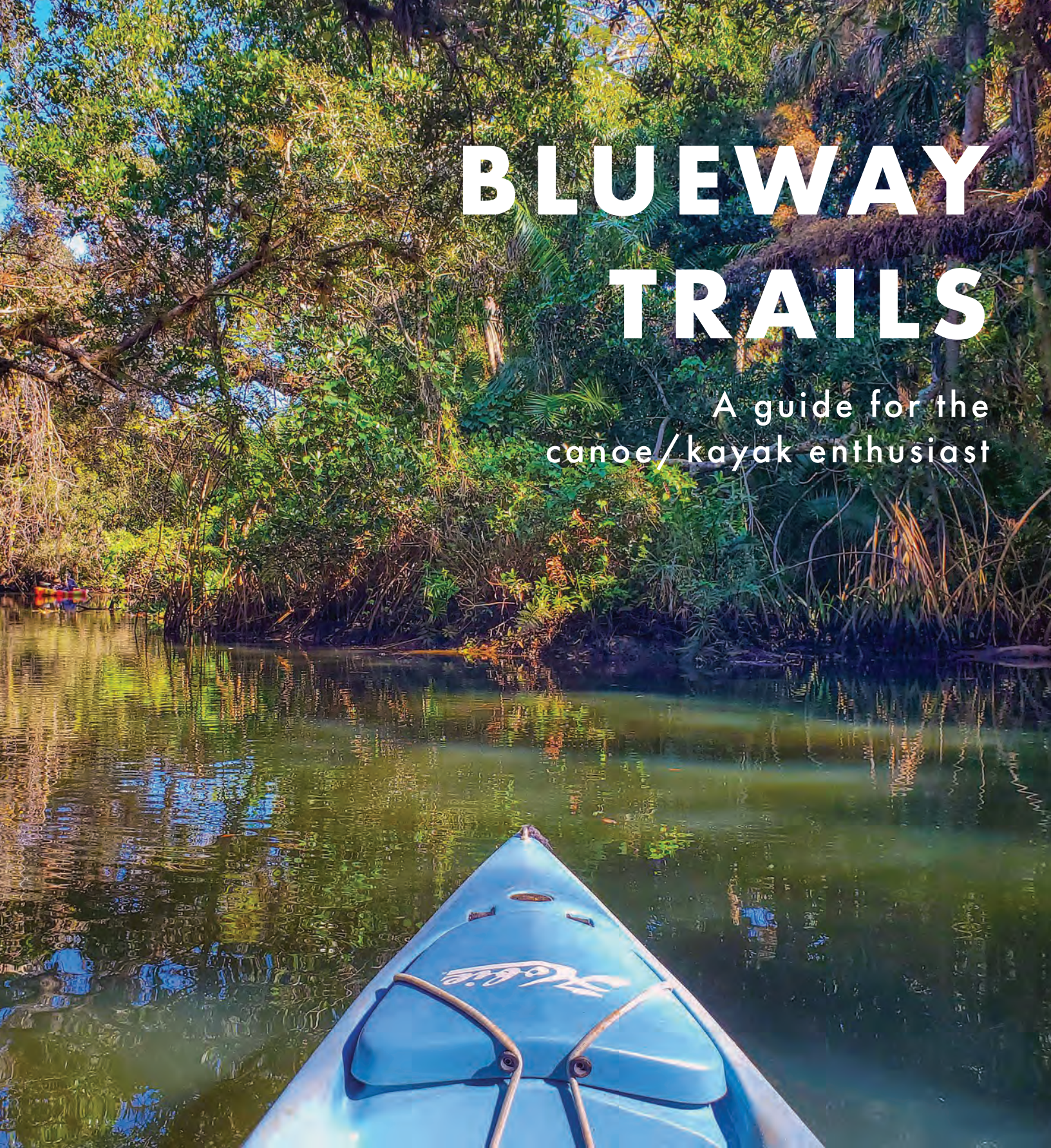


BLUEWAY TRAILS

A guide for the
canoe/kayak enthusiast



CHARLOTTE COUNTY
FLORIDA

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide provides information on the excellent paddling opportunities in and around Charlotte County. Charlotte County's shoreline is divided into the following three regions: **West County**, **Mid-County**, and **East County**.

