

Gen. James A. Van Fleet State Trail

The Gen. James A. Van Fleet State Trail is one of Florida's most rural trails. The trail is named after an American veteran who was a distinguished combat commander in World War I, World War II and the Korean War. It runs through the Green Swamp, the headwaters for some of Florida's most frequently canoed rivers—the Withlacoochee, Hillsborough and Peace. Landscapes include the natural environments associated with the Green Swamp, former citrus lands, cattle ranches and wildlife management areas.

The Trail corridor's history as a railroad dates back to the 1920s and today there remain a few vestiges of its past such as fragments of old trestle wood, mile markers, etc. Historic mile marker 789 is believed to indicate the number of miles to Richmond, Virginia, hub for the railroad line and home to many of the rail workers. With only one curve in its 29.2 miles, visitors can go slowly and view the wildlife or enjoy it at a brisk pace. The trail has excellent wildlife viewing opportunities between Green Pond Road and Bay Lake Road.

Four trailheads located along the trail provide convenient access. An equestrian trail parallels the length of the paved path. Hunting is allowed in the Green Swamp and Richloam wildlife management areas, found on the western side of the northern half of the trail. The trail remains open during hunting seasons, so trail users should display fluorescent orange while using the trail in those areas. General gun season—November to January. Small game season—January to February. Spring turkey season—March to April.



Trail Safety and Etiquette

- Bicyclists and in-line skaters yield to other users; all trail users yield to equestrians.
- Obey all trail rules posted at trailheads.
- Stay to the right except when passing.
- Pass slower traffic on their left; yield to oncoming traffic when passing.
- Give a clear warning signal when passing.
- Always look ahead and behind when passing.
- Travel at a responsible speed.
- Keep pets under control on a maximum 6-foot leash; walk them along the edge of any shared-use trail.
- Do not trespass on private property.
- Move off the trail surface when stopped to allow others to pass.
- Yield to other trail users when entering and crossing the trail.
- Do not disturb wildlife. All animal and plant life is protected in Florida State Parks.
- Watch out for traffic at road crossings. Obey all traffic signals.
- Helmets are required by Florida law for cyclists and equestrians under the age of 16 and are recommended for all ages.
- Equestrians should carry a copy of the negative Coggins test. (Chapter 5C-18.010, F.A.C.). Without documentation, you could be subject to fine.

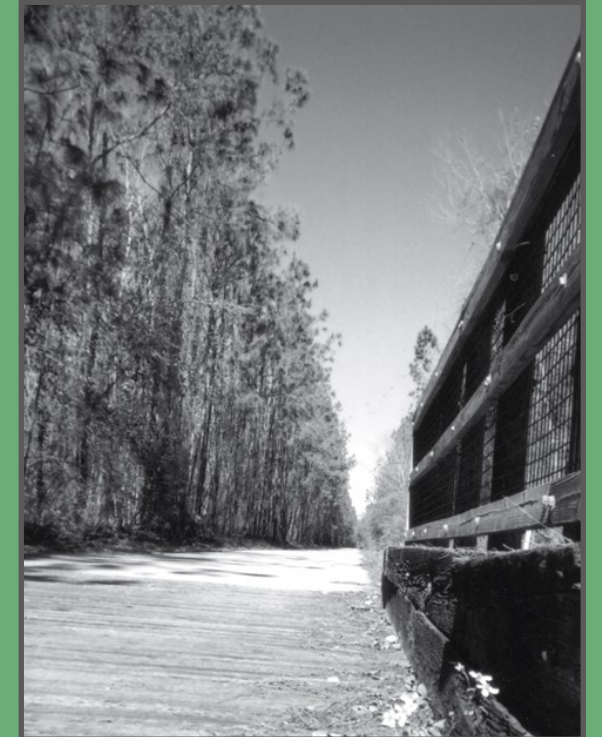


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Major Activities:

Walking, biking, skating, horseback riding, wheelchair accessible

Trail Length/Surface:

29.2 miles, paved

Fee: None

Counties:

Sumter, Lake, Polk

Nearby Towns:

Clermont, Polk City, Lakeland

Notes:

Some areas of the trail are quite remote and isolated. Be sure to bring plenty of water.

Trailhead Locations

Mabel Trailhead

7981 County Road 772

Webster, FL 33597

GPS: N 28.5776 / W -81.9768

Bay Lake Trailhead

7500 Bay Lake Road

Groveland, FL 34736

GPS: N 28.4549 / W -81.9219

Green Pond Road Trailhead

4903 Green Pond Road

Polk City, FL 33868

GPS: N 28.3199 / W -81.8626

Polk City Trailhead

7683 Berkley Road

Polk City, FL 33868

GPS: N 28.1805 / W -81.8276

