

# charlotte harbor cycling guide



*Your Guide to Cycling in the Area*



The Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island Coast

PureFlorida.com



## bicycle shops & repair supplies

### Acme Bicycle Shops LLC

Cross Trails Center  
615 Cross St # 1116  
(941) 639-2263

AcmeBicycleShop.com

### Bicycle Center of Port Charlotte

3795 S Tamiami Trail  
(941) 627-6600

BicycleCenterCC.com

### Bikes & Boards

966 S McCall Rd  
(941) 474-2019

BikeGoodys.com

### Real Bikes Englewood

461 S Indiana Ave  
(941) 445-7325



## resources

MapMyRide.com

FloridaBicycle.org

PeaceRiverRidersBicycleClub.com

Strava.com

ShareTheLane.com

### Area Information:

CharlotteHarborTravel.com

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## notes

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## eco-friendly tips

- Use reusable water bottle/food containers and dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Never feed or handle wildlife

Leave only tire tracks. Take only pictures.

## TEAM Punta Gorda bike loaner program

No bike? No problem! **Punta Gorda** provides a fleet of **44 free-to-the-public loaner bikes** at multiple sites around the city. The process is simple: Show your ID and credit card, sign a release form, receive your helmet and bike, and off you go! The loaner program, the **first of its kind in Florida**, began in 2010. More than **5,000 riders** from around the country and around the world enjoy touring on these **canary yellow bicycles** every year.



### locations

Fishermen's Village

Laishley Marina

Bayfront Punta Gorda's Wellness Center

Four Points by Sheraton

### for more info, visit

[TeamPuntaGorda.org/free-bike-program](http://TeamPuntaGorda.org/free-bike-program)

### Punta Gorda Mayor Rachel Keesling



Punta Gorda is home to the first free bicycle loaner program in Florida. These bright yellow cruisers are the perfect way to explore all that our city has to offer. Our Punta Gorda Pathways system makes it easy to get around town. These routes will take you from our vibrant downtown through the historic district, along the scenic harbor to Fisherman's Village, or out to Ponce de Leon Park where you can visit the Peace River Wildlife Center sanctuary. Enjoy your ride!



# Charlotte County

has **858** diverse square miles to experience from the seat of a bicycle. Riders can explore the **Gulf Coast** on Manasota Key in the northwestern part of the county or the wet pine flatwoods in the southeastern part. In between there are rides through classic Florida neighborhoods and **tropical** wildernesses, along **waterfronts** and down **historic** trails.

The Cape Haze Pioneer Trail is a good place to start. The trail follows the route of the Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railroad, built to haul phosphate mined along the Peace River to the deep-water port at the southern tip of Gasparilla Island. The trailhead, about a block south of the intersection of state road 776 (McCall Road) and county road 771 (Gasparilla Road), is the location of the historic wood frame Placida Bunkhouse, built by the railroad around 1907 to house its employees. The trail runs 6.8 miles and terminates near the Boca Grande Causeway.

Across the causeway on Gasparilla Island, the Boca Grande Bike Path continues along the former rail bed to the south end of the island.



If you like to bike,  
**Florida is the  
state for you!**

There's an ever-growing network of paved and off-road biking trails crisscrossing the Sunshine State. Beautiful year-round weather and level grades allow for hundreds of miles of pure riding pleasure. Whether you're touring, racing, commuting, mountain biking, or just pedaling for fitness or recreation, Florida is perfect to have under your wheels. For more information on biking in Florida, visit **[VisitFlorida.com/biking](https://www.visitflorida.com/biking)**



## Commissioner Bill Truex

Welcome to Charlotte County, a Florida community committed to healthy, active living. People who bike have a unique opportunity to experience, up-close, the amazing diversity of our natural environment while enjoying our famous Florida sunshine.



## Commissioner Chris Constance

As Chairman of the Tourist Development Council, it is my pleasure to present our 2016 Cycling Guide. We invite you to explore our beautiful harbor, natural areas, trails and, of course, our beaches. Thank you for joining me and biking Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands!



Bicycle clubs frequently stage rides in the neighborhoods of Cape Haze, Englewood, Rotonda and South Gulf Cove. You'll find friendly communities and dedicated bicycle lanes. For a view of the beaches and the Gulf, pedal from Englewood Beach to Stump Pass on Manasota Key or check out Knight Island/Palm Island Resort, only accessible by ferry. For ferry access, take the first left north of Leverock's Restaurant, located at 7092 Placida Road. The toll per bicycle is \$7.00.