EXPLANATION OF CLASSIFICATIONS

These guidelines are for educational purposes only and are not intended to provide a basis for evidence of responsibility or negligence in any legal action. All uses of the outlined trails are at the users' own risk. Factors that can change the classification of a trail include weather, time of year, time of day, group and individuals needs.

- ▶ **BEGINNER (BEG):** Involves gentle paddling in lakes, deltas, creeks and embayments, in inhabited, non-challenging, protected waterways exposed to slight currents or tides. Trips will generally require less than **two (2) hours** of paddling; on-board water is recommended.
- ▶ **INTERMEDIATE (INT):** Involves exposure to open water subject to moderate currents, tides, and wind. Landing areas may be unavailable for up to five miles. Moderate hazards may exist such as bottom conditions and unrestricted motorboat traffic. Trips will generally require less than **six (6) hours**; on-board food and water is required.
- ▶ **EXPERT (EXP):** Involves exposure to broad reaches of open water with potential for heavy currents, tides, wind, and surf. Areas may be remote with assistance more than four hours away and landing areas are not predictable. Uncharted hazards and conditions may exist. Trips may exceed **eight (8) hours**; on-board food and water required. Thorough knowledge of trail route and conditions required.

PADDLING SAFETY TIPS AND REGULATIONS

SAFETY EQUIPMENT TO HAVE BEFORE HITTING THE WATER:

- Flotation gear; Florida Law requires a Coast Guard-approved, readily accessible and wearable personal flotation device (PFD) for each occupant of the vessel.
- All occupants under age 6 must wear PFDs.
- Sound-producing device, such as a whistle, horn or bell.
- First aid kit; include sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Extra paddle, bow and stern lines, and extra rope.
- Hat and sunglasses.
- Cellular/mobile phone if available.

PLAN ROUTE AND ALLOW FOR ENOUGH TIME:

- Let someone know where you are going and how long you expect to be on the water.
- Allow for a minimum of two miles per hour paddling time under normal water conditions for route area.
- Check recent and predicted weather conditions. Thunderstorms with extreme gusty winds can form quickly in the summer months.
- Paddling against the tidal flow can be difficult and will exhaust a person's energy reserves; most of Charlotte County's waters are tidally influenced.
- Wind direction and speed can also be a factor when paddling, especially on wide or coastal rivers.
- Rivers in south Florida are usually low in the spring and normal to high in the summer and fall months.

ON THE WATER:

- Paddle in a group or with a buddy.
- Watch for motorboats, wave runners, and jet skis. Stay to the right and turn your bow into the wake.
- Place food and gear in a water tight container and secure them tightly to your canoe or kayak.
- Bring plenty of drinking water for the trip.
- Wear your life jacket.

Charlotte County Blueway Trails

The Charlotte County Blueway Trails system is incorporated into the extensive Statewide Florida Greenways and Trails System, providing for connectivity through an inclusive interconnected network of greenways, trails, and waterways. Come and experience the beauty of the barrier islands, tidal creeks, estuary bays, and of course Charlotte Harbor.

The Charlotte County Blueway Trails are filled with unique opportunities to observe Southwest Florida’s native flora and fauna. With approximately 219 miles of coastline to explore, paddlers can get away from the hurried pace of day-to-day life. Along the western county boundary the Gulf of Mexico connects to an extensive estuarine system including barrier islands, tidal creeks, estuary bays, and Charlotte Harbor. Paddlers can expect to see a variety of coastal habitats including seagrasses, salt marshes, mangrove forests, and riverine communities. Seagrasses are underwater flowering plants found in protected bays and lagoons where water is clear and wave action is moderate. Seagrass beds are of vital importance to the health of the estuarine waterways by providing lifelong shelter for many species of small fish and invertebrates. Recreational marine fish species are dependent upon seagrass during their life cycles and seagrasses help to improve water quality by stabilizing bottom sediments.

