

LOCATION

Horse trails in the Hernando County portion of the Croom Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest are located northeast of the county seat of Brooksville. The primary trail-head is centrally located on Croom Road (Forest Road 6) adjacent to the Tucker Hill fire tower. Turn east onto Croom Road 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 on your right (south). Parking for the trail-head is west of the fire tower on the opposite (north) side of the road.

A secondary trailhead is located at Twin Pond Hunt Camp on Forest Road 7, about ½ mile north of Sault Road (Forest Road 12). When the hunt camp is closed to hunters, riders may park on empty campsites for day use riding. A permit is needed for overnight use.

CAMPING

Overnight primitive camping is permitted only at designated sites. Primitive horse camping is allowed at Twin Pond Hunt Camp when the area is closed to hunters by Special Use Permit. Contact the Visitor Center for a permit and information on overnight primitive camping fees. As with all primitive camp areas, the user is responsible for their sanitation, water and refuse pickup.

Please help keep the primitive camping areas in their natural states by packing out all litter. Do not bury or burn litter. Report any irregularities to the Visitor Center. Only cooking fires are allowed in the primitive camping areas. Bonfires are not permitted. Fires may be prohibited during times of drought and high wildfire potential.

DESCRIPTION

The 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 include deer, quail, grey squirrels and bobcats.

DESIGNATION

The main horse trail is marked on trees with a single, 6+ inch wide blue band that makes a complete circle around the tree trunk. Turns in trails are marked in double blue bands. Metal signs showing the international symbol for horse riders supplement blue bands where needed.

On the Croom Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest, horses are allowed only on designated horse trails and open, designated vehicle roads. Horses must not travel cross-country, on fire lines, on hiking, off-road bicycle trails or closed roads.

Portions of the Croom Horse Trails are also open, designated vehicle roads. Horses harnessed to a surrey, buggy, wagon or other similar conveyance must comply with Florida laws pertaining to the use of these vehicles on public roadways.

You may encounter hikers on the horse trail or hikers and off-road bicyclists at trailheads and trail crossings. Communicate to other trail users to let them know if your horse is safe to pass. Turn your horse away from other trail users so your horse can see them.

As always, all trail users must keep their dog on a leash and under control when passing other trail users.

WATER

Drinking (potable) water is available at the parking area at Tucker Hill fire tower trail-head. For longer, hot weather or overnight riding trips, you may wish to cache supplemental water at forest road crossings prior to riding.

TIPS

- Tie out horses away from trees to prevent damage to this forest resource.
- Keep to trails designated for equestrian use. Hiking and other trails are ruined by horse traffic.
- Keep a bandanna on hand when riding. It has many uses: sponge, napkin, bandage, etc.
- If you are riding a lengthy trail, be sure to take along sunscreen, insect repellent and a container of water. You may wish to cache supplemental water at forest road crossings prior to riding.
- Pace yourself. If your horse isn't experienced on the trail, don't take on a 20-mile trail ride your first time out. Local horse groups hold rides regularly and can offer valuable trail tips; contact the Visitor Center for more details.
- Take your time; there is plenty to observe out on the trails.

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

CROOM HORSE 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

The Florida Forest Service established these horse trails in cooperation with the Croom Trail Equestrians and other volunteers for the enjoyment of riders and nature lovers.

Much of the Withlacoochee State Forest is divided into Wildlife Management Areas administered by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. All rules and regulations pertaining to firearms, dogs, game and non-game animals and other wildlife management area regulations must be followed. Hunting rules and regulations for the Citrus Wildlife Management Area are available at www.myfwc.com or the Withlacoochee Visitor Center.

Use of trails is not recommended during the muzzleloading gun and general gun portions of the annual hunting season. Equestrians should wear brightly colored clothing when riding during all portions of the hunting season. Dates vary from year to year and from tract to tract on the state forest.

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. Parking for vehicles is provided at the trailheads. The Florida Forest Service is not responsible for articles lost, damaged or stolen.

All groups of 6 or more persons using the Withlacoochee State Forest are required to obtain a Special Use Permit from the Visitor Center.

As per State Statutes, all horses entering the Withlacoochee State Forest or any other managed lands must produce proof of a negative Coggins test for Equine Infectious Anemia.

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