With harbor-front trails, historic neighborhoods and unspoiled wildlife areas, Punta Gorda has many options.

Worth the trip: Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area; this 65,758-acre gem is one of the last remaining wet pine flatwoods in Southwest Florida. In town, dedicated hike and bike trails run past History Park, with beautifully landscaped grounds and original buildings from the early days of the area. Rides along the waterfront can include stops at popular Fishermen's Village, with 40 boutique shops and restaurants, and Harborwalk Scoops & Bites (voted the #1 ice cream parlor in the U.S. by TripAdvisor), where unique frozen flavors are enjoyed while viewing a flame-red harbor sunset.



## local clubs

### Coastal Cruisers Club

Englewood Area  
Offers rides weekly  
All rides begin at 8:30 a.m.  
Helmets are required  
[CoastalCruisers.net](http://CoastalCruisers.net)

### Peace River Riders

Punta Gorda/Port Charlotte Area  
Offers regularly scheduled rides  
[PeaceRiverRidersBicycleClub.com](http://PeaceRiverRidersBicycleClub.com)

### Charlotte County Cyclists

Offers regularly scheduled cycling meetups  
Helmets are required  
[Meetup.com/Charlotte-County-Cyclists](http://Meetup.com/Charlotte-County-Cyclists)



## local rides

### Pedal and Play in Paradise Event

Downtown Punta Gorda  
Event typically held in spring, benefiting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and TEAM Punta Gorda's bicycle friendly initiatives. Five fun bicycle rides to choose from.  
941-637-TEAM (8326)  
[PedalandPlayinParadise.com](http://PedalandPlayinParadise.com)

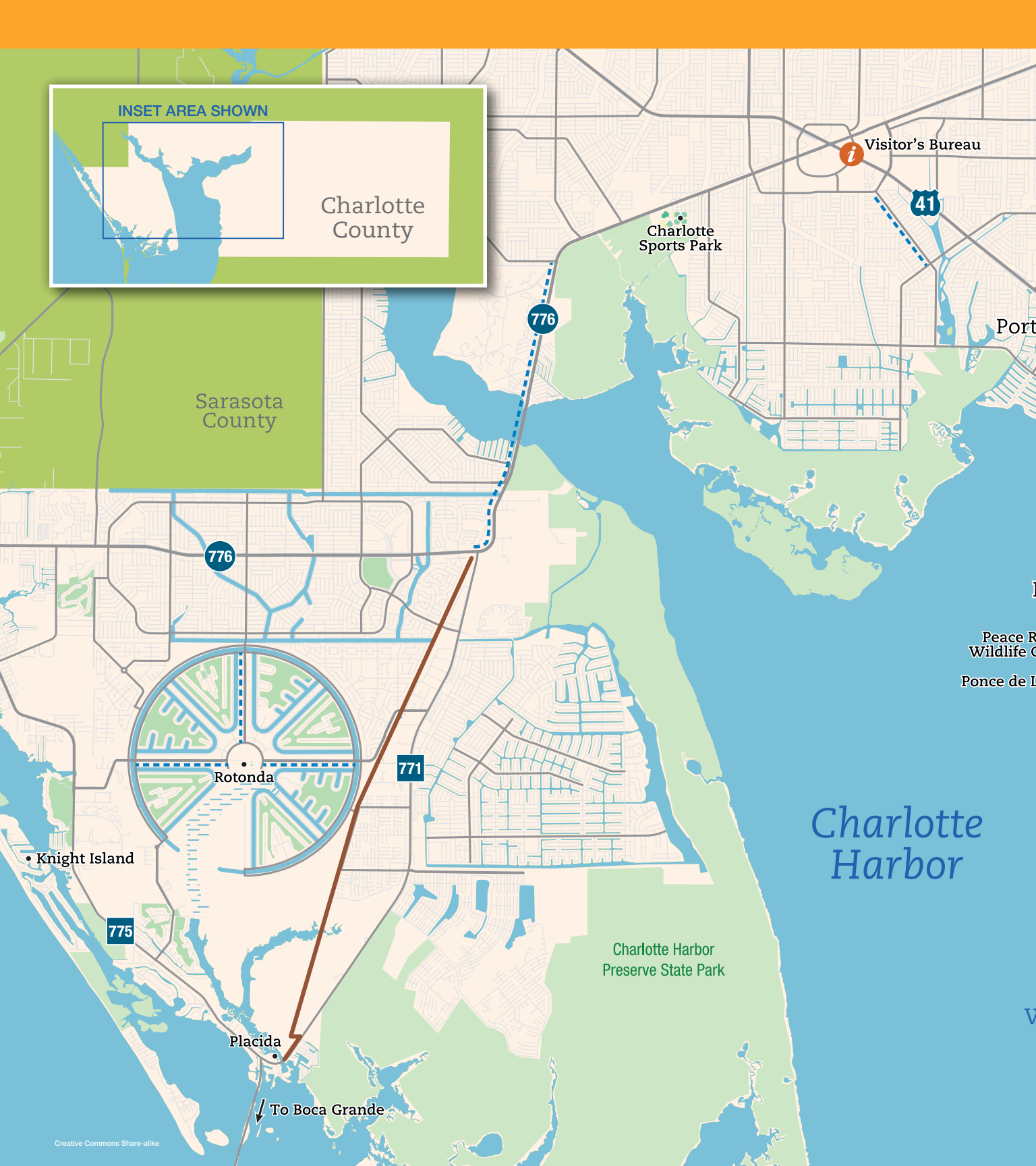
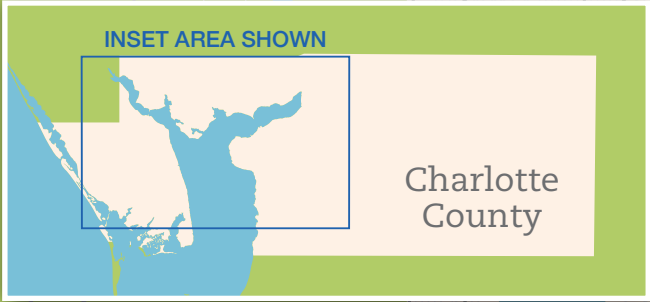
### Peace River Riders

