





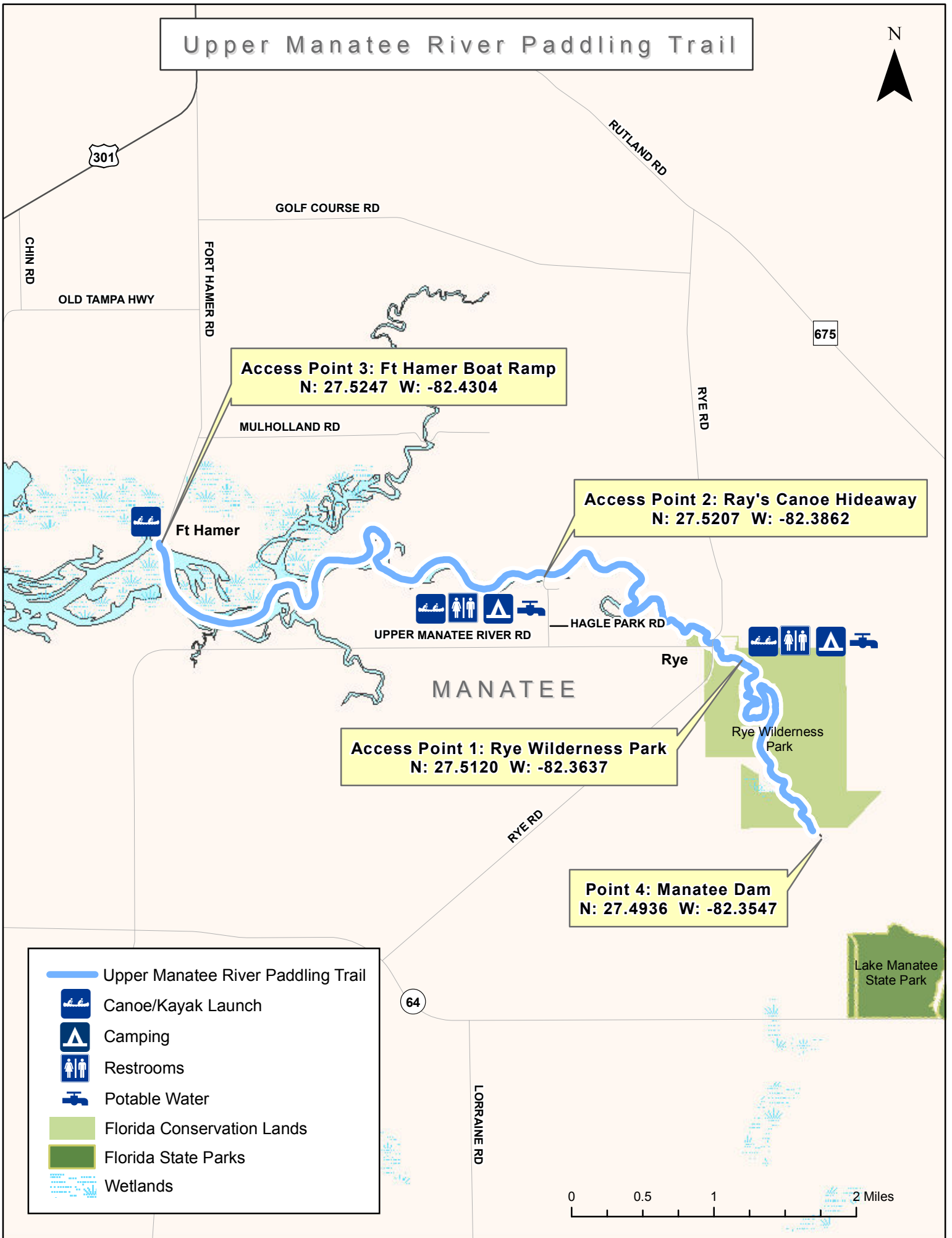
Florida Designated Paddling Trails
Upper Manatee River



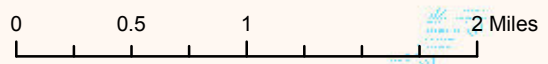
-  Designated Paddling Trail
-  Wetlands
-  Water
-  Designated Paddling Trail Index

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Upper Manatee River Paddling Trail



- Upper Manatee River Paddling Trail
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Camping
- Restrooms
- Potable Water
- Florida Conservation Lands
- Florida State Parks
- Wetlands



Upper Manatee River Paddling Trail Trip Planning

Overview: Subtropical vegetation lines the banks of this gently winding trail. It is an easy half-day trip, or you can paddle both ways, making only one vehicle necessary. Water levels and flows vary with releases from Lake Manatee Dam. Across from the take-out point is the historic site of Fort Hamer. The fort was built during the Indian scare of 1849-1850 to defend Tampa settlers.

County: Manatee

Nearest town: Bradenton

Trip length: 6.5 miles. (It is 6.5 miles from Rye Wilderness Park downstream to the Fort Hamer Boat Ramp. Another scenic trip is to paddle 3 miles upstream from Rye Wilderness Park to Manatee Dam—Map Point #4. There is no launch or take-out at Manatee Dam, so add 3 miles for the return trip.)