Salt marshes are tidal wetlands that occur along low-energy coastlines and river shorelines; they are characterized as expanses of grasses, rushes, and sedges found in the zone between low and high tide. Salt marshes are one of the most biologically productive ecosystems, providing food for many species of animals, forming the base of the marsh food web, and serving as a nursery for several species of fish, crabs, and shellfish. Salt marshes also buffer upland areas from storm surge, helping to protect homes and upland development. Mangrove forests, or mangrove swamps, inhabit low energy shorelines in coastal areas and are specially adapted to salt- and brackish-water environments. Mangrove forests are very high in ecological value and contribute to both the health of our waterways and the local economy by stabilizing shoreline areas, buffering storm surge, preventing erosion, as well as providing nesting sites for shorebirds, and habitat and nursery grounds for many species of fish and invertebrates.

History of the Area

The archaeological record of Charlotte Harbor dates back some 3,000 years. The area’s first inhabitants were mound builders who constructed numerous shell mounds and established camps along the harbor. The first European to visit the area was probably Ponce de Leon in the early 1500s. Hernando de Soto is believed by some historians to have ventured here in 1539, followed by Pedro Menendez D’Aviles in 1556.

In 1744, English explorer Bernard Romans surveyed the area and named it Charlotte Harbor in honor of Queen Charlotte Sophia, wife of King George III. The United States took possession of Florida in 1819.

In 1862, rangers Joel and Jesse Knight constructed a cattle dock on the northern shore of Charlotte Harbor. The dock was used by local cattlemen to load their shipments, sold primarily to the Confederate Army. A holding pen, general store, and homes were constructed in the area surrounding the dock. This first settlement, which predated Punta Gorda and Englewood, was known as Live Oak Point, Hickory Bluff, and eventually Charlotte Harbor.



Queen Charlotte

Parking Passes

Parking passes are available for those who frequently visit and enjoy our beautiful Charlotte County beaches and boat ramps. Passes can be purchased by mail, in-person, or online and need to be affixed to the vehicle on the inside front windshield, passenger side, bottom corner. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/CharCoParkPass> to purchase a parking pass online.

PASSES MAY BE PURCHASED BY MAIL OR BY VISITING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

- Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park Recreation Center, 7001 San Casa Drive, Englewood
- Centennial Park, 1120 Centennial Blvd., Port Charlotte
- Charlotte County Tax Collector, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte (in-person only)
- Harold Avenue Regional Park, 23400 Harold Ave., Port Charlotte
- Port Charlotte Beach Park, 4500 Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte
- South County Regional Park, 670 Cooper St., Punta Gorda
- Tringali Park, 3460 N. Access Road, Englewood

