

Lake Okeechobee

Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail

Technically the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) runs 115 miles in a complete loop around Lake Okeechobee, the largest lake in Florida which stretches across Glades, Hendry, Martin, Okeechobee, and Palm Beach Counties, but not all is paved. It draws anglers and boaters from all over the world with its populations of largemouth bass, black crappie, and catfish. First hiked in the 1960s and developed as a loop in the Florida National Scenic Trail in the 1980s, the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail offers spectacular views. Mainly atop the 35-foot-tall Herbert Hoover Dike built for flood control between the 1930s and 1960s, it offers unmatched perspectives on the lake for photographers and birders.



Herbert Hoover Dike

In 1926, the Great Miami Hurricane hit the Lake Okeechobee area, killing approximately 300 people. Two years later in 1928, the Okeechobee Hurricane crossed over the lake, killing at least 2,500. In both cases the catastrophe was caused by flooding from a storm surge when strong winds drove water over the 6.6-foot mud dike that circled the lake at the time. After the two hurricanes, the Florida State Legislature created the "Okeechobee Flood Control District".

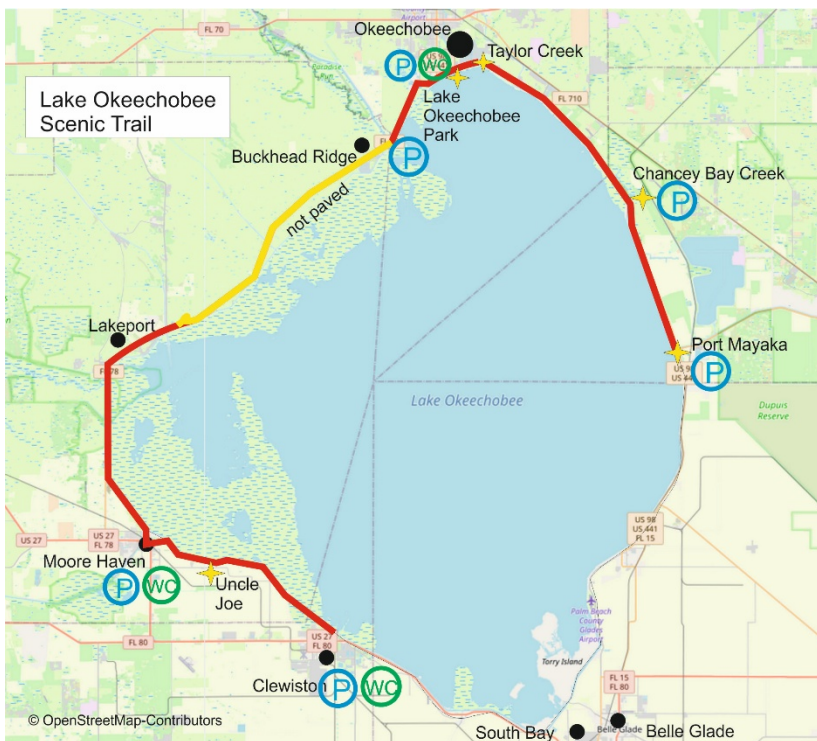
The organization was authorized to cooperate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in actions to prevent similar disasters. U.S. President Herbert Hoover visited the area personally, and afterward the Corps designed a plan incorporating the construction of channels, gates, and nearly 140 miles of levees to protect areas surrounding Lake Okeechobee from overflow. The dike was named after the president.

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On the east side of the lake, views are primarily of islands and vast open waters. The west side of the lake is shallow and marshy. Sunrises (best viewed from the western shore) and sunsets (from the northeastern shore) are especially gorgeous across the marshes and open waters.

Since the trail has several trail exits, only the smaller ones can be crossed by a bridge. The larger like Moore Haven, Port Mayaca, Clewiston, Okeechobee, and Taylor Creek have on-road portions in order to cross bridges where canals enter/exit the lake.

Author's note: To begin with we just describe parts of the paved trail (in red), more to follow in the future editions.



