

Panther Point Trail South

For decades, the Lake Hancock area has been a key component on the Peace River to Green Swamp water resource / wildlife corridor. As early as the 1950s it was identified as a wildlife and birding hotspot. When footprints were found along the southwest corner of the lake, it became known as "Panther Point". Today, Panther Point Trail runs south from the Marshall Hampton Reserve around the east side of Lake Hancock. It goes through pasture, shady woods and along former phosphate mine pit lakes that have spoil island rookeries. There is an impressive bridge between the pit lakes and Lake Hancock.

TRAIL ENTRANCE via:

Lake Hancock Boat Ramp

PARK GPS COORDINATES:

N27 56.293 W81 51.097



TREK TEN CACHE COORDINATES:

N27 56.926 W81 49.111

PLEASE NOTE: Sections of the trail heading from the south entrance have no shade. The total length of the trail from Fort Fraser Trail at US 98 to Marshall Hampton Reserve is 10 miles

FIND THE CACHE WITHOUT GPS:

From the parking area, enter through the gate and cross the canal. Head up the trail and turn left at the Historic Marker. Follow this trail for approximately 1.5 miles. Hike straight through the intersection, passing the pump house on your left. At the next intersection, turn left towards Lake Hancock where the trail enters the woods. About 60 – 80 yards past the fence area with the 3.5 mile marker there is a mulberry tree that has many stems on the right. The cache is behind the larger diameter tree in the middle of the mulberry tree stems. (**HIKE: 5.6 miles round trip**)

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

The entrance is off Hwy 98 approximately 1.2 miles north of the Ernest Smith Blvd intersection and .59 mile south of the Ernest Smith Lane intersection on the east side of the road between Highland City and Bartow.

There are brown signs on HWY 98 at Farm Road marking the turn in. The trail begins at Fort Fraser Trail and runs along the entrance road to the boat ramp area and crosses the P11 structure on the south side of the parking area. You will see a kiosk and red / white signs on the gate access at that location with the hours posted.



THINGS TO SEE

The trail traverses a variety of habitats including open water via the bridge. You are almost guaranteed to see alligators and a good variety of birds especially during spring and fall migrations. There are impressive views of Lake Hancock and the vestiges of phosphate mining.

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