

LOCATION

The northern trailhead is located in the Crooked River Campground, which is a part of the Silver Lake Recreation Area. This trailhead provides easy access for campers staying at one of the three campgrounds located within Silver Lake Recreation Area. Parking in the day use area is open daily from 8 am until 8 pm. The Silver Lake Recreation Complex is located on Croom-Rital Road just south of the I-75 overpass. From exit 301 off I-75, travel east about one mile on SR 50 to the traffic light at Croom-Rital Road. Turn north and proceed on Croom-Rital Road to the Withlacoochee State Forest Silver Lake Recreation Area. Turn east onto Silver Lake Road and follow the roadway straight back to the Day Use Area and boat ramp. The information kiosk for the trailhead is located on the left side of the road, opposite the picnic shelter.

The southern trailhead is located at the Ridge Manor trailhead of the Withlacoochee State Trail. Parking at this location is open daily during daylight hours. From exit 301 off I-75, travel east about one mile on SR 50 to the traffic light at Croom-Rital Road. Turn north and proceed about 1/4 mile north on Croom-Rital Road to the Withlacoochee State Trail. Turn east into the parking area. The trailhead is located near the picnic shelter closest to the restroom facilities.

WATER

Drinking (potable) water is available at Crooked River and Ridge Manor trailheads.

DESCRIPTION

The hiking trails are dry-to-damp and wind through central Florida's longleaf pine and scrub oak hills, cypress swamps and along the Withlacoochee River. The trail is subject to periodic flooding and may be temporarily closed. Please call the Visitor Center for information on closures.

Of particular interest are the wood stork rookery and the Cracker cattle and ponies that can be seen from the trail. Other wildlife that may be seen along the trail include deer, wild turkey, squirrels, bobcats and a variety of songbirds and waterfowl.

DESIGNATION

The hiking trail is blazed in orange with the exception of the Blue Loop Trail on the southern portion. Blazes are about two inches wide and six inches long and marked within sight distance of each other at eye-

TRAILWALKERS

Croom River Trail is one of the Withlacoochee State Forest nature/hiking trails included in the *Trailwalker* program. This program offers recognition awards for hiking 10 to 30 trails in state forests all across Florida. Contact the Visitor Center for more information.

www.FDACS.gov/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/State-Forests/Withlacoochee-State-Forest

CAMPING

Camping is not permitted along the trail. Nearby campgrounds with bathhouses are located at Silver Lake Recreation Complex and Hog Island Recreation Area. No pets are allowed in the Crooked River Campground. All improved campgrounds do require reservations. You may reserve a campsite by calling 877-879-3859 (TTD: 800-373-3851 or online by visiting www.FloridaStateForests.ReserveAmerica.com.

TIPS

- Tread lightly. Stick to the path and avoid trampling the sensitive vegetation around you.
- Keep a bandanna on hand when hiking. It has many uses: sponge, napkin, bandage, etc.
- If you are hiking a lengthy trail, be sure to take along sunscreen, insect repellent and a container of water.
- Wear good hiking shoes or hiking boots. If you have to break them in, do it before the hike.
- Pace yourself. If you aren't an experienced hiker, don't take on a 10-mile trail your first time out. We have a number of shorter hiking/nature trails (averaging two+ miles each) to get you started.
- Take your time; there is plenty to observe out on the trails.

CROOM RIVER TRAIL

Withlacoochee State Forest



Florida Forest Service management plans include prescribed burning most months of the year. For personal safety reasons, area users should contact the FFS for information and location of burn areas, (352) 797-4100.

Withlacoochee Visitor Center
15003 Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: (352) 797-4140 Fax: (352) 797-4108
www.FDACS.gov

NO-TRACE HIKING

Your challenge is to leave no evidence of your visit so that the next person can enjoy a natural scene.

- Travel quietly as to not disturb other hikers or animals.
- Stay on the trail, even if wet.
- Never shortcut trail switchbacks.
- Look at and photograph, never pick up or collect from the forest areas.
- Never discard cigarette butts, candy or wrappers.
- Dig a six-inch-deep hole for human waste, well away from the camp zone. Be sure to cover it completely.
- Parking for vehicles is provided at the trailheads. Florida Forest Service is not responsible for articles lost or stolen.
- All groups using the Withlacoochee State Forest are required to obtain a Special Use Permit from the Visitor Center.

We hope you enjoy the Croom River Trail. Please follow good hiking and safety practices. Maps and information may be obtained from the Visitor Center and at the Silver Lake Recreation Complex.