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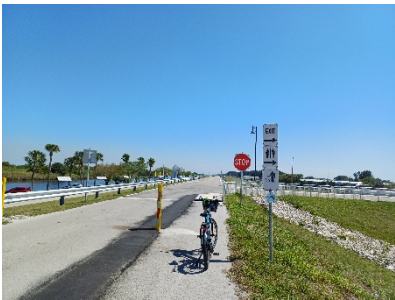
Clewiston – Moore Haven – Okeechobee, 51 mi (15 mi not paved)

Clewiston

The small town of Clewiston, situated on the southwestern side of Lake Okeechobee, boasts some of the best freshwater fishing in Florida and offers all kinds of outdoor thrills, from skydiving to airboat tours on Florida’s largest lake. Therefore, it has several motels, restaurants, and a camp ground. Its thriving sugar cane industry earned Clewiston the nickname “America’s Sweetest Town.”

Since the canal enter/exit the lake near Clewiston, the trails ends and riders have to use the road bridge on Hwy 27, first left to the Army Corps of Engineers to join the trail again.

Start is the Clewiston Boat Ramp Parking with lots of parking and restrooms. On the trail no shade, water or restrooms. It can be windy on the elevated trail.



Start: Boat Ramp Parking	N26 45.676 W80 55.397
Start of trail to the north	N26 45.789 W80 55.427
Start of trail to the south	N26 45.587 W80 55.072
Trail Parking Moore Haven	N26 50.535 W81 5.084
End of pavement	N27 0.18 W81 3.118
New start of pavement	N27 9.163 W80 51.998
End: Okeechobee Taylor Creek exit west	N27 12.391 W80 47.907

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Mi 0 Ride on the elevated Herbert Hoover Dike to NW. Right and left of the trail is a canal, the canal of the eastern side used by boats. First, we can have a glimpse of the lake, but later the trail is too far from the lake to see. But lots of birds, and alligators swimming in the canal.

Mi 5 Uncle Joe's Campground and Motel, N26 48.667 W80 59.155, 1699 Griffin Rd, Fl 33471, phone (863) 983-4818. This is a friendly little place to have a cold beer and a snack. Tent-Campers can stay over night for 20 \$, cabins are also available starting at 60 \$/day.



Mi 12 Alvin Ward Park, trail parking with restrooms at **Moore Haven**, N26 50.535 W81 5.084. The trail is interrupted, follow the road to the Hwy 27 bridge, after the bridge turn right on 1st St, turn right on Canal St and join the trail again. Now there is not much water to be seen.

Mi 17.5 Hwy 78 parallels now the trail.

Mi 23.5 Lake Port Boat Ramp, the trail joins the Dike again, N26 58.123 W81 7.116.

Mi 28.5 North **Lakeport** at Dyess Ditch Ramp Rd end of paved section, N27 0.18 W81 3.118, go offroad.

Mi 44.1 In **Buckhead Ridge** canal exit, use the Hwy 78 bridge, after 0.7 mi little kiosk with parking, start of paved section, N27 9.163 W80 51.998.

Mi 48.6 Lake Okeechobee Park. Parking, boat ramp and restrooms, N27 11.809 W80 49.829.

Mi 51 Okeechobee Taylor Creek, N27 12.391 W80 47.907, canal exit, use the road. There are several hotels and restaurants in Okeechobee.

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Okeechobee Taylor Creek – Port Mayaka, 20 mi

Start: Okeechobee Taylor Creek exit east	N27 12.436 W80 47.821
Trail Parking Chancey Bay Creek	N26 50.535 W81 5.084
End: Port Mayaka exit	N26 59.171 W80 37.088

This section of the Loop is quite nice, canal on one side and now open lake on the other. But, honestly, it is always the same.

Mi 0 Taylor Creek exit east.

Mi 6 Boat Ramp, there is parking, but difficult to go around the gate.

Mi 12 Chancey Bay Creek boat ramp with parking, no restrooms.

Mi 20 Port Mayaka, parking, no restrooms. To reach the trail on the other side of the exit, use the road bridge. But this trail is not paved.

