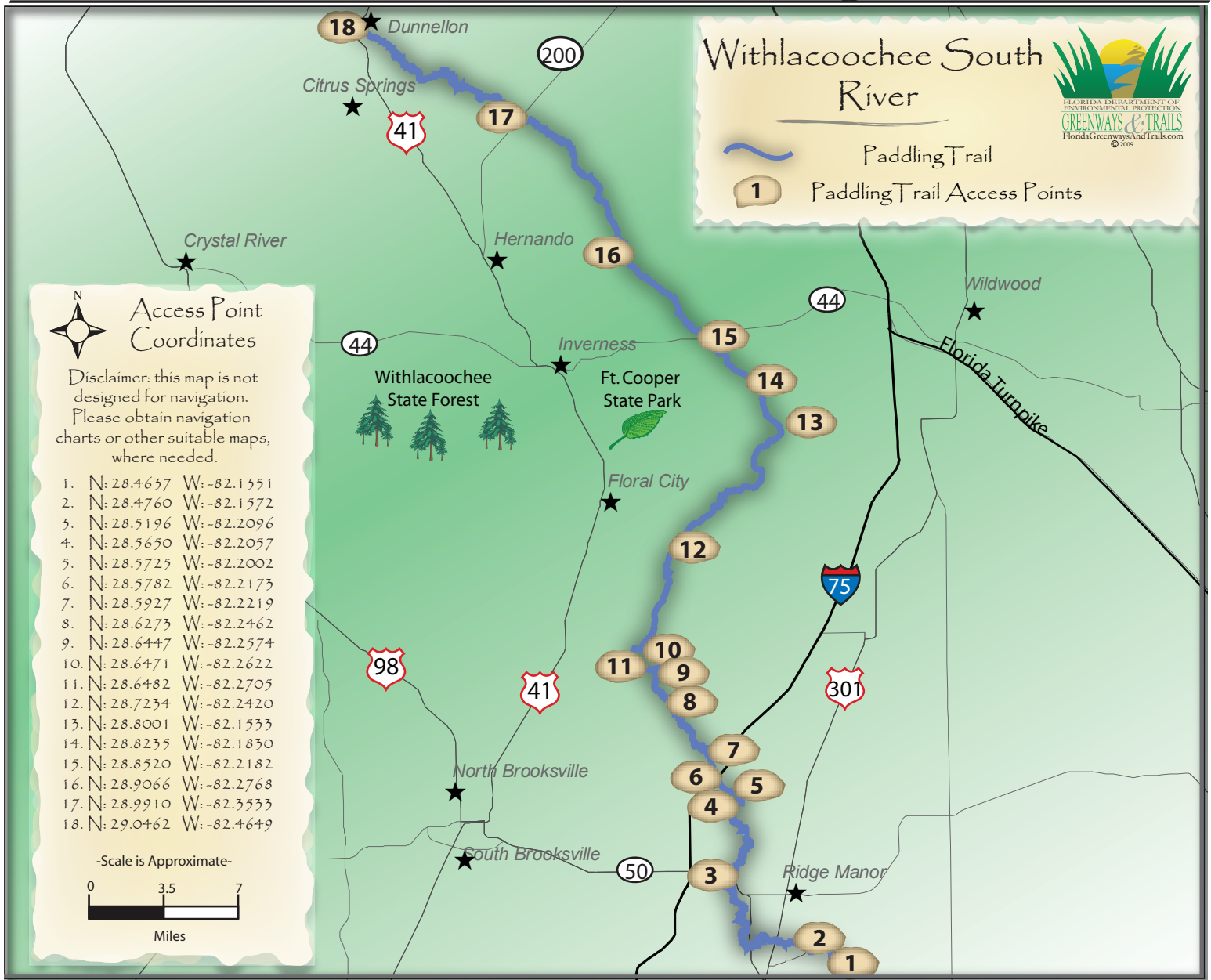


Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail



Withlacoochee South River



Paddling Trail
 Paddling Trail Access Points

Access Point Coordinates

Disclaimer: this map is not designed for navigation. Please obtain navigation charts or other suitable maps, where needed.

