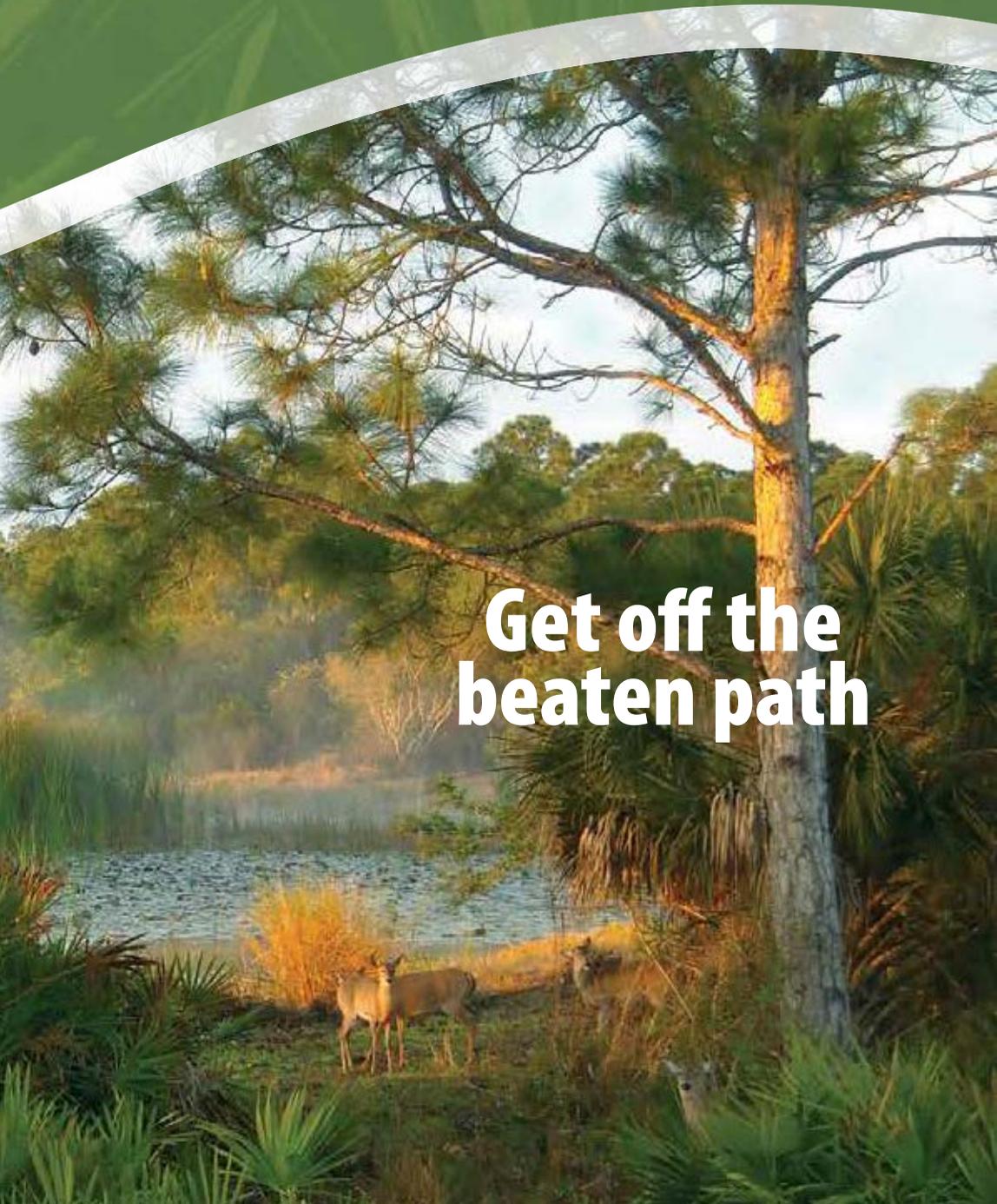


SARASOTA COUNTY

Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources

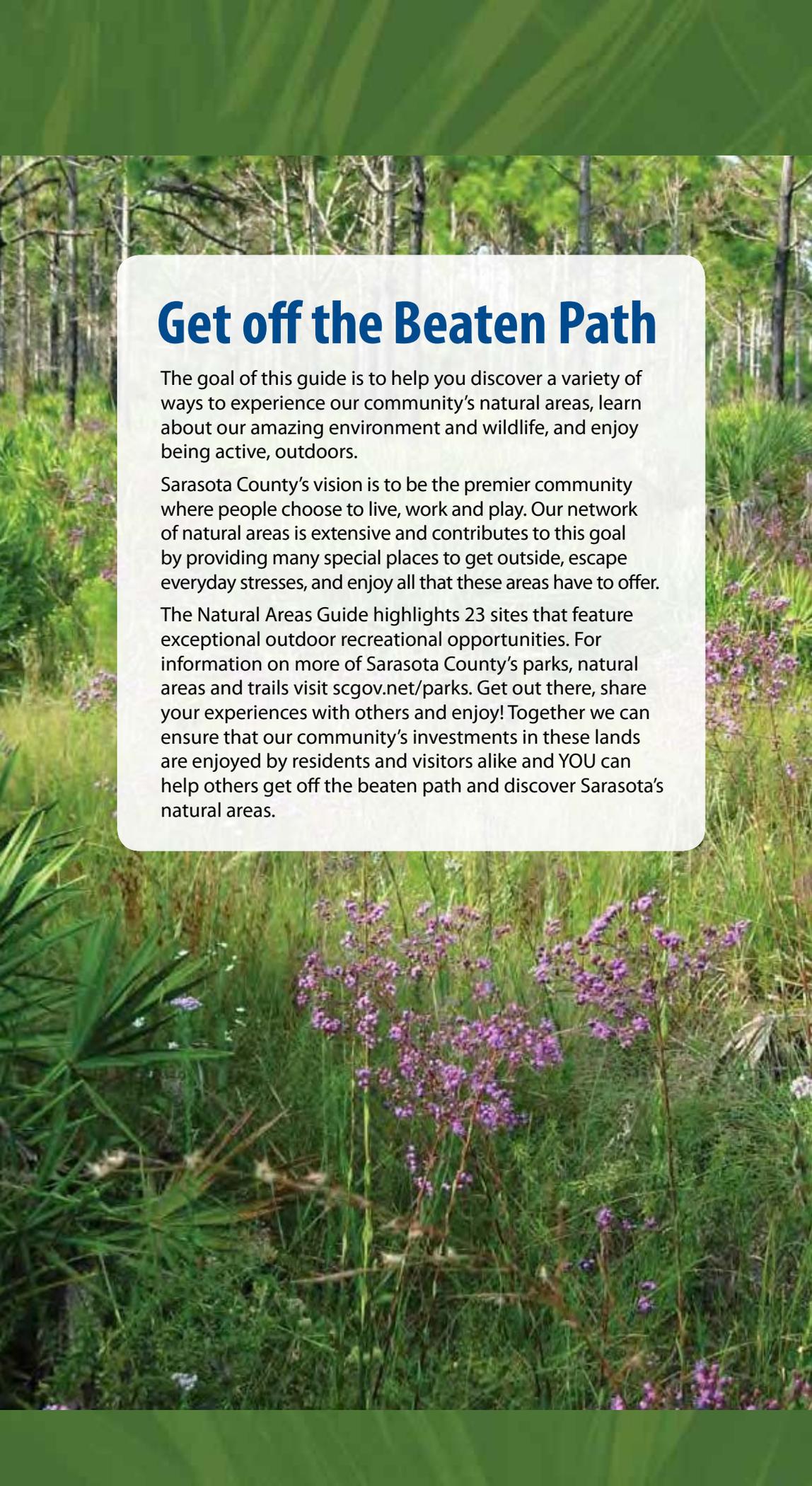
Natural Areas Guide



**Get off the
beaten path**



Sarasota County



Get off the Beaten Path

The goal of this guide is to help you discover a variety of ways to experience our community's natural areas, learn about our amazing environment and wildlife, and enjoy being active, outdoors.

Sarasota County's vision is to be the premier community where people choose to live, work and play. Our network of natural areas is extensive and contributes to this goal by providing many special places to get outside, escape everyday stresses, and enjoy all that these areas have to offer.

The Natural Areas Guide highlights 23 sites that feature exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities. For information on more of Sarasota County's parks, natural areas and trails visit scgov.net/parks. Get out there, share your experiences with others and enjoy! Together we can ensure that our community's investments in these lands are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike and YOU can help others get off the beaten path and discover Sarasota's natural areas.

Table of Contents

Important Information.....	2
How to use this Guide	3
What Kind of “Wild” Are You?	4
Sarasota County Wildlife.....	8
Notable Species	9
Sarasota County Park Locator Map.....	10
At-a-glance Guide	11
● Ainger Creek Trails.....	12
● Carlton Reserve	14
● Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility	16
● Circus Hammock.....	18
● Curry Creek Preserve	20
● Deer Prairie Creek Preserve.....	22
● Jelks Preserve.....	24
● Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center	26
● Manasota Scrub Preserve	28
● Myakka Islands Point.....	30
● Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park.....	32
● Old Miakka Preserve.....	34
● Pinelands Reserve	36
● Pocono Trail Preserve	38
● Red Bug Slough Preserve	40
● Rothenbach Park	42
● Scherer Thaxton Preserve.....	44
● Shamrock Park and Nature Center	46
● Sleeping Turtles Preserve North	48
● Sleeping Turtles Preserve South	50
● South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve	52
● Urfer Family Park.....	54
● Walton Ranch	56
Heritage Stewardship.....	58
Be a Steward	59
More Outside Opportunities.....	60
Get Outside and Get Involved	Inside back cover

Important Information

Sarasota County has thousands of acres of natural areas to explore. Many of those included in this guide are wild, primitive and full of surprises. Please follow these guidelines to remain safe.

- Have a plan! Let others know where you will be and when you plan to return. Some natural area locations are remote and may have limited cellular or GPS service.
- Before leaving home, confirm park hours online at scgov.net/parks.
- Take your time and stay on the trails.
- Water, sunscreen, a rain jacket, insect repellent and sturdy shoes are recommended for hiking.
- Be aware of and respect the surroundings and wildlife. For your protection and that of the wildlife keep a safe distance from wild animals as they may behave aggressively if provoked or frightened.
- Be considerate of other visitors.
- Read and respect posted notices of land management activities, which may restrict access to certain areas. Prescribed burning, exotic or non-native plant removal and other habitat restoration may be occurring during your visit.



PACK IN / PACK OUT



“Leave no trace” refers to a set of outdoor ethics promoting conservation.

TRAIL COURTESY



A commonly used trail sharing sign.

- Bikers yield to hikers and horses
- Hikers yield to horses

Enjoy the lands that have been preserved for this and future generations!

In case of emergency, call 911.

PROHIBITIONS

To ensure public safety and environmental protection, the following activities are not allowed:

- Removal of plants, animals or archaeological or cultural resources
- Off-road vehicles
- Open fires
- Pets, except in areas/sites designated for leashed dogs

How to use this Guide

This guide is organized alphabetically for ease of navigation. Each page has a brief site summary that includes addresses, hours, acreage, GPS coordinates, informative facts and a trail map.

We hope you will enjoy the beautiful natural areas of Sarasota County for years to come. To help you make the most of your time, we have provided a “What kind of wild are you?” section that highlights specific opportunities. “More outdoor opportunities” lets you discover more of what Sarasota County has to offer. Please keep this guide for future visits or share with friends or family.

For more information about Sarasota County’s natural areas, parks and trails:

- scgov.net (keyword parks)
- Sarasota County Contact Center 941-861-5000
- “Discover Natural Sarasota” online at discovernaturalsarasota.org

Visit Sarasota County Government on YouTube for virtual tours and information on some natural areas at: youtube.com/user/sarasotacounty.

AMENITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS LEGEND

Access Point - Pedestrian	Indoor Rental
Accessibility	Interpretive Signage
Bicycling	Main Entrance
Birding	Nature Center
Boardwalk	Parking
Camping	Picnic Shelter/Pavilion
Canoe/Kayak Launch	Playground
Dog-friendly (leash required)	Restrooms
Drinking Water	Seasonal Flooding
Fishing	Trails - Equestrian
Fitness Equipment-outdoor	Trails - Paved
Grill	Trails - Unpaved
Historical/Cultural Resource	Wildlife Viewing

MAP LEGEND

Featured Park	Natural Area	Other Park
Boardwalk	Trail	
Dog-friendly designated area	Trail - Equestrian	
Road/Street	Water	
I-75 Exit	Wetland/Swamp	



What Kind of Wild Are You?



NATURE SEEKERS hope to catch a glimpse of creatures (regardless of whether they walk, crawl, swim or fly), that call our wild places home, or discover native plants that you have never seen before, like the elusive pine lily. You can explore lands prized for their vast diversity. A surprise awaits you!

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 3 Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility
- 5 Curry Creek Preserve
- 7 Jelks Preserve
- 9 Manasota Scrub Preserve
- 10 Myakka Islands Point
- 12 Old Miakka Preserve
- 17 Scherer Thaxton Preserve
- 19 Sleeping Turtles Preserve North
- 20 South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve

FAMILY TRAILBLAZERS are adventurers who discover the wonders of nature and create memories that will last for decades. Family-friendly areas await with paved and unpaved easy trails, playgrounds, pavilions and tables for picnics.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 3 Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility
- 8 Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center
- 11 Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park
- 15 Red Bug Slough Preserve
- 16 Rothenbach Park
- 22 Urfer Family Park

WILDLANDS ENTHUSIASTS can hear the call of the wild challenging them to experience wilderness at its finest. Expect the unexpected with hundreds of miles of primitive hiking. Sarasota County's rugged back country offers a true challenge for hikers.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 2 Carlton Reserve
- 6 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve

WEEKEND WARRIORS scout the perfect picnic spot or leisurely stroll to find their next great conquest. Create a perfect weekend with short hikes, kayaking, fishing or bird watching.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 3 Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility
- 5 Curry Creek Preserve
- 7 Jelks Preserve
- 8 Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center
- 11 Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park
- 12 Old Miakka Preserve
- 15 Red Bug Slough Preserve
- 19 Sleeping Turtles Preserve North
- 21 South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve

HERITAGE HOUNDS can explore the community's rich and unique history through its cattle ranches, settler homesteads and turpentine camps. Keep an eye peeled for historic buildings, lone cattle corrals, signs of Native American settlements and more.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 2 Carlton Reserve
- 6 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve
- 14 Pocono Trail Preserve
- 22 Urfer Family Park
- 23 Walton Ranch





SIDEWALK ADVENTURERS need firmer ground beneath them. Paved trails and accessible amenities allow Sidewalk Adventurers to enjoy the beauty of our community's natural areas. Try these sites if you seek a short walk on easy, even pavement or to be able to experience scenery without a lot of sweat equity.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 3 Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility
- 8 Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center
- 15 Red Bug Slough Preserve
- 16 Rothenbach Park
- 18 Shamrock Park and Nature Center
- 22 Urfer Family Park



WATER WAYFARERS whet their appetites with opportunities for boating, paddling and fishing. We have it all from blackwater rivers to gentle, quiet creeks, lakes, and adventures that take you all the way to the bay and Gulf waters.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 2 Carlton Reserve
- 5 Curry Creek Preserve
- 6 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve
- 8 Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center
- 15 Red Bug Slough Preserve



SHADE SEEKERS are the ones combing the area for the perfect shady walk or picnic spot. There are many areas to choose to delight your "stay cool" desires.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 4 Circus Hammock
- 8 Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center
- 10 Myakka Islands Point
- 14 Pocono Trail Preserve
- 15 Red Bug Slough Preserve
- 16 Rothenbach Park
- 19 Sleeping Turtles Preserve North
- 20 Sleeping Turtles Preserve South



TRAIL TROTTERS can choose from miles of equestrian experiences, with user-friendly features like designated horse trailer parking. Please remember, state law requires all riders to carry proof of current negative Coggins results.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 1 Ainger Creek Trails
- 2 Carlton Reserve
- 6 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve
- 23 Walton Ranch



BIKING BUFFS prefer pedals and spokes to hiking boots. Sarasota County offers Biking Buffs a variety of opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors by bicycle. Regardless of your level of experience, you'll find places that delight both the experienced rough trail bike rider and occasional cyclist.

