

APPENDIX **D**

Collier to Polk Planning Area County Profiles

COLLIER COUNTY

The largest and southernmost county in the study area, Collier County offers a diverse range of landscapes, attractions, and amenities. It is home to the communities of Naples, Golden Gate Estates, Immokalee, and Ave Maria, as well as major outdoor destinations such as Big Cypress National Preserve and Collier-Seminole State Park. Additional local highlights include Baker Park, Gordon River Greenway, and the new Paradise Coast Sports Complex. The recently completed study for the Paradise Coast Trail envisions a 70+ mile multi-use trail network traversing the county and connecting many of these key destinations.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

The opportunities for a regional trail network in Collier County are primarily associated with the alternatives defined in the Paradise Coast Trail (PCT) Pathway Report and Feasibility Study (June 2022) that connect Immokalee to Collier-Seminole State Park. The north-south component of the PCT aligns with major segments of the priority pathway planned for Collier County that is also included in the State Priority Land Trails and SUN Trail networks. This includes the existing Rich King Memorial Greenway, portions of existing trail along US 41 (Tamiami Trail), and a utility corridor segment adjacent to Livingston Road to be evaluated in a feasibility study. The east-west component of the PCT is based in part on segments of the spine trail network defined in the Collier MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This component would link Baker Park and Gordon River Greenway with the Paradise Coast Sports Complex and continue east to Immokalee where it would eventually connect to points north as part of a Collier to Polk Regional Trail. Collier County has a number of existing assets that could be leveraged in association with a regional trail, such as its national, state, county, and municipal parks. The county includes eight Great Florida Birding Trail sites and 14 Florida Heritage Trail sites that are part of five Florida Heritage Trails.



**MILES OF TRAIL
PLANNED FOR
THE PCT**

70+

Example Destinations in Collier County

State Parks - Collier-Seminole State Park, Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park

Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge

Baker Park, Gordon River Greenway, Paradise Coast Sports Complex, Immokalee Community Park

Ave Maria, Everglades City, Golden Gate Estates, Immokalee, Marco Island, Naples

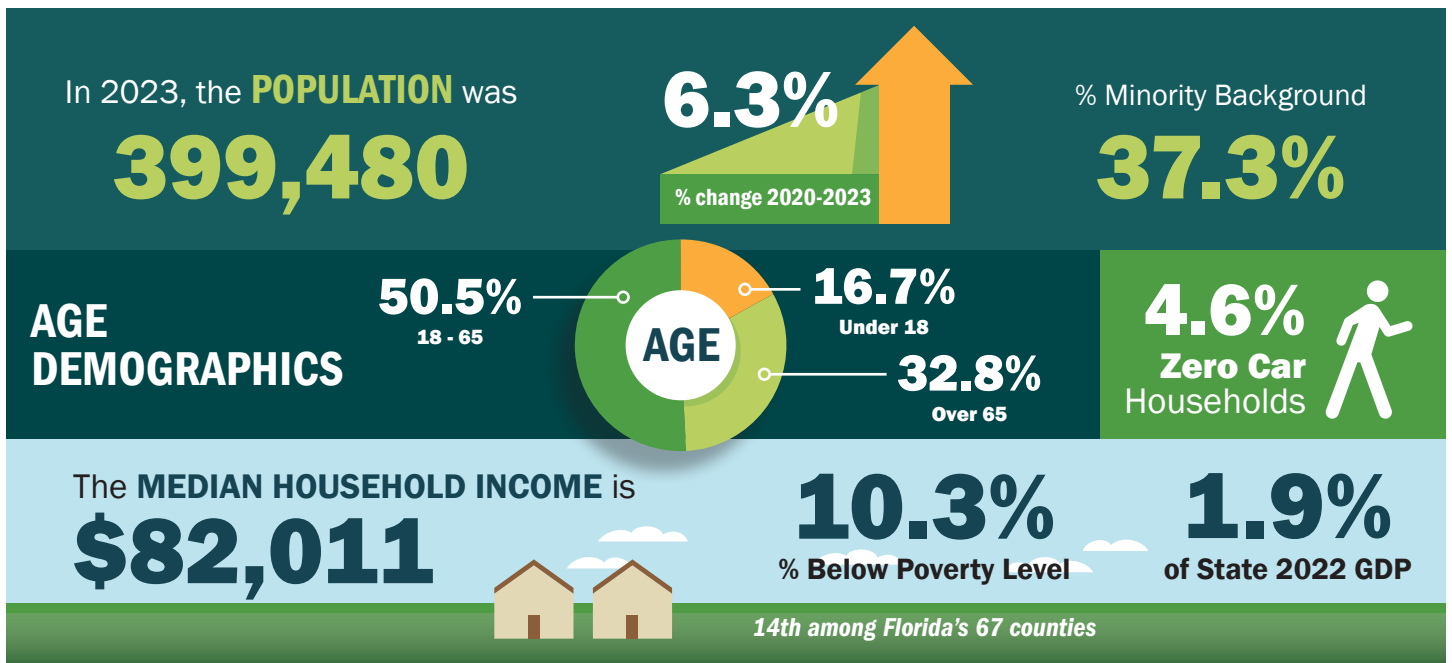
OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND AND IMPACT

Residents and tourists to Collier County spend nearly an estimated \$2.7 billion annually on outdoor recreation, the highest of the study area counties. Collier County offers a number of assets that support visitor spending on outdoor recreation and trails including beaches, expansive natural areas, and sports facilities hosting events and tournaments. Activities include biking, hiking, and wildlife viewing, paddling, and boating. The following summarizes the annual spending by residents and tourists in Collier 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

