



Tiger Creek Preserve

The 5,000-acre Tiger Creek Preserve is located on the edge of peninsular Florida's oldest and highest landmass, the Lake Wales Ridge. The Ridge shelters one of the highest concentrations of threatened and endangered plants and animals in the United States. Only 10 percent of the native habitat that once covered the Ridge remains. Tiger Creek is a high-quality blackwater seepage stream, so called because it drains wetlands, and the vegetation that falls into the creek colors the water. There are only two other high-quality streams like it left on the Lake Wales Ridge.

TRAIL ENTRANCE:

8373-8399 Wakeford Rd,
Lake Wales, FL 33898

PARKING COORDINATES:

N27° 49.893' W81° 27.361'



TREK TEN CACHE COORDINATES:

N27° 50.040' W81° 27.837'



DRIVING DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of US-27 and SR 60 in Lake Wales, merge onto FL-60 E/W Polk Ave. toward Vero Beach. Continue to follow FL-60 E 9.5 mi; turn right onto Walk in Water Rd. 3.6 mi; turn right onto Wakeford Rd. - destination will be on the left in 0.7 mi.

THINGS TO SEE

Several trails provide access to the oak scrub, sandhill, pine flatwoods, longleaf pine/wiregrass and hardwood swamp habitats associated with Tiger Creek's watershed. Watch for gopher tortoises, sand skinks, woodpeckers and otters.

FIND THE CACHE WITHOUT GPS:

From the trailhead follow the signs southward along the Wakeford Trail (white blazes). At the first blaze (approx. 250ft), turn to the right to continue westward deeper into the sand scrub. Watch closely to follow the blazes, as service trails not marked on the map branch off in some spots!

After traveling ~1/3 mile from the trailhead and weaving through the scrub, the trail will veer to the right and descend to the Tiger Creek footbridge, passing into a completely different environment. Cross the bridge, and ascend to meet with the Creek Bluffs Trail (pink blazes). As you emerge from the lush creek area into the scrub habitat, turn right once again, and head north. You'll soon see a double-blazed post where a narrow trail leads into the oak hammock. Turn right to continue your trek. Follow this trail for roughly 1/2 mile. As the trail begins to make a sharp left-hand turn in a clearing, you'll notice (on the right-hand side) a burned pine snag. On the left will be a stand of small scrub oaks. It is near the center of this stand, in a low clump of oak brush, under a pile of Spanish moss, that you'll find the cache.

If you continue along the Creek Bluffs Loop, you will travel 1/2 mile more than if you turn around and head back the way you came. This continuation will lead through stands of cabbage palms near the creek, as well as the scrub highlands farther west, with some minor hills. However, be careful to watch for the trail blazes, as in several areas the trail becomes hard to see. There are also a couple downed trees to watch for, as well as more unmarked service roads.

(HIKE: 2 mile round trip -2.5 mile loop trail)