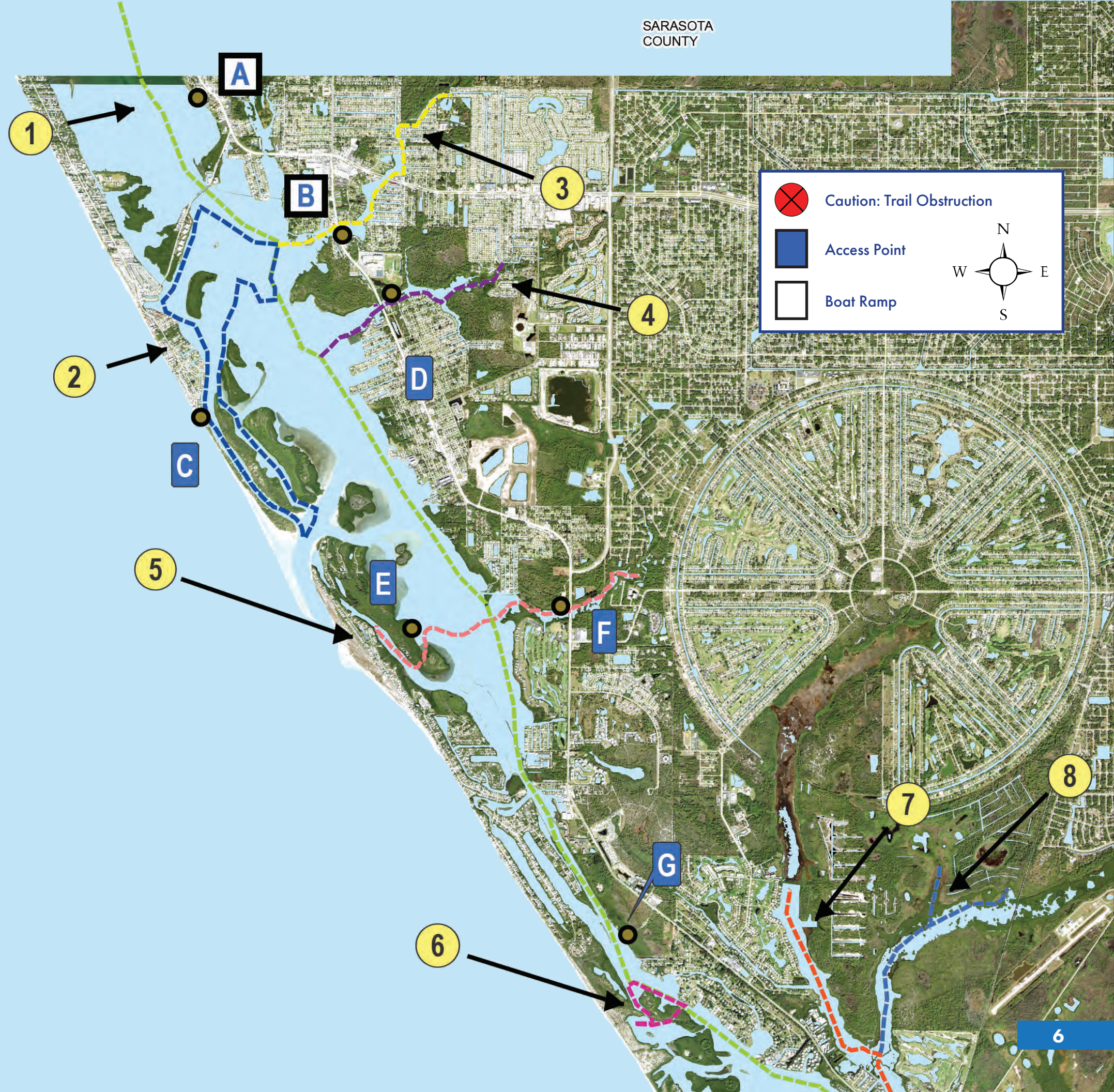
PASSES ARE AVAILABLE IN THREE FORMS:

Annual	\$53.50
6 Month	\$37.45
3 Month	\$26.75

WEST COUNTY TRAILS

- 1 Inter Coastal Trail (BEG)
- 2 Stump Pass Trail (BEG)
- 3 Rocky Creek Trail (INT)
- 4 Oyster Creek Trail (BEG)
- 5 Buck Creek Trail (BEG)
- 6 Rambler Hole Trail (BEG)
- 7 Grande Tour Trail (BEG)
- 8 Coral Creek East Trail (BEG)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--------|
| A | Lemon Bay Sunrise Rotary | Ramp |
| | 1000 S McCall Road, Englewood | |
| B | Ainger Creek Park | Ramp |
| | 2011 Placida Road, Englewood | |
| C | Stump Pass Beach State Park | Beach |
| | 900 Gulf Blvd., Englewood | |
| D | Oyster Creek Environmental Park | Sand |
| | 2333 Placida Road, Englewood | |
| E | Thorton Key Preserve | Sand |
| | 8 Thornton Key Preserve, Englewood | |
| F | Bill Coy Preserve | Geoweb |
| | 5350 Placida Road, Englewood | |
| G | Don Pedro State Park | Sand |
| | 8450 Placida Road, Placida | |