1. N: 28.4637 W: -82.1351
2. N: 28.4760 W: -82.1572
3. N: 28.5196 W: -82.2096
4. N: 28.5650 W: -82.2057
5. N: 28.5725 W: -82.2002
6. N: 28.5782 W: -82.2173
7. N: 28.5927 W: -82.2219
8. N: 28.6273 W: -82.2462
9. N: 28.6447 W: -82.2574
10. N: 28.6471 W: -82.2622
11. N: 28.6482 W: -82.2705
12. N: 28.7234 W: -82.2420
13. N: 28.8001 W: -82.1533
14. N: 28.8235 W: -82.1830
15. N: 28.8520 W: -82.2182
16. N: 28.9066 W: -82.2768
17. N: 28.9910 W: -82.3533
18. N: 29.0462 W: -82.4649

-Scale is Approximate-

Miles

Withlacoochee South River Trip Planning

Counties: Pasco, Herando, Sumter, Citrus, Marion

Nearest towns: Ocala, Inverness, Dunnellon

Trip length: 76 miles

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate, depending on trip distance

Skill level: Beginner to Intermediate, depending on trip distance

Mileage:

1. Mile 0 Lacoochee Park.
2. Mile 2.5--CR 575 Bridge/Withlacoochee RV Resort and Canoe
3. Mile 11.5--SR 50 Bridge.
4. Mile 16.5--Crooked River Campground.
5. Mile 18--River Junction Recreation Area.
6. Mile 19--Silver Lake Recreation Area
7. Mile 20--Iron Bridge Recreation Area.
8. Mile 21.5--Hog Island Recreation Area.
9. Mile 26--CR 476 Bridge/Nobleton Canoe Rental.
10. Mile 27--Nobleton Wayside Park.
11. Mile 27.5--Lake Townsen Regional Park Ramp.
12. Mile 34--SR 48 Bridge/ Wynnhaven Riverside RV Park.

13. Marsh Bend County Park.
14. Mile 45--Carlson Landing/Wysong Park
15. Mile 47.5--SR 44 Bridge.
16. Mile 53.5--SR 581 Ramp.
17. Mile 63--Grey Eagle Park/SR 200 Bridge
18. Mile 76--Dunnellon Wayside Park

**The provided mileage data is approximate (rounded to the nearest 0.5 mi) and shouldn't be relied upon for navigation.

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

UPPER SECTION ACCESS POINTS

Put-in: Lacochee Park (Withlacoochee State Forest). http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/index.html

Nearest town to put-in: Lacochee **Miles from put-in:** ~ 2 miles

Directions to put-in: From SR 50, turn south onto US 301 to Lacochee. Turn left (east) onto CR 575. Turn right (south) onto Durden Road (indicated by a canoe sign), then left onto Coit Road (unpaved road, also indicated by canoe sign). Follow 2.5 miles to river access. When the road crosses into the State Forest, it becomes Coulter Rd., which is extremely bumpy. Four wheel drive vehicles are recommended. The Withlacoochee River RV Resort and Canoe Rental (352-583-4778), located at the CR 575 bridge in Lacochee, provides a shuttle to this launch for a small fee.

Put-in: CR 575 Bridge/Withlacoochee RV Resort and Canoe Rental

Nearest town to put-in: Lacochee **Miles from put-in:** In town

Directions to put-in: From SR 50, turn south onto US 301 to Lacochee. Turn left (east) onto CR 575. The Withlacoochee RV Resort and Canoe Rental is about 2 miles away, located on the southwest side of the bridge. Launch/parking fee.

Put-in: SR 50 bridge

Nearest town to put-in: Brooksville **Miles from put-in:** ~12 miles

Directions to put-in: Located on SR 50, about 12 miles east of Brooksville. The access point is on the northeast side of the bridge. THERE IS NO PARKING AT THIS ACCESS POINT. IT SHOULD ONLY BE USED AS A DROP-OFF ACCESS POINT.

