

Hiking In Our Nature

Guided and Self-Guided Trails in Southwest Florida

By Master Gardeners Mary Jane Cary, Bette Nebel and Stephanie Orlikoff

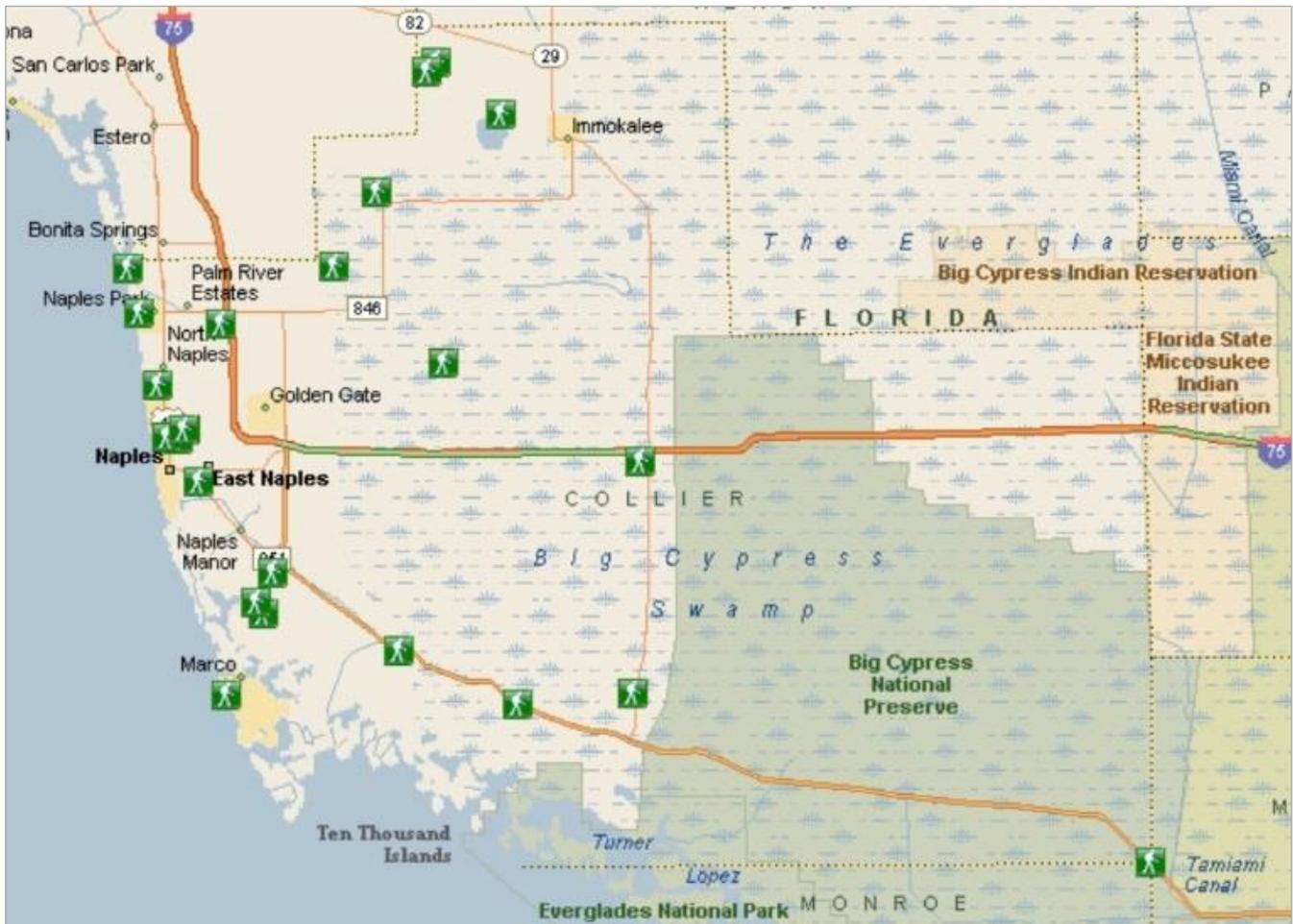
Year-round opportunities to explore our natural surroundings abound, since Collier County is home to local Conservation Collier lands, county and state parks, and national wildlife refuges. This guide can assist you in locating area hiking trails for observing and enjoying our natural world. These trails include those that are self-guided as well as guided walks.

