

Crooked Lake Wildlife & Environ. Area

The 1,147 acre site was acquired as a gopher tortoise mitigation park under the FWC's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Program. The property serves to manage the habitat important to the protection of listed wildlife, contribute to attainment of goals of the FWC's Gopher Tortoise Management Plan, and assist completion of the Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Florida Forever Project. The WEA also lies within the Crooked Lake Unit of the Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Florida Forever Project.

TRAIL ENTRANCE:

156-232 Turtle Run Trail
Fort Meade, FL 33841

PARKING COORDINATES:

N 27° 44.136 W 081° 37.268

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From Polk Parkway and US 98 head south on US 98 to Bartow Road, 7.5 miles. In Bartow,, turn left onto Van Fleet Drive/ SR 6, 0.8 miles. Turn right onto US 17S/US-98 and continue to follow US 17/98 south for 10.9 miles. In Fort Meade, turn left onto US 98, continue to follow US 98 east for 12.0 miles. Turn left onto Rhoden Meyer Road/ Turtle Run, the parking area is 500 feet on the right.

TREK TEN CACHE COORDINATES:

N 27° 44.445 W 081° 36.872



THINGS TO SEE

THE WEA boasts 13 different natural communities including uplands such as dry prairies, upland mixed forest and scrubs, as well as wetland communities lie basin marsh and cypress swamps. It is home to two imperiled plant species, cutthroat grass and Britton's beargrass, as well as several imperiled animal species including the gopher tortoise, wood stork, and sandhill crane.



FIND THE CACHE WITHOUT GPS:

Enter through the in-and-out next to the picnic pavilion. Head right and pick up the trail behind the main gate. Pass several blue blazed trees on your right and continue straight down the trail. At the fork turn left down the Cutthroat Grass Trail. Continue heading north with the barbwire fence on your left. At the four-way intersection turn right and head through the open gate. At the trail marker sign stay straight on the two-track trail. Pass the two posts with the blue blazes on your left but continue straight into the thicket of pine trees. Pass 5 small pines on your right and veer off the trail. The cache is at the end of this animal trail to the left of the top of the ridge near the pond behind a clump of four intertwined pine trees. Please replace as found so that the green bike lock cord is not obvious.

(HIKE: 1.6 miles round trip)



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