



Palatka/Dunns Creek State Real Florida Guide

Note: Colored numbers correspond with numbers on the map and represent destinations for each day. **Red** = Day 1, **Green** = Day 2 and **Blue** = Day 3.

Day 1

The small, charming town of [Palatka \(1\)](#), nestled along the St Johns River, is part of the [Florida Mural Trail](#). Coasting along its slow-paced streets on foot, by bike or car to view murals and historic architecture is worthwhile. Palatka is also the home of [Ravine Gardens State Park \(2\)](#), named for a pair of steep ravines that plunge about 120 feet deep. Unlike common gullies or sinkholes caused by temporary flooding, these steephead ravines are created as underground water bubbles up and cuts into the bank, carrying sand and soil downstream over thousands of years to the St. Johns River. In 1933, a ravine was transformed into a dramatic garden by the federal [Works Progress Administration](#). Much of the original landscaping still exists as formal gardens and an extensive trail system. The garden's peak flowering period is azalea season, late January to April. A 1.8-mile paved road winds around the ravine, offering motorists and bicyclists a view of the gardens. The Ravine Loop is closed to vehicle traffic one hour before sunset, but remains open for pedestrians, bicycles, and wheelchairs. There is also a hidden cache in this park for those who enjoy [geocaching](#).



Day 2

[Putnam County](#) has an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities entwined with the fascinating history of John Bartram and his son, William, both naturalists and authors who explored the majestic St. Johns River in the 1700s. The renowned [Bartram Trail \(3\)](#) explores the legacy of their



extensive travels and writings and calls to modern explorers who can follow in their footsteps and river wake. It may take more than one day to sample the possibilities!



You can plan an adventure on the Bartram Trail accessing a wealth of technology. Choose hiking, biking, paddling, or driving tour options on over 250 miles of trails and then dive into layers of rich history. Each trail site includes entries from John Bartram's journal and William Bartram's Travels, photos, GPS coordinates, and extensive links. A link to the [Bartram Collection](#) in the London's Natural History Museum shares a marvellous illustration of an alligator reminiscent of an Old World dragon. There is a YouTube Channel with virtual tours and over thirty Story Maps that provide a profusion of

information. A visit to [St. Johns River Center \(4\)](#) on Palatka's Riverfront also offers directions, maps and information.

The Bartram Trail in Putnam County overlays two other [state paddling trails](#) designated as part of the Florida Greenways & Trails System: [Putnam County Blueways](#) and the [St. Johns River Blueway](#). The St. Johns River is also designated as an American Heritage River in recognition of its ecological, historic, economic, recreational and cultural significance.

Day 3

More than 6,200 acres of diverse natural communities are represented at [Dunns Creek State Park \(5\)](#) just southeast of Palatka on US 17. There are four miles of multi-use trails that wind through distinct natural communities including sand pine scrub and sand hills covered with longleaf pines and wiregrass. This habitat helps to protect gopher tortoises and several other endangered and native wildlife species. While walking any of these trails you may glimpse sandhill crane, southeastern kestrel, hawks, fox, deer and various water and wading birds.





Native Americans used this site extensively as evidenced by the fairly widespread shell mound. During the 1920s, a steamboat stop provided wood and water to citrus loaded ships. The 6,000-acre property experienced turpentine logging, logging, cattle ranching and farming within the last century. Located south of a sharp bend in the St. Johns River, the park was added to the state park system in October 2001. Dunns Creek forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the park.

There are a pair of state trails under construction that target Palatka as a destination: the [Palatka-to-Lake Butler Trail \(6\)](#) and the [Palatka-to-St Augustine Trail \(7\)](#). Though still in development as a paved, multi-use recreational trail, the Palatka-Lake Butler State Trail is situated in one of the most picturesque areas of the state. The trail corridor stretches nearly 47 miles 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. 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. There is approximately 19 miles of paved trail between Bradford County, at S.E. 57th Street in Keystone Heights, and Putnam County, at Roberts Lane.