BEST OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATOR MAP

- 2 Carlton Reserve
- 6 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve
- 13 Pinelands Reserve
- 16 Rothenbach Park
- 18 Shamrock Park and Nature Center
- 22 Urfer Family Park
- 23 Walton Ranch

Notable Species

Sarasota County provides critical habitat for many imperiled native species. Protection and management of natural areas ensures these habitats will support future generations of wildlife as well as people.

Species you might encounter in Sarasota's natural areas:



FLORIDA SCRUB-JAYS

Sarasota County features diverse natural communities, such as native oak scrub with sandy, dry soil. These areas provide critical habitat for the endangered Florida scrub-jay, the state's only endemic bird.



BALD EAGLES

State and federally protected bald eagles are found throughout the state year-round with nesting season occurring from Oct. 1 - May 15.



WEST INDIAN MANATEES

The warm waters of Sarasota County's bays, rivers and creeks provide protected sites for the endangered West Indian manatee.



GOPHER TORTOISES

Gopher tortoises can be found throughout much of Florida. Considered to be a keystone species, their burrows provide refuge for more than 350 other animal species, including several imperiled species.



FLORIDA BOBCATS

Bobcats are about twice the size of house cats, and are the most common wild feline in Florida. Home territory is one-to-five square miles, and as development increases, bobcats are becoming more comfortable in urban areas. These beautiful cats are quite stealthy, and are more common

PARKS	Reptiles										Mammals			Birds									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
14 Ainger Creek Trails																							
16 Carlton Reserve																							
18 Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility																							
20 Circus Hammock																							
22 Curry Creek Preserve																							
24 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve																							
26 Jelks Preserve																							
28 Lemon Bay Park																							
30 Manasota Scrub Preserve																							
32 Myakka Islands Point																							
34 Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park																							
36 Old Miakka Preserve																							
38 Pinelands Reserve																							
40 Pocono Trail Preserve																							
42 Red Bug Slough Preserve																							
44 Rothenbach Park																							
46 Scherer Thaxton Preserve																							
48 Shamrock Park																							
50 Sleeping Turtles Preserve North																							
52 Sleeping Turtles Preserve South																							
54 South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve																							
56 Urfur Family Park																							
58 Walton Ranch																							

Page

Locator Map #

Locator Map

Match the map reference numbers on the locator map to the At-a-glance Activity Guide on page 11.



- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 Ainger Creek Trails | 13 Pinelands Reserve |
| 2 Carlton Reserve | 14 Pocono Trail Preserve |
| 3 Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility | 15 Red Bug Slough Preserve |
| 4 Circus Hammock | 16 Rothenbach Park |
| 5 Curry Creek Preserve | 17 Scherer Thaxton Preserve |
| 6 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve | 18 Shamrock Park and Nature Center |
| 7 Jelks Preserve | 19 Sleeping Turtles Preserve North |
| 8 Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center | 20 Sleeping Turtles Preserve South |
| 9 Manasota Scrub Preserve | 21 South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve |
| 10 Myakka Islands Point | 22 Urfer Family Park |
| 11 Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park | 23 Walton Ranch |
| 12 Old Miakka Preserve | |

At-a-glance

Park number	Page number	Accessibility	Bicycling	Birding	Wildlife Viewing	Boardwalk	Camping-Primitive	Canoe/Kayak Launch	Dog-friendly (leash required)	Drinking Water	Fishing	Fitness Equipment (Outdoor)	Grills	Historical/Cultural Resource	Interpretive Signage	Nature Center	Picnic Shelter/Pavilion	Playground	Restrooms	Trails-Equestrian	Trails-Paved	Trails-Unpaved
1	12				•				•		•									•		•
2	14	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
3	16	•		•	•	•			•	•				•	•	•			•			•
4	18				•				•													•
5	20				•			•	•		•				•							•
6	22	•	•	•				•	•	•	•		•		•		•			•		•
7	24				•				•		•				•							•
8	26	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
9	28				•				•						•							•
10	30				•																	•
11	32		•	•	•	•	•		•	•			•				•		•	•		•
12	34				•										•		•					•
13	36		•	•					•						•					•		•
14	38				•				•					•	•							•
15	40		•	•	•				•		•				•		•	•	•			•
16	42	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
17	44		•	•				•	•		•				•							•
18	46	•	•	•					•	•						•	•	•	•	•	•	•
19	48				•				•		•				•		•			•		•
20	50				•						•						•					•
21	52				•	•									•		•					•
22	54	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
23	56		•	•											•					•		•

1 AINGER CREEK TRAILS



29490 Winchester Blvd.
Englewood, 34223

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
148 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 26.96183
W -82.30400
N 26.95375
W -82.320438

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The shared-use trails are popular with equestrians, off-road bicyclists and hikers seeking nature and solitude. Please practice trail courtesy when using the trails. Motorized vehicles are prohibited.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 191 to North River Road. Head south on North River Road for approximately 13 miles to Winchester Boulevard. Parking will be on the west side of Winchester Boulevard.

WHAT TO EXPECT

While exploring the preserve's network of trails, visitors may observe various natural habitats including the tidal creek, slash and longleaf pine flatwoods, mesic and hydric hammocks, seasonal wetlands, marshes, mangrove tidal swamp and tidal strands. One might hear barred owls or see osprey flying above, observe fiddler crabs, jumping mullet and a wide array of wildflowers such as swamp sunflower (pictured above) in the fall, rosinweed, wild petunia, blazing star and beautyberry.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: hiking, biking, birding, equestrian use, wildlife viewing.
- More than four miles of primitive trails.

- A natural area where visitors can enjoy an "old-Florida" nature experience.
- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

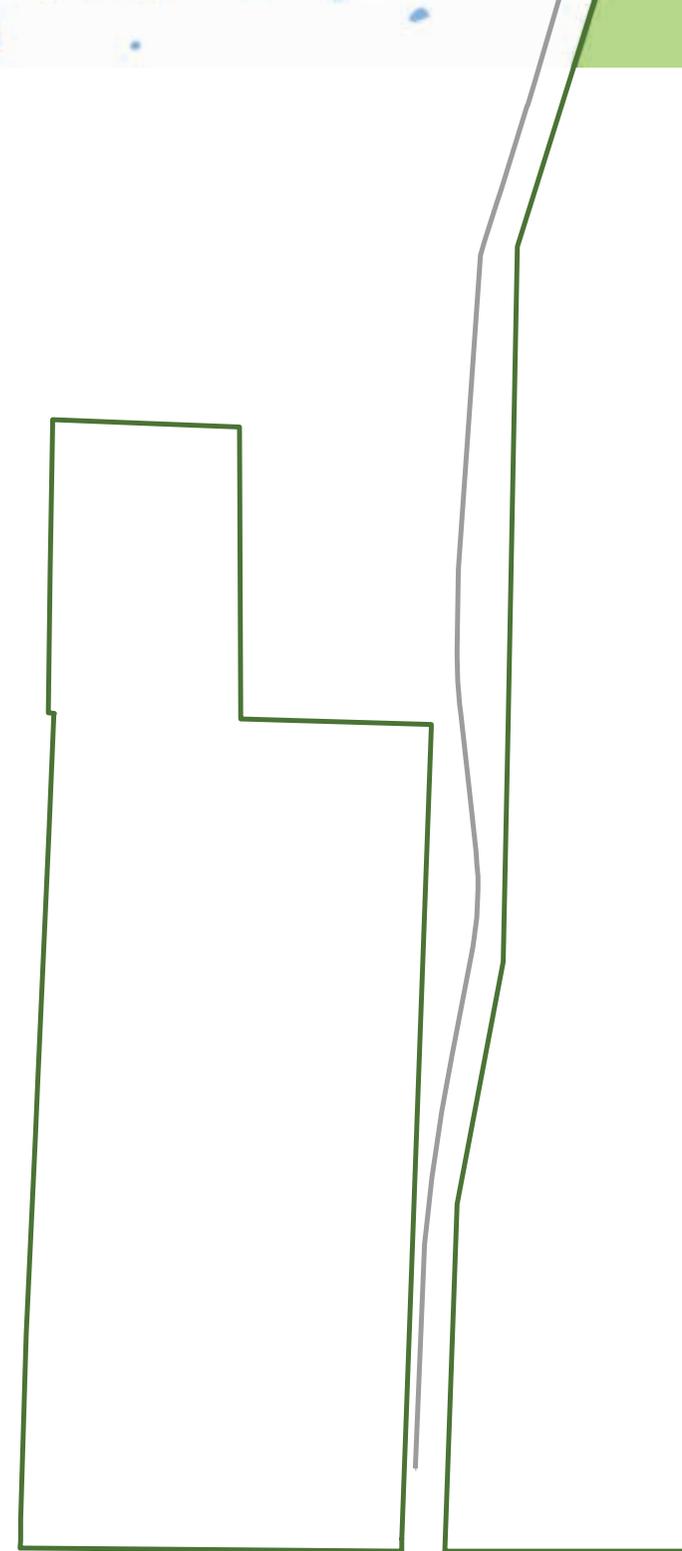
- Interpretive signage
- Shared use trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center and Manasota Scrub Preserve.

DID YOU KNOW?

Although this preserve is divided in two by the Myakka State Forest, it is connected by the creek. Can you trace the creek on the map from North to South? What might you see in the creek when you hike?



2 CARLTON RESERVE

1800 Mabry Carlton Parkway,
Venice, 34292

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
24,565 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.122836
W -82.342744

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve (Carlton Reserve) was acquired in 1984. It is a multifaceted property where protection of wetland-speckled expanses of pine flatwood and dry prairies provide natural area conservation, unique wilderness recreation opportunities, cultural heritage preservation and public water supply safety.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 193-Jacaranda Boulevard. Go north on Jacaranda Boulevard for 0.9 miles. Right on Border Road, go 2.6 miles. Left on Mabry Carlton Parkway, go 0.3 miles. Follow signs to public park area on right.

WHAT TO EXPECT

A true wilderness excursion with unique getting back to nature experiences. Wildlife viewing may include: white-tailed deer, turkey, bobcat, swallow-tailed kite, various wading birds. You may also see plants, such as pine lily, tarflower and blue flag iris.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: biking, birding, hiking, primitive camping and paddling.
- 100+ miles of trails/horseback riding.
- 12-mile Myakka Island Wilderness Trail continues north to Myakka River State Park.
- Contact 941-861-7275 for camping/pavilion reservations.

AMENITIES

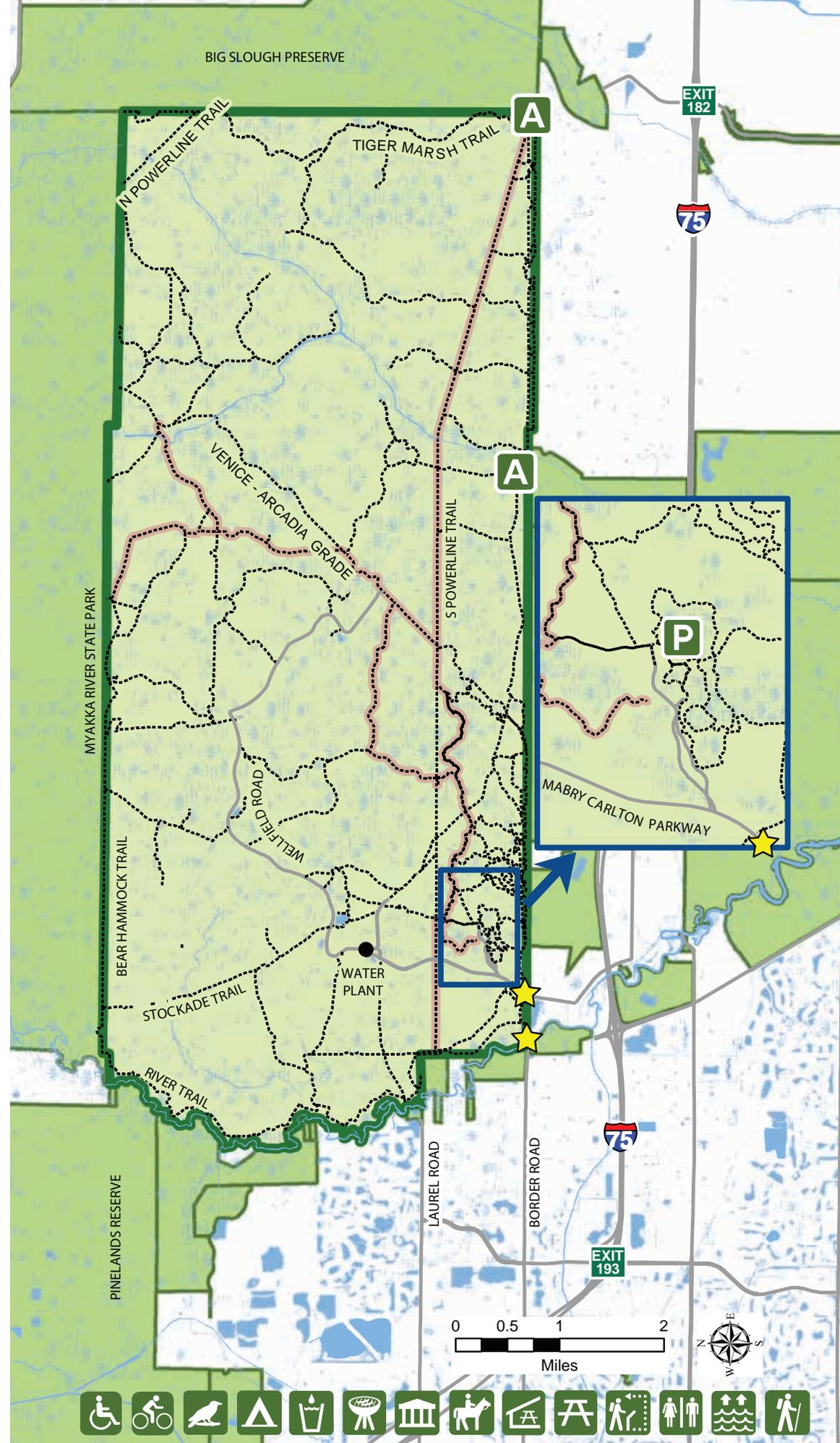
- Accessible (partially)
- Bicycle trails - technical - 15 miles
- Horse trailer access
- Picnic pavilion - reservable
- Picnic tables and grills
- Primitive camping (permit required)
- Restrooms
- Self-guided interpretive trails
- Trails - equestrian
- Trails - unpaved
- Visitor center / historic cabin

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Deer Prairie Creek Preserve, Sleeping Turtles Preserve North.