Looking for nature-inspired current events? Check our [Year in Our Nature Calendar](#), a companion guide which identifies the distinctive yet subtle seasonal activities taking place all around us, including the arrivals, behaviors, and departures of our wildlife neighbors.

The Collier County map below shows the locations of all of the trailheads included in this guide thus far. The following pages list each trail site in alphabetical order, and provide details for each location. But this is by no means all of the hiking trails in Collier County! We will continue to add additional trails as time permits. Enjoy hiking in our nature!

If you have a favorite trail to share, email us at CollierMG@ifas.ufl.edu.

Collier County



Hiking In Our Nature

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Collier County



BAREFOOT BEACH PRESERVE

Self-guided trail available year-round. Click on the map below to view a larger map of the preserve and Saylor Nature Trail.

Guided walks January – April. [Naturalist-guided walks and talks](#) are free, and reservations are NOT required. These programs are sponsored by the [Friends of Barefoot Beach Preserve](#).

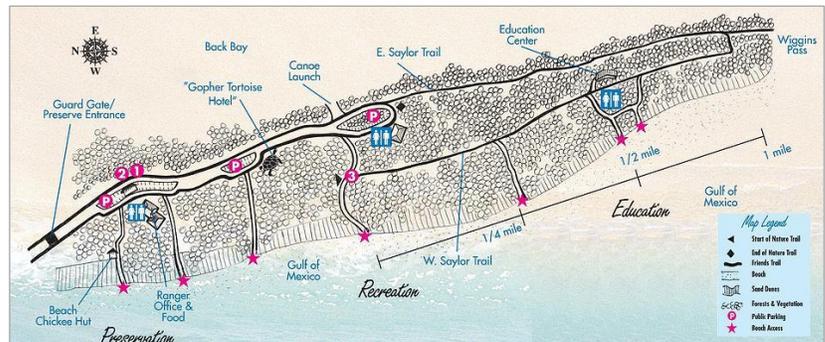
Cost: Free with [current Collier County Beach Parking Permit](#). Otherwise, \$ 8/vehicle preserve entrance fee.

Location: Preserve Learning Center - 503 Barefoot Beach Blvd., North Naples FL 34134. Click on the photo above for area map and directions to Preserve.

Caution: [Gopher Tortoises](#) live beside the Preserve roadways, so drive with care.

Noteworthy:

SATURDAY LECTURE SERIES offered January through April. Meet at the Preserve Learning Center Chickee for a variety of weekly 1-hour lectures, from native plants or animals to photography or exotic plants. Details are available at the Learning Center or at www.friendsofbarefootbeach.org.



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Collier County (Continued)

BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE *Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site*



Florida National Scenic Trail Site

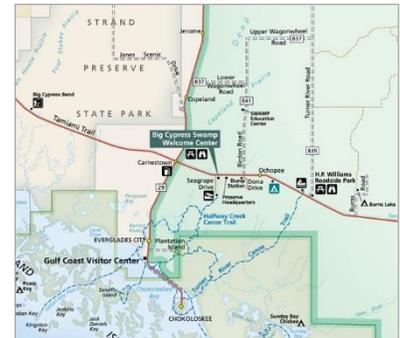
Self-guided trails available year-round. There is something for everyone here: [numerous hiking trails](#), from short hikes on designated trails like the Fire Prairie Trail and Tree Snail Hammock, to the [Kirby Storter elevated Boardwalk](#), and the [historic Deep Lake Interpretive Trail](#). Orienteering through unmarked territory with the aid of GPS is also permitted.

Guided walks conducted year-round. While [Ranger-led guided walks and other programs](#) are typically offered from November – April, [permitted commercial companies](#) provide a wide range of guided activities throughout the year.

Cost: Free entrance. Some activities, like camping and off-road vehicle operation, have associated fees.

Location: Welcome Center - 33100 Tamiami Trail East, Ochopee, FL 34141. Click on the map at right for a larger map and directions to the Preserve.

