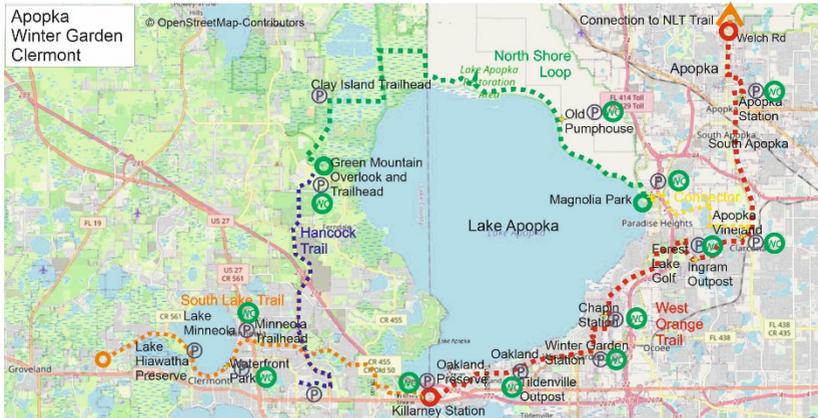


Apopka – Winter Garden - Clermont

Lake Apopka Loop, 48 mi

With the following 5 trails you can do a wonderful loop of about 48 miles surrounding Lake Apopka. 17 miles are gravel, but the rest is all paved trail.



1 West Orange Trail, 28 miles

This is one of the most scenic trails; it is all paved and separated from the roads. The flat trail is mostly shaded by trees, but some open parts have to be crossed. It follows the old railroad tracks; and the old railway stations are now beautiful trail stops. In the stations you get the very helpful trail map.

Killarney Station (Mi 0.2) is the connection between South Lake Trail and West Orange Trail, N28 32.804 W81 39.414. It has large parking, restrooms, water, playground, and a bike shop for rentals, sales, repairs, and refreshments.



Killarney Station



Railroad Bridge

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Start: Killarney Station	N28 32.804 W81 39.414
Winter Garden Station	N28 34.009 W81 34.873
End: Welch Rd	N28 42.342 W81 30.542
Official end at mile 28 (Including a gap)	N28 47.194 W81 31.244

Mi 0 The actual point between the two trails is west of the station at N28 32.888 W81 39.444.

Mi 0.8 The old railroad bridge over Florida’s Turnpike is a local landmark, N28 33.069 W81 38.757.

Mi 1.4 Amon Pavilion Trailhead, N28 33.195 W81 38.259. Park your bike to stroll the Oakland Nature Preserve to Lake Apopka (0.7-mile trail and boardwalk leading to a pier on the lake).

Mi 2.2 Through a quiet residential area you reach Tubb St in **Oakland**, N28 33.441 W81 37.690, with a well-equipped maintenance station in front of the town hall. Serene old Oakland is a charming town draped in Spanish moss. Several historic buildings remain along the trail.

Mi 3.8 Tildenville Outpost, N28 33.633 W81 36.553, with parking and Porta Potty. Stop and enjoy the butterfly garden! Leaving Oakland, pedal past tall oaks laden with Spanish moss and an orchard.



Mi 5 Park Ave, N28 33.870 W81 35.522, begin of downtown **Winter Garden**. The new

Winter Garden City Hall fronts the trail. Now follows the most scenic part of the trail, but be careful of the small crossing streets. It winds through the streets of the town; there are nice restaurants, frequented much by the bikers. The trail runs past the Clock Tower and Pavilion, central to many community events and activities. As the focal point for the renaissance of this old Florida town, the bike trail has completely revitalized downtown Winter Garden.

Mi 5.2 Winter Garden Station, N28 34.009 W81 34.873. Large parking, playground, water, restrooms, bike shop/rentals in the station. The trail now follows the CR 438

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for a while, but soon heads to the north. **Mi 6** Division St, N28 34.375 W81 34.618. The start of Lulu Creek Trail is to the left, we continue right along West Orange Trail, passing through suburban neighborhoods and tunnels under the highway.