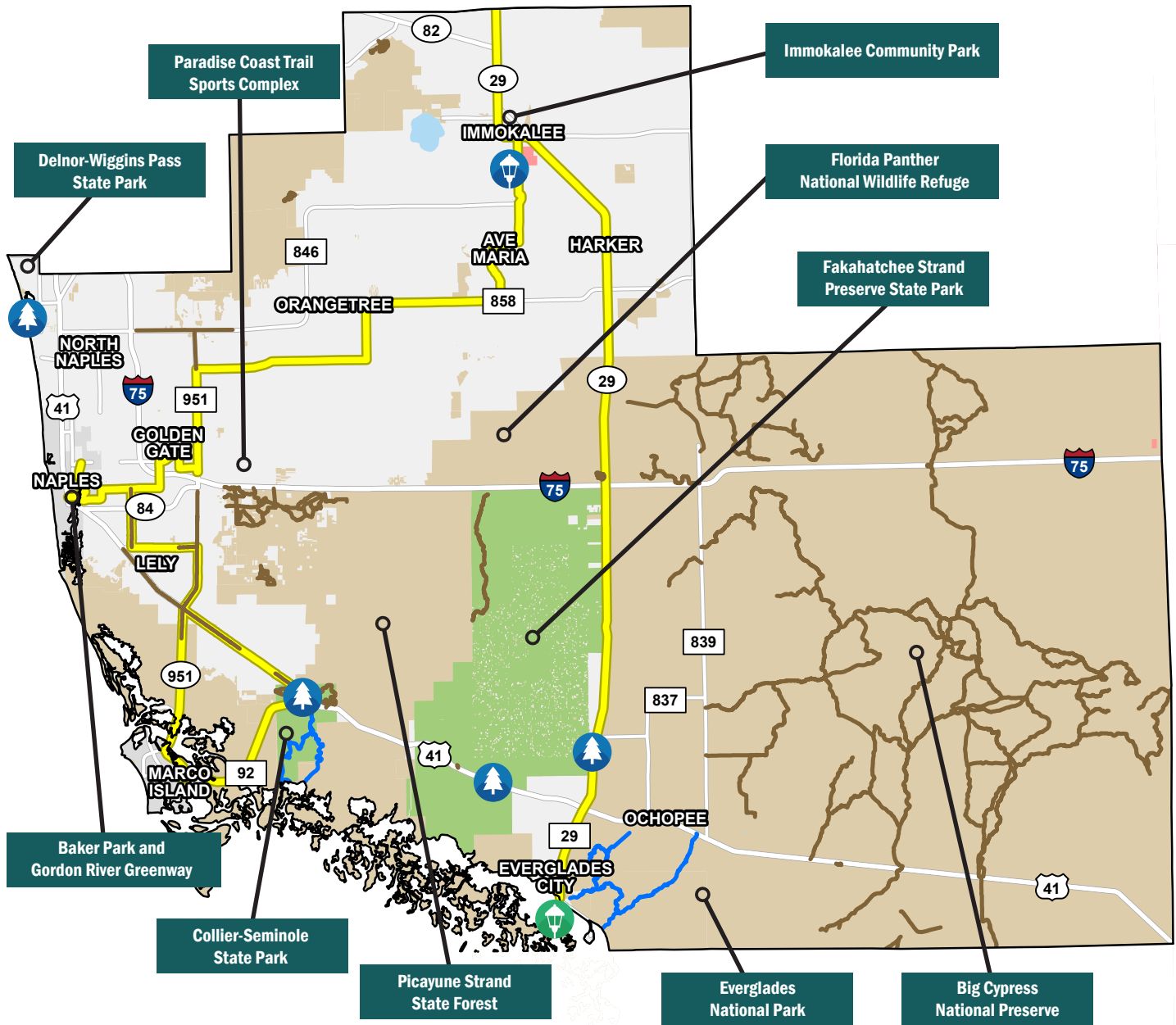


COLLIER COUNTY



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 | | |



HENDRY COUNTY

Located in Florida's Heartland, rural Hendry County is home to the small towns of LaBelle and Clewiston and extensive agricultural acreage for pasture, and for crops such as sugarcane and citrus. The county is connected to Big Cypress National Preserve along its southern border and Lake Okeechobee in the northeast, and is home to multiple state managed conservation and recreation lands: Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest, Okaloacoochee Slough Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Dinner Island Ranch WMA, and Spirit-of-the-Wild WMA. The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Big Cypress Reservation, in the southeastern portion of the county, includes visitor sites such as the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

Hendry County includes a segment of the paved Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST), a major component of the state's planned trails system. Notable unpaved trails include a segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail and hiking trails within Okaloacoochee Slough. LaBelle and Clewiston offer excellent opportunities to serve as trail destinations with historic sites, local parks, and businesses. Hendry County is also home to 11 Florida Heritage Trail Sites within the Native American Heritage, World War II Heritage, and other heritage trails and five Great Florida Birding Trail sites. With its small towns and connections to major natural areas such as Big Cypress, Lake Okeechobee, Okaloacoochee Slough, and the Everglades, Hendry County offers excellent potential opportunity for development of a regional trail network.

In 2009, the county developed a Comprehensive Pathway Plan and identified several miles of potential on- and off-road multimodal trails. The Sugar Trail Corridor is an east-west component within the planned Florida Greenways and Trails System and SUN Trail Network. The county's comprehensive plan also includes provisions for development of trails including creation of a Blueway/Greenway system through West Hendry County.



Existing Trails and Opportunities

Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail
(Paved - Existing)

Florida National Scenic Trail
(Unpaved - Existing)

The Sugar Trail Corridor
(Opportunity)

Example Destinations in Hendry County

LaBelle - Hendry County Seat and home of the Swamp Cabbage Festival

Clewiston - Home of the Clewiston Museum and the Clewiston Sugar Festival

Okaloacoochee Slough and associated conservation and recreation areas

Lake Okeechobee

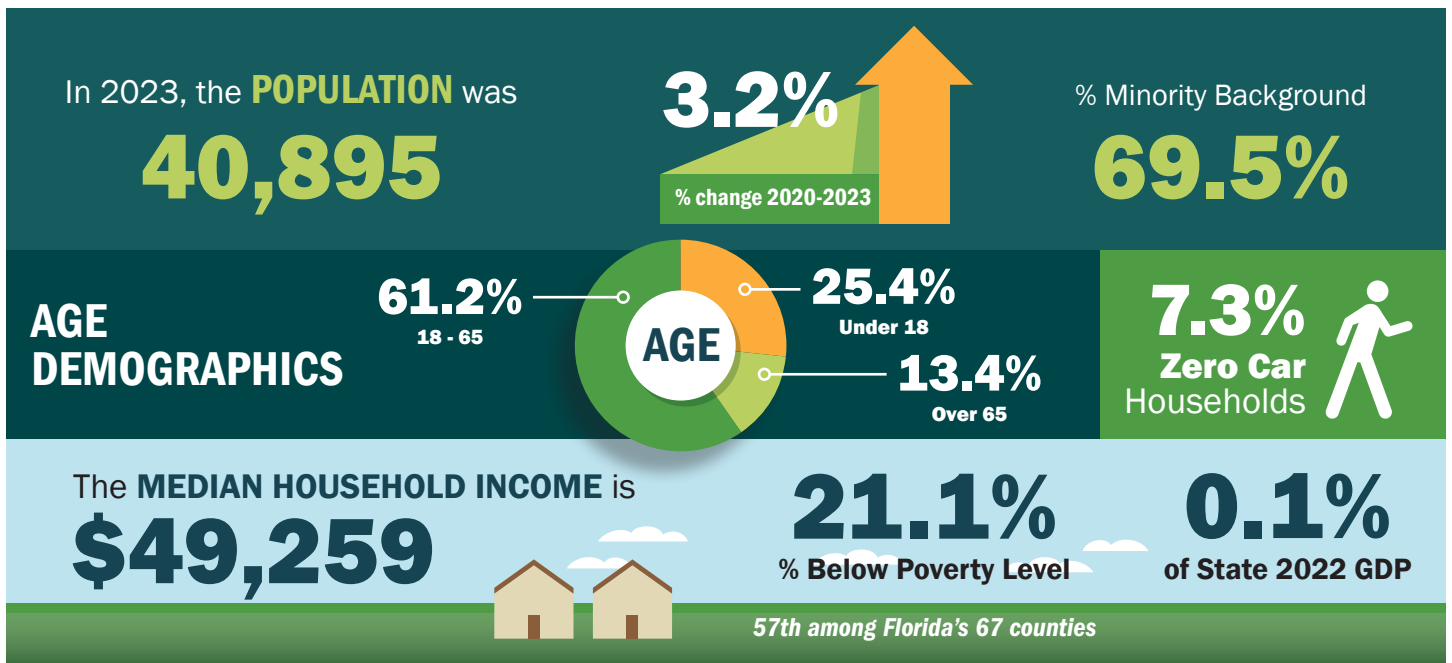
OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND AND IMPACT