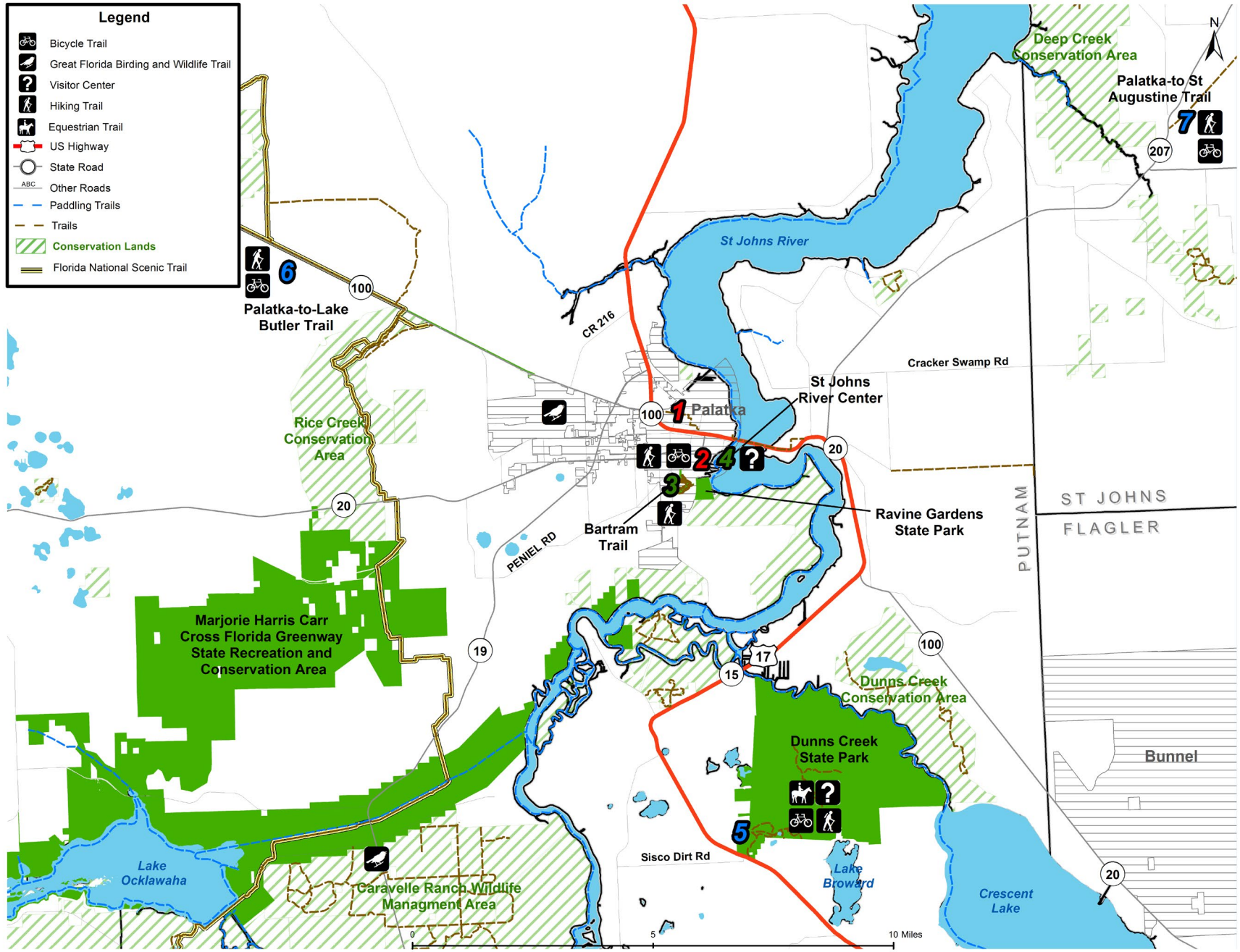
The Palatka-to-St. Augustine State Trail, also known as the State Road 207 Rail-Trail, is in development as a multi-use recreational trail along a corridor that stretches over 19 miles through St. Johns and Putnam counties. Trail users will appreciate the continuing progress of this trail which runs through agricultural landscape and features Florida's native wildflowers. Construction of a 12-foot-wide, paved trail is being completed in phases by the Florida Department of Transportation, as funding becomes available. The existing 8.5-mile trail extends from just west of Interstate 95 west to the town of Spuds.





Legend

- Bicycle Trail
- Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail
- Visitor Center
- Hiking Trail
- Equestrian Trail
- US Highway
- State Road
- Other Roads
- Paddling Trails
- Trails
- Conservation Lands
- Florida National Scenic Trail



PUTNAM

ST JOHNS
FLAGLER

Bunel

10 Miles