Mi 7.2 Chapin Station, N28 34.944 W81 34.093, main trail offices, large parking, restrooms, playground, picnic/pavilions, playing fields, tennis, Path of Life gardens. From here there is a horse trail next to the paved trail.



Mi 8.7 John P. Hamilton Middle School, N28 35.938 W81 33.395, sometimes many students heading

to and from home. Soon after crossing the busy Ocoee Apopka Rd, use the button for the traffic light.

Mi 9.9 We follow now for a long time Forest Lake Golf course.

Mi 11.8 Ingram Outpost, N28 36.435 W81 31.548, at a busy intersection. Little dirt parking, not very secure. The trail then follows Clarcona-Ocoee Road about 0.6 miles before branching off-road through a beautiful shady oak wood.

Mi 13.6 Apopka-Vineland Outpost, N28 36.911 W81 30.030. Parking, playground, water, Porta-Potty. Next to the outpost is a Buddhist Temple.

From Apopka-Vineland Outpost continue north along the road about 0.2 mi to where the trail crosses at the light. A spur at this point goes straight to **Clarcona Outpost** (Clarcona Horsemen's Park, trailhead for the equestrian trail with camping). To continue on the West Orange Trail, cross Apopka-Vineland Road. From here you have relaxing tree canopy before at marker 14.7 emerging once again along the busy road, the trail to Apopka is mostly open and parallel to the roadway. After crossing Hwy 414 the trail becomes quiet again. Entering **South Apopka** there is a commercial area.

Mi 17.8 In **Apopka** the bridge spans busy US441 or Main Street. Don't cross the street, take the overpass. It is a black neighborhood, some people don't feel so well, but I encountered no problems at all. Apopka is a far cry from charming Winter Garden. The busy four lane Main St is lined by fast food places, no nice little cafes and eateries.

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Mi 18.2 Apopka Station, 111 S Forest Ave, Apopka, N28 40.579 W81 30.437, with parking, restrooms, water, playground, and picnic facilities. No open store. Past Apopka Station the trail winds along an alignment.

Mi 19.5 Wooden bridge in front of a large school and sports center, N28 41.230 W81 30.440. Shortly after turn right into Park Ave at marker 19.7. Now it is parallel to the busy highway until the end of the trail, not the best part. It is more recommended to end the West Orange Trail at Apopka Station.

Mi 20.8 End of the trail at Welch Road, N28 42.342 W81 30.542. No trail parking, but you can use the Publix parking at Wekiva Plaza nearby. An old trail extends 0.5 mi more along Rock Springs Rd to Lester Road. But the official end of the West Orange Trail is after a total of 28 miles at the northern county line near Neighborhood Lake Trailhead.

Connection to Neighborhood Lake Trailhead and Wekiva Trail (see page 55):

Continue on the old trail along Rock Springs Rd, later sidewalk, followed by bike lane. After 3.5 mi turn left into Kelly Park Rd (no more bike lane); at 4 miles turn right into Mt Plymouth Rd. At mile 5.8 there is the **Neighborhood Lakes West Trailhead**, N28 46.816 W81 31.666. Continue on this trail to reach the Wekiva Trail going from Mt. Plymouth to Sanford, see page 55. A total of 8.5 miles with only 2.3 on roads.



Interesting: On this trail you cross the county line from Orange to Lake County, N28 47.194 W81 31.244. At this point is the official end of West Orange Trail with 28 miles and the start of the short, but nice Neighborhood Trail.



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2 South Lake Trail, also known as Lake Minneola Scenic Trail or even West Orange Trail, 13 miles

Florida is not known for its hills, but Clermont has some of the highest points in the state. This elevation adds a degree of difficulty that advanced cyclists will enjoy compared to the relatively easy trails in the rest of the state.

