

LOCATION

The primary trailhead is centrally located on Croom Road (Forest Road 6) adjacent to the Tucker Hill fire tower. Turn east onto Croom Road (Hernando CR 480) from US Highway 41, about 13 miles south of Floral City at the city limits on the north side of Brooksville. Travel east on Croom Road about two miles until you see the fire tower to the south. Parking for the trailhead is east of the fire tower.

A second trailhead is located in the day use area of the Silver Lake Recreation Area. This trailhead provides access for campers staying at one of the three campgrounds located at Silver Lake Recreation Area. Parking in the day use area is open daily from 8 am until 8 pm. From Exit 301 of Interstate Highway 75, travel east about one mile on State Road 50 to the traffic light at Croom-Rital Road. Turn north and proceed about four miles north on Croom-Rital Road to the Silver Lake Recreation Area. Turn east onto Silver Lake Road and follow the roadway straight back to the Day Use Area and boat ramp.

DESCRIPTION

The hiking trails are dry-to-damp, all-weather trails that wind through central Florida's longleaf pine and scrub oak hills, live oak thickets and hardwood hammocks, past creek bottoms and cypress ponds. Of particular interest are the area's ravines, prairies and abandoned rock mines. Wildlife found in the area includes deer, quail, grey squirrels and bobcats.

DESIGNATION

The main hiking trails are blazed in yellow; cross trails and side trails are blazed in blue; and any portions of our trails that are part of the Florida National Scenic Trail are blazed in orange. The *A, B & C Loops* are marked with yellow blazes, with the *A-B & B-C Cross Trails* and the *High Water and Low Water* side trails to Silver Lake marked in blue blazes. Blazes are about two inches wide and six inches long and marked within sight distance of each other at eye-level. Metal signs showing the international symbol for hikers supplement blazes where needed.

Croom also contains Off-Road Mountain Bicycle (marked with 4 inch circle blazes) and Horse Trails (marked by a 6 inch blue band). While pedestrians may walk on horse or off-road bicycle trails, please be courteous to bicyclists and horseback riders. Step to the side of the path so bicyclists and riders may pass you on trails designated for them. Step off the trail and downhill from passing horses. Stand quietly and listen for special instructions from the rider. Keep your dog on a leash and under control when passing horses and other trail users.

TRAILWALKERS

The *A Loop* of the Croom Hiking Trails is one of eight Withlacoochee State Forest nature or hiking trails included in the Florida Forest Service's *Trailwalker* program. This program offers recognition awards for hiking 10 to 30 trails in state forests all across Florida. More information is available at the Visitor Center.

www.FDACS.gov/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/State-Forests/Withlacoochee-State-Forest

CAMPING

Overnight primitive camping is permitted only within the Primitive Camp Zones (PCZ's) designated by yellow-banded trees. PCZ West is located on the west end of the trails and 1/2 mile north of the Tucker Hill Trailhead. PCZ East is located north of Croom Road (Forest Road 6) between Forest Road 9 and Nobleton Croom Road approximately 6 miles east from Tucker Hill. Nearby campgrounds with bathhouses are located at Hog Island Recreation Area and Silver Lake Recreation Area.

WATER

Drinking (potable) water is available at the parking area at Tucker Hill Fire Tower Trail Head. For longer, hot weather or overnight hiking trips, you may wish to cache supplemental water at forest road crossings prior to hiking.

TIPS

- Tread lightly. Stick to the path and avoid trampling sensitive vegetation.
- Keep a bandanna on hand when hiking. It has many uses: sponge, napkin, bandage, etc.
- If you are hiking a lengthy trail, be sure to take along sunscreen, insect repellent and a container of water.
- Wear good hiking shoes or hiking boots. If you have to break them in, do it before the hike.
- Pace yourself. If you are a novice hiker, don't take on a 10-mile trail your first time out. We have a number of hiking or nature trails that average two+ miles each to get you started.
- Take your time; there is plenty to observe out on the trails.

CROOM HIKING TRAILS

Withlacoochee State Forest



Florida Forest Service management plans include prescribed burning most months of the year. For personal safety reasons, area users should contact the FFS for information and location of burn areas, (352) 797-4100.

Withlacoochee Visitor Center

15003 Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: (352) 797-4140 Fax: (352) 797-4108
www.FDACS.gov

RULES OF THE TRAIL

- Only cooking fires are allowed in the primitive camping zones. Bonfires are not permitted. Fires may be prohibited during times of high wildfire potential.
- Parking for vehicles is provided at the trailheads. Florida Forest Service is not responsible for articles lost, damaged or stolen.
- Dig a six-inch-deep hole for human waste, well away from the camp zone. Be sure to cover it completely.
- Please help keep the camp zone in its natural state. All litter must be packed out. Do not bury or burn it. Report any irregularities to the Visitor Center.
- Unlicensed off-road motorcycles and ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) are not allowed on the Withlacoochee State Forest, with the exception of the Croom Motorcycle Area. All other vehicles must be licensed and travel only upon open, designated vehicle roads.
- All groups using the Withlacoochee State Forest are required to obtain a Special Use Permit from the Visitor Center.

The Croom Hiking Trails were established by the Florida Forest Service in cooperation with the Florida Trail Association for the enjoyment of hikers and nature lovers.

Much of the Withlacoochee State Forest is divided into Wildlife Management Areas administered by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission. All rules and regulations pertaining to firearms, dogs, game and non-game animals and other wildlife management area regulations must be followed. The Croom Wildlife Management Area is legally open to hunting during specified seasons from September through April. Check in advance for open hunt season dates and restrictions related to open hunts. Use of trails is not recommended during the muzzleloading and general gun portions of the annual hunting season. Bright colored clothing is recommended when hunt seasons are open. Hunting rules and regulations for the Wildlife Management Areas are available at www.myfwc.com or the Withlacoochee Visitor Center.

We hope you enjoy the Croom Hiking Trails. Please follow good hiking and safety practices. Maps and information may be obtained from the Visitor Center.