DID YOU KNOW?

The site was named for **T. Mabry Carlton, Jr.**, a former Sarasota County commissioner and fifth generation Florida cattle man who was instrumental in the reserve's acquisition. The reserve remains a hallmark of Sarasota's legacy of stewardship.



3 CELERY FIELDS REGIONAL STORMWATER FACILITY



6799 Palmer Blvd.
Sarasota, 34240

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
400 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.325275
W -82.433664

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility is an important regional stormwater facility, handling runoff from 3,500 acres of the upper Phillippi Creek Basin. Historically farmed as celery fields, the existing wetlands were created to improve water quality and provide important wildlife habitat.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 210 - Fruitville Road/FL-780. East on Fruitville Road for 0.7 miles. Right on Coburn Road for 0.7 miles. Continue on Apex Road, for 0.4 miles. Left on Palmer Boulevard, for 0.8 miles. Entrance is on the left.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The site provides varied terrain to walk, run or hike. Wildlife viewing may include a wide range of birds, as well as many migratory birds. You may see herons, black-necked stilt, ibis, terns, anhinga, cormorant, limpkin, sparrows and wrens. The Sarasota Audubon Society has noted at least 225 species.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding and hiking.
- Observation mound and two boardwalks with views of the wetlands.
- Popular for birding enthusiasts and is noted in the *Great Florida Birding Trail*.

- Seven miles of trails.
- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

- Accessible (partially)
- Boardwalks
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic tables
- Restrooms
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

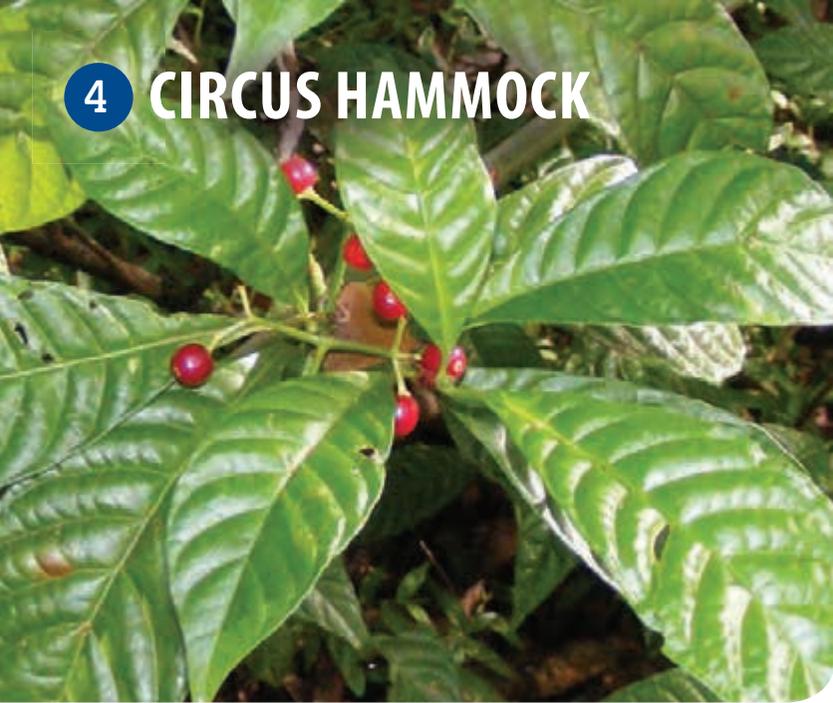
Ackerman Park, Colonial Oaks Park, Nathan Benderson Park and Sarasota Audubon Nature Center.

DID YOU KNOW?

This area was a rich muckland known as Big Camp Saw Grass and Tatum Saw Grass prior to being developed as vegetable fields in the early 1920's by the Sarasota-Venice Company. The site has historically been and continues to be a birding hotspot with over 225 species identified.



4 CIRCUS HAMMOCK



4572 17th St.
Sarasota, 34235

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
21 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.350356
W -82.480816

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

This urban preserve protects a diverse assemblage of plants and provides a beautiful, peaceful green space in the midst of residential neighborhoods. You will meander through the shady hammock of oaks, red maple, hackberry and American elm.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 210 - Fruitville Road/FL-780. Travel west on Fruitville Road, turn right on Honore Avenue. Turn left on 17th Street. Turn left into 17th Street Park (west entrance). Preserve entrance is on the right. Parking area is on your left at 17th Street Dog Park, just a short walk to the preserve's entrance.

WHAT TO EXPECT

A shady refuge in Sarasota's city limits with wildlife viewing, which may include woodpeckers, box turtle, red-shouldered hawk, barred owl and migratory song birds such as warblers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, picnicking and hiking.
- 1.5 miles of shady trails

- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

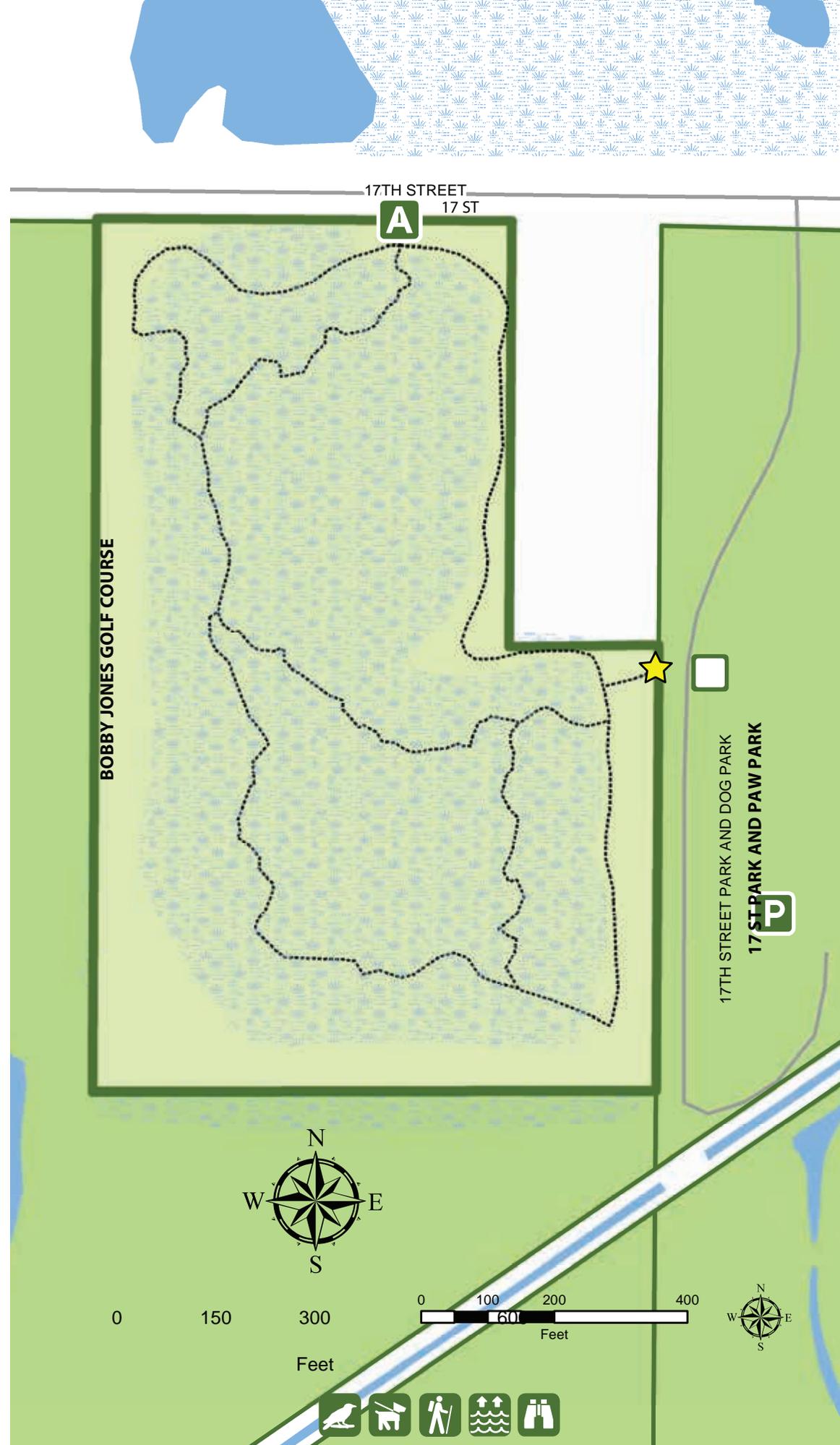
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

17th Street Park and Dog Park, Fruitville Park and Nathan Benderson Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Circus Hammock is located near the original historic winter quarters of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.



5 CURRY CREEK PRESERVE



1500 Pinebrook Road
Venice, 34285
East entrance

1075 Albee Farm Road
Venice, 34292
West entrance

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
80 acres

GPS Coordinates
East entrance
N 27.115563
W -82.417324
West entrance
N 27.116302
W -82.433459

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

This preserve protects rare coastal longleaf pine flatwoods while providing valuable open space for a growing community. Visitors will delight in the variety as scrub and pine flatwoods blend into tidal marshes and swamps along the creek's edge.

GETTING THERE

East entrance: from I-75 Exit 195 - Laurel Road East. Travel west on Laurel Road East. Turn left on Pinebrook Road. Entrance on the right, limited parking along easement. Entrance on the right, opposite Water Street. Limited parking near entrance.

West entrance: from I-75 Exit 195 - Laurel Road East. Travel west on Laurel Road East. Turn left on Albee Farm Road North. Entrance and parking area are on the left, close to walk-through access and kayak launch. Entrance and parking area located south of Colonia Lane, on the left, close to walk-through access and kayak launch.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Mangroves and giant leather ferns line the creek. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoise, alligator, bobcat, bald eagle and wading birds such as the herons, ibis and limpkins.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fishing, hiking and paddling.
- Just over 1.5 miles of trails with views along Curry Creek.
- West entrance - kayak launch. Dog-friendly designated area only on west side of preserve. All dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

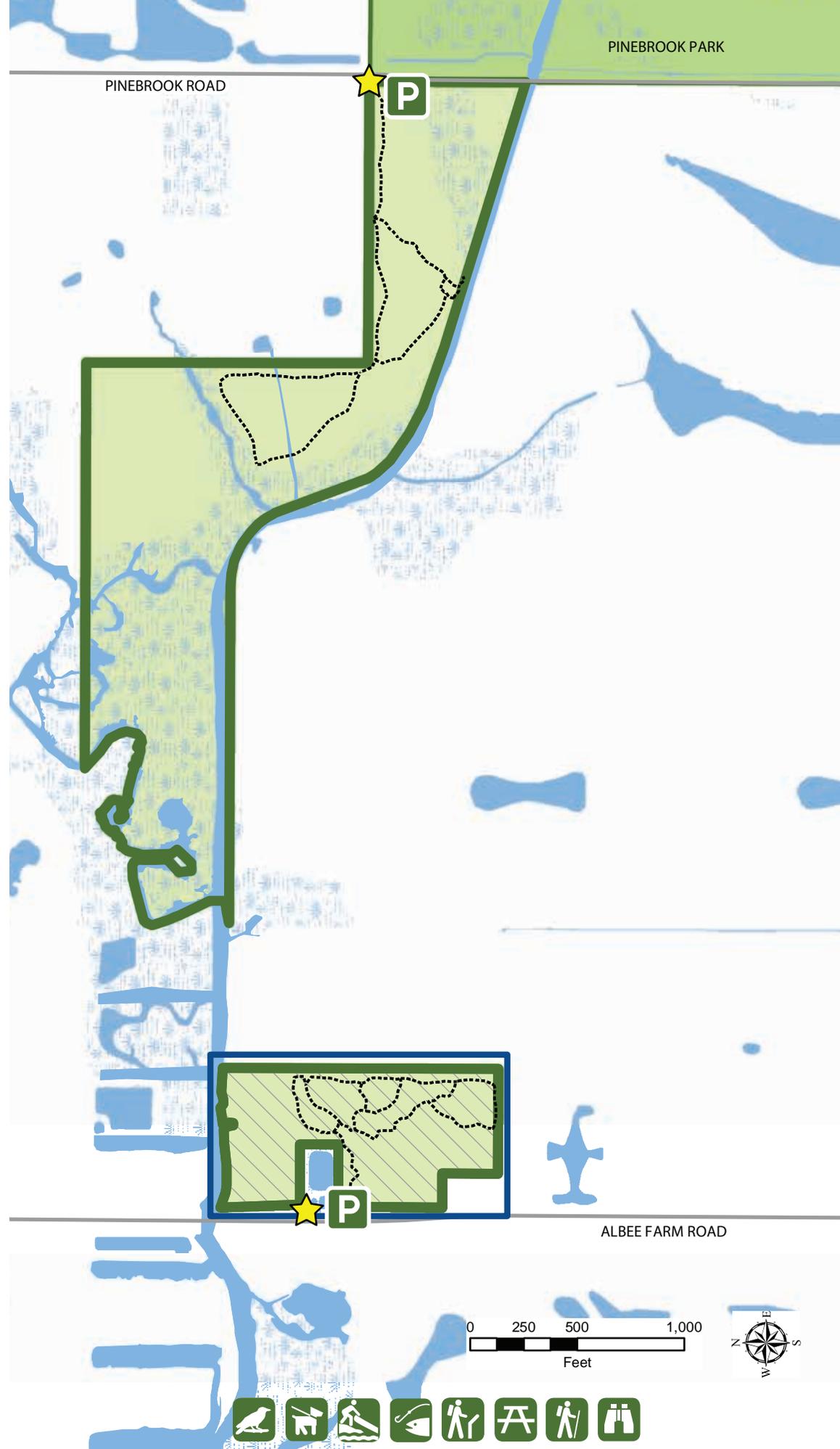
- Canoe/kayak launch
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic tables
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Nokomis Community Park, Pinebrook Park, Pocono Trail Preserve, The Legacy Trail, Wellfield Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Curry Creek is one of the few remaining coastal creeks in southwest Florida and is named for the Curry family, early pioneers that settled the area. Take a virtual tour at: youtu.be/mT5kpQ9fz-8.



6 DEER PRAIRIE CREEK PRESERVE



10201 South Tamiami Trail
Venice, 34287
South entrance

7001 Forbes Trail
Venice, 34292
North entrance

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
6,439 acres

GPS Coordinates
North entrance
N 27.107847
W -82.318981
South entrance
N 27.048405
W -82.288305

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

This preserve protects the floodplain of the Myakka River, a designated Wild and Scenic River. The preserve features pine flatwoods, prairie hammock and seasonal wetlands, providing scenic overlooks along the Myakka River and Deer Prairie Creek.

GETTING THERE

North entrance: I-75 Exit 193 - Jacaranda Boulevard. North on Jacaranda Boulevard. Right on Border Road Right on South Moon Drive. Left on Forbes Trail. Entrance on right with horse trailer parking.

South entrance: I-75 Exit 191 - North River Road Turn left on US-41/South Tamiami Trail. Make U-turn at Lazy River Road, entrance is on right. Parking area is one mile into the preserve.