Put-in: Crooked River Campground, Silver Lake Recreation Area (Withlacoochee State Forest) http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/index.html

Nearest town to put-in: Brooksville **Miles from put-in:** ~15 miles

Directions to put-in: From SR 50, turn north onto Rital Croom Rd. (~1 mile east of the intersection of SR 50 and I-75). Paralleling the Withlacoochee State Trail, follow this road ~ 3.5 miles to recreation area, indicated by brown sign. From CR 476, turn south onto Edgewater Ave (unpaved), across from the Nobleton Wayside Park. Follow this road for ~ 4 miles, the turn left onto Rital Croom Rd (paved). Follow for ~ 2 miles, cross underneath I-75, and the recreation area entrance is on the left. Follow signs to campground.

Put-in: River Junction Recreation Area (Withlacoochee State Forest) http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/index.html

Nearest town to put-in: Bushnell **Miles from put-in:** ~ 6 miles

Directions to put-in: From US 301, turn west onto CR 656. After ~ 2 miles, turn left on FR 13 (SW 50th Blvd), indicated by a brown "River Junction Recreation Area" sign. Follow to the recreation area.

MIDDLE SECTION ACCESS POINTS

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

Put-in: Silver Lake Recreation Area (Withlacoochee State Forest) http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/index.html

Nearest town to put-in: Brooksville **Miles from put-in:** ~15 miles

Directions to put-in: From SR 50, turn north onto Rital Croom Rd. (~1 mile east of the intersection of SR 50 and I-75). Paralleling the Withlacoochee State Trail, follow this road ~ 3.5 miles to recreation area, indicated by brown sign.

From CR 476, turn south onto Edgewater Ave (unpaved), across from the Nobleton Wayside Park. Follow this road for ~ 4 miles, the turn left onto Rital Croom Rd (paved). Follow for ~2 miles, cross underneath I-75, and the recreation area entrance is on the left.

Put-in: Iron Bridge Recreation Area (Withlacoochee State Forest) http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/index.html

Nearest town to put-in: Bushnell **Miles from put-in:** ~10 miles

Directions to put-in: From CR 476, turn south onto CR 635. After ~1.5 miles, turn right onto SW 90th Ave. Follow brown signs to recreation area.

Put-in: Hog Island Recreation Area (Withlacoochee State Forest) http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/index.html

Nearest town to put-in: Bushnell **Miles from put-in:** ~10 miles

Directions to put-in: From CR 476, turn south onto CR 635. After ~1.5 miles, turn right onto SW 90th Ave. Follow brown signs to recreation area. If using as a take out, the boat ramp is not on the main branch of the river and is easy to miss!

Put-in: CR 476 Bridge/Nobleton Canoe Rental

Nearest town to put-in: Nobleton **Miles from put-in:** In town

Directions to put-in: The ramp is located on the northwest side of the CR 476 bridge on the property of the Nobleton Canoe Rental.

Put-in: Nobleton Wayside Park, Hernando Co. Parks Dept.
http://www.co.hernando.fl.us/Parks_Rec/parks/index.htm

Nearest town to put-in: Nobleton **Miles from put-in:** In town

Directions to put-in: The park is located in the town of Nobleton on CR 476, bout 12 miles north of Brooksville. It is situated on the north side of the road, about 0.25 miles west of the Withlacoochee River bridge.

Put-in: Lake Townsen Regional Park Ramp, Hernando Co. Parks Dept.
http://www.co.hernando.fl.us/Parks_Rec/parks/index.htm

Nearest town to put-in: Nobleton **Miles from put-in:** In town

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

Directions to put-in: The ramp is located in the town of Nobleton on CR 476, about 12 miles north of Brooksville. It is situated on the north side of the road, about 1 mile west of the Withlacoochee River bridge. The entrance is adjacent to the crossing of the Withlacoochee State Trail.

Put-in: SR 48 Bridge/ Wynnhaven Riverside RV Park

Nearest town to put-in: Bushnell **Miles from put-in:** ~10 miles

Directions to put-in: The ramp is located on the southeast side of the SR 48 bridge, about 8 miles west of I-75. There is a launch fee.