WEST COUNTY TRAILS

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 9 Woolverton Trails (BEG) | 12 M Cantelas Trail (BEG) | 15 Bird Key Trail (BEG) | 18 Shallow Water Trail (BEG) | 21 Turtle Bay Trail (BEG) |
| 10 Catfish Creek Trail (BEG) | 13 Little Gasparilla Trail (BEG) | 16 Bull Bay Trail (BEG) | 19 Widden Creek Trail (BEG) | 22 Turtle Bay Bypass (BEG) |
| 11 Boggess Hole Trail (BEG) | 14 Boca Grande Trail (BEG) | 17 Bull Bay Bypass (BEG) | 20 Sister Ponds Trail (BEG) | 23 Cantelas Trail (BEG) |



MID-COUNTY TRAILS

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 24 West Wall Trail (EXP) | 33 Muddy Cove Trail (BEG) |
| 25 Santa Fe Trail (BEG) | 34 Ohara Trail (BEG) |
| 26 Trout Creek Trail (INT) | 35 Arapahoe Trail (BEG) |
| 27 Cattle Dock Trail (BEG) | 36 W Spring Lake Trail (BEG) |
| 28 Upper West Wall Trail (INT) | 37 Three Lakes Trail (BEG) |
| 29 Gulf Cove Trail (INT) | 38 Myakka Cut Off (INT) |
| 30 Myakka River Trail (INT) | 39 Muddy Cove Cut (BEG) |
| 31 Tippecanoe Trail (BEG) | 40 Lewis Creek Trail (BEG) |
| 32 Ghost Point Trail (BEG) | 41 Alligator Bay Trail (BEG) |
| 33 Muddy Cove Trail (BEG) | 42 E Spring Lake Trail (BEG) |
| K South Gulf Cove Park ————— Ramp
10150 Amicola St., Port Charlotte | |
| L El Jobean Boat Ramp ————— Ramp
4224 El Jobean Road, Port Charlotte | |
| M Tippecanoe Environmental Park ————— Sand
2400 El Jobean Road, Port Charlotte | |
| N Spring Lake Park ————— Ramp
3520 Lake View Blvd., Port Charlotte | |
| O William R. Gaines Veterans Jr. Memorial Park — Sand
20499 Edgewater Drive, Port Charlotte | |
| P Port Charlotte Beach Park ————— Beach
4500 Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte | |
| Q Bayshore Live Oak Park ————— Sand
23157 Bayshore Road, Port Charlotte | |
| R Chester Roberts Park ————— Sand
5084 Melbourne St., Punta Gorda | |