WHAT TO EXPECT

A wilderness lover's dream for nature hiking. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoise, alligator, river otter, wild turkey, swallow-tailed kite, Florida scrub-jay, wading birds. Plants include: St. John's wort, tarflower and pine lily.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fishing, hiking, paddling, and picnicking.

- 70 miles of trails through diverse habitats.
- Horseback riding trails accessible from north entrance only.
- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

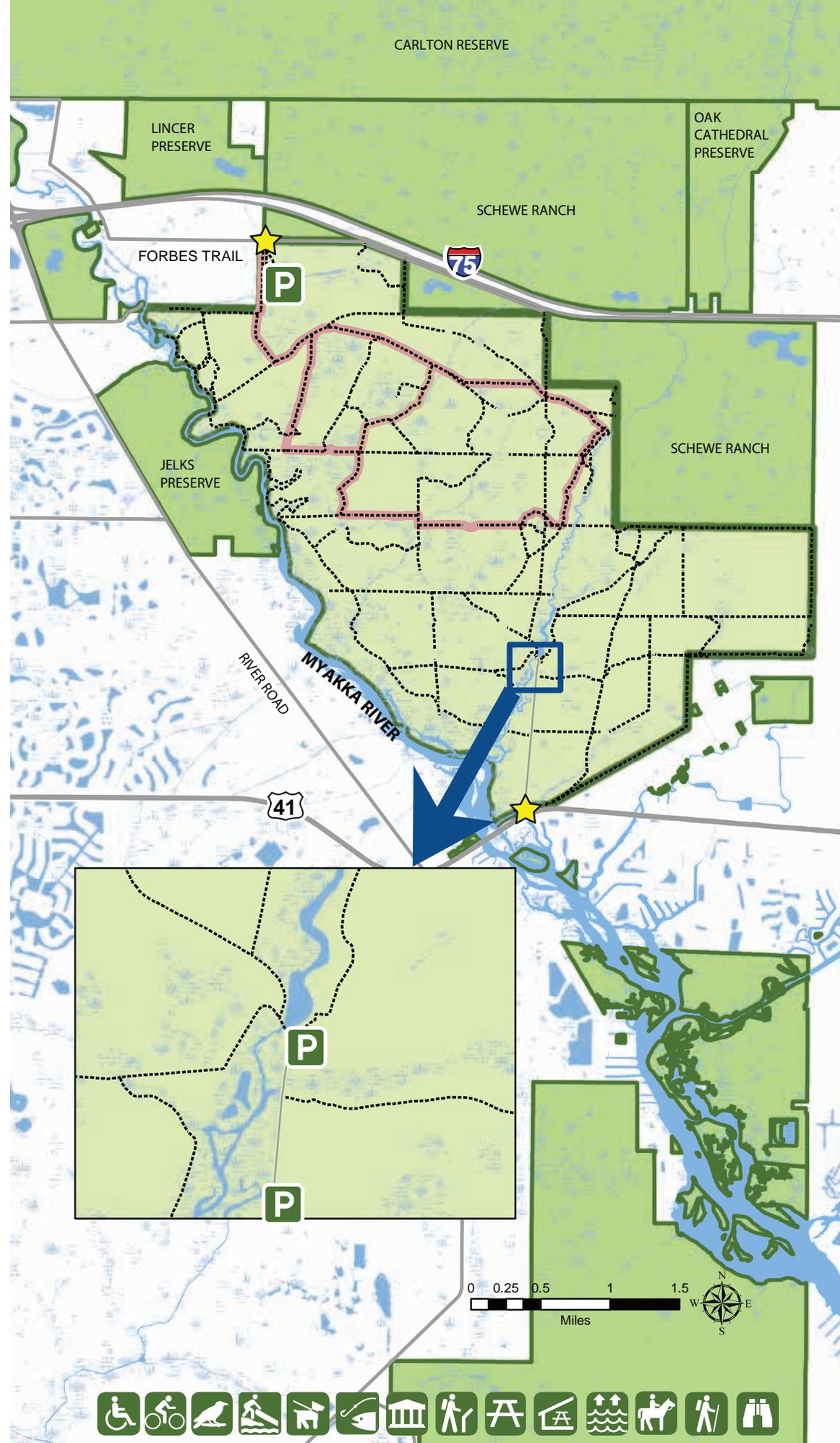
- Accessible paved path to picnic table - south entrance
- Canoe/kayak launch - south entrance
- Horse trailer access - north entrance
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic shelters with tables
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Carlton Reserve, Jelks Preserve and Senator Bob Johnson's Landing.

DID YOU KNOW?

The preserve contributes to complete protection of the Deer Prairie Creek in Sarasota County and nearly six miles of the Myakka River's east bank. Take a virtual tour at: youtu.be/lpyUx9CyJaY.



7 JELKS PRESERVE



2300 N. River Road
Venice, 34292

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
614 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.091104
W -82.338187

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Acquired in 1999 with generous support of the Jelks Family Foundation, the preserve borders the Myakka River, forever protecting a piece of the riverine floodplain. Visitors will traverse through a varied landscape of hammocks, pine flatwoods, and seasonal wetlands.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 191 - North River Road. Travel southeast on North River Road for 1.4 miles. Entrance is on left, parking area located near entrance and walk-through access.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Some trails may be cool as you stroll to the river through canopy hammocks, others may be open and sunny as they cross pine flatwoods. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoises, swallowtail butterflies and swallow-tailed kites, song birds and an assortment of wildflowers, such as Carolina jessamine and coralbean.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fishing, hiking and picnicking.
- Eight miles of trails through a diverse landscape.
- Scenic vistas of the Myakka River.

- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

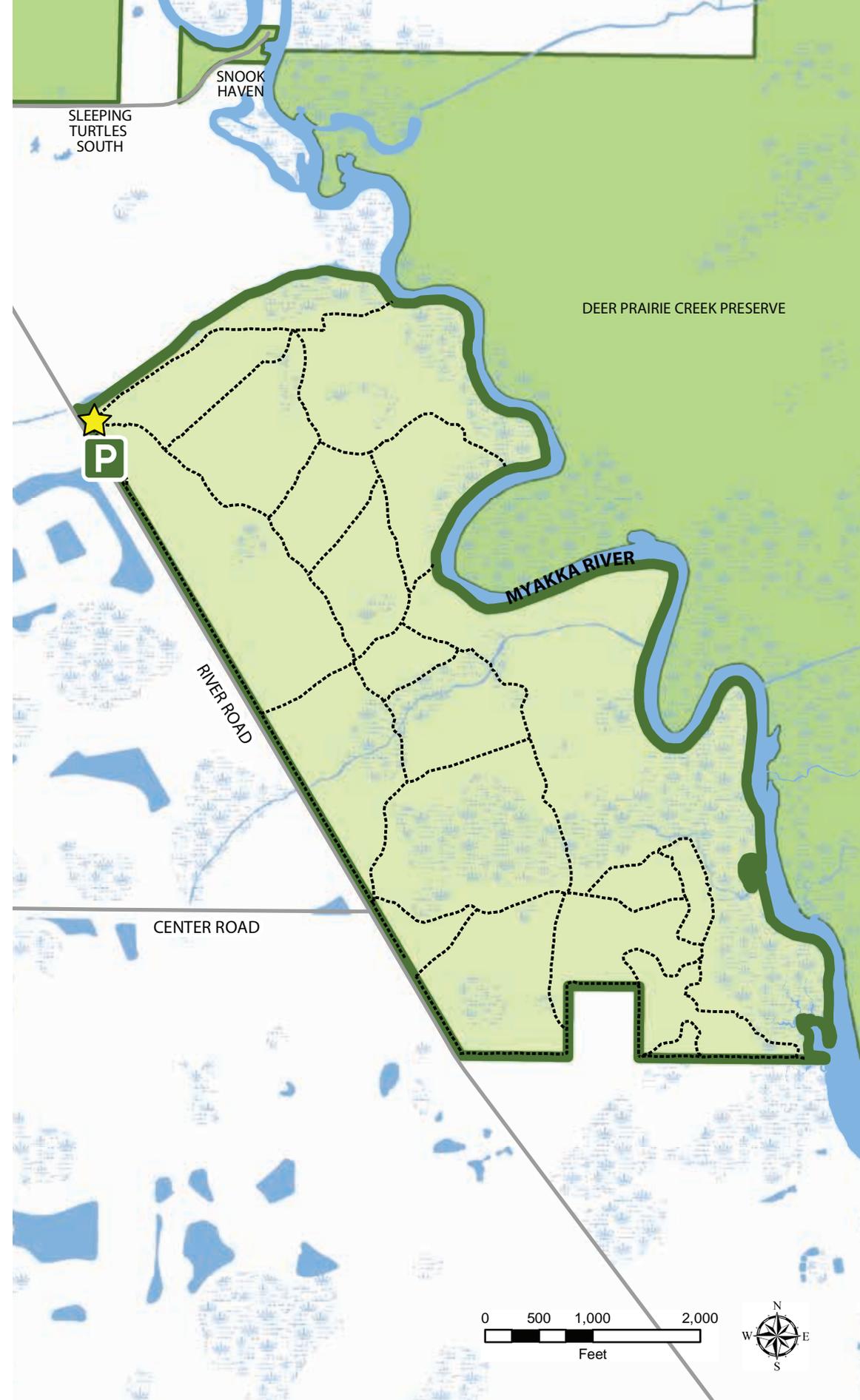
- Picnic tables
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Deer Prairie Creek Preserve, Senator Bob Johnson's Landing, Sleeping Turtles Preserve South and Snook Haven Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Visitors can view the river at three different locations, while walking in the shade of mature live oak trees, full of epiphytes. Take a virtual tour at: <https://youtu.be/0aa3f4gfs3o>.



8 LEMON BAY PARK AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER



570 Bay Park Boulevard
Englewood, 34223

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
210 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 26.971914
W -82.373363

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Lemon Bay Park has preserved the pine and scrubby flatwoods and natural shoreline along Lemon Bay. Tucked in an urban location, the park also provides outdoor recreation and environmental education.

GETTING THERE

From I-75 Exit 193 - Jacaranda Boulevard. Go south on Jacaranda Boulevard toward Englewood for 5.1 miles. Left on FL-776/Englewood Road, go 4.1 miles. Right on Old Englewood Road, go one mile. Slight right on Kilbourne Avenue, go 0.2 miles. First right on Morrison Avenue, then first left on Curtis Boulevard. First right on Brengle Avenue. Entrance and parking ahead.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Varied tree and wildflower species: lupine, palafox, coontie and Curtis' milkweed. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoise, grey fox, bobcat, river otter, raccoon, butterflies, and a variety of birds such as anhinga, bald eagle, snowy egret, flycatchers and frigates.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fishing, hiking, kayaking, strolling through the butterfly garden, attending seasonal programs.
- Picnic pavilion and indoor meeting space available. Contact 941-861-7275 for reservations.

- 3.5 miles of trails including boardwalks with scenic overlooks of Lemon Bay.
- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

- Accessibility
- Boardwalk, scenic overlook
- Butterfly garden
- Canoe/kayak launch
- Indoor rental space
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic shelter with tables
- Restrooms
- Trails - paved and unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Indian Mound Park, Manasota Scrub Preserve, Englewood Sports Complex, Buchan Airport Community Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Visitors can explore the longest remaining intact and contiguous natural area mangrove shoreline in Sarasota County, home to three pairs of nesting bald eagles.



9 MANASOTA SCRUB PRESERVE



2695 Bridge St.
Englewood, 34223

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
179 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.017725
W -82.394127

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Manasota Scrub Preserve is home to some of the county's remaining scattered pockets of scrub habitat. The system of trails and a boardwalk offers picturesque views of a variety of upland and wetland habitats right within a suburban community.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 193 - Jacaranda Boulevard. Go south on Jacaranda Boulevard toward Englewood for 5.1 miles. Left on Englewood Road go 1.6 miles. Right on Manasota Beach Road, go 0.2 miles. Left on Bridge Street, entrance on left with limited parking.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Unwind and enjoy nature on one of the benches that you will find along the trail, and overlooking the pond. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoise, wood ducks, swallowtail butterflies and great horned owls.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, hiking and picnicking.
- 1.5 miles of trails, some of which experience seasonal flooding.
- A variety of wildflowers such as grassleaf, goldenaster and blazing star.

- Dog-friendly designated area (east of Bridge Street and north of 5th Street only). All dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

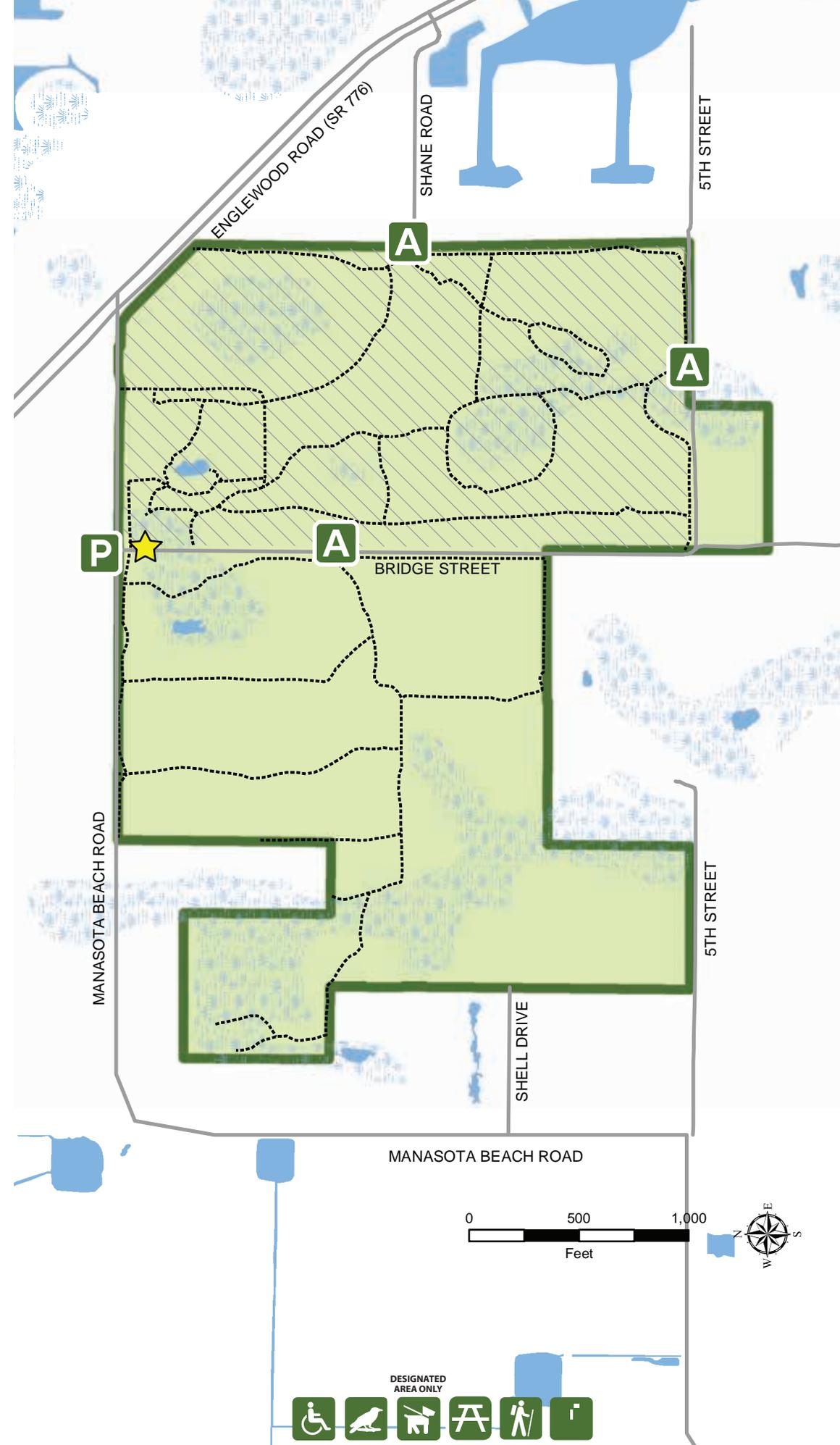
- Accessibility (partial)
- Picnic tables
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Lemon Bay Park, Manasota Beach, Shamrock Park, South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve and Venice Area Audubon Rookery.