Noteworthy: Travel the [historic and scenic Tamiami Trail](#) to the park's [Welcome Center](#) and [Oasis Visitors Center](#). The southernmost trailhead of the [Florida National Scenic Trail](#) is located near the Oasis Visitors Center. Several hiking trails are located along the two scenic drives which meander through the preserve: [Loop Road Scenic Drive](#) and the [Turner River, Upper Wagon Wheel and Birdon Road Loop Drive](#).



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Collier County (Continued)

BIRD ROOKERY SWAMP



Self-guided trails available year-round. 12 miles of hiking trails, including a ¼ mile crushed shell path and an 1800-foot-long boardwalk with wheelchair accessibility. Click the trail map image below right for a larger printable trail map.

Guided walks conducted November through April. Register for free Master Naturalist-led walks at <http://crewbrs2015.eventbrite.com>.

Cost: Free. Donations to [CREW Land Trust](#) appreciated.

Location: Trailhead at 1295 Shady Hollow Blvd., Naples FL 34120. Click on the image at left

for a larger map and directions to the trailhead.

Noteworthy: Additional activities, including [Citizen Science Projects](#), [Strolling Science Seminars](#), and [Geocaching](#) are offered at various CREW Land Trust Trail locations.



BRIGGS BOARDWALK



Self-guided trail available year-round. ½ mile boardwalk through six ecological communities. Signs describes the flora and fauna.

Guided walks conducted January through March. Daily from 9am – noon, volunteer naturalists provide a spotting scope along the boardwalk to help identify plants and wildlife.

Cost: Free. Site is a satellite location managed by the [Conservancy of Southwest Florida](#).

Location: Trailhead at 401 Shell Island Road. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the trailhead.

Noteworthy: Additional trails and activities available at the [Conservancy Nature Center](#).

Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site

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Collier County (Continued)

CLAM PASS



Self-guided trail available year-round. $\frac{3}{4}$ mile boardwalk through red, white, and black mangrove community to beach.

Guided walks conducted December through April. Daily at 9am, volunteer guides conduct 2-hour walks of the boardwalk, bay, and beach. Discover the importance of mangroves, some Florida history, and meet fascinating creatures and plants that live here.

Cost: Free with [current Collier County Beach Parking Permit](#).

Location: Trailhead at Clam Pass parking lot 465 Seagate Drive, Naples FL 34103. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park and trailhead.

Noteworthy: Volunteer guides are provided by the [Conservancy of Southwest Florida](#).

COLLIER SEMINOLE STATE PARK

Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail Site

Operation Recreation Geotour Site



Self-guided trails available year-round. [Three nature trails](#) cover both dry and wetland environments. The 0.9 mile Royal Palm Hammock Trail includes a boardwalk which traverses wetland habitat. Hikers are asked to register at the Ranger office to access the two longer park trails.

Cost: Daily \$ 5/vehicle for 2 – 8 people. See [Collier Seminole Park fees](#) for more detail.

Location: Park headquarters at 20220 Tamiami Trail, Naples FL 34114. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park.

Noteworthy: Inside the park is the [Bay City Walking Dredge](#), now a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark, used to construct the [Tamiami Trail](#) that passes by the front entrance of the park. Additional historic exhibits are featured nearby. [Geocaching](#) is offered, including the oldest geocache in Florida, known as the “Christmas cache.” Year-round canoeing, kayaking, and boating. Additional activities offered January through April by Park Rangers and volunteers from the [Friends of Collier-Seminole State Park](#).

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Collier County (Continued)

CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site



Self-guided trails available year-round. Two new self-guided walks are offered: the [Lagoon Trail](#) and the [Hammock Trail](#). Additional walking through the 8-acre Christopher B. Smith Preserve, and around 21-acre site.

Guided and self-guided tours [available year-round for groups.](#)

Cost: Free for members. \$ 12.95/adult; \$ 8.95/child age 3-12. See [General Information](#) for details.

Location: Conservancy located at 1495 Smith Preserve Way, Naples, FL 3410. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the nature center.

Noteworthy: [Many additional activities available.](#) Click the map at right for a larger printable map.



CORKSCREW SWAMP SANCTUARY

Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site



Self-guided trail available year-round. 2.25 mile boardwalk trail through North America’s largest remaining stand of old growth Cypress.

Guided walks available periodically. See [guided morning walks January-March](#) for details, and an [Ancient Forest walking tour](#) is offered October through April. [Swamp Walks](#) offered periodically.