Hendry County offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism. Within the study area, it ranks 4th out of 6 counties for total outdoor recreation spending. Notably, spending in the County is three times higher than the next ranked county indicating that its outdoor recreation opportunities are being utilized. Nonetheless, the potential for expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities, in coordination with a focus on connectivity to small towns, is high. The following summarizes the annual spending by residents and tourists in Hendry County for activities which are often associated with a multi-use trail, based on the 2019 Statewide Conservation Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

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POPULATION AND ECONOMY AT-A-GLANCE

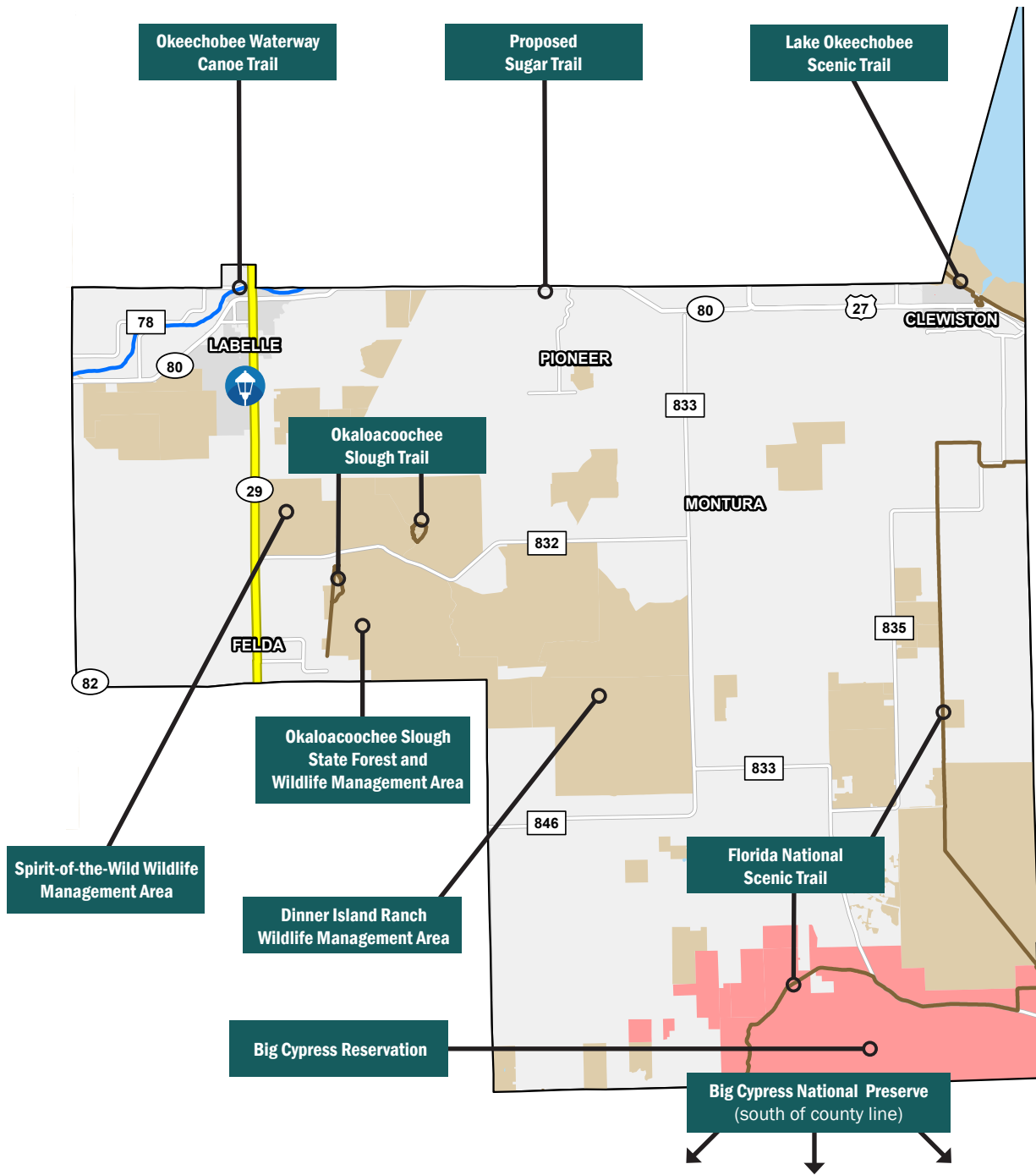


HENDRY COUNTY



LEGEND

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



GLADES COUNTY

Glades County was named for the Florida Everglades and is located in the Florida Heartland on the western bank of Lake Okeechobee. The county has significant natural resources and recreational activities, including more than 30 miles of Lake Okeechobee shoreline, 60 miles of Caloosahatchee River frontage, and 52 miles of paddling trails on Fisheating Creek. The City of Moore Haven serves as the county seat with dining, lodging, and recreation options near Lake Okeechobee. The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Brighton Reservation, in the northeastern portion of the county, includes visitor sites such as the Seminole Arts and Crafts Center and the Florida Seminole Veteran's Building.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

Glades County includes a large segment of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST), a major component of the state's planned trails system. This trail is part of the Florida National Scenic Trail and is on the Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network. The Florida Greenways and Trails System Land Trail Opportunities include the US 27 Trail Corridor extending from the Highlands County line to Moore Haven and the LaBelle to Palmdale Trail corridor connecting Glades County to Hendry County. There is a network of trails in the Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), including the Fort Center Trail which highlights the rich cultural heritage of the area and is a site on the state's Native American Heritage Trail. The county also boasts opportunities for recreation on the water, with existing paddling trails like the Okeechobee Waterway Canoe Trail and the Fisheating Creek Paddling Trail. Ortona Indian Mounds Trail, located in Ortona Park, is another important location along the Native American Heritage Trail. Glades County has five Florida Heritage Trail Sites within the Native American Heritage, Seminole Wars Heritage, and Women's Heritage Trails, as well as two Great Florida Birding Trail sites.