Put-in: Marsh Bend County Park (Outlet River access), Sumter County

Nearest town to put-in: Lake Panasofkee **Miles from put-in:** ~ 2 miles

Directions to put-in: From SR 44, turn south onto CR 470. Follow ~ 6 miles to bridge over Outlet River. The ramp is located on the southwest side of the bridge.

Put-in: Carlson Landing/Wysong Park (Southwest Florida Water Management Dist.)
<http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/recreation/>

Nearest town to put-in: Inverness **Miles from put-in:** ~12 miles

Directions to put-in: From the north, take SR 44 to CR 470 and turn south. After driving ~ 2 miles, turn right (west) onto CR 300. Park is located on west side of the road. From the south, take CR 470 to CR 300. Park is located on west side of the road.

Put-in: SR 44 bridge.

Nearest town to put-in: Inverness **Miles from put-in:** ~ 6.5 miles

Directions to put-in: Ramp is located on the southeast side of the SR 44 bridge, approximately 11.5 miles from Wildwood and 6.5 miles from Inverness.

Put-in: CR 581 ramp.

Nearest town to put-in: Inverness **Miles from put-in:** ~ 7 miles

Directions to put-in: From the city of Inverness, traveling on US 41, turn east onto CR 581 Turner Camp Rd. Travel ~ 7 miles until the road ends at the boat ramp.

LOWER SECTION ACCESS POINTS

Put-in: Grey Eagle Park, SR 200 bridge

Nearest town to put-in: Hernando **Miles from put-in:** ~ 6 miles

Directions to put-in: From SR 200, turn west onto Spruce Dr., which is just south of the Withlacoochee Bridge. The park is 0.5 mi on the right.

Take-out: Dunnellon Wayside Park (Centennial Park), US 41 bridge

Directions to take-out: Park located on northwest side of US 41 bridge in Dunnellon.

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

Driving distance from put-in to take-out: Varies with trip.

Topo maps (USGS quads): Dunnellon, Stokes Ferry, Rutland, Wahoo, St. Catherine, Lacochee

Gazeteer pages: 77, 78, 84, 71

Outfitters within 20 miles of trail: <http://www.hernandocounty.us/visit/canoe.htm>
<http://www.visitcitrus.com/canoeinglist.asp>

Nobleton Canoe Rental
(800) 783 5284 / (352) 796 7176

Dragonfly Watersports,
Dunnellon (800) 919 9579 / (352) 489 3046

Rainbow River Canoe and Kayak,
Dunnellon (352) 489 7854

Angler's Resort,
Dunnellon (352) 489 2397.

Withlacoochee River RV Park and Canoe Rental,
Lacochee (352) 583-4778

Shuttle service offered: Call outfitters

USGS link (water level info): Go to <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/fl/nwis/rt>

Break / Lunch areas:

The Upper Section of the river has many spots for stops: Crooked River Campground, River Junction Recreation Area, And Silver Lake Recreation Area.

Middle Section: Between Silver Lake and Grey Eagle Park the banks of the river are very swampy. Bridges and occasional high spots can be used as break areas. There is an old boat ramp at the confluence of Jumper Creek that would make a nice lunch spot. Shell Island is also a popular place to stop along the Jumper Creek WMA, along with Wysong Park.

Lower Section: Two miles beyond the Grey Eagle Park, the banks become more appropriate for stops. The final 7-8 miles of the trail has predominantly swampy banks.

Camping options:

- **Upper Section:** Withlacoochee River RV Park and Canoe Rental, Lacochee (352) 583-4778. Sawmill Gay and Lesbian Campground (352) 583-0664. River Junction Recreation Area, Brooksville (352) 754 6896.
- **Middle Section:** Silver Lake Recreation Area, Brooksville (352) 754 6896. Hog Island Recreation Area (352) 754 6896. Trails End Camp, Floral City (352) 726 3699. Turner's Fish Camp, Inverness (352) 726 0085. Shell Island (800) 423-1426. Potts Preserve (800) 423-1426, Flying Eagle WMA (800) 423-1426.
- **Lower Section:** Two Mile Prairie Canoe Camp (Oxbow Primitive Camp), Dunnellon (352) 754 6896. Halpata Tastanaki Preserve (800) 423-1426.