Cost: Free for [Friends of Corkscrew members](#). \$12/adult; \$ 4/student ages 6-18. See [Hours and Admission](#) for further details.

Location: Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is located at 375 Sanctuary Road West, Naples FL 34120. Click on the image above for an area map and directions.

Noteworthy: Rare [Ghost Orchids bloom periodically here.](#) Click the map at right for a larger printable map.



Hiking In Our Nature

Guided and Self-Guided Trails in Southwest Florida

Collier County (Continued)

CREW MARSH

Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site



Self-guided trails available year-round. 5.5 miles of hiking trails wind through four different ecosystems, with two boardwalks and an observation tower. Click the trail map image below right for a close-up view. Trail maps are available at the trailhead.

Guided walks conducted November through April. Register for free Master Naturalist-led walks at <http://2015screwmarshwalks.eventbrite.com>.

Cost: Free. Donations to [CREW Land Trust](#) appreciated.

Location: Trailhead at 4600 CR 850 (Corkscrew Road), Immokalee, FL 34142. Click on the image above for a larger map and directions to the trailhead.

Noteworthy: Additional activities, including [Citizen Science Projects](#), [Strolling Science Seminars](#), and [Geocaching](#) are offered at CREW Land Trust Trail locations.



CYPRESS DOME



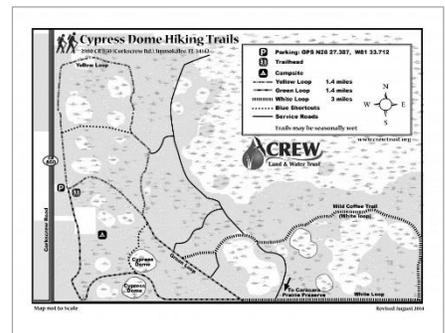
Self-guided trails available year-round. 6 miles of hiking trails wind through five ecosystems, including two Cypress domes. Click the trail map image below right for a printable map. Trail maps are also available at the site.

Guided walks conducted November through March. Register for free Master Naturalist-led walks at <http://2015screwcdtwalks.eventbrite.com>.

Cost: Free. Donations to [CREW Land Trust](#) appreciated.

Location: Trailhead at 3980 CR 850 (Corkscrew Road), Immokalee, FL 34142. Click on the image above for a larger map and directions to the trailhead.

Noteworthy: Additional activities, including [Citizen Science Projects](#), [Strolling Science Seminars](#), and [Geocaching](#) are offered at CREW Land Trust Trail locations.



Hiking In Our Nature

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Collier County (Continued)

[DELNOR WIGGINS STATE PARK](#)

[Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site](#)

[Operation Recreation Geotour Site](#)



Self-guided trail available year-round. The 0.3 mile [Observation Tower Trail](#) passes through a shady wooded coastal hammock. Click on the park map below for a printed brochure including map. Larger map available at Ranger office.

Guided walks available periodically year-round. [Guided walks and talks](#) offered periodically throughout the year by Rangers and Friends of Delnor Wiggins State Park.

Cost: Daily \$ 6 / vehicle for 2 – 8 people. See [Park Hours and Fees](#) for more detail.

Location: Park headquarters at 11135 Gulfshore Dr, Naples FL 34108. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park.

Noteworthy: Additional activities offered January through April by Park Rangers and volunteers from the [Friends of Delnor Wiggins State Park](#).

[EAGLE LAKES COMMUNITY PARK](#)

[Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site](#)



Self-guided trails available year-round. There is a 2.5 mile nature trail in addition to a 1 mile paved walking path.

Cost: Free.

Location: Park is located at 11565 Tamiami Trail East, Naples FL 34112. Click on the image above for an area

map and directions to the park.

Noteworthy: Native plantings around two very productive water reclamation ponds attract over 170 species of birds, including bitterns, bronzed cowbirds, ducks, Eurasian widgeons, gallinules, swallows, terns and wading birds.

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Collier County (Continued)

[FAKAHATCHEE STRAND PRESERVE STATE PARK](#)



[Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Sites](#)

Self-guided trails available year-round. The 2000-foot-long [Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk](#) winds through old growth Cypress. In addition, [several hiking trails](#) exist in the preserve along [Janes Scenic Drive](#), and the 6 mile grassy [Jones Grade Trail](#) is located in the park's NE corner. Click on the park map below for a printed map, or obtain one from park headquarters.