DID YOU KNOW?

The preserve is named for the predominant habitat and one of the earlier landowners, the Manasota Land and Timber Company.



10 MYAKKA ISLANDS POINT



1289 Campbell St.
Port Charlotte, 34293

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
100 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.010580
W -82.254818

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Myakka Islands Point is an ecologically productive and important site. The expansive tidal marsh that surrounds an “island” of upland flatwoods provides habitat for wading birds and fish. Catching a glimpse of the Myakka River, it’s easy to understand this region’s historic associations with fishing, navigable waterways and Native American culture.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 191 - North River Road. Go south on North River Road toward North Port for 5.5 miles. Left on US-41 South Tamiami Trail, go 4.1 miles. Right on North Port Boulevard, go 0.8 miles. Right on Chancellor Boulevard, go one mile. Chancellor Boulevard turns left and becomes Campbell Street, go south on Campbell Street 1.4 miles. Entrance and parking on right.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Tidal marsh views. Wildlife may include: American kestrel, swallow-tailed kite, a variety of wading birds and amphibians.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding and hiking.

- Two miles of trails with wonderful views of the Myakka River, Charlotte Harbor and tidal marshes.
- A bountiful array of natural coastal communities rich with history.

AMENITIES

- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Dallas White Park, Myakka State Forest and Marina Park.

DID YOU KNOW?



Visitors may observe species such as American kestrels and bald eagles, as well as a variety of wading birds, amphibians and various wetland plants.



11 MYAKKAHATCHEE CREEK ENVIRONMENTAL PARK



6968 Reisterstown Road
North Port, 34291

Hours
Dawn to dusk

Size
162 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.109727
W -82.206252

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

This park is owned by the city of North Port and operated by Sarasota County. The shared-use trails are popular with equestrians, off-road bicyclists and hikers seeking nature and solitude. Motorized vehicles are prohibited. Please practice trail courtesy when using shared-use trails.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 182 Sumter Boulevard. Head north on Sumter Boulevard for approximately one mile, head left on Tropicaire Boulevard for approximately 1/2 mile, take the first right on to Reisterstown Road and follow it for approximately one mile. The park entrance will be on your right.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Great views of Myakkahatchee Creek. Wildlife viewing may include: a wide a variety of birds, alligators, turtles, fish, deer, bobcats and gopher tortoises.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: hiking, horseback riding and primitive camping (by reservation).
- Four miles of multi-use trails along a blackwater creek lined with century-old oaks.
- A natural area where visitors can enjoy an old Florida nature experience.
- Trailhead to Eastern Ranchlands, including Carlton Reserve.

- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

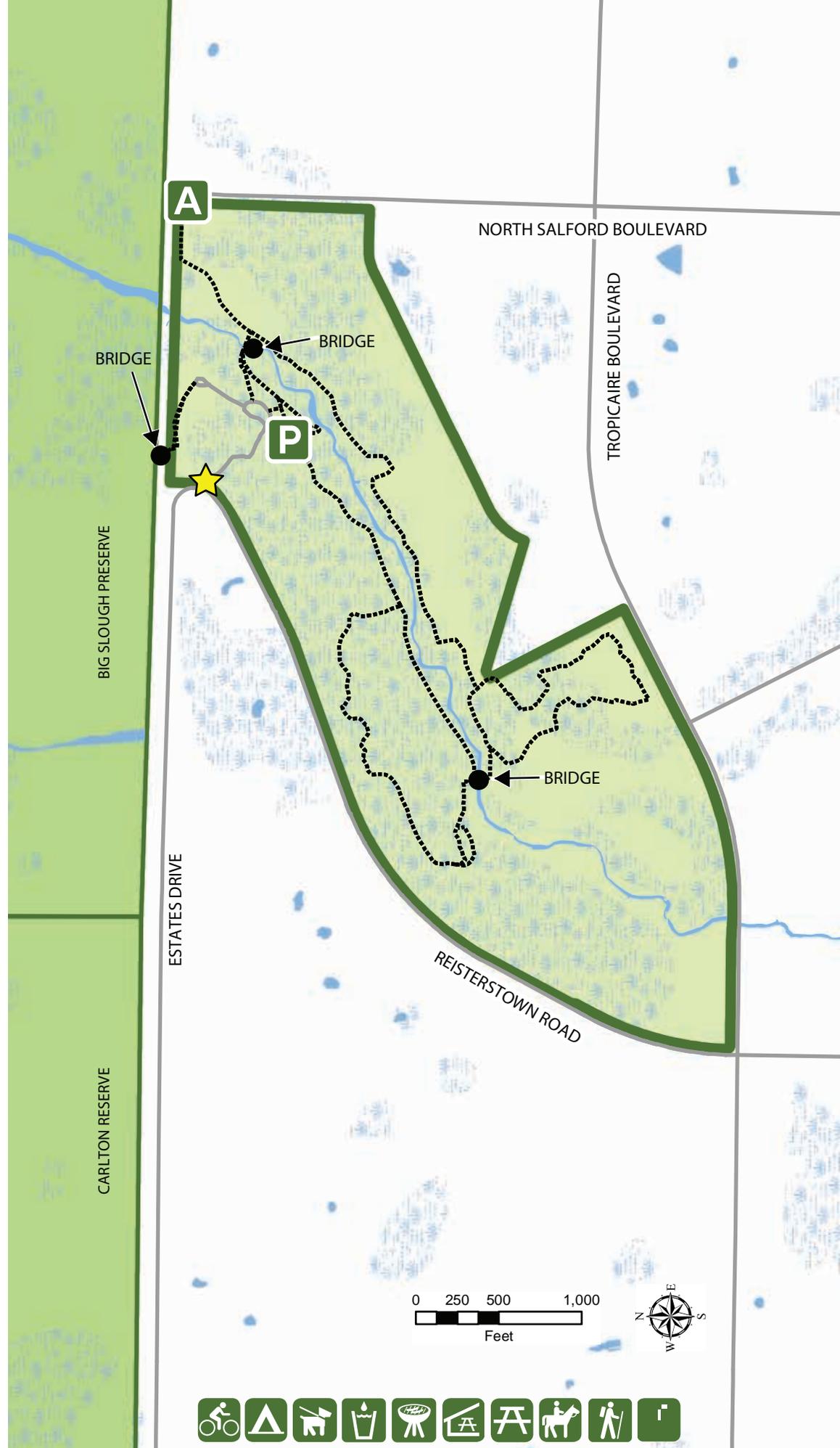
- Grills
- Hitching posts
- Picnic tables
- Picnic shelter (small)
- Potable water for horses
- Primitive campsite (permit required)
- Scenic overlook
- Trails - equestrian
- Trails - unpaved
- Water fountain

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Carlton Reserve, Deer Prairie Creek Preserve and Walton Ranch.

KIDS CORNER

See if you can find the scenic wooden footbridge that is located over the creek. If you are lucky you may see a horseback rider sharing the trail.



12 OLD MIAKKA PRESERVE



251 Myakka Road
Sarasota, 34240

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
132 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.334184
W -82.262337

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The preserve is named for Old Miakka, the historic rural community where the preserve is located. Enjoy the variety of plant life here that inspired Tim Cash (1954-1993), a local nursery owner and founding member of the Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, who was also active in the Old Miakka community. A trail named in his honor passes through subtle changes in habitat, allowing visitors to experience the natural diversity that Tim admired.

GETTING THERE

I-75, Exit 210-Fruitville Road, east on Fruitville Road for 11.3 miles. Continue straight on Fruitville Road Extension for .04 miles. Entrance and parking on right, inside the gate.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Experience the tranquil beauty of this preserve with wildlife viewing that may include: gopher tortoise, swallow-tailed kite, migratory song birds. Plants such as longleaf pine, scrub oaks, Florida paintbrush and pawpaw are plentiful.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, hiking and picnicking

- Four miles of unpaved trails through systems of hammocks and seasonal wetlands.
- 1.5 mile Tim Cash Loop Trail.

AMENITIES

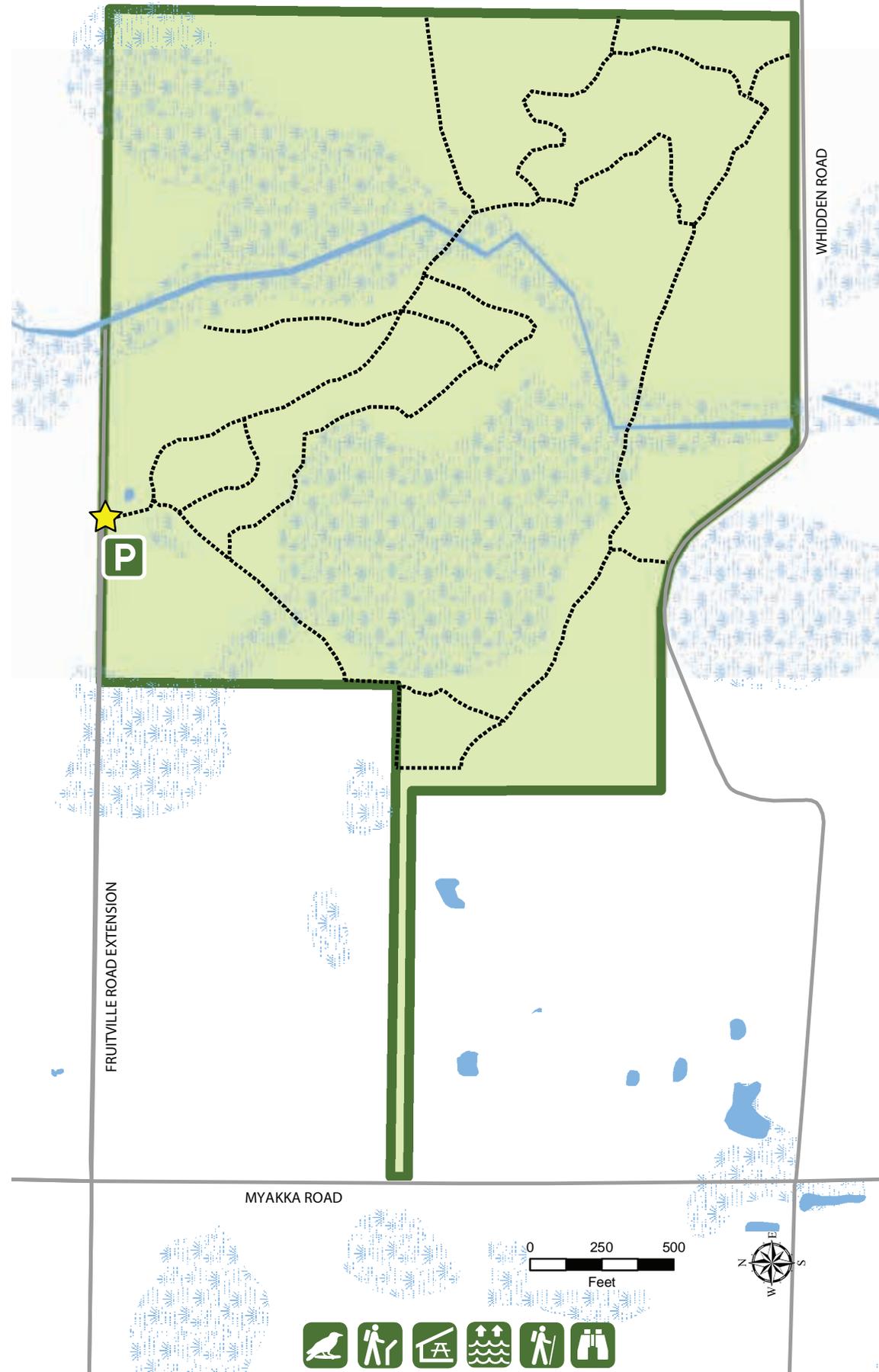
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic shelter with table
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Myakka River State Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Old Miakka Preserve has the highest natural elevation of any county park. The elevation reaches a height of 54 feet.



13 PINELANDS RESERVE



4000 Knights Trail Road
Nokomis, 34275

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
6,151 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.166585
W -82.404300

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Pinelands Reserve is a 5,601-acre site that surrounds the Central County Solid Waste Disposal Complex. Currently, a small portion of the reserve is open to the public, with more access and trails planned for the future. Enjoy hiking through diverse natural communities. Please practice trail courtesy when hiking trails. Motorized vehicles are prohibited.

GETTING THERE

I-75, Exit 195-Laurel Road. Go east on Laurel Road for 0.25 miles. Turn left onto Knights Trail Road, travel two miles. Entrance is on the right; limited parking is located near the entrance.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Great views of wildlife may include: bald eagles, a wide variety of birds, alligators, turtles, fish, deer, bobcats and gopher tortoises.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, hiking, horseback riding and wildlife viewing.
- 1.5 miles of hiking trails.
- While touring the reserve you will enjoy a diverse vegetation community, including pine flatwoods, upland mixed forests,

lakes and seasonal wetlands and a myriad of native wildflowers.

- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

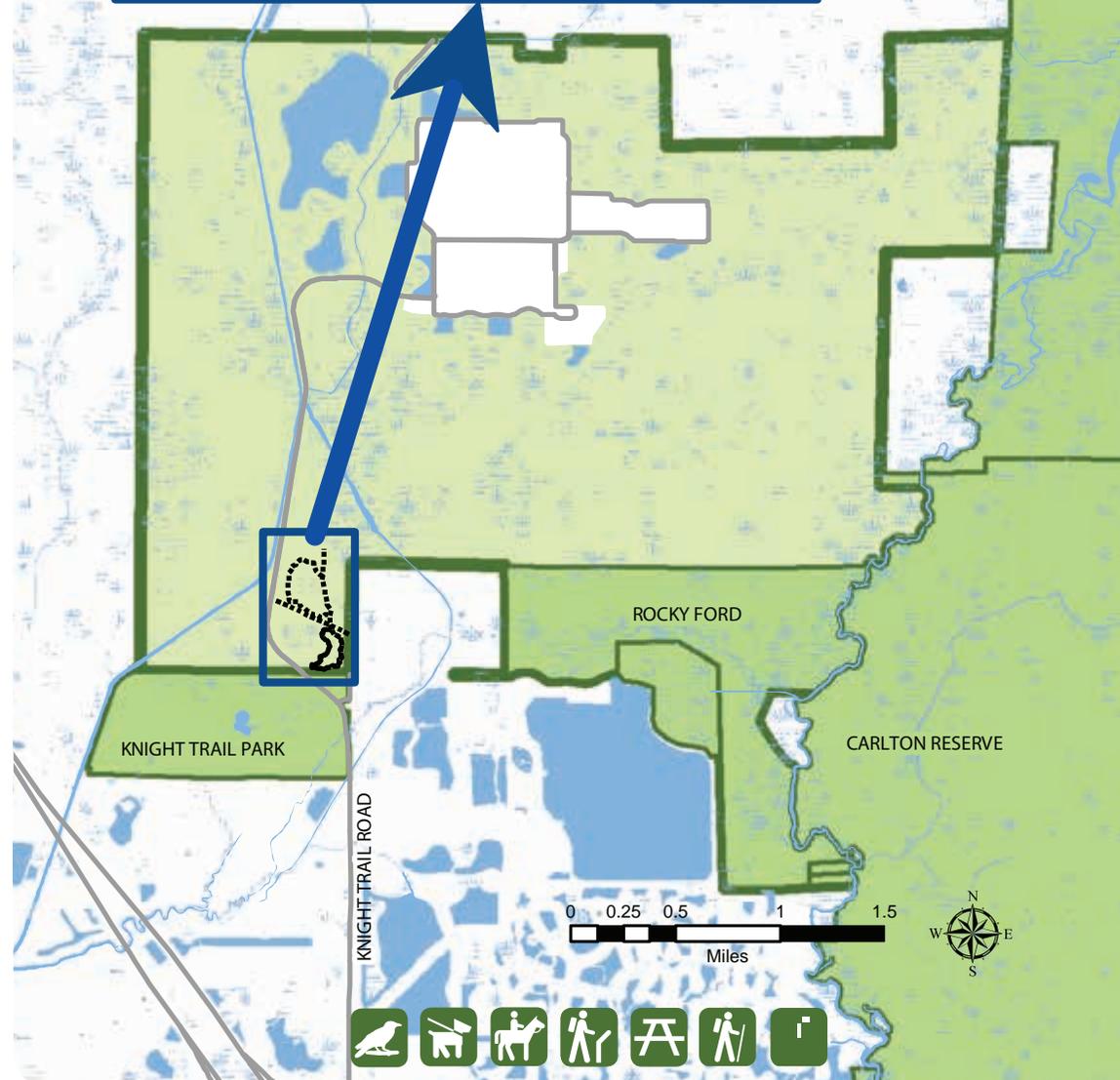
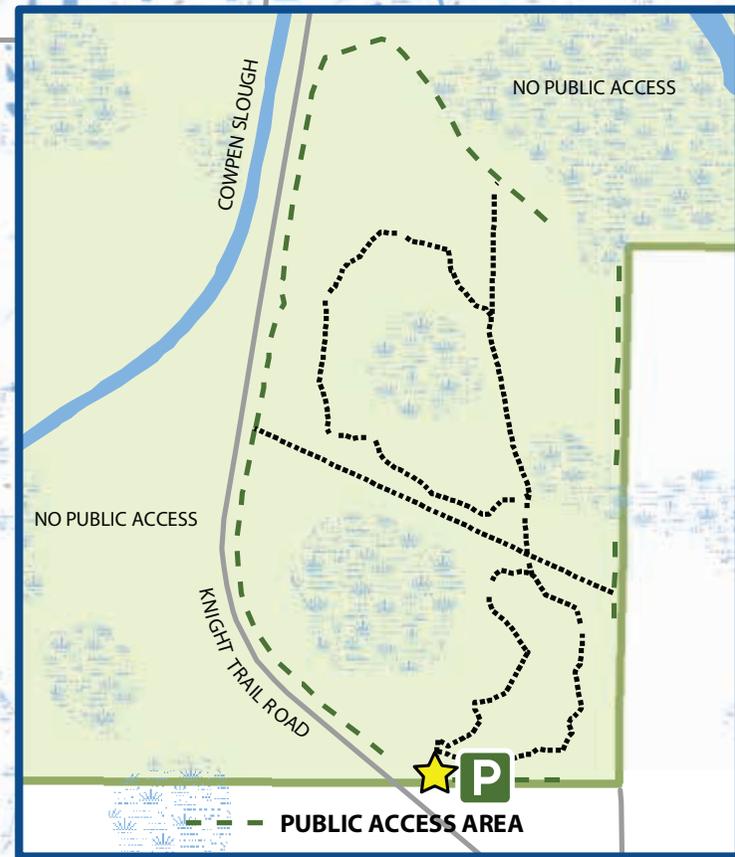
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic tables
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Curry Creek Preserve, Pocono Trail Preserve and Scherer Thaxton Preserve.

DID YOU KNOW?

The protected Sherman's fox squirrel is bigger than your average squirrel! It is found in the open pine flatwoods of central and northeastern Florida, and eats mostly plants, but sometimes insects and bird eggs.



14 POCONO TRAIL PRESERVE



189 Pocono Trail
Nokomis, 34275

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
8.2 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.117776
W -82.449284

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The preserve maintains the health of the Shakett Creek estuary system, providing important habitat, open space and water access along a major urban corridor. Shady trails meander beneath picturesque live oaks and slash pines offering occasional glimpses of the creek.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 195/Laurel Road. West on Laurel Road for 2.8 miles. Left on U.S. 41 and go south 1.7 miles. Left on Colonia Lane, go 0.3 miles. Take a third left on Pocono Trail East, go 0.2 miles. Entrance on right. Limited parking.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Enjoy the maritime hammock, tidal swamp and scrubby flatwoods. Wildlife viewing may include: ospreys, grey squirrels, and a variety of wading birds.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, hiking, picnicking and nature photography.
- One mile of shady trails right on Shakett Creek.
- Close to U.S. 41 and various restaurants.

- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

- Picnic tables
- Scenic overlook
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Nokomis Community Park, The Legacy Trail, Curry Creek Preserve and Laurel Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pocono Trail Preserve was originally named by Dr. Fred Albee, an early settler of Nokomis and owner of the Pollyanna Inn, which was located on this property and opened in 1922. Take a virtual tour at: youtu.be/xD1dk8r3VLE.



15 RED BUG SLOUGH PRESERVE



5200 Beneva Road
Sarasota, 34231

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
72 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.277198
W -82.497745

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Red Bug Slough Preserve is a small oasis of natural Florida in the midst of suburban Sarasota. The slough, named for the cotton stainer bug, flows through the preserve and forms a calm lake. Hiking and biking trails through the preserve are shaded by pines and loblolly bay that give way to oaks draped with Spanish moss.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 207 - Bee Ridge Road/FL-758. Go west on Bee Ridge Road for 2.9 miles. Turn left onto Beneva Road, for 1.4 miles. Entrance is on the right with limited parking available a short distance from a walk-through access.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Destress as you stop to rest on one of the park benches that overlook the lake. Bring a picnic to enjoy at the picnic shelter. Wildlife viewing may include: grey squirrel, marsh rabbit, river otter, and occasional alligator, migratory song birds, wood ducks and plants, such as partridge pea, string lily, milkweed, passionflower and frostweed.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: biking, birding, hiking, picnicking, fishing, nature photography and playground.
- Two miles of shaded and sunny trails with water views.

- Butterfly garden featuring Florida native plants.
- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

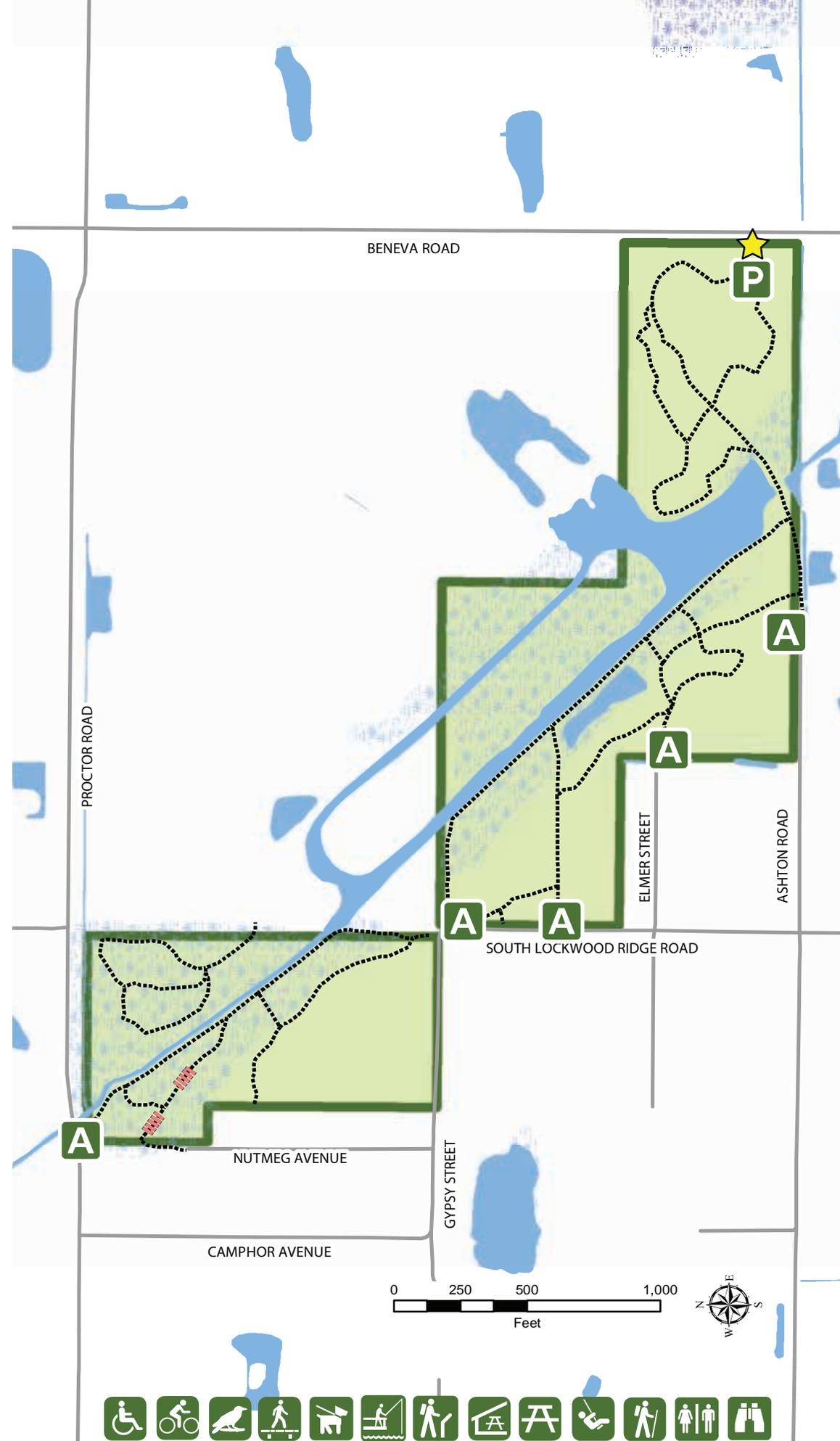
- Accessible restrooms
- Boardwalk
- Fishing pier
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic shelters with tables
- Playground
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Bee Ridge Park, Phillippi Estate Park, Urfer Family Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Red Bug Slough is a shallow, slow-moving body of water that filters and improves the quality of water entering Sarasota Bay. Take a virtual tour at: youtu.be/0QQPljec7Dg.



16 ROTHENBACH PARK



8650 Bee Ridge Road
Sarasota, 34241

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
450 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.295577
W -82.397353

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Rothenbach Park is a closed and capped landfill that has been recycled into open vistas. It is a prime example of turning trash into treasure! The amenities include advanced recycling and sustainable building techniques and materials. Named for Walter J. Rothenbach, Jr., a 40-year employee of Sarasota County and former director of Parks and Recreation.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 207 - Bee Ridge Road. Go east on Bee Ridge 3.1 miles, turn right 0.2 miles into the park. Follow park road veering right to the entrance.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Two playground areas with a variety of playground equipment on a soft mulch surface. Wildlife viewing may include: white-tailed deer, American alligator, armadillo, meadowlarks, red-shouldered hawk, black-bellied whistling duck, wood ducks, coot, moorhen, herons, rabbits and woodpeckers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, hiking, picnicking and playground.
- Five miles of varied elevation, paved trails, both sunny and shaded.
- Picnic pavilion available for reservation. For more information contact 941-861-7275.

AMENITIES

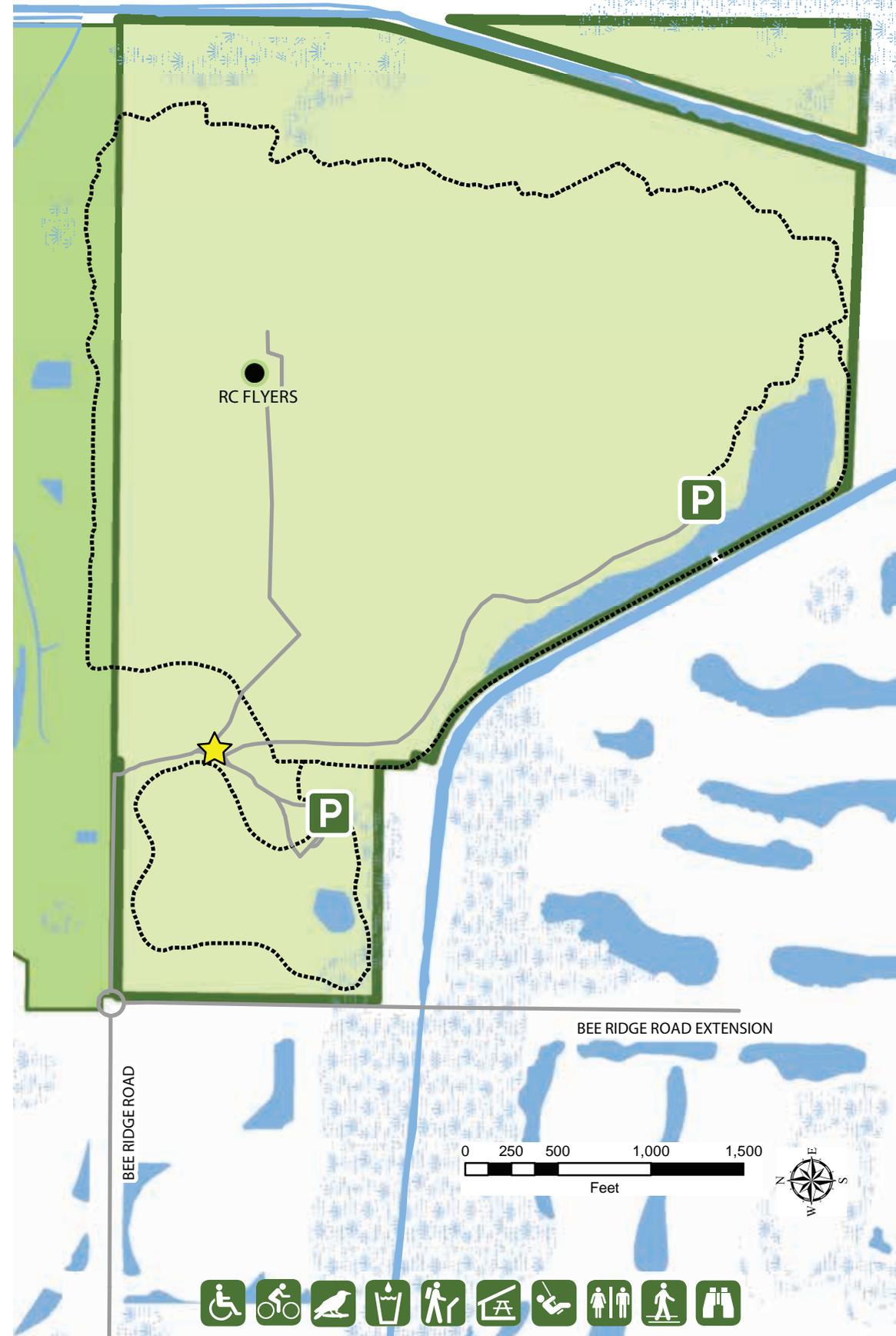
- Accessibility
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic pavilion - reservable
- Picnic tables
- Playground - accessible
- Restrooms
- Trails - paved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Lakeview Park and Dog Park and Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility.