Start: Killarney Station	N28 32.888 W81 39.444
End: Silver Eagle Road	N28 33.897 W81 49.124

Killarney Station is the connection between South Lake Trail and West Orange Trail, 17914 State Road 438, N28 32.804 W81 39.414. Killarney Station has large parking, restrooms, water, playground, and a bike shop for rentals, sales, repairs, and refreshments.

Mi 0 The actual point between the two trails is west of the station at N28 32.888 W81 39.444. From there, it meanders up and down through hilltops and wooded valleys to Hancock Road, you'll need your gears. On a clear day, you'll have wonderful views of the entire region, from glimmering lakes to the Orlando skyline. After 1.7 mi we cross CR 455, N28 33.131 W81 40.938, we follow CR 455 for a while. **Mi 2.5** We turn left and follow Old Hwy 50, N28 33.632 W81 40.974.

At **Mi 5** we meet Hancock Road. We can go right or left, after crossing Hancock Rd the trails will come together. The Hancock Trail separates here to head north, see page 90.

Mi 6 To the right (N28 34.323 W81 44.415) is a path to **Minneola Trailhead** (0,4 mi, N28 34.413 W81 44.567)), there is parking,

playground, restrooms, dog park, mountain bike trail. If you want to enter the bike trail from here you have to take the path along the picnic hut up the hill.

On the trail follows **Lee Harvey Station**. Built in the style of the old train stations, it is a biker's shelter dedicated to the memory of Lee Harvey, who loved bicycling in the south lake hills and died after he was struck by a motorist when he was bicycling near his home.



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Mi 7 We reach the lake at the 7 miles marker, N28 34.293 W81 45.200. At the 7.5 marker Clermont begins, the trail changes to the other side of the road.

Mi 8 Waterfront Park, 330 3rd St, Clermont, N28 33.684 W81 45.562. Beautiful Park at the shore of Lake Mineola in **Clermont** with a real beach feeling. Playground, splash park, parking, docks, restrooms. The trail meanders now along the shoreline. You could leave the shore for a minute and go into town for the Sun Creek Brewery for refreshments, N28 33.383 W81 46.094. At Mi 8.5 is Lilly's on the Lake, a nice little restaurant. And next is **Epic Cycles**, 528 8th St, best bike shop in the area with even a coffeeshop to sit outside.



Mi 9 Victory Point trailhead with maintenance station, water, restrooms, parking, right on the lake, N28 33.471 W81 46.286. Shortly after West Beach Park, another trailhead parking with restroom, N28 33.579 W81 46.520.

Mi 10 Lake Hiawatha Preserve Parking, N28 34.282 W81 46.789. The trail is now moving away from the lake.

Mi 12.8 End of South Lake Trail at Silver Eagle Road, N28 33.897 W81 49.124. 2 miles more to Groveland, 10 miles to Mabel, Van Fleet Trail, see page 94.

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3 Hancock Trail, 8.5 mi

The paved 14 ft wide Hancock Trail is the connection between South Lake Trail and Lake Apopka Loop at Green Mountain Trailhead. The hilly topography is a moderate challenge for Floridians. At the Cooper Memorial Library (parking), the trail dips under Hancock Road and starts to head north along busy Hancock Rd., noisy and no shade.



Map see page 84.

Start: Don Wickham Dr / Oakely Seaver Drive	N28 33.114 W81 43.130
Parking; Cooper Memorial Library (1250 N Hancock Rd, Clermont)	N28 33.171 W81 42.579
End: Green Mountain Trailhead	N28 38.815 W81 42.586

At mile marker 2.5, Just beyond Old Highway 50, the north-south Hancock Trail meets the east-west South Lake & Lake Minneola Scenic Trail. To remain on the Hancock Trail, you'll need to cross the busy intersection and make a sharp left back towards Hancock Road. The trail continues directly north, past the Florida Turnpike



and heads up to its northern terminal at Green Mountain Trailhead.