Existing Trails and Opportunities

Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail
(Paved - Existing)

US 27 Trail
(Opportunity)

LaBelle to Palmdale
(Opportunity)

Example Destinations in Glades County

Lake Okeechobee and the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail

Moore Haven, Palmdale, Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation

Okeechobee Waterway Canoe Trail and Fisheating Creek Paddling Trail

Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area

OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND AND IMPACT

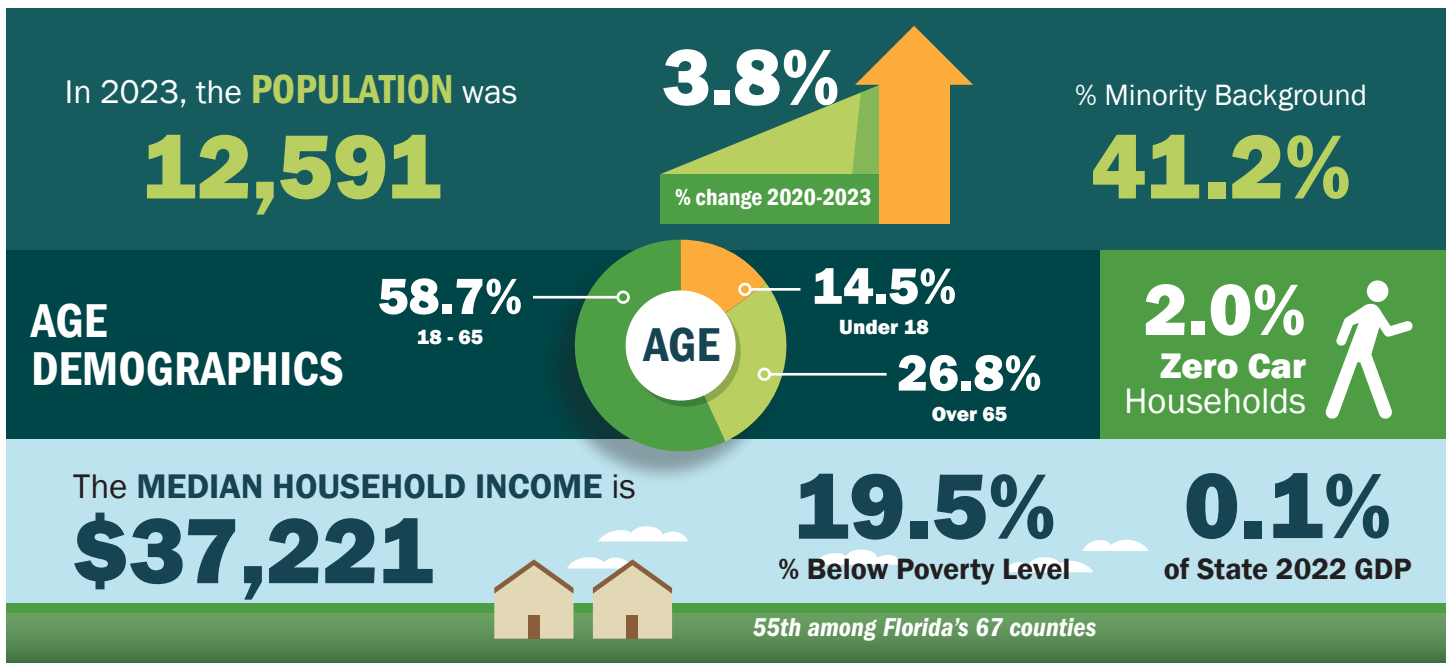
Glades County offers a variety of opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism. Within the study area, it ranks 5th out of 6 counties for total outdoor recreation spending. There is high potential for expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities, in coordination with a focus on connectivity to and between the county's small towns, Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, and other destinations.

The following summarizes the annual spending by residents and tourists in Glades County for activities that are often associated with a multi-use trail, based on the 2019 Statewide Conservation Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

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POPULATION AND ECONOMY AT-A-GLANCE

