

Saturday, Oct 14, 2023

Sat-GP Old Growth Forest at Gibbons Preserve

Address for meeting leaders is: 13356 Boyette Rd, Riverview, FL 33569

8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Limited to 10 participants, no tolls or entrance fees

Leaders: Dan Savercool 240-793-5455, Nathan LaFata 304-906-7470

Bring water, snacks, insect repellent, sun screen. This is a 1.5 mile loop in a mostly shaded area. The trail is narrow, and there may be roots. While most is flat there are some steep spots up or down the banks near the river, and spots may be wet, depending on recent rains, so wear shoes that can get wet. Some people might feel more comfortable with a walking stick. **THERE ARE NO FACILITIES AT THIS LOCATION.**

See what 'old Florida' looked like before the lumbermen came through! The Myron and Helen Gibbons Preserve is a 60-acre forest that has not been logged. The Gibbons family donated the preserve to the Tampa Bay Conservancy, a regional land trust that will be guiding and hosting your walk. The 1.5-mile trail crosses Bell Creek and winds through oak and mixed hardwood and cypress wetlands before reaching the shoreline of the Alafia River and looping back to the parking area. Suncoast Native Plant Society members identified over 120 plant species here in 2005. Providing natural shoreline on the Alafia River, this refuge for wildlife also protects water quality. Although this trip is mainly an old growth forest riverine habitat walk, you might spot warblers, vireos, woodpeckers and more in the hammocks, and waders may be along the river's edge. Frogs, toads and anoles will skitter along pond edges. The trail is narrow, and there are roots. While most is flat, there are some steep spots near the river banks, and spots may be wet, depending on recent rains, so shoes for wading across wet areas are recommended.

From Brandon/East Tampa: Take I-75 South to Exit 250, the Riverview Gibsonton exit and go East on Gibsonton Drive. At Rt 301 this will become Boyette Rd.

Or, take Rt 301 South through Riverview to Boyette Rd and go East on Boyette Rd.

From the intersection of Rt 301 and Boyette Rd, go East 3.4 miles. You will pass the entrance to the Preserve parking lot on your left but cannot crossover there. Make a U-turn at the next crossover, return west barely half a mile and enter the parking area now on your right. (Note that Ace Golf Riverview is immediately to the west of the parking area entrance.

