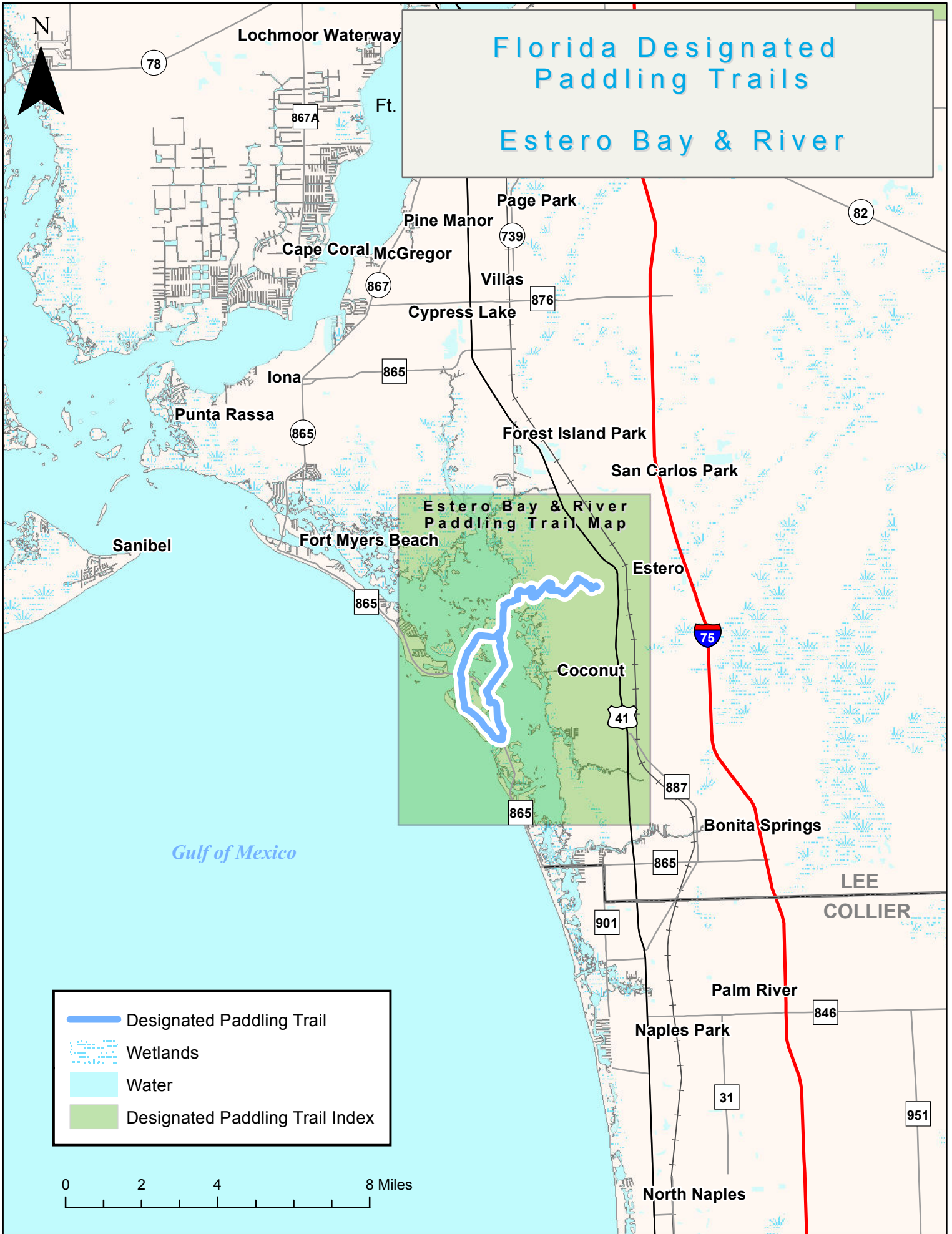


Florida Designated Paddling Trails

Estero Bay & River



- Designated Paddling Trail
- Wetlands
- Water
- Designated Paddling Trail Index



Estero Bay & River Paddling Trail

N



Estero Bay Preserve State Park

Access Point 1: Koreshan State Historic Site
N: 26.4368 W: -81.8197

Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve

Broadway Ave

Estero Pkwy

Estero



Koreshan State Historic Site

Corkscrew Rd

Mound Key Archaeological State Park

Williams Rd

Coon Key

LEE

41

Estero Bay

865

Coconut

Coconut Rd



Lovers Key State Park

Access Point 2: Lovers Key State Park
N: 26.3936 W: -81.8666

Gulf of Mexico

Big Hickory Island Preserve

Estero Bay & River Paddling Trail

- Camping
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Restrooms
- Swimming
- Potable Water
- Florida State Parks
- Wetlands

