

Green Swamp West

The Green Swamp offers a variety of plants, animals, and topography. There are mile-wide pastures, extensive riverine swamps, and relict sand dunes supporting longleaf pine, turkey oak, and wiregrass. The trail passes through many large oak hammocks as well as pine flatwoods, palmetto prairies, and cup-over timber lands which are being allowed to regenerate. Deer, feral pigs, alligators, fox, bobcat, otter, and armadillos, as well as gopher tortoises are frequently seen. There are scrub jays, Sandhill cranes, marsh hawks, and many types of waterfowl.

Bit of Green Swamp History

The cabin in Green Swamp West Wildlife Management Area (WMA) traces its origins to an early 1900s settlement established by the Cummer Sons Cypress Company. The lumber company operated a logging camp and a company settlement known as Cumpresso in the heart of the Green Swamp, complete with a railroad and hunting/logging cabins. In the early 1990s Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) acquired the majority of Green Swamp West. During this acquisition the Boy Scouts made an agreement to maintain and manage the cabin site in exchange for permission to use it for camping and wilderness events.

Today the cabin sits dormant and unused. More disturbing Green Swamp history..... in the Eastern tract of Green Swamp an area is known for a grim 1918 event at the Stewart Homestead. Pioneers Isham and Sarah Stewart lived on the land where, in May 1918, they were brutally murdered by the wife's grandson (Josh Browning) and his accomplice in a dispute over \$1,500. Today, while the original, historical cabins in the area have collapsed or were destroyed in wildfires over the decades, visitors can still explore remnants of early "Old Florida" infrastructure, the old railroad trams, and the preserved gravesite of the Stewart family.

Where we begin all hikes inside Green Swamp:

All Green Swamp West distance hikes begin at River Road Trailhead. Hike eastbound on the blue blazed spur trail for 1.5 miles to connect to the orange blazed FNST. At this junction, all hikes will turn right (southbound) on the FNST.

ALL INTERSECTIONS ARE CLEARLY SIGNED FOR THESE 3 HIKE LENGTH OPTIONS.

15-mile distance

Hike southbound on the orange blazed FNST for 4.8 miles. Arrive at a clearly marked "15-mile hike" turn sign at this junction with the white blazed loop trail. Turn right onto the white trail. Follow white blazes for 5.3 miles, following signs at any intersection. In 5.3 miles the old, abandoned cabin, with a view of the Withlacoochee River appears. This is a nice rest spot. After a restful break at the cabin area, continue northbound along the white trail for 1 mile, arriving back at the orange blazed FNST. Turn left (northbound) on the FNST. Hike 1 mile back to the blue blazed spur trail. Turn left & enjoy the last 1.5 miles back to the trailhead.

13-mile distance

Hike southbound on the orange blazed FNST for 4 miles. Arrive at a clearly marked "13-mile hike" turn sign at this junction with the white blazed loop trail. Turn right onto the white trail. Follow white blazes

for 4.3 miles, follow signs at any intersection. In 4.3 miles the old, abandoned cabin, with a view of the Withlacoochee River appears. This is a nice rest spot. After a restful break at the cabin area, continue northbound along the white trail for 1 mile, arriving back at the orange blazed FNST. Turn left (northbound) on the FNST. Hike 1 mile back to the blue blazed spur trail. Turn left & enjoy the last 1.5 miles back to the trailhead.

10-mile distance

Hike southbound on the orange blazed FNST for 2.4 miles. Arrive at a clearly marked "10-mile hike" turn sign at this junction with white blazed loop trail. Turn right onto the white trail. Follow white blazes 0.8 mile to next white blaze junction & turn right again, following the loop in a northwest direction. In 2 miles the old, abandoned cabin, with a view of the Withlacoochee River appears. This is a nice rest spot. After a restful break at the cabin area, continue northbound along the white trail for 1 mile, arriving back at the orange blazed FNST. Turn left (northbound) on the FNST. Hike 1 mile back to the blue blazed spur trail. Turn left & enjoy the last 1.5 miles back to the trailhead.

Hikes within Withlacoochee River County Park

5.5 miles -Withlacoochee River Trail starting along the Withlacoochee Riverbank returning through oak hammock. You will catch a glimpse of the old cabin across the river. When you return you will pass by the observation tower.

2.9 miles - Park Perimeter Trail - Enjoy an easy walk on the packed gravel Park Perimeter Trail through the scenic landscapes of Withlacoochee River Park. This beginner-friendly hike is perfect for all ages and offers a relaxing way to experience the park's natural beauty.

1.75 Mile Multipurpose Paved Trail - Enjoy a leisurely walk on the paved trail through Withlacoochee River Park. Perfect for beginners, families, strollers, and anyone looking for a relaxed pace while taking in the park's beautiful scenery and wildlife.

Paddle on the Withlacoochee River

2.5 Mile Withlacoochee River Paddle

Starting at the boat launch across the road from the Florida Trail trailhead. Once launching, you will paddle downstream (to the right). The river is a little wider at this point then narrows with many fun twists. Single file is recommended. If we get some rain and the river rises, this section can be swift. Paddle 1.25 miles before the river ends. There will be less tree canopy at the end. The round trip took 1.5 hours and 2.5 miles. It is beautiful with tall, dense cypress trees that feel like Jurassic Park. The tree canopy is lush and song birds are abundant. **This is limited to 20 paddlers in each morning & afternoon trip. No Gear Provided! Please bring your own boat or SUP & gear. We recommend contacting Easy Peasy Mobile Kayak Rentals 352-888-4882 for rental. Mention FTA IDIDAHKE when calling.**

Biking in the Green Swamp

20 Mile Green Swamp West Tract Gravel Adventure

Join us for a guided 20-mile gravel cycling adventure through the remarkable **Green Swamp West Tract**, one of Central Florida's most scenic and ecologically significant landscapes. Beginning and ending at the Withlacoochee River Park campground pavilion, this leisurely-paced ride offers an opportunity to experience the quiet beauty of Florida's backcountry while enjoying a variety of riding surfaces and natural surroundings. Our route departs the pavilion and follows **Ranch Road, Cedar Pocket Road, Main Line Road, and Compresco Grade Road**, winding through open pine flatwoods, oak hammocks, expansive prairies, and wetlands that support an incredible diversity of wildlife. Along the way, riders will cross several intersections with the **Florida National Scenic Trail**, a reminder that this unique landscape is treasured by hikers and outdoor enthusiasts from across the country. **No Gear Provided! Please bring all your own bike & gear.**