DID YOU KNOW?

Florida has the richest epiphyte flora in the United States, with approximately 85 species of native air plant ferns and flowering plants. A walk along the shaded hammock trail provides multiple opportunities for epiphyte viewing.



17 SCHERER THAXTON PRESERVE



13125 Honore Ave.
Osprey, 34229

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
287 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.140614
W -82.416526

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

This property was acquired in 1992 to continue the natural landscape and wildlife corridor adjacent to the Mary Thaxton Memorial Preserve of the Oscar Scherer State Park. Elsa Scherer Burrows left her family's ranch to the state in memory of her father, Oscar. Former Sarasota County Commissioner Jon Thaxton, a local Florida scrub-jay expert, led the effort to protect additional lands adjacent to the park.

GETTING THERE

From north: I-75 Exit 200 - SR 681 South toward Venice/Osprey. Go south on SR 681, turn right on Honore Avenue, entrance and parking on left.

From south; take U.S. 41 north to Central Sarasota Parkway, turn right, go to Honore Avenue, travel south, entrance and parking on right.

WHAT TO EXPECT

As you hike, keep an eye out for the scarce Florida scrub-jay or a soaring eagle. Habitats include pine flatwoods and depressional wetlands.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: biking, birding, fishing, hiking, paddling and wildlife viewing.
- Loop trail around the lake and connecting trails to Oscar Scherer Park (entrance fee). Seasonal trail flooding can occur.

- A diverse variety of Florida flowering plants and seasonal explosions of color.
- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash

AMENITIES

- Canoe/kayak launch
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic tables
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Culverhouse Nature Park, Curry Creek Preserve, The Legacy Trail and Oscar Scherer State Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that this preserve depends on flooding and fire? Intermittent floods and fires shape the habitat allowing grasses and wildflowers to dominate the understory.



18 SHAMROCK PARK AND NATURE CENTER



3900 Shamrock Drive
Venice, 34293

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
85 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.050926
W -82.432227

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The park balances several community activities while providing opportunities for nature study, educational hikes and environmental programs, as well as facilities for active recreation. As a trailhead for the Venetian Waterway Park, it allows visitors to walk, bike or roller blade from the park to downtown Venice, the historic Venice Train Depot and The Legacy Trail.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 200 SR 681 South toward Venice to North Tamiami Trail/U.S. 41. Left onto North Tamiami Trail to Venice Bypass to Shamrock Drive, right on Shamrock Drive to park entrance on right. Parking areas are near the Nature Center, park amenities and trails.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Come take a beautiful trail walk along the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) or shoot some hoops. Wildlife and scenic viewing may include: gopher tortoise, osprey, Florida scrub-jay, and views of the ICW.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, hiking, basketball and tennis.
- Recreational pavilion and indoor meeting/classroom space. For reservations, contact 941-861-7275.
- Trailhead for the Venetian Waterway Park (trail).

- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

- Accessibility
- Basketball courts - outdoor
- Demonstration garden
- Nature center with interpretive signage
- Picnic shelters with tables
- Picnic pavilion - reservable
- Playground, toddler and school-aged areas
- Restrooms
- Tennis courts
- Trails - paved and unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Caspersen Beach, The Legacy Trail, South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve and Venetian Waterway Park.

DID YOU KNOW?



Gopher tortoises may live more than 60 years and dig burrows up to 40 feet long and 10 feet deep. These burrows are used by nearly 350 other kinds of animals, including insects, snakes, rodents, toads and spiders.



19 SLEEPING TURTLES PRESERVE NORTH



3462 Border Road
Venice, 34292

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
174 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.122678
W -82.351988

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Sleeping Turtles Preserve North provides multiple passive recreation opportunities and preserves the character and quality of the Myakka River. The preserve's trails wind through floodplain swamps and pine flatwoods and offer views of the river where visitors might see "sleeping" turtles basking on fallen trees.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 193 - Jacaranda Boulevard. Go north on Jacaranda Boulevard for 0.9 miles. Turn right onto Border Road, travel two miles. Entrance is on the left, limited parking is located near the entrance.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Visitors will enjoy amazing views of the Myakka River and diverse natural communities, including upland mixed forests and seasonal wetlands. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoises, swallow-tailed kites, alligators, snakes and migratory song birds.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fishing and hiking.
- 4.7 miles of trails with breathtaking views of the Myakka River.

- Dog-friendly, designated area is only on the portion of the preserve north of Border Road. All dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.
- Horses are allowed on the preserve south of Border Road.

AMENITIES

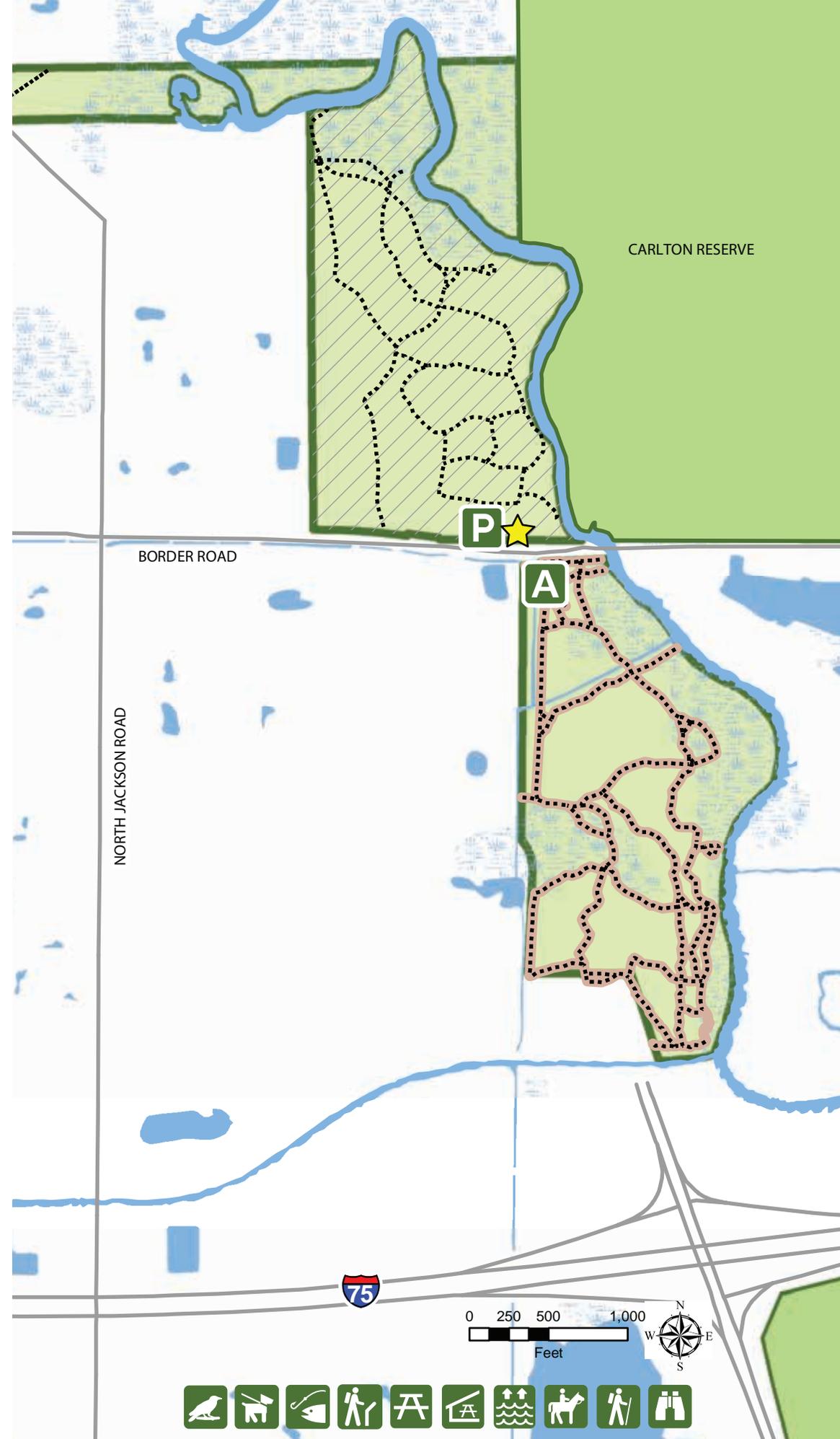
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic shelters with tables
- Trails - equestrian
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Carlton Reserve, Deer Prairie Creek Preserve-North Entrance.

DID YOU KNOW?

The preserve is named after Sleeping Turtles, a landmark on the Myakka River noted on naval maps from the 1800s.



20 SLEEPING TURTLES PRESERVE SOUTH



2800 N. River Road
Venice, 34292

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
213 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.106561
W -82.346281

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Sleeping Turtles Preserve South provides shady hiking trails through oak hammocks and pine flatwoods. It is bordered on the east by the Myakka River and has a large man-made lake in the center of the preserve. Fishing, hiking and birding are some of the nature-based recreational activities available.

GETTING THERE

From I-75 Exit 191- North River Road. Travel southeast on North River Road for 0.6 miles. Entrance is on the left. Limited parking just before Venice Avenue. Walk-throughs are located off of North River Road near East Venice Avenue and near the southeast corner, near the intersection of North River Road and the I-75 southbound ramp.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Bring your fishing pole, and stroll around the 20-acre lake until you find your secret spot. The one-mile trail offers several benches and picnic tables to take in the view, go hiking or enjoy a waterfront picnic. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoises, swallow-tailed kites, alligators, snakes and migratory songbirds.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fishing, hiking.

- 5.5 miles of trails with one leading to a view of the Myakka River.
- An approximately one-mile trail encircles a 20-acre lake.

AMENITIES

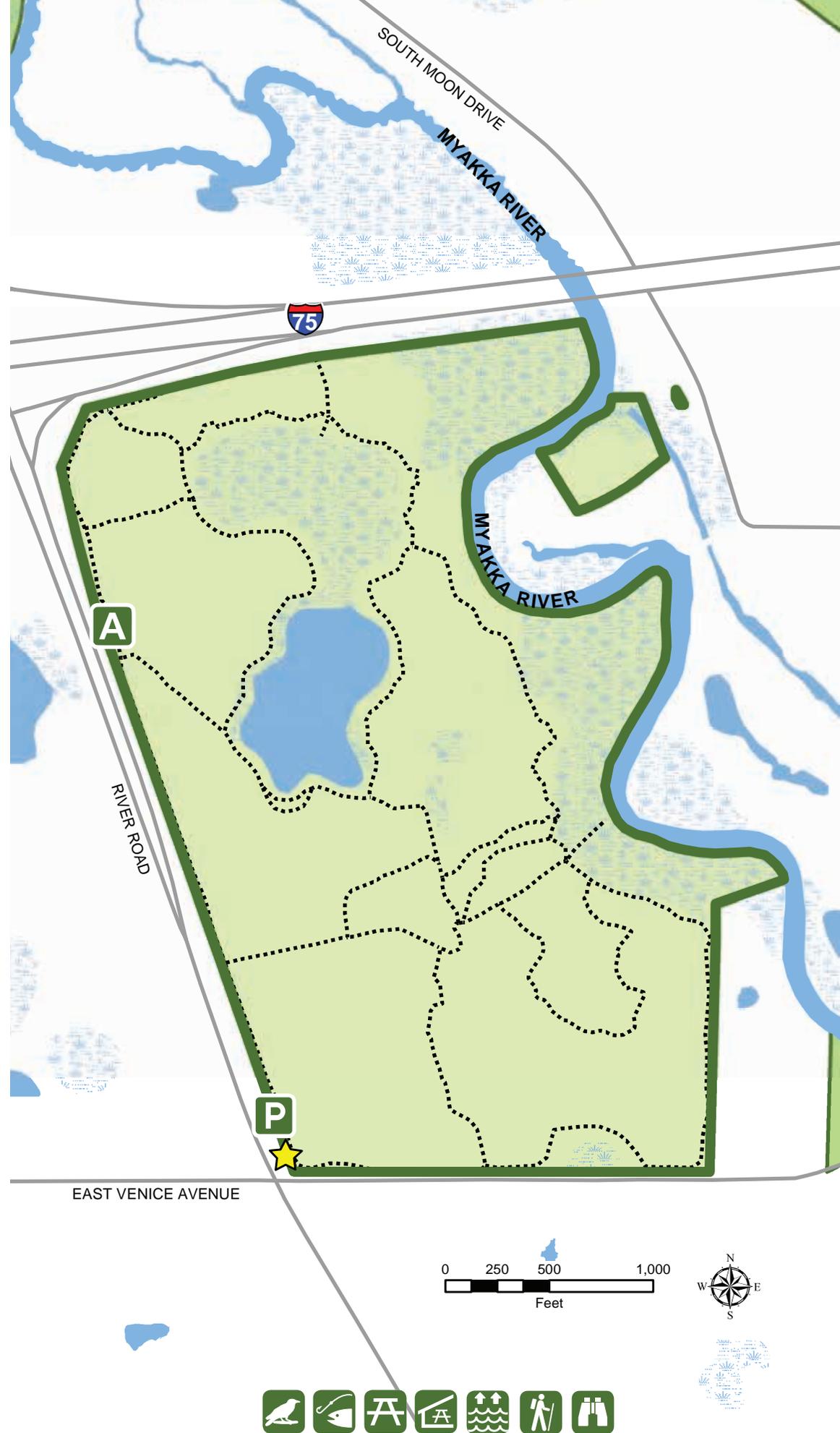
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic shelters with tables
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Carlton Reserve, Deer Prairie Creek Preserve, Jelks Preserve and Snook Haven.

DID YOU KNOW?

This man-made lake was created from a borrow pit (an excavation in which material is removed to serve as fill for another site). The fill was used in the construction of I-75 in the early 1970s.



21 SOUTH VENICE LEMON BAY PRESERVE



6200 Osprey Road
Venice, 34293

5472 Kenisco Road
Venice, 34293

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
225 acres

GPS Coordinates
6200 Osprey Road
N 27.022834
W -82.410164
5472 Kenisco Road
N 27.029793
W -82.414688

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

A peaceful retreat for visitors and a refuge for several protected animals and plants. Tucked in an urban location, the park provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and environmental education.