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Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

While in the area and tired from biking, you could do a visit to the beautiful wildlife drive on the north shore, it is 5 miles from Apopka station. For cars it is a 11-mile one way track through wetlands. You'll see lots of birds and alligators.

Entrance is at 2850 Lust Road, Apopka, no fee. Open Friday to Sunday for cars.

There is also a gravel bike trail partly intersecting and sharing with the drive, open daily. This is the ultimate trail with plenty of wildlife viewing and there is no guarantee that no alligator is blocking your path. See map p. 84. The North Loop Trail is crushed gravel and packed soil. Therefore, we recommend wide tires on your gravel, mountain, hybrid, e-bike or road bike.

4 Connector from West Orange Trail to Magnolia Park (Lake Apopka Trail), 4 mi:

Mi 0 Apopka-Vineland Outpost, N28 36.911 W81 30.030. Continue north on the West Orange Trail about 0.2 mi to where the trail crosses at the light, but follow the spur straight. The **Clarcona Horsemen's Park** is to the right, the connection to Magnolia Park continues straight, then turns left along



McCormick Rd. Wonderful new trail with benches and water. Most of the trail is shaded and curves downhill.

Mi 4 Magnolia Park, start of Lake Apopka North Shore Loop.

Magnolia Park

2929 S. Binion Rd, N28 38.004 W81 32.992, has a pond, camping, restrooms, playground, picnic areas, parking. But for the loop don't park there but on the other side of the road. There is a trailhead just at Lake Apopka with playground and restrooms, where the North Shore Loop starts, N28 38.134 W81 33.030.

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5 Lake Apopka North Shore Trail, 17.5 mi

The trail has markers every half mile. The only place to get restrooms and water is at the old Pump House, so bring water. The area is open and sunny, bring a hat and sunscreen. Recommended is a start early in the morning, because you have better light for photos. And if you do this for the first time, plan double of your usual time, because there is just too much to see and take pictures.

Start: Magnolia Trailhead	N28 38.134 W81 33.030
Pump House	N28 40.075 W81 35.630
End: Green Mountain Trailhead	N28 38.815 W81 42.586

Map see page 84.



Mi 0 Magnolia Trailhead. The first part of the loop is paved and follows the road, but soon turns left into the wetland. There gravel path on an elevated dam. And immediately you will see all the wildlife, birds, even otters, and lots of alligators. The osprey watches out for a little fish to catch, anhingas dry their wings. **Mi 2** at N28 38.892 W81 34.504

Mi 4 The Old Pump House with restroom and water, N28 40.075 W81 35.630. From here share the trail with cars until just after the 5-mile marker.



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Mi 6.5 At this marker the trail separates from the shoreline, N28 40.699 W81 37.751. The loop is white blazed and very well marked to Green Mountain.

Mi 7.1 the loop turns left, N28 41.049 W81 38.047. **Mi 8** is the last marker I noticed, N28 40.957 W81 38.628. **Mi 8.7** Picnic shelter N28 41.164 W81 39.067

Mi 13.7 Flow Way Tower Clay Island, N28 40.467 W81 41.526.

Mi 14.5 N28 40.446 W81 42.358. The loop turns left, on the right is **Clay Island Trailhead**. At **Mi 15** picnic shelter, N28 40.001 W81 42.351. Old pavement now on the trail, it looks like an old runway. After the runway we turn right, through shady hammock. The loop winds slowly to the Green Mountain, underground a little rough.

Mi 17 Gate to Green Mountain overlook, N28 38.901 W81 42.629. In serpentines it now goes up to the overlook.

Mi 17.5 Green Mountain Overlook and Trailhead, N28 38.815 W81 42.586. Parking, restroom with water and maintenance, picnic shelter. Outside the trailhead starts the Hancock Trail, see page 90.



My best friend



Flow Way Tower



Green Mountain Overlook