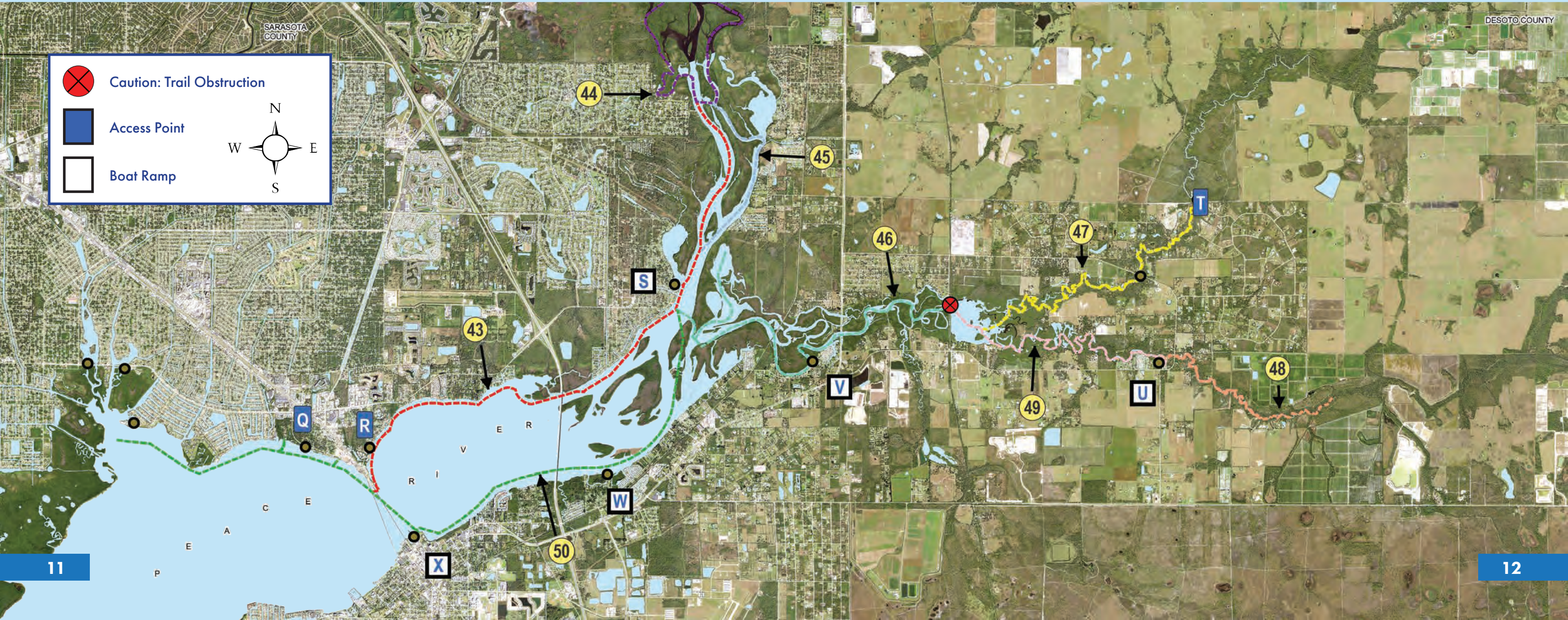
MID-COUNTY TRAILS

- 43 Harbour Heights Trail (BEG)
- 44 Long Lake Trail (BEG)
- 45 South Long Lake Trail (BEG)
- 46 Outer Shell Creek Trail (BEG)

- 47 Prairie Creek Trail (BEG)
- 48 Upper Shell Creek Trail (INT)
- 49 Shell Creek Trail (INT)
- 50 Tranquility Island Trail (BEG)

- Q Bayshore Live Oak Park — Sand
23157 Bayshore Road, Port Charlotte
- R Chester Roberts Park — Sand
5084 Melbourne St., Punta Gorda
- S Harbor Heights Park — Ramp
27420 Voyageur Drive, Punta Gorda
- T Praire Creek Preserve Access — ROW
1900 Duncan Road, Punta Gorda


- U Hathaway Park — Ramp
35461 Washington Loop Road, Punta Gorda
- V Riverside Park — Ramp
8120 Riverside Drive, Punta Gorda
- W Darst Park — Ramp
537 Darst Ave., Punta Gorda
- X Laishley Park Municipal Marina — Ramp
120 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda




SOUTH COUNTY TRAILS

- 50 Tranquility Island Trail (BEG)
- 51 Dead Lake Trail (INT)
- 52 Barge Canal Trail (INT)
- 53 Explorer Trail (INT)
- 54 North Fork Trail (BEG)
- 55 Alligator Creek Trail (BEG)
- 56 Gaspar Trail (INT)
- 57 East Wall Trail (EXP)
- 58 Mosquito Trail (INT)
- 59 Spider Trail (INT)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| W | Darst Park | Ramp |
| 537 Darst Ave., Punta Gorda | | |
| X | Laishley Park Municipal Marina | Ramp |
| 120 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda | | |
| Y | Ponce de Leon Park | Ramp |
| 3400 Ponce de Leon Pkwy, Punta Gorda | | |
| Z | Allaptchee Shores Park | Ramp |
| 3100 Hickory Ct., Punta Gorda | | |
| AA | Taylor Rd. Access | Roadside |
| Taylor Road, Punta Gorda | | |