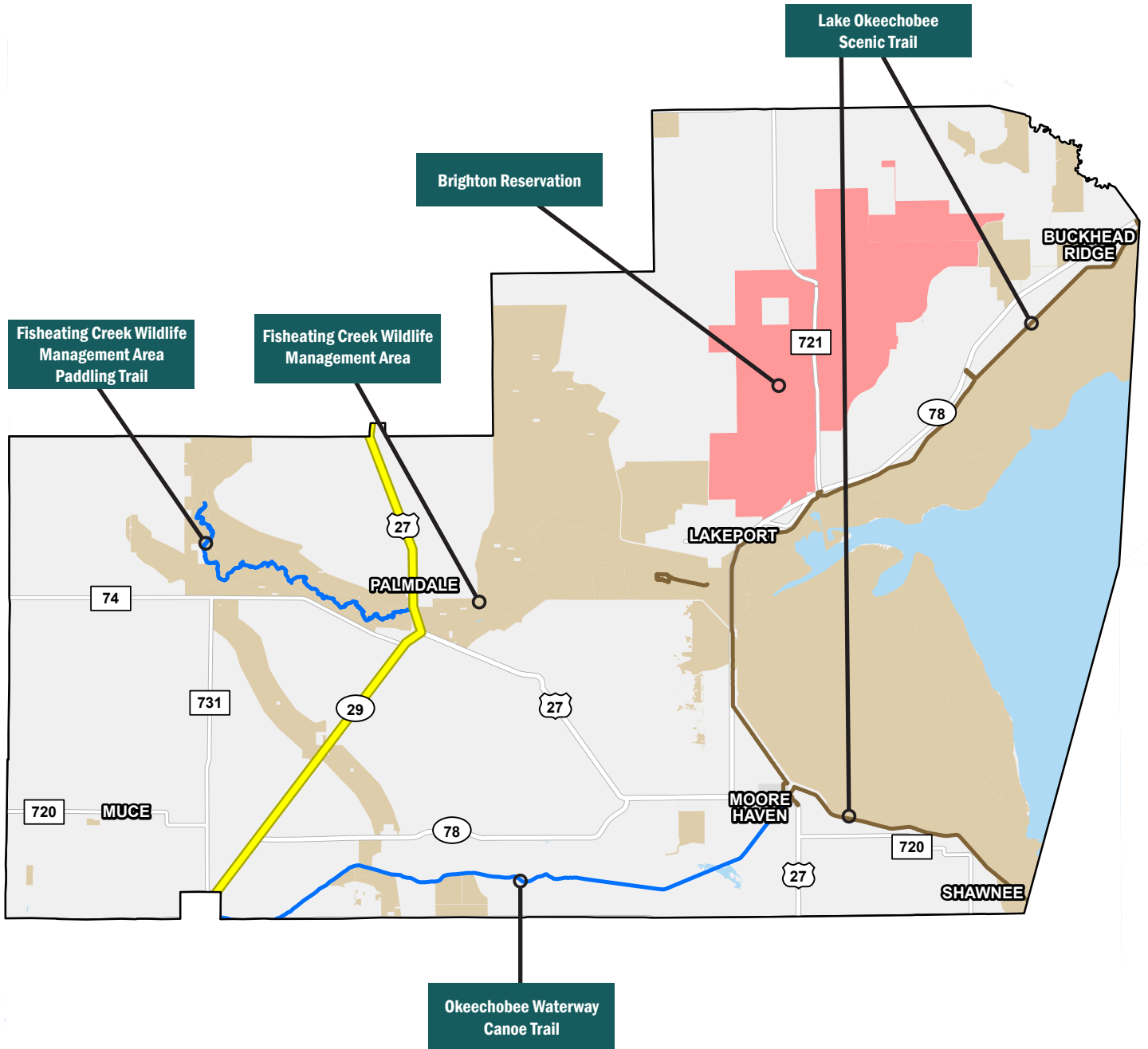


GLADES COUNTY



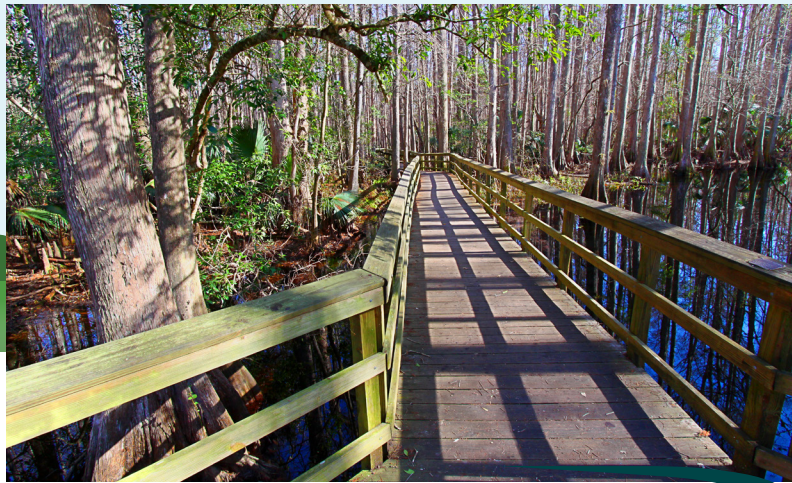
LEGEND

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|--|--|
| Conservation Land | Greenways and Trails |
| City Limits | Existing Land Trail |
| Tribal Lands | Existing Paddling Trail |
| County Boundary | Priority Trail/SUN Trail Corridor |



HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Highlands County, located in Florida’s Heartland, has been referred to as “lake country” because of its more than 100 lakes surrounding the towns of Sebring, Avon Park, and Lake Placid. A combination of natural areas and opportunities make Highlands County a desired location for outdoor recreation activities. Conservation lands in the county include Lake Wales Ridge National Wildlife Refuge, Lake June-in-Winter Scrub State Park, Highlands Hammock State Park, and Hickory Hammock Wildlife Management Area. Local activity offerings include shops, restaurants, paddling, swimming, boating, golfing, hiking, and the Sebring International Raceway.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

Highlands County currently includes an approximately 18-mile segment of existing paved multi-use trail that is part of a larger Lake Placid Loop Trail in the southern part of the county. The Lake Placid Loop Trail and the proposed Heartland Trail corridor extending south from the Polk County line are intended to be part of a larger network identified by the Office of Greenways and Trails and the SUN Trails program. The Florida Cracker Trail segment of the Heartland Trail Corridor extends east to connect to Okeechobee County and the Florida National Scenic Trail. A regional multi-use trail could also provide connectivity to unpaved trails located within Lake Wales Ridge National Wildlife Refuge and Highlands Hammock State Park.

Highlands County is home to 7 Great Florida Birding Trail sites and 18 Florida Heritage Trail Sites within the Black Heritage, World War II Heritage, and other heritage trails. Notably, Highlands Hammock State Park, one of eight Florida parks built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) under President Roosevelt’s New Deal, is home to Florida’s CCC Museum. Avon Park, Lake Placid, and Sebring’s local art, dining, small-town character, and connections to natural areas provide attractive destinations for development of a regional trail network.

Existing Trails and Opportunities

Lake Placid Loop Trail
(18 miles existing)

Heartland Trail (Highlands County Connector & Florida Cracker Trail)
(Opportunity)

Example Destinations in Highlands County

State Parks (Lake June-in-Winter Scrub State Park, Highlands Hammock State Park)

Lake Wales Ridge National Wildlife Refuge and Hickory Hammock Wildlife Management Area

Downtowns of Lake Placid, Sebring, and Avon Park

Nearly 20 Florida Heritage Trail Sites within the Black Heritage, World War II Heritage, Jewish Heritage, Golf Heritage, and other heritage trails