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 210-Jacaranda Boulevard. Go south toward Englewood/Venice for 5.1 miles. Left on Englewood Road, go 1.6 miles. Right on Manasota Beach Road, go 0.2 miles. Slight right on Belvedere Road, go 0.3 miles. Right on Pheasant Road, go 0.2 miles. Left on Macon Road, go 0.2 miles. Left on Osprey Road. Entrance is south of the intersection of Macon Road and Osprey Road, with limited parking.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Look for plants such as mangroves, cord grasses, oak species, lupine, palafox, coontie, and Curtis' milkweed. Wildlife viewing may include: gopher tortoises, Florida scrub-jays, bald eagles, river otters and an assortment of snakes, including the Eastern coachwhip.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fishing, hiking and picnicking.

- Approximately eight miles of trails, including a 1.6-mile scenic trail.

AMENITIES

- Boardwalks
- Interpretive signage
- Trails - unpaved
- Picnic shelters with tables

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Manasota Scrub Preserve,
Shamrock Park, Lemon Bay Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

This preserve contains some of the last remaining undeveloped bay shorelines, which protect the water quality and health of the Lemon Bay Estuary, a state aquatic preserve for which it was named.



22 URFER FAMILY PARK



4000 Honore Ave
Sarasota, 34233

Hours
6 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Size
55 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.2839764
W -82.464647

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

This wonderful park offers accessible fitness equipment along the paved multi-use trails, multiple playgrounds, nature trails, views of cattle grazing, self-guided tours at the historic Dr. C.B. Wilson House and more!

GETTING THERE

I-75 Exit 207 - Bee Ridge Road
Go west on Bee Ridge Road for 0.9 miles. Left on Honore Avenue. Entrance and parking area immediately on the right.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Ideal for family reunions or organized events - offering playgrounds, a fitness trail, one-mile nature trail winding through pine flatwoods, and adjacent to herbaceous and forested wetlands. Wildlife viewing may include: raccoons, gopher tortoises, turtles, various snakes, birds and bobcats.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: birding, fitness trail, hiking and picnicking.
- Two miles of easy nature trails among diverse ecosystems, including boardwalks over wetlands.
- Picnic pavilion available for reservation. Contact 941-861-7275.

- Dog-friendly, all dogs must be kept on a hand-held, maximum 6-foot leash.

AMENITIES

- Accessibility
- Boardwalks
- Fitness trail with exercise equipment
- Historical/Cultural
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic shelters with tables
- Two accessible playgrounds - toddler/teen
- Restrooms
- Trails - paved and unpaved

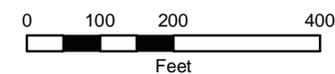
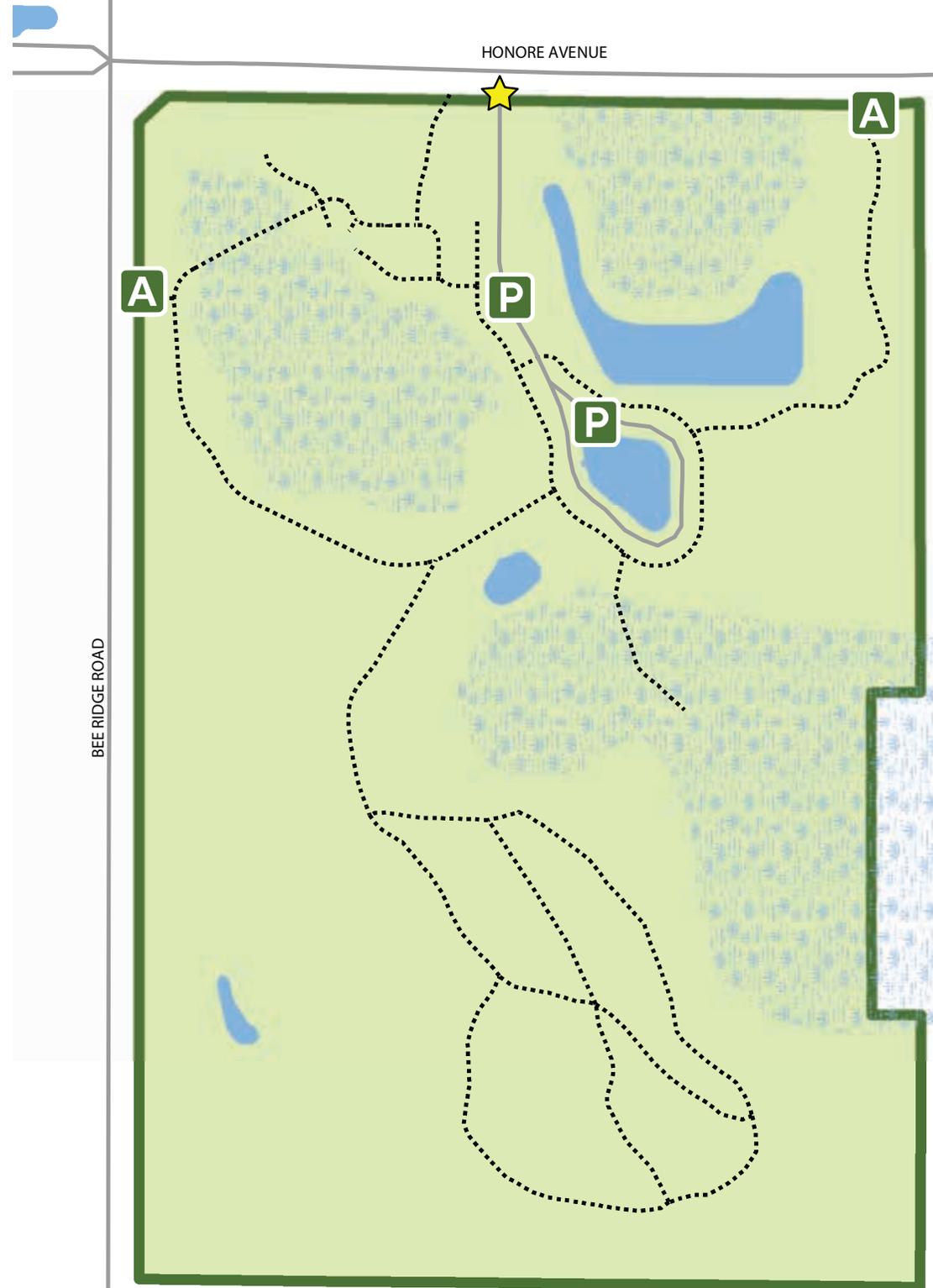
NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility, Colonial Oaks Park, Rothenbach Park, Red Bug Slough Preserve.

DID YOU
KNOW?



This was Sarasota
County's first
Gold LEED certified park (2011),
representing a new milestone in
sustainability and livability in a
suburban setting.



23 WALTON RANCH



7020 N. Toledo
Blade Blvd.
North Port, 34291

Hours
6 a.m. - Sunset

Size
3,760 acres

GPS Coordinates
N 27.120250
W -82.1155346

ABOUT THE PROPERTY

Walton Ranch is an active cattle ranch with beautiful natural areas. The shared-use trails are popular with equestrians, off-road bicyclists, birders and hikers seeking nature and solitude. Motorized vehicles and dogs are prohibited. Please practice trail courtesy when using shared-use trails.

GETTING THERE

From I-75 take Exit 179 Toledo Blade Boulevard. Head north on Toledo Blade Road for approximately 1.6 miles, the entrance will be on the right, straight ahead.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Great views of wildlife may include: gopher tortoises, alligators, and of wide variety of birds, including caracara and wild turkey. Visitors can also observe a wide array of wildflowers, such as narrow-leaf sunflower and blue flag iris.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities: biking, bird watching, equestrian use, wildlife and cattle viewing.
- There are more than 19 miles of shared-use primitive trails in the non-grazing areas.
- Cattle grazing in the pasture areas (please do not intentionally disturb).

AMENITIES

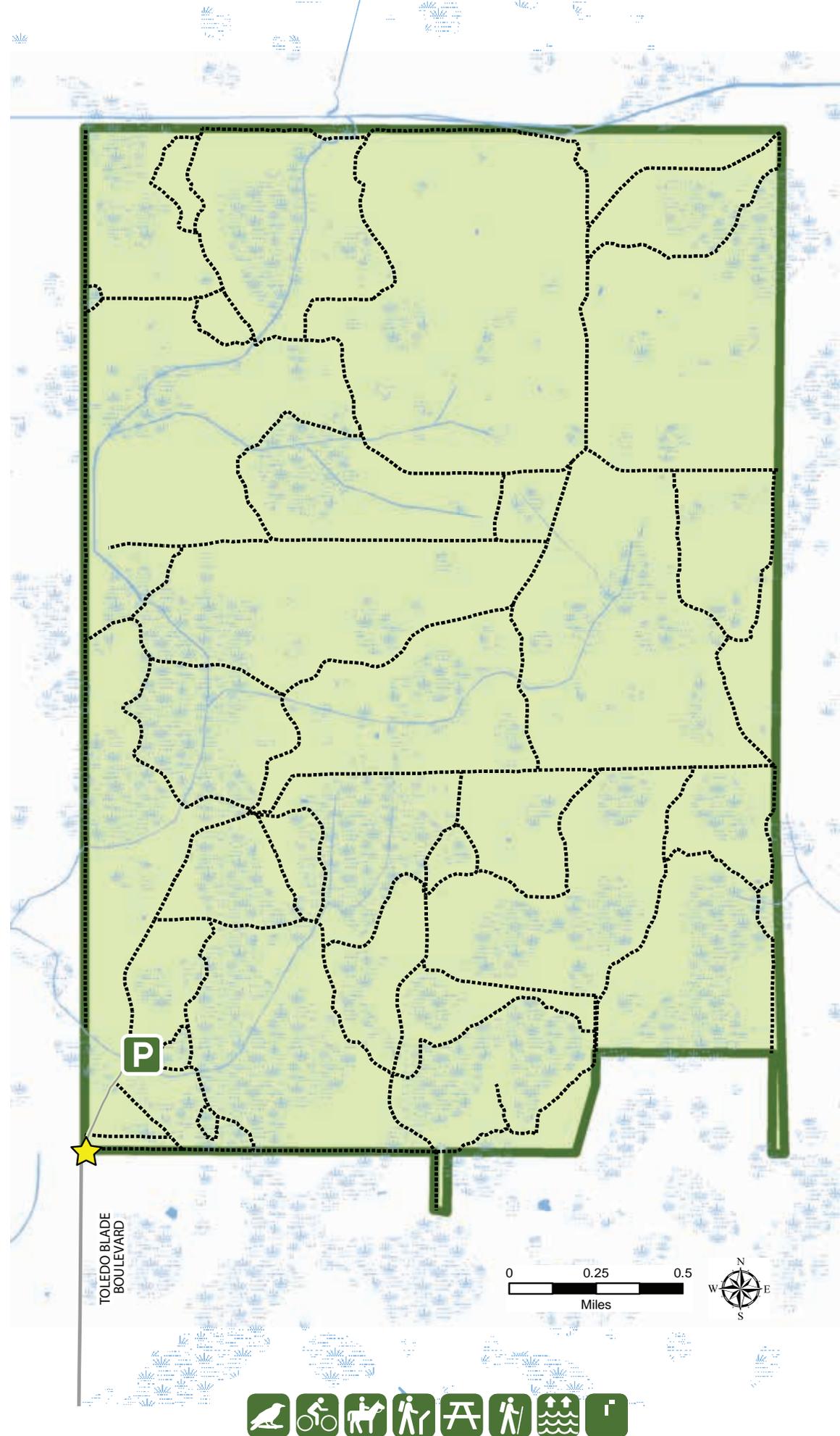
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic tables
- Water for horses at stock tanks
- Trails - unpaved

NEARBY PARKS AND TRAILS

Deer Prairie Creek Preserve and Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

Florida has the longest history of ranching in any state in the United States. The first cattle arrived with the earliest Spanish explorers more than 400 years ago. When pioneer settlers came to Florida in the mid-1800s, they established a cattle industry that is still active today.



Heritage of Stewardship

Stewardship is a unique and important part of Sarasota County's rich heritage. This heritage is reflected in our voter-adopted land acquisition programs. The citizens of Sarasota County, demonstrating their understanding of the ecological, historical and cultural value of natural areas, have chosen to preserve open spaces for wildlife habitat, to maintain plant diversity, protect watersheds, and provide outdoor recreation. They voted twice, once in 1999 and again in 2005, to pass an ad valorem tax referendum to support land conservation. The natural areas and parklands protected through these initiatives can serve to create a community legacy by protecting sensitive resources and providing outdoor recreation for current and future generations.

While you are exploring the county's natural areas, you may see our environmental professionals in action, working to restore and maintain the sites through activities such as vegetation reduction, prescribed fire, managed grazing, invasive plant management and related activities. Our ecosystem management seeks to restore and maintain a natural balance which preserves the quality of these diverse landscapes for the benefit of visitors and wildlife. Monitoring, often facilitated by volunteers, enables us to gauge our effectiveness and develop responsive approaches.

This balanced, adaptive program continues Sarasota County's history of stewardship to maintain ecological functions, preserve diverse habitats, and provide recreation for residents and visitors to enjoy our community's wild places.



Be a steward



- **Help protect wildlife** - Sarasota County is home to many threatened species, including Florida scrub-jays, gopher tortoises, and eastern indigo snakes. Help protect these creatures by observing them from a distance, and making sure that your pets are leashed at all times while in dog-friendly parks.
 - Other notable info:
 - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: myfwc.com
 - Recreational Fishing License: myfwc.com (keyword license)
 - To report wildlife violations, contact Wildlife Alert: 888-404-3922
- **Go native** - Native plants provide valuable habitat for wildlife. Consider using native plants and removing invasive exotic species from landscaping. Sarasota County's Cooperative Extension Service provides free landscaping advice: sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu.
- **Report suspicious activity** - While the lands are open to the public, not all activities are authorized. Visitors are limited to posted hours. Motorized vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), are not permitted beyond parking areas. If you observe unauthorized access or suspicious activity, contact the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office non-emergency number at 941-316-1201.
 - Please report fence and gate damage or illegal dumping to 941-861-5000 and include park name and location.

Get outside and get involved

Looking for a way to make a difference? Volunteer your time and talent!

There are a variety of volunteer opportunities available with Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources. You decide how much time you want to volunteer and we'll match your skills and interests to activities you'll enjoy.

To register with Volunteer Sarasota, visit scgov.net (keyword volunteer) or Friends of Sarasota County Parks at fosc.org.



Non-discrimination Statement

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, religion, or genetic information. Persons with disabilities who require assistance or alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.), or who wish to file a complaint, should contact Sarasota County ADA / Civil Rights Coordinator, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, Florida 34236. Phone: 941-861-5000, TTY 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771; email: adacoordinator@scgov.net.

More outdoor opportunities

Discover nature at some of our beach parks...

- Caspersen Beach Park
- Ted Sperling Park at South Lido Beach

Spot wildlife along these multi-use trails...

- The Legacy Trail
- Venetian Waterway Park

Explore more gateways to the Myakka Wild and Scenic River...

- Snook Haven Park and Riverfront Restaurant
- Venice Myakka River Park

Go to scgov.net/parks for more details on these and other locations.

Enjoy thousands of acres of nearby state lands...

- Myakka River State Park
floridastateparks.org/park/Myakka-River
- Myakka State Forest
freshfromflorida.com
- Oscar Scherer State Park
floridastateparks.org/park/Oscar-Scherer





Sarasota County



Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources

IT STARTS IN
PARKS