 Caution: Trail Obstruction

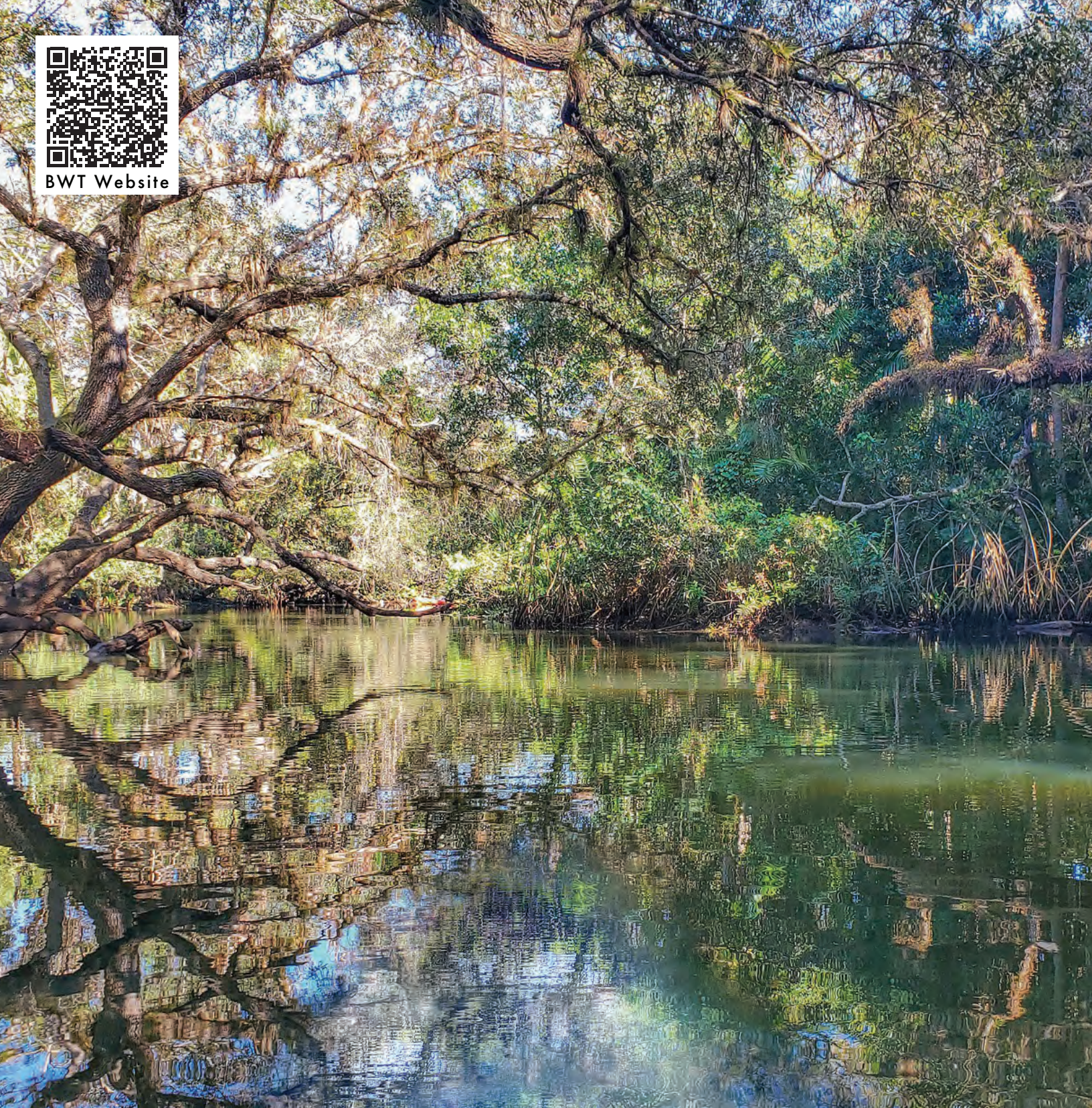
 Access Point

 Boat Ramp





BWT Website



Charlotte County Community Services

1120 Centennial Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33948

941.625.PLAY (7529)

CharlotteCountyFL.gov