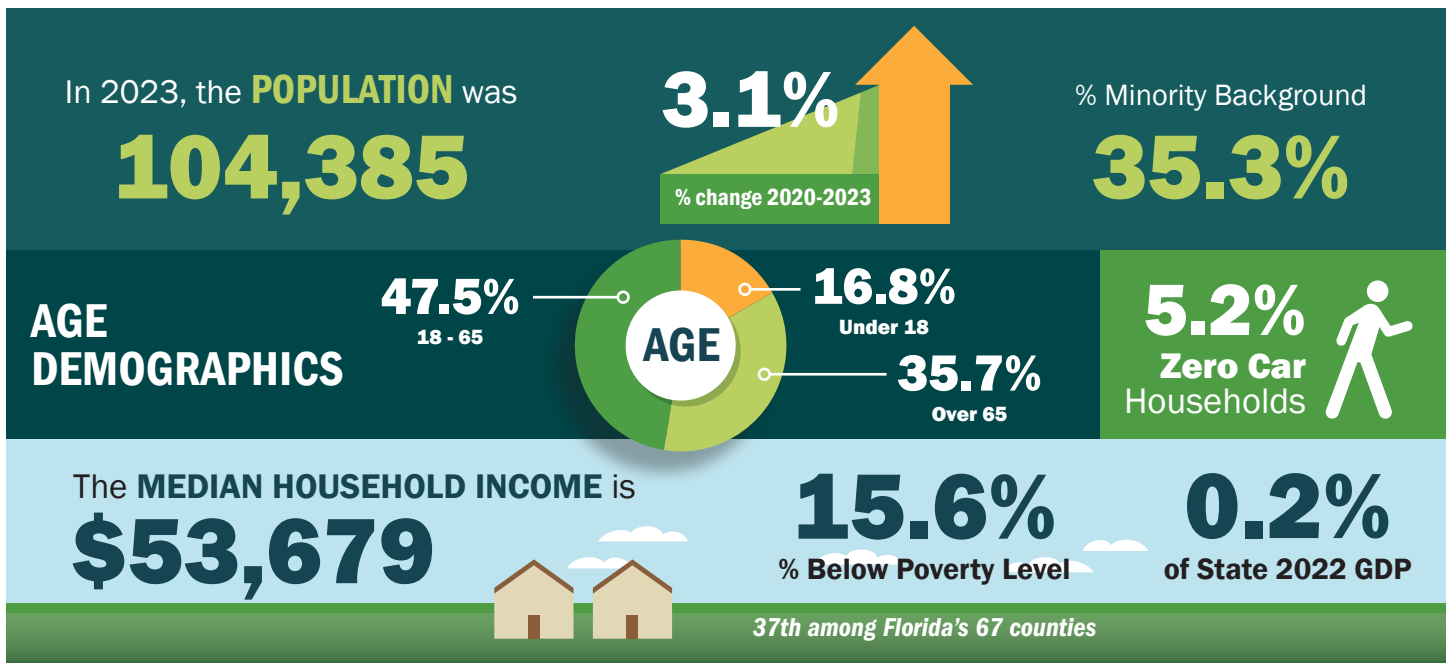
OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND AND IMPACT

Residents and tourists to Highlands County spend an estimated \$61 million annually on outdoor recreation, putting it 3rd among study area counties but first among the four Heartland counties. This is likely due to the diverse range of recreational activities and amenities the county offers. From biking, hiking, and wildlife viewing to paddling, boating, and camping, Highlands County offers many assets that support visitor spending on outdoor recreation and trails. The following summarizes the annual spending by residents and tourists in Highlands County for these activities typically associated with a multi-use trail, based on the 2019 Statewide Conservation Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

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Collier County	\$2,680,095,358
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POPULATION AND ECONOMY AT-A-GLANCE

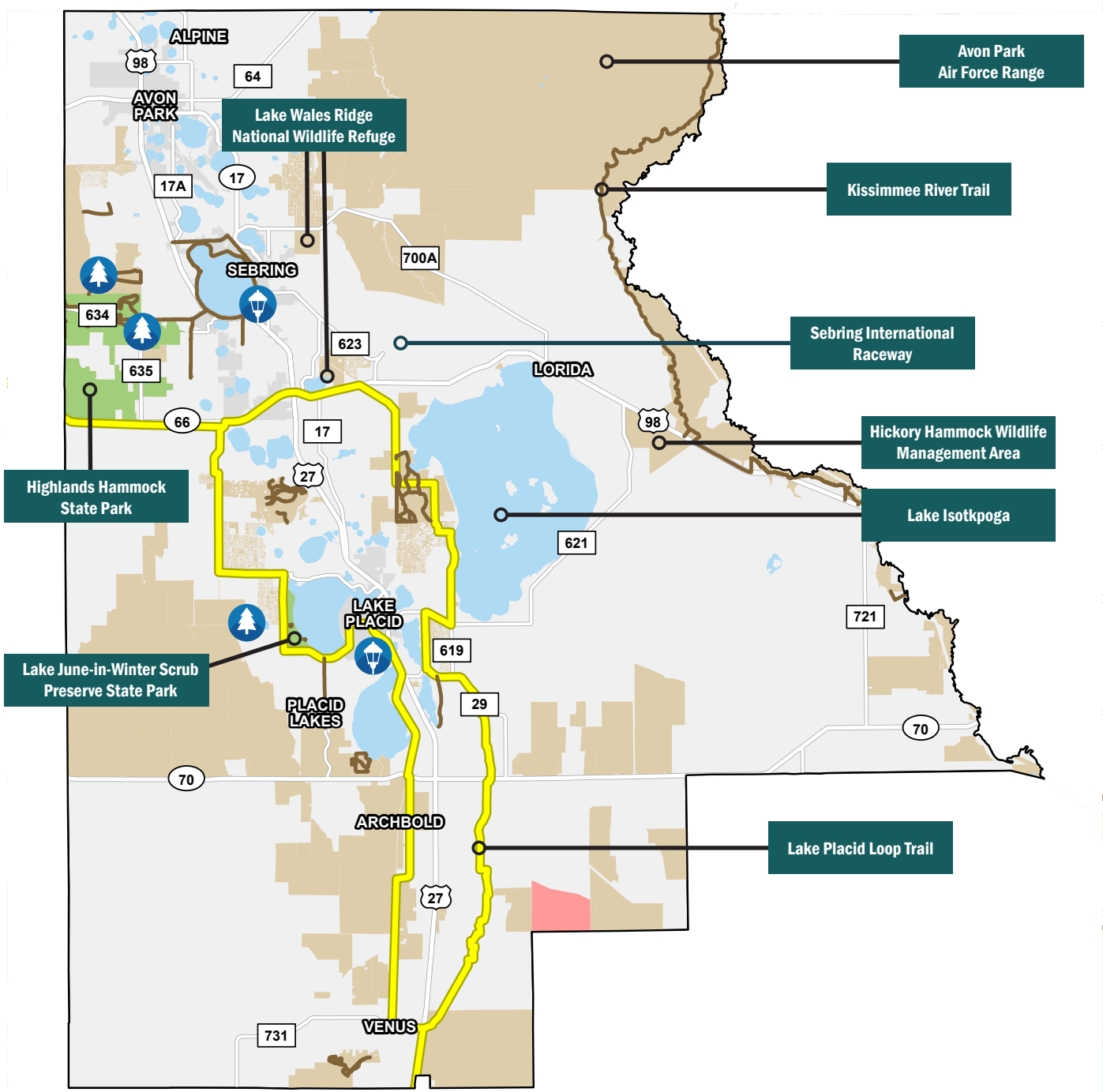


HIGHLANDS COUNTY



LEGEND

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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 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 | | |



