

## Palatka-to-Lake Butler State Trail

---

**Planning Region:** Trail System

**County:** Bradford, Clay, Putnam, and Union

**Lease/Management Agreement Number:** 4338

### Overview

Designated as a National Recreation Trail and a key component in the Florida Greenways and Trails System, the Palatka-to-Lake Butler State Trail preserves and restores a historic railroad route and the natural and cultural values of the property. The trail repurposes this corridor as a healthy mode of transportation from Palatka to Lake Butler, enhancing the quality of life for visitors and nearby communities.

**Total Acreage:** 613.94

<b>Altered Landcover</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Developed	613.94

**Acquisition:** On June 26, 2001, the Trustees obtained title to a 611.27-acre abandoned old railroad right-of-way that later became Palatka to Lake Butler Trail. The property was purchased from Georgia Southern and Florida Railway Company. The purchase was funded under P2000/ Greenways and Trails Program.

### Resource Management Component Objectives

#### Hydrology

- Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs.

#### Imperiled Species

- Develop/Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists.
- Monitor and document 1 selected imperiled animal species (gopher tortoise).
- Monitor and document 1 selected imperiled plant species (Rainlily).

#### Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 2 of 13 recorded cultural resources in the park (GS & F Railroad Bridge 1 (PU01621) and GS & F Railroad Bridge 2 (PU01622)).
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Bring 1 of 13 recorded cultural resources into good condition. Regularly monitor the rail bed to check for possible erosion sites

# **Palatka-to-Lake Butler State Trail**

---

## **Land Use Component Objectives**

### **Conceptual Land Use**

#### General Trail Needs

- Improve wayfinding at key trailheads.
- Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to pave the entire trail.
- Reconstruct New River Bridge.
- Consider removing unnecessary portions of wooden fencing.

#### Trail Boundary

- Prevent unauthorized entry points from adjacent private properties.

#### Support Areas

- Conduct a property survey to evaluate the possibility of an additional support complex along the trail.
- Acquire optimum boundary parcels to provide additional support facilities.

#### Palatka Trailhead

- Pave parking lot.
- Delineate parking spaces.
- Install permanent restroom with automatic locking doors.
- Install a bike repair station and water fountains.
- Partner with FDOT and Putnam County to provide deceleration lanes on State Road 100.
- Provide an interpretive panel.

#### Forest Hills Trailhead

- Pave parking lot.
- Delineate parking spaces.
- Provide interpretive panel.

#### Lake Butler Trailhead

- Install permanent restroom with automatic locking doors.
- Install a bike repair station.
- Provide interpretive panel.

#### Highway Crossings

- Coordinate safe crossing options for U.S. Highway 301 and State Road 100 with FDOT.

## **Palatka-to-Lake Butler State Trail**

---

### **Optimum Boundary**

Several parcels identified below would provide an ideal location for maintenance hubs along the trail. A swath of planted pine parcels planted owned by the U.S. Forest Service northwest of Keystone Heights, is an optimal location with respect to constructing a maintenance hub at a central location along the trail. West of Palatka, a vacant structure encroaches on the park boundary by about three feet. This structure, pending an assessment, would be ideally repurposed as a maintenance structure.

To support the Office of Greenways and Trails Priority Trail Network, acquisition of the Waldo Road Corridor will provide a connection to the Gainesville-to-Hawthorne State Trail. The Palatka to Hawthorne Corridor will also connect the two trails from Gainesville to Palatka at the trail's eastern terminus. West of the terminus in downtown Lake Butler, an additional Florida Forever Board of Trustees (B.O.T.) project, a component of the Strategic Managed Areas Lands List, would extend the trail corridor 21 miles northwest to Lake City. This addition would close gaps in the corridor to the Palatka to St. Augustine State Trail. By acquiring these Land Trail Priorities and Florida Forever B.O.T. projects, long distance excursions to and from large cities like Lake City, Gainesville, Palatka, and St. Augustine will be provided.