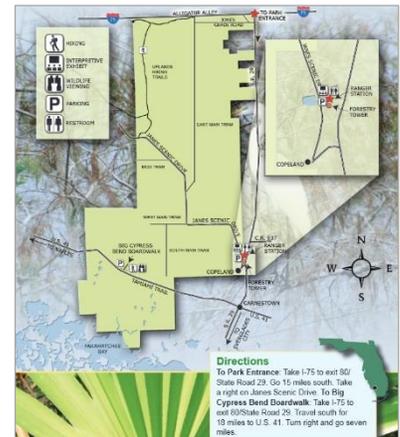
Guided walks available September through April.

[Guided walks and talks](#) offered by rangers, biologists, and naturalists.

Cost: Daily \$ 3 / vehicle up to 8 people. See [Park Hours and Fees](#) for more detail.

Location: Park headquarters at 137 Coastline Dr., Copeland, FL 34137. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park.

Noteworthy: Fakahatchee Strand contains the largest bald cypress and royal palm swamp in the world. [Additional programs and activities](#) offered September through April by Park Rangers, biologists, naturalists and volunteers of the [Friends of the Fakahatchee Strand State Park](#).



[FRED W COYLE FREEDOM PARK](#)

[Conservation Collier Site](#)



Self-guided trail available year-round. Walking trails include a 3500-foot boardwalk through a restored wetland.

Cost: Free.

Location: Park headquarters at 1515 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples FL 34104. Click on the image at left for an area map and directions to the park. Detail of walking trails also shown.

Noteworthy: This 50-acre man-made interconnected system of multi-depth ponds, polishing marshes, and wetlands functions as a natural filtration system similar to the Everglades, providing flood relief and water quality treatment of stormwater runoff from the Gordon River Extension Basin. While the eastern 12.5 acres is owned by Conservation Collier, the park and its activities are managed by [Collier County Parks and Recreation](#).

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Collier County (Continued)

GORDON RIVER GREENWAY

[Conservation Collier Site](#)



Self-guided trail available year-round. Two miles of trails and boardwalks along the Gordon River from north to south, starting at Golden Gate Parkway and going south past the Conservancy and the Zoo, are now open. Click on the aerial photo below for a Greenway map.

Cost: Free. [Donations are appreciated.](#)

Location: Access points at 1596 Golden Gate Parkway, 1590 Goodlette Frank Rd., and North Rd. behind Naples airport, Naples FL 34105. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the Golden Gate Parkway entrance.



Noteworthy: For news of additional activities, including new trail openings, visit the [Southwest Florida Land Trust](#).

MAX HAASE JR. COMMUNITY PARK



Self-guided trail available year-round. After enjoying the beautiful butterfly garden managed by local Boy Scouts, the grounds of this community park provide room to wander, whether on paved sidewalks or tramping through the pines.

Cost: Free.

Location: Head to 3390 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples FL 34120. Click on the photo above for a map and directions to the park entrance.

Noteworthy: This park also includes a community center, fitness center, lighted and covered basketball pavilion, lit tennis courts, softball fields, and playground, and picnic shelters.

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Collier County (Continued)



[NAPLES PRESERVE](#)

Self-guided trail available year-round. The 0.4 mile nature trail winds through two unique upland habitats: Pine Flatwoods and Oak-Rosemary Scrub.

Guided walks available January through April. Guided walks offered daily by [volunteer Ambassadors](#).

Cost: Free.

Location: Preserve headquarters at Hedges Family Eco-Center, 1690 Tamiami Trail N, Naples FL 34102. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park.

Noteworthy: [Additional programs and activities](#) offered January through April by guest speakers.

[NORTH COLLIER REGIONAL PARK](#)

Self-guided trail available year-round. A 2.5 mile paved walking trail winds around the large lake and through the park, including an elevated boardwalk through the wetlands preserve area. Dogs on leash are welcome.

Cost: Free.

Location: The trailhead is located within the North Collier Regional Park, 15000 Livingston Rd., Naples FL 34109. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park.