Wheels & Wings  
July

### Peace River Riders

Hamster Wheel 200  
January







# pedal your way through a natural paradise

There are a couple of things you won't see in Charlotte County, like no buildings taller than five stories. So no high-rise condos on the beach and no big ships in the harbor. The water is too shallow. You will see, however, nature at its most abundant. The state began protecting the harbor shoreline in 1977, thereby creating the third largest park in the state: Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park. Over 100 miles of shoreline is protected, preserving one of the most fertile estuaries in the world. For the cyclist, that means the trails team with flora and fauna.

You don't have to be a biking botanist to appreciate the lush and varied foliage. In Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area, for example, the rare and endangered pawpaw produces beautiful, fragrant white flowers each spring. In winter, cyclists can



spin by citrus orchards brilliant with sun-drenched oranges. Throughout the year, spectacular, dinner plate-sized hibiscus bloom throughout History Park in Punta Gorda, while pines and palms, banyans and blossoms dot the tropical landscape.

Plus, there's enough wildlife to turn a trail ride into a two-wheeled safari. Seven sections of the Great Florida Birding Trail are within the county. Egrets, you'll see a few, plus eagles, ibis, pelicans, herons: the list is a long one. Along the waterfront, easily visible from the trail could be dolphins, manatees, even rays. If there's fresh water, a gator could be soaking or sunning. On four legs, there might be bears, bobcats or boars, and that's just the b's.



**President, Englewood  
Chamber of Commerce, Ed Hill**

"Enjoy the best of the beach and biking with a Manasota Key ride to Stump Pass, or peddle leisurely through Rotonda. Englewood offers a variety of nature parks that offer butterfly gardens, waterfront vistas and chances to see native wildlife."



## bicycling safety



Always wear a helmet to prevent the impacts of a crash and an injury. A bicycle rider or passenger under 16 years of age **MUST** wear a helmet under Florida Law.



Headlight and taillight are required for operation of a bicycle from dusk until dawn.



Headsets, headphones, or other listening devices other than a hearing aid are prohibited when riding.



Cyclists are considered vehicles under Florida Law and must obey all traffic controls and signals.





Use arm and voice signals to indicate intended movements and warn of approaching hazards.



Ride single file, if possible, to avoid possible collisions with other trail users.



When riding on sidewalks or in crosswalks, cyclists must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before passing on the left.



Carry personal identification with an emergency number.