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

Food/Beverage restrictions: The Rainbow River, which enters the Withlacoochee near the end of the trail, is a spring fed river with strict food and beverage restrictions. Any food or beverage that is packaged in a throw-away container is prohibited.

What to expect on the river:

Tidal influence: No

Pull-overs: On upper section during low water.

Low branches: No

Narrow water: No

Shallow water: Not usually, but check with outfitters during drier months, especially for trips on the upper section of the trail (around Lacoochee).

Strong currents: No

Rocks: On upper and lower sections during low water.

Houses: Portions of the trail have considerable development along the west bank of the river. The vast majority of the trail winds through undeveloped land.

Shoals: No

Tight turns: No

Open water: Along the entirety of the trail, the river occasionally widens to form "lakes". Some of these lakes are over a mile long.

Springs: None directly along the river. The Rainbow River flows into the Withlacoochee 0.5 miles before the end of the trail, and it is fed by a first magnitude spring, located 7 miles up the Rainbow River. Gum Springs is located about 5 miles up Gum Slough, which feeds into the Withlacoochee about 7 miles north of the SR 44 bridge. Visit this website for more information: <http://www.floridasprings.org/>

Potable water sources:

- Upper Section: Withlacoochee RV Resort and Canoe Rental, Sawmill Campground, River Junction Recreation Area.
- Middle Section: Silver Lake Recreation Area, Hog Island Recreation Area., Nobleton Canoe Rental at the CR 476 bridge, Townsen Regional Park, Trails End Camp, Turner's Fish Camp.
- Lower Section: Dunnellon Wayside Park.

Wildlife: Wildlife is abundant along the Withlacoochee. Limpkin, herons, ibis, woodpeckers, wood ducks, osprey, hawks, alligators, otters, brown water snakes, river cooters, red ear silders, and anhinga. Various songbirds are present including the summer tanager. Captive lions and tigers are located in a cage along the middle section.

Natural communities: Floodplain swamp, oak/palmetto scrub, mesic hammock.

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

Portages: At the Wysong Dam, there is a short portage to help paddlers over the dam. The upper section might require portages during low water.

Swimming: At the confluence of the Rainbow River, there is a park on the bank with a roped-off swimming area. The water is crystal clear. There is also a swimming area at Silver Lake.

Motorboats: Motorboats and airboats utilize this river regularly.

UPPER SECTION PARKING INFORMATION

Expect at parking: Lacoochee Park where four-wheel drive is recommended, Withlacoochee State Forest

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** No
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Sunrise to sunset (no gate)
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** No
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Yes

Expect at parking: SR 575 Bridge/Withlacoochee RV Resort and Canoe Rental

- **Parking fee:** Yes
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** 8 am to 8 pm. Call (352) 583-4778
- **Camping:** Yes
- **Camping fees:** Yes
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** No
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Yes

Expect at parking: River Junction Recreation Area

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Sunrise to sunset (no gate)
- **Camping:** Yes, open on weekends only on a first come, first serve basis.
- **Camping fees:** Call Division Of Forestry (352) 754 6896
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** No
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Yes

MIDDLE SECTION PARKING INFORMATION

Expect at parking: Silver Lake Recreation Area

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Sunrise to sunset (gate)
- **Camping:** Yes, on a first come, first serve basis.
- **Camping fees:** Call Division Of Forestry (352) 754 6896

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

- **Crowds:** Holidays and weekends
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Yes

Expect at parking: Iron Bridge Recreation Area

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** No
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Sunrise to sunset
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** No
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Yes

Expect at parking: Hog Island Recreation Area

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Sunrise to sunset
- **Camping:** Yes, on a first come, first serve basis.
- **Camping fees:** Call Division Of Forestry (352) 754 6896
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Yes

Expect at parking: CR 476 Bridge/Nobleton Canoe Rental

- **Parking fee:** Call outfitter (800) 783 5284
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Call outfitter (800) 783 5284
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** n/a
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Yes