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Estero River Paddling Trail Guide

The Waterway

The Estero River starts as a black water stream curving through hardwood hammocks and lush shoreline that eventually gives way to mangrove swamps and islands of Estero Bay. Yellow-crowned night herons, cormorants and anhingas are easily spotted; more elusive are black-whiskered vireos and mangrove cuckoos. Two prominent historic sites are featured along the trail: the [Koreshan](#) community and [Mound Key](#). The trail also circumnavigates the island of Lover's Key State Park.

The Paddling Experience

Beginners may be comfortable paddling up or down stream a mile or two from the trail's beginning at the boat ramp at Koreshan. However, the entire nine-mile paddling trail is suitable for intermediate paddlers who must be comfortable with open water conditions on Estero Bay. Expect wind, waves, heavy motor boat traffic across channels and tidal influence four miles downstream where the river meets the bay. Take time to tour the fascinating [Koreshan State Historic Site](#) before or after your adventure. A good destination on the Estero River is [Estero Bay State Buffer Preserve](#), offering a picnic area and 10 miles of hiking trails just two miles downstream from the Koreshan boat ramp. A fascinating stop mid-way is [Mound Key Archeological State Park](#) with an interpretive walk across the span of the island but no facilities. Estero River is part of the [Great Calusa Blueway](#), a large system of scenic trails mingling along the coastline, offering many days of fine paddling and exploration.

Access Points

#1, Start of the trail, Koreshan State Historic Site



There is a boat ramp and canoe rentals in the park. Beginners may be comfortable paddling upstream a mile or two. *From I-75, exit 123 Corkscrew Rd, head west 2 miles, cross U.S. 41 and continue on Corkscrew Road to Koreshan State Historic Site entrance at the intersection of U.S. 41.*

#2, Mile 9, End of the trail, Lover's Key State Park.



[Lovers Key State Park](#) is one of four barrier islands that provide a haven for wildlife. The islands and their waters are home to West Indian manatees, bottlenose dolphins, roseate spoonbills, marsh rabbits, and bald eagles. The two mile long beach is accessible by boardwalk or tram and is popular for shelling, swimming, picnicking and sunbathing. Black Island has over five miles of multiuse trails for hiking and bicycling. Anglers and boaters can launch their vessels from the park's boat ramp. The park's concession offers kayak tours, as well as bicycle, canoe, kayak and paddleboard rentals. For boating access continue past the ranger station to the first parking area. The boat ramp is just to the left of the pedestrian/tram bridge (#12 marker on the Great Calusa Blueway). *The state park is located on CR 865 between Ft. Myers Beach and Bonita Springs. The parks is 10.5 miles west of I-75 on exit 116.*



Estero River Paddling Trail Guide

Outfitters and Shuttle Service

Visit [Outfitters and Local Resources](#) of the Great Calusa Blueway. There are also canoe rentals in Koreshan State Historic Site (239)-992-0311 and kayak, canoe and SUP [rentals](#) in Lover's Key State Park (239)-765-7788.

Base Camp

[Koreshan State Historic Site](#) has a full-facility campground and offers an excellent base for exploring the area. [Reservations](#) can be made up to 11 months in advance. Visitors can take self-guided tours of the settlement or a ranger-guided tour. For overnight stays, the park has a full-facility campground. Campers can enjoy campfire programs every Saturday night starting in December and every Wednesday and Saturday from January through March. The park is easily located on U.S. 41 at Corkscrew Road.

History

Throughout its history, Florida has welcomed pioneers of all kinds. Cyrus Reed Teed was probably the most unusual, bringing followers to Estero in 1894 to build the "New Jerusalem" for his new faith, Koreshanity. The colony, known as the Koreshan Unity, believed that the entire universe existed within a giant, hollow sphere. The colony began fading after Teed's death in 1908, and in 1961 the last four members deeded the land to the state. What remains of their once vibrant community are 11 beautifully maintained historic structures that date from 1882-1920 and landscaped grounds including unique ornamental exotic vegetation from throughout the world. Today, visitors can fish, picnic, boat, and hike where Teed's visionaries once lived and created their own utopia. Visitors can take self-guided tours of the settlement or a ranger-guided tour.



Upper Estero River



Estero Bay



Koreshan State Historic Site
Photos FWC