

POLK COUNTY

Located at the northernmost portion of the study area, Polk County is one of the fastest growing areas in Florida and is home to 17 municipalities including Auburndale, Bartow (County Seat), Haines City, Lakeland, Lake Wales, and Winter Haven. The county includes a wide variety of destinations from its downtowns and historic sites to state parks and scenic highways. Polk County currently boasts a robust network of existing trails, including a segment of the General James A. Van Fleet State Trail, with additional plans in place for further expansion and the connection between trail systems throughout the county and the region.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

Trails are an established priority in Polk County as there are nearly 110 miles of existing multi-use trails, including the Chain of Lakes Trail, Lake-To-Lake Bikeway Route, TECO Auburndale Trail, Fort Fraser Trail, and the General James A. Van Fleet State Trail. The Polk TPO's Momentum 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan also identifies an additional 275 miles of proposed multi-use trails. This existing and planned trail network in Polk County provides a strong foundation from which to develop a regional trail system heading south to Collier County.

Polk County has a number of existing assets that could be leveraged in association with a regional trail, such as its state, county, and municipal parks; more than 40 Florida Heritage Trail sites that are part of 9 Florida Heritage Trails; 13 Great Florida Birding Trail sites; The Ridge Scenic Byway; and Polk County's own Heritage Trail which includes locations of National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) sites and districts, notable architecture, cemeteries, churches, schools, museums, historic markers, historic homes, vintage hotels, and museums.



MILES OF EXISTING
PAVED TRAILS

100

Example Destinations in Polk County

State Parks - Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek Preserve, Lake Kissimmee State Park, Colt Creek State Park

More than 40 Florida Heritage Trail Sites within the Black Heritage, World War II Heritage, and other heritage trails

Historic Downtowns and Districts

Cultural Landmarks such as Bok Tower Gardens and the Polk County History Center

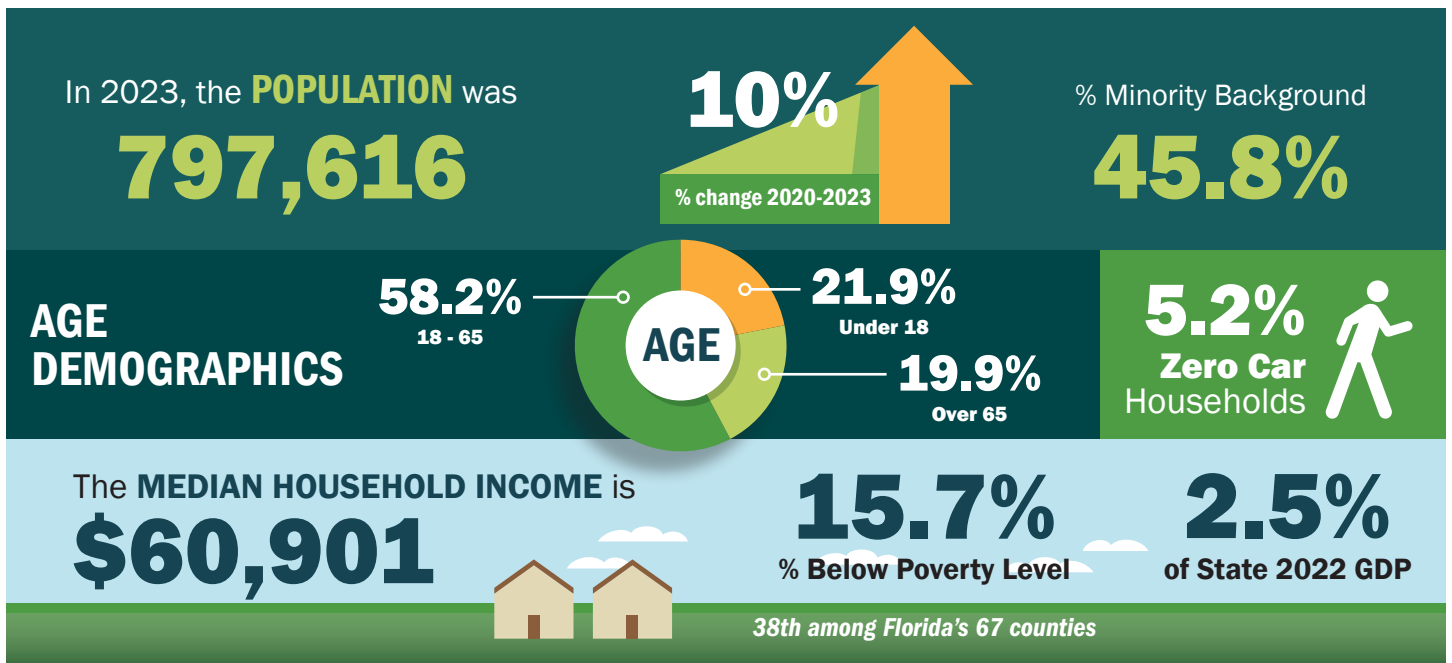
OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND AND IMPACT

Polk County has established itself as a major destination for visitors to the region. According to the Central Florida Visitors & Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Central Florida), Polk County attracts more than 5 million visitors who spend more than \$1.5 billion every year. Much of this economic activity can be attributed to spending by residents and visitors on outdoor recreation activities. The following summarizes the annual spending by residents and tourists in Polk County for these activities typically associated with a multi-use trail, based on the 2019 Statewide Conservation Outdoor Recreation Plan (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



POLK COUNTY

LEGEND



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

