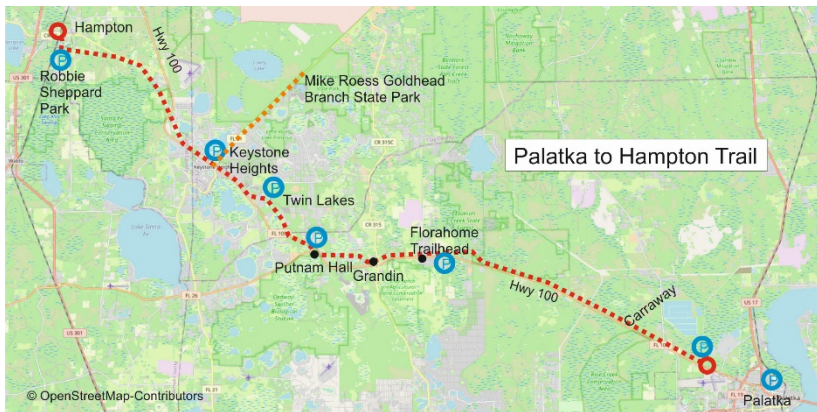


Palatka to Lake Butler State Trail

Palatka to Lake Butler State Trail, 32 mi

The trail corridor stretches from west of US 17 in Palatka to State Road 238 in Lake Butler, as it runs along the former Norfolk-Southern Railroad right-of-way through Putnam, Clay, Bradford and Union counties. Purchased with Preservation 2000 funds through the Florida Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program, the Rails to Trails Conservancy played a key role in preserving the corridor for conversion to a rail-trail. It was designated as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System in 2007 and is being constructed by the Florida Department of Transportation in segments as funding becomes available.

The Palatka-Lake Butler State Trail provides two paved segments for riders and a lengthy unpaved corridor used by the Florida Trail between Hampton and the New River. Much of the northern end of the trail, 4.4 miles between the New River and Lake Butler, is also paved. Other portions remain unpaved but can be traversed with some jogs out to the highway around missing bridges. This description only covers the paved section from Palatka to Hampton, it runs mostly north of Hwy 100.



Start: 5 mi northwest Palatka on Hwy 100	N29 40.148 W81 42.004
Florahome Trailhead	N29 43.977 W81 53.180
Keystone Heights Center SR 21	N29 47.151 W82 01.876
End: Hampton Navarre Ave	N29 48.960 W82 03.795

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Through this initial stretch, there are a number of raised embankments and bridges over marshes, and two road crossings with signals, Bardin Rd being the busiest. The trail corridor is paralleled by SR 100, although there is enough of a screen of forest. Straight, flat and shady.

Mi 0 5 miles on Hwy 100 northwest Palatka, N29 40.148 W81 42.004, is a large dirt parking lot close to the paved trail, no official sign. The trail starts 300 m east at N29 40.064 W81 41.776. East of this point are still old railways tracks. We start our trail at the parking lot.



Mi 5.5 Carraway, Roberts Ln, large dirt parking area, N29 42.343 W81 46.816.

Mi 10 We cross Holloway Rd, N29 43.760 W81 50.923. The trail leaves the road in a triangle and returns soon after to Hwy 100

Mi 12.5 Florahome Trailhead, Coral Farms Road, with restrooms, water and parking, picnic table with roof, N29 43.977 W81 53.180. In the old railway station building was a little store, but is now closed.



Florahome

The tiny town was established in 1899 by the Georgia Southern and Florida Railway and served as a station. The streets are laid in a grid system. Streets north and south are named for trees or shrubs. Streets east and west are named for states or provinces. Early in the town's history, it was surrounded by swamps. These were drained when canals were dredged by the Etoniah Canal and Drainage Company.

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Mi 14.5 Grandin, N29 43.701 W81 55.116. Here the trail leaves the road in an arc and leads through a swampy forest area.

Mi 17 Goodson Prairie Rd, N29 44.040 W81 57.506. The trail comes back to Hwy 100.

Mi 18 Putnam Hall. Official trail parking is available at intersection of Forest Hills Road and SR 100, N29 44.510 W81 58.269. North of Putnam Hall, the trail diverges from the highway for a while to circle around some large prairies as it approaches Keystone Heights.

Mi 20 Twin Lakes Park Trailhead, 6065 Twin Lakes Road, Keystone Heights, N29 45.844 W81 59.558. Large sports ground – the first not along SR 100 – with parking, picnic tables and restrooms.

Mi 23 Keystone Heights, intersection with SR 21, N29 47.151 W82 01.876. Many possibilities to stop for a snack or drink at one of the small businesses located nearby. Next to the intersection is **Keystone Heights Trailhead** with parking, tools, water.

From here, along SR 21, you can reach Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park.

Mi 24.6 Parking for 2 cars next to the trail, N29 47.953 W82 03.159.

Mi 26 We cross SR 100, N29 48.960 W82 03.795. The trail is now running south of SR 100 through quiet farmland.

Mi 31.5 At the intersection with CR 325 is Robbie Sheppard Park with playground and parking. Restrooms closed. Could be used as trailhead.

Mi 32 After a swamp end of paved trail at Navarre Ave next to railway tracks.



Palatka to Lake Butler State Trail

Keystone Heights

Located in northeast Florida at the southern end of Clay County, Keystone Heights is a small town with a population of 1,350. Its landscape includes numerous lakes, parks and recreation areas as well as a quaint downtown area where residents shop. Keystone is also a “commuter’s town” since many of the residents commute daily to work within a 50-mile radius surrounding the city. The town sits between two main Florida cities, Gainesville to the Southwest and Jacksonville to the Northeast.

Mike Roess Goldhead Branch State Park

From SR 21 in Keystone Heights a 5.5-mile paved path connects the main trail to Mike Roess Goldhead Branch State Park, one of the best remaining examples of sandhill habitat remaining in north-central Florida, and an excellent opportunity for canoeing, swimming, hiking and more wildlife-viewing. A steep head ravine with seepage springs forms Gold Head Branch and bisects the park. Marshes, lakes and scrub provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. In the park is a large swamp, a small part is for swimming. Nice hikes to the ravine and the saw mill.

5 \$ per car or 2 \$ per bicycle. Lodging can be arranged in cabins or camping.

