

Crooked Lake Prairie

Protects more than two miles of shore line on Polk County's second largest lake, designated as an Outstanding Florida Water. Purchased by Polk County in 1997, much of the 525 acres is open with little shade. Prickly pear cactus is abundant on the property and care must be taken when hiking. The Prairie contains a variety of habitats, including wet and dry prairie, pine flatwoods, marsh, lakeshore and oak scrub.

TRAIL ENTRANCE:

985 Ohlinger Rd.
Babson Park, FL 33827

PARKING COORDINATES:

N 27° 48.391 W 081° 33.559

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From I-4 and US 27 (Haines City) take US 27 south 28 miles to CR 640 (Alturas Babson Park Cutoff), turn left and follow CR 640 east 1 mile to SR 17 south 5.3 miles to Cody Villa Road, turn right and follow Cody Villa Road west 1 mile to the Crooked Lake Prairie entrance on the left.



FIND THE CACHE WITHOUT GPS:

After parking, go through the entrance and pick up a trail map at the kiosk. Proceed to your right, past the porta potty and look for the blue trail marker at the mowed trail on your right. Follow the Lakeside Trail signs and blue blazes. Continue past the Short Lake View Trail sign, past the picnic table and along the lakeshore past a bench to the boardwalk. Cross the boardwalk and continue following the blue trail (could be some directional flagging tape too) until you reach a two track dirt road. Turn left and head towards but DO NOT CROSS the deep swale/ditch. The cache is in a group of small oak trees on your left near a cabbage palm. In wet conditions, after finding the geocache, return to the parking area the way you came (HIKE 1.4 mi. RT) In dry conditions, you can cross the swale/ditch and continue the Lake View Trail loop back to the parking area.

(HIKE: 1.1 mile loop trail)



TREK TEN CACHE COORDINATES:

N 27° 48.533 W 081° 33.947

THINGS TO SEE

Wildlife that may be observed include bald eagles, deer, gopher tortoise, Florida scrub jays and an array of wading and migratory birds. As you venture through the scrub and scubby flatwoods, watch for evidence of wildlife including scat and tracks. Determining small differences in tracks will help you identify the animal that left the. For example, the absence of claw marks in the sand help distinguish a bobcat track from that of a dog or fox.

NOTE:

WATCH OUT for CACTUS!