Expect at parking: Nobleton Wayside Park

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** No
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Open all hours
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** n/a
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Expect at parking: Lake Townsen Regional Park Ramp

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** No

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Dawn to dusk, no overnight parking.
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Expect at parking: SR 48 Bridge/Wynnhaven Riverside RV Park

- **Parking fee:** Yes
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Call (352) 793-4744
- **Camping:** Yes
- **Camping fees:** Call (352) 793-4744
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Expect at parking: Marsh Bend County Park (Outlet River access)

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** Sunrise to sunset
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Expect at parking: Carlson Landing/Wysong Park

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** No
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** All hours
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Expect at parking: SR 44 Bridge

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** All hours
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Expect at parking: CR 581 Ramp

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** No
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** All hours
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

LOWER SECTION PARKING INFORMATION

Expect at parking: Grey Eagle Park (SR 200)

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** No
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** All hours
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Expect at parking: Dunnellon Wayside Park (Centennial Park)

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** All hours
- **Camping:** No
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** No
- **Boat Ramp:** Yes
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** No

Cultural and historical features along the trail:

The Withlacoochee River is rich in culture and history. The region was settled by many Native Americans in pre-Columbian times. The Spanish explorer, Hernando DeSoto, crossed the river in the 1500s, and made contact with a number of indigenous settlements. A mass grave found near the river on the McGregor Smith Scout Reservation is evidence of DeSoto's presence, which inadvertently left a trail of death and disease across the state. Later in history, the Seminoles inhabited the Withlacoochee region. Osceola, a famous leader of the Seminoles, spent much of his life in this region, which became the fighting grounds for the Second Seminole War. Many Seminole victories were won along the Withlacoochee. Once the Seminoles were finally forced to leave the area, white settlers migrated quickly to establish a thriving lumber and citrus industry. The Orange State Canal was built in 1884, which connected the orange groves around Lake Tsala Apopka and Floral City to the Withlacoochee River. The canal exists today, and enters the Withlacoochee near the SR 200 bridge.

Notes:

Withlacoochee South River Paddling Trail

For such an extensive river, there is minimal development along its banks. The banks are lined predominantly with lush cypress floodplain swamp. The intermittent lakes are rich in wildlife and offer unique vistas to paddlers used to traveling down a forested corridor.

The river naturally separates itself into three distinct sections. The Upper Section (Lacoochee to Silver Lake, 19 mi) is characterized by relatively high banks. The river is considerably narrower than the Middle and Lower Sections, with sizeable banks on both sides of the river. Most of the river is lined with oaks and cypress, with occasional stands of pine. The banks are less swampy than the rest of the river. Since the banks of this section are less prone to flooding, there are a number of homes along this section. Most of the forest, along both banks, is disturbed from previous land uses, indicated by a large number of oaks. Dark limestone rocks are visible. When the water is low, there are places where portages and pull-overs are necessary.

The Middle Section (Silver Lake to Grey Eagle Ramp, 44.5 mi) is characterized by undefined banks and dense cypress swamp. Due to the confluence of the Little Withlacoochee River, the river becomes much wider and straighter. Homes are few and far between, and wildlife is abundant. The river is continually changing shape between wide, open lake sections and windy sections. There are few places to stop for lunch and/or camp on the banks. However, there are a few fish camps that allow camping, and one public camping area at Shell Island.

The Lower Section (Grey Eagle Ramp to US 41 Bridge, 12.5 mi) is reminiscent of the Upper Section, with defined banks and less cypress swamp. Portions are lined with scrub ecosystems. A number of camping spots occur along this stretch. The crystal-clear Rainbow River feeds into the Withlacoochee about a half mile before the end of the designated trail.

An interesting opportunity exists along the Withlacoochee River—a hiking/paddling loop trail. The Florida Trail Association maintains a 7-mile hiking trail that begins at Hog Island Recreation Area and ends at River Junction Recreation Area. A person can potentially drop and lock their boat at River Junction, drive to Hog Island and park, then hike back up to River Junction and paddle back to Hog Island. These two areas are close to each other, and shuttling time should not exceed one hour.