HARDEE COUNTY

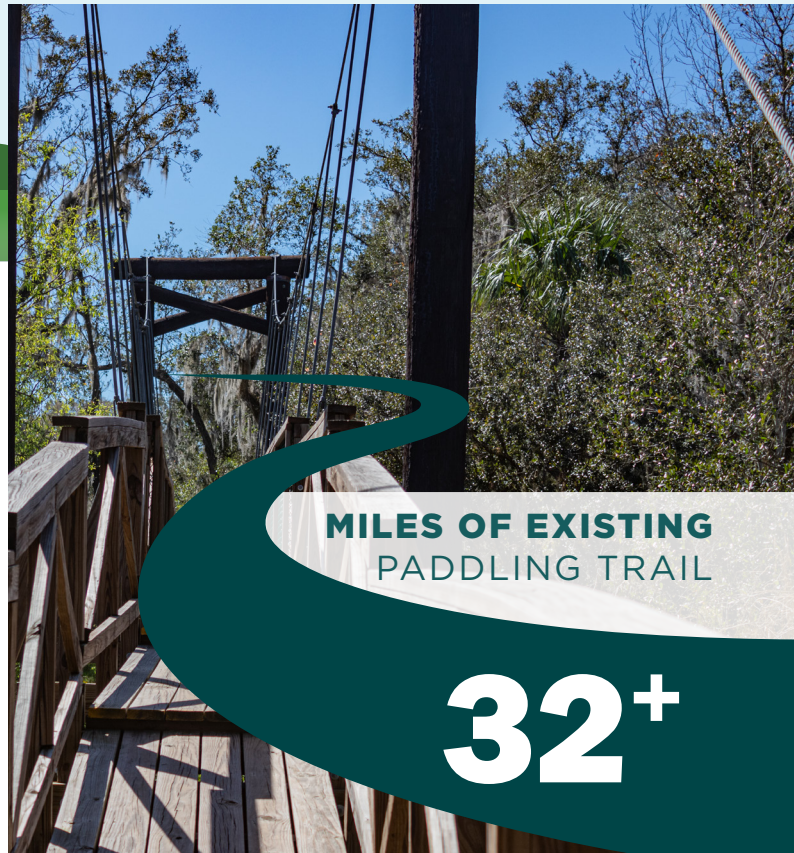
Hardee County is located in Florida's Heartland, and like many of the counties in this region, is relatively rural. Hardee County is known for phosphate mining and its primarily agriculture-driven economy, with citrus groves and cattle ranches. The Peace River also winds its way through the county, providing 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.



MILES OF EXISTING PADDLING TRAIL

32+

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.

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Hardee County	\$3,637,868

FITNESS WALKING/ JOGGING



\$5 K
(Resident Spending)
\$299 K
(Visitor Spending)

BIKING - PAVED ROADS/TRAILS



\$132 K
(Resident Spending)
\$239 K
(Visitor Spending)

HIKING



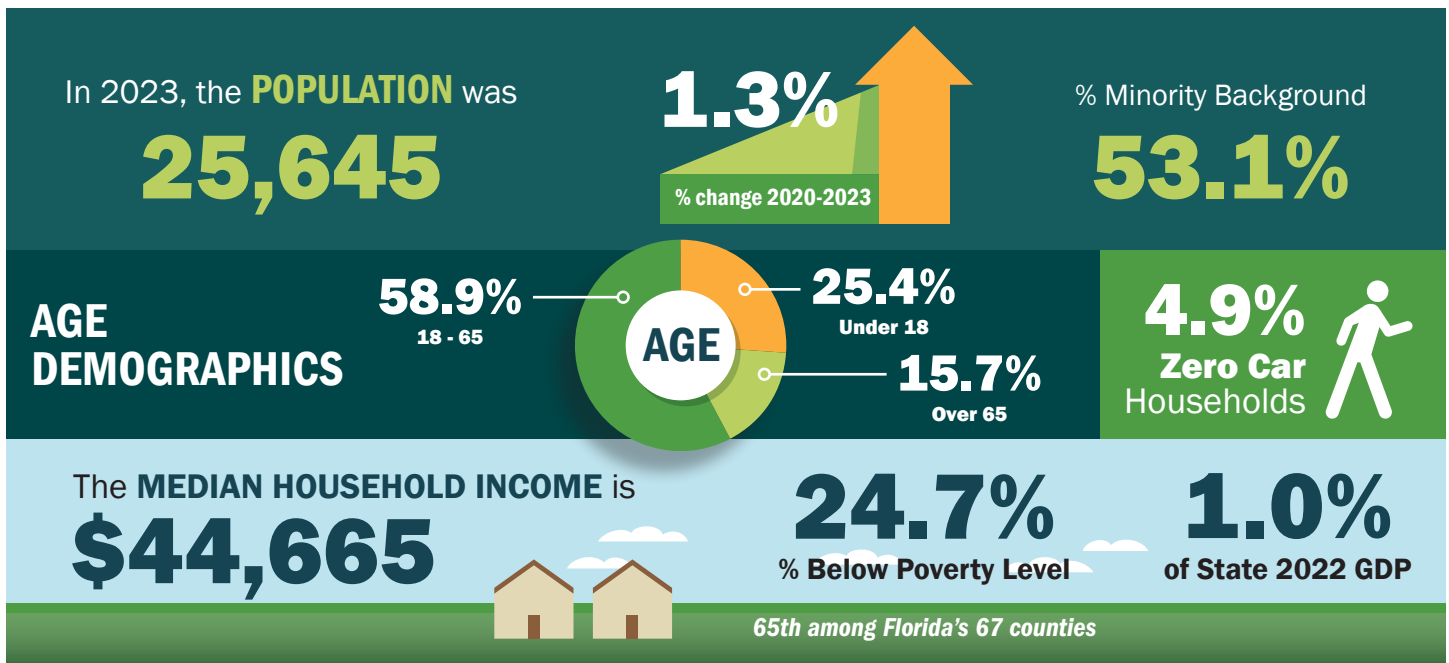
\$69 K
(Resident Spending)
\$258 K
(Visitor Spending)

WILDLIFE VIEWING



\$3 K
(Resident Spending)
\$265 K
(Visitor Spending)