Mileage:

1. Mile 0—Rye Wilderness Park
2. Mile 2.5—Ray’s Canoe Hideaway
3. Mile 6.5—Fort Hamer Boat Ramp

Difficulty: Easy

Skill level: Beginner

Access Points

Access Point 1 Put-in: Rye Wilderness Park

Nearest town to put-in: Bradenton

Miles from put-in: 12 miles

Directions to put-in: Take Rye Road either south from CR 675 or northeast from SR 64 (accessible from I-75 at exit 42). Look for signs to Rye Wilderness Park northeast of Rye Bridge.

Access Point 2 Put-in: Ray’s Canoe Hideaway

Nearest town to put-in: Bradenton

Miles from put-in: 12 miles

Directions to put-in: From I-75 (exit 42), travel 2.5 miles east on SR 64. Turn north at the traffic light onto Upper Manatee River Road and go 4.5 miles to Hagle Park Road. Turn north and follow signs a half mile to Ray’s Canoe Hideaway.

Access Point 3 Take-out: Fort Hamer Boat Ramp

Nearest town to take-out: Bradenton

Miles from take-out: 13 miles

Directions to take-out: From Rye Wilderness Park go north 2.5 miles on Rye Road to Golf Course Road. Go west 3.5 miles on Golf Course Road to Fort Hamer Road. Go south on Fort Hamer Road 2.5 miles to the boat ramp.

Distance from put-in to take-out: Approximately 8 miles

Topo maps: Parrish, Verna and Lorraine

Gazetteer page: 91

Outfitters within 20 miles of trail:

Ray's Canoe Hideaway,
(941) 747-3909
<http://www.rayscanoehideaway.com/RyeWildernessPark.html>

Shuttle service offered: No

Water level info: Call outfitter (941) 747-3909 or Lake Manatee Dam (941) 746-3020

USGS link: http://waterdata.usgs.gov/usa/nwis/uv?site_no=02300009

Break / Lunch areas: Picnic tables, restrooms and water are available at Rye Wilderness Park. Picnic tables available at Ft. Hamer launch. Food and bathrooms are available at Ray's Canoe Hideaway. Many sandbars along the river are suitable for rest breaks.

Camping options:

Rye Wilderness Park has a 32-site tent campground. Visit this site for park hours and rules: <http://www.rayscanoehideaway.com/RyeWildernessPark.html>. Camping is only available on weekends and during some 3-day holidays.

Ray's Canoe Hideaway offers camping accommodations:
<http://www.rayscanoehideaway.com/RCHHoursandPrices.html>.

Depending on water levels, camping is also possible along the river at numerous large sandbars.

Other lodging: Lodging available in Bradenton area

Food/Beverage restrictions: None

Expect on River:

Pull-overs: None

Low branches: Yes, some above Rye Bridge.

Narrow water: Yes, some above Rye bridge due to blow downs in the river.

Shallow water: Yes, highly dependent on tides and the amount of water being released from the Lake Manatee Dam.

Strong currents: Yes, depending on tides and dam releases. Some stronger currents are present above Rye Bridge where the river narrows, especially at the confluence of Rye Creek.

Rocks: None

Houses: Yes, many below Rye Bridge and especially below Ray's Canoe Hideaway.

Shoals: None

Springs: None

Tight turns: Some above Rye Bridge

Open water: River widens a great deal below Ray's Canoe Hideaway. Strong winds and motorboats are likely.

Wildlife: Alligators, herons, bald eagles, turkey vultures, buzzards, yellow-bellied sliders

Natural communities: Alluvial stream, upland mixed forests, tidal marshes, hardwood hammock

Portages: None

Swimming: There is a small beach at Rye Bridge. Swimming is possible at sandbars along the river.

Motorboats: Likely at any point below Rye Bridge, depending on water levels.

Expect at parking: Rye Wilderness Park

- **Park fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of Operation:** Daylight hours
- **Camping:** Yes (weekends only)
- **Camping fees:** Yes
- **Crowds:** Possible on weekends
- **Boat Ramp:** No
- **Potable water source:** Yes
- **Canoe/Kayak launch:** Easy

Expect at parking: Ray's Canoe Hideaway

- **Parking fee:** Yes
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of Operation:** Daylight hours. Closed Wednesdays (except holidays) and for inclement weather
- **Camping:** Yes
- **Camping fees:** Yes
- **Crowds:** Possible on weekends
- **Boat Ramp:** Paved
- **Potable water source:** Yes

- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Easy

Expect at parking: Fort Hamer County Park

- **Parking fee:** None
- **Bathrooms:** None
- **Hours of Operation:** Daylight hours
- **Camping:** None
- **Camping fees:** None
- **Crowds:** Possible on weekends
- **Boat Ramp:** Paved with dock
- **Potable water source:** No
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Easy

Cultural and historical features along the trail:

Fort Hamer was built across the river from the boat ramp to defend the Tampa area during the Seminole wars.

Lake Manatee Dam was built in 1965. A malfunction in the dam in 2003, combined with heavy rains in the area, caused the river to swell many feet above flood stage.

Notes:

The original designated trail included the Aquatel Lodge which is no longer an access point. Continue further downstream to take out at Ft. Hamer boat ramp. Another scenic trip option is to paddle upstream from the Rye Bridge to the Manatee Dam, a total round trip of 6 miles

Launching is no longer allowed at Rye Bridge. Use the nearby launch at Rye Wilderness Park.