

HARDEE COUNTY

Hardee County is located in Florida’s Heartland, and like many of the counties in this region, is relatively rural. Hardee County is known for phosphate mining and its primarily agriculture-driven economy, with citrus groves and cattle ranches. The Peace River also winds its way through the county, providing residents and visitors recreational opportunities such as paddling, wildlife viewing, and camping along the Peace River State Paddling Trail. Despite Hardee’s rural nature, small towns like Wauchula, the county seat and a Main Street community, offer visitors small town amenities such as shops and parks in a setting rich with Florida history.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

Hardee County offers several key amenities that could be accessed via a long-distance multi-use trail. Bowling Green, Zolfo Springs, and Wauchula could serve as future trail towns, with local parks, historic sites, and businesses. Trail users could also access the Peace River via Paynes Creek Historic State Park (Bowling Green), Crews Park (Wauchula), and Pioneer Park (Zolfo Springs) for recreation opportunities and wildlife viewing. Paynes Creek Historic State Park is a Great Florida Birding Trail site.

Hardee County’s amenities also include Hardee Lakes Park in Bowling Green which provides opportunities for hiking, biking, and camping. Outdoor recreation destinations like this would be important sites to either determine the routing of the regional trail system or serve as important spur connections. Agritourism is highlighted in Hardee County’s visitor information, and citrus groves, cattle ranches, and other farmlands would contribute to a pastoral aesthetic for the trail in this area. Paynes Creek Historic State Park and Pioneer Park/Cracker Trail Museum are sites on the Florida Seminole Wars Heritage Trail. These elements collectively suggest the opportunities that could be leveraged to provide a trail user experience and connectivity to a broader regional trail system.



Example Destinations in Hardee County
Peace River State Paddling Trail
Paynes Creek Historic State Park, Hardee Lakes Park, Crews Park, Pioneer Park
Small Towns - Bowling Green, Wauchula, and Zolfo Springs
Agritourism Destinations

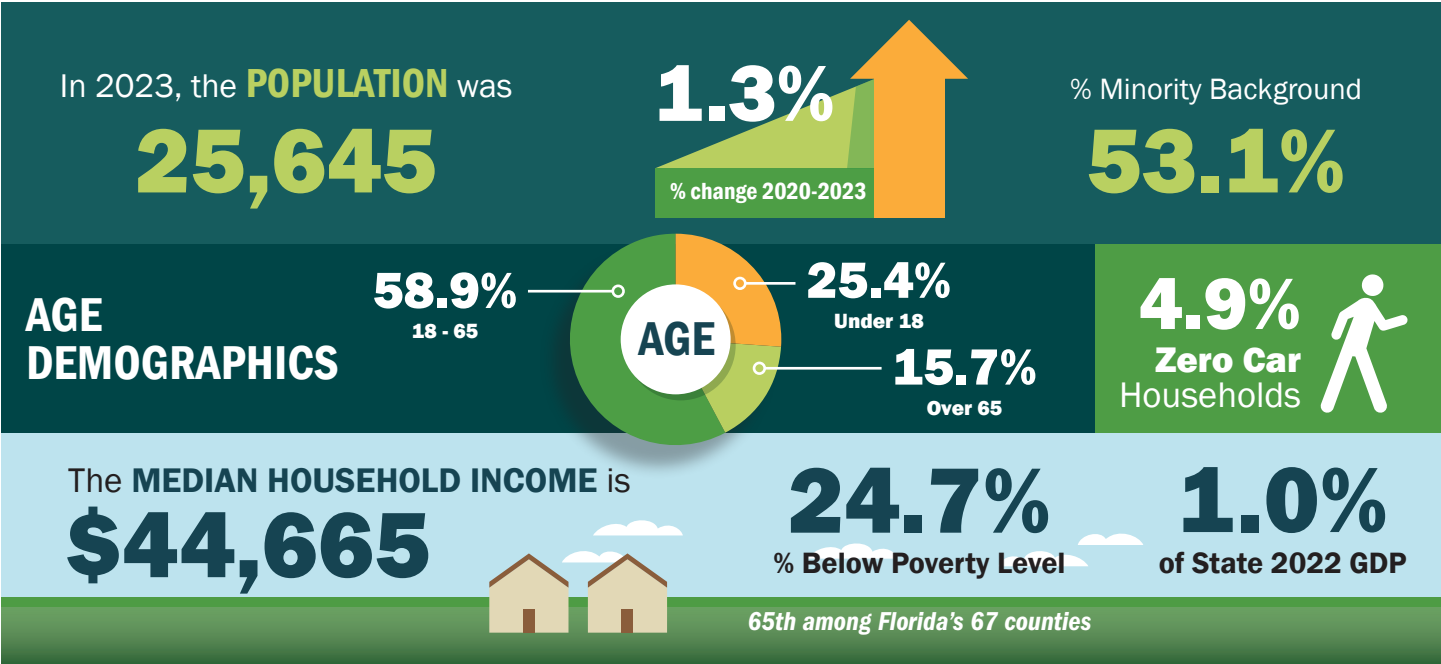
OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND AND IMPACT

Hardee County offers a rural setting and picturesque opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism. Based upon Office of Greenways and Trails data from the 2019 Statewide Conservation Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Hardee County has the lowest total outdoor recreation spending - \$3.6 million - among the counties in the study area. This may be related to availability of recreational opportunities and the county's lower population. However, it suggests the potential for expanding opportunities that might build upon the presence of a regional trail. The figures below summarize the annual spending by residents and tourists in Hardee County for activities typically associated with a multi-use trail, based on the SCORP.

D1 Regional Trail Study Area Counties	Total Outdoor Recreation Activity Spending
Collier County	\$2,680,095,358
Polk County	\$1,765,618,168
Highlands County	\$61,004,689
Hendry County	\$31,153,773
Glades County	\$3,667,949
Hardee County	\$3,637,868














POPULATION AND ECONOMY AT-A-GLANCE



HARDEE COUNTY

LEGEND

-  State Park Entrance
-  State Park
-  Conservation Land
-  City Limits
-  Tribal Lands
-  County Boundary
- Greenways and Trails**
 -  Existing Land Trail
 -  Existing Paddling Trail
 -  Priority Trail/SUN Trail Corridor
- Trail Towns**
 -  Designated Trail Town
 -  Potential Trail Town