POPULATION AND ECONOMY AT-A-GLANCE

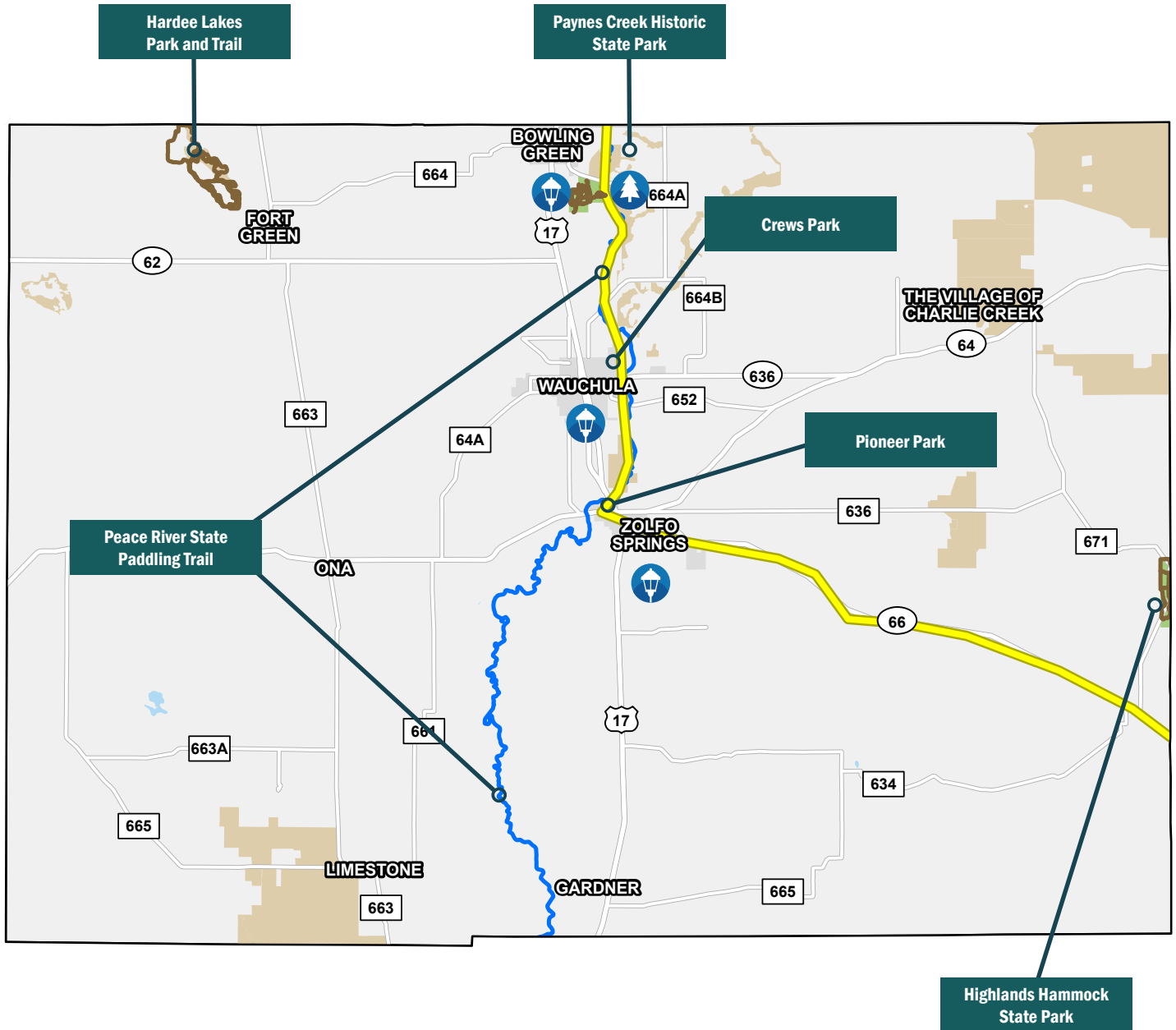


HARDEE COUNTY



LEGEND

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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 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 | | |



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

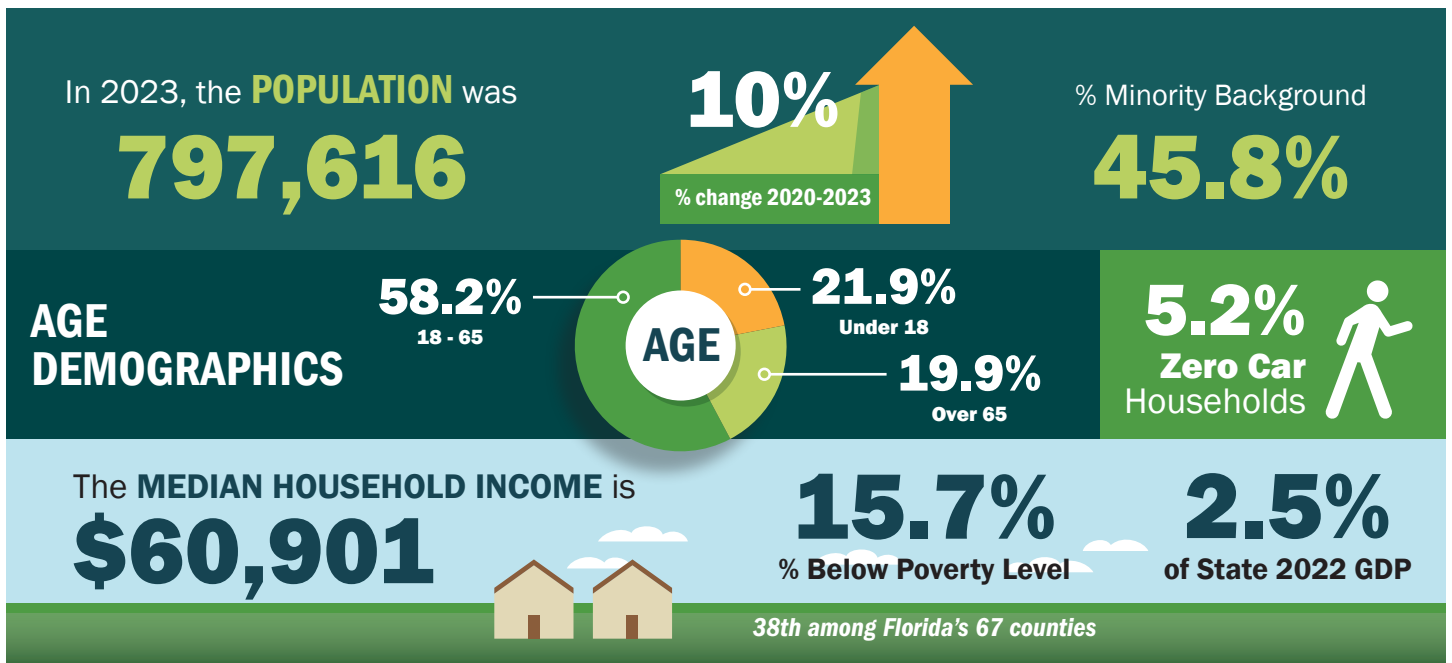
OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND AND IMPACT

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).

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POPULATION AND ECONOMY AT-A-GLANCE



POLK COUNTY

LEGEND



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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
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