Noteworthy: This park also contains the [Sun-N-Fun Lagoon](#), a state-of-the-art water park, RecPlex fitness facility, tournament fields for soccer, lacrosse and softball, Can You Dig It interactive playground with Calusa fossil dig area, and Exhibit Hall and Ranger station offering year-round [programs, tours and activities](#). The Golisano [Children's Museum of Naples](#) is also located on the site.



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Collier County (Continued)

PEPPER RANCH

Conservation Collier site



Self-guided trails available most weekends October through May. Click on the park map below right for a larger printable map.

Guided walks planned October through May. Guided walks and talks by volunteer naturalists are being planned.

Cost: Free. Some activities like camping have associated fees. See [Preserve Hours and Fees](#) for more information.

Location: Ranch access at 6315 Pepper Rd, Immokalee, FL 34142. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park.

Noteworthy: Fourteen distinct plant communities exist on the ranch, which is also home to many species of native wildlife, including those listed as threatened, endangered, or of special concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Florida. The ranch provides connectivity for wildlife between the Corkscrew wetlands, Lake Trafford wetlands and the Camp Keais Strand, extending south into the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and Everglades National Park.

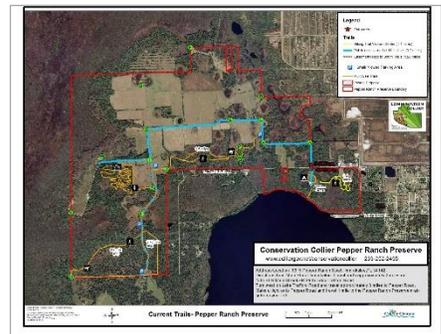


The property also contains many historical and archeological features, since it has been a farm, hunting grounds, cattle ranch, fishing camp and home for one local family since 1926. The preserve also borders Lake Trafford, the largest natural lake in Collier County and the location of early settlements by Native Americans.

Artifacts discovered in and around the lake have been dated to 550 A.D. Click on

the ranch access roadway image above left to view a short video about the property.

The preserve is managed by [Conservation Collier](#). Camping reservations and other activities are managed through [Collier County Parks and Recreation](#).



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ROOKERY BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE



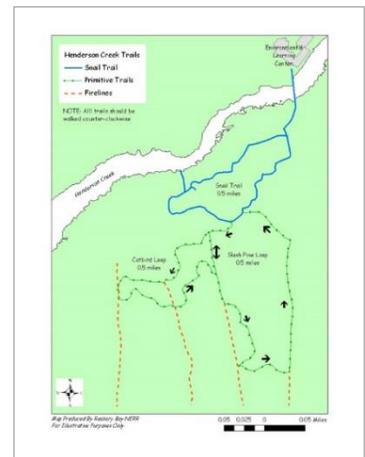
Self-guided trail available year-round. An observation bridge, ½ mile Snail Trail and wildlife viewing platform are located adjacent to the [Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center](#). Additional “Trails through Time,” a series of three primitive trails, each approximately ¼ mile long, is located nearby, near the end of Shell Island Road. Click on the map below to view a larger printable map.

Guided tours for groups. While the trails are self-guided, group tours of the Environmental Learning Center are available.

Cost: \$ 5 / Adult, \$ 3 / Child ages 6 – 12. See [Hours and Admission](#) for additional information.

Location: Environmental Learning Center at 300 Tower Rd., Naples FL 34113. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the Learning Center.

Noteworthy: [Additional activities](#), including naturalist-led kayak and boat tours, are available.



TIGERTAIL BEACH

Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Site



Self-guided trail available year-round. Explore 32 acres of habitat for migrating shorebirds, including a tidal lagoon and area known as Sand Dollar Spit.

Guided walks conducted January through April. Daily Monday – Friday at 8:30 am, volunteer guides from the [Conservancy of Southwest Florida](#) and the [Friends of Tigertail Beach](#) conduct 2-hour walks of the beach, tidal lagoon and mud flats.

Cost: Free with [current Collier County Beach Parking Permit](#).

Location: Trailhead at 480 Hernando Dr, Marco Island 34145. Click on the image above for an area map and directions to the park and trailhead.

Noteworthy: Additional activities provided by the [Friends of Tigertail Beach](#). Tigertail Beach is adjacent to the [Big Marco Pass Critical Wildlife Area](#) managed by the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#).