**POTACKEE TRAIL** (2.14-mile Loop): The trail takes its name from the first and only female Chief of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. This trail by design is a **Loop** trail following “orange” blazes, and is excellent for younger Scouts and Cub Scouts as a day outing. For Boy Scouts the POTACKEE TRAIL may serves as a practice trail for learning to read blazes, testing backpacking equipment, and learning topographic map & magnetic compass skills. For older Boy Scouts and Scouts of Venturing ages 14 to 20-years, the POTACKEE TRAIL is a reasonable route for learning the intricacies of your Global Positioning System (GPS) transceiver. The pathway extends through all the various natural communities found on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation. During periods of high aquifer levels, the trail’s path near wet prairies may need to be re-established by the user. This always adds a moderate level of interest and excitement for the younger Scouts accessing the trail. The trail officially starts and ends along the hardened roadway north of campsite number 1.

**CASEY CRACKER-COW TRAIL** (3.80-mile): This trail following “yellow” blazes takes its name from two sources. First, **CASEY** represents a volunteer Scouter with a long history of service to the Property Committee. Second, **CRACKER-COW** salutes the property’s history as a cattle ranch. Historically, the Cracker-cow is a descendant of Andalusian cattle brought from Spain during early exploration of southern North America and specifically Florida during the 1500s. Three hundred years later, these cattle had adapted to the Florida flatwood and scrub with short inward-facing horns and the ability to forage without notable pasture and grasses. Thus, by the mid-1800s Florida became a cattle producing territory and later state, including up to these current times. The trail is suitable for older Boy Scouts and Venture Scouts, and is accessible from the eastern end of the powerline right-of-way or on it western ends along the hardened roadway north of campsite number 1. The trail traverses some of the more remote landscapes of the Sand Hill Scout Reservation including the xeric sand hill and xeric scrub natural communities to the east and isolated rockland sinkhole communities where the trail dips into these low elevation extremes.

**COACOOCHEE TRAIL** (1.77-mile): The trail name means “Wild Cat”, taking its name from a leading Seminole Chieftain during the closing stages of the Second Seminole War (circa 1835 to 1842). The trail follows “blue” blazes. The Seminole Wars were the longest running wars between the U.S. Government and Native-American tribes that were pushed by expanding colonist. Eventually several southeastern tribes co-mingled into the Seminoles as they were pressed into peninsula Florida and eventually the Everglades. The first documented use of the name Seminole was in 1771, and while the name may originate from Creek or American-Spanish, in both languages the word represents “wild” or “un-tamed”. Today populations of these proud Native-Americans reside in Oklahoma and the Florida Everglades. The trail is suitable for older Boy Scouts and Venture Scouts, and is accessible from the eastern end of the powerline right-of-way or from the roadway entrance gate. The trail traverses the northern landscapes of the Sand Hill Scout Reservation mostly composed of the mesic upland mixed forest natural community, a succession brought about by fire suppression in a formerly xeric and mesic upland pine forest.


**STAFF GAGE TRAIL** (± 5-miles): *This is a build your own trail using GPS technologies, therefore the trail length is variable but could reach distances approaching five miles.* The trail takes its name from the points of destination where staff gages are found on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation. What is a staff gage? It is a water level measuring device, similar to a ruler, placed in surface water bodies on the property. The recorded water levels are used to study aquifer discharge and recharge, because the surface waters at the Reservation are exposures of the Floridan Aquifer System’s potentiometric surface. These active research projects occurring on the property also study aquifer drawdown and recovery during well field pumping operations for the Hernando County drinking water supply. Working through the **STAFF GAGE TRAIL** allows you to visit parts of the property less frequented with a purpose toward ground water hydrology and wet prairie biology. The five-step approach described in the **KARST WINDOWS TRAIL** is applicable here: 1) learn the instrument, 2) reserve a campsite, 3) complete the trail, 4) debrief, and 5) do follow-up S.T.E.A.M research and discovery. This trail will traverse various natural communities, however, considerable time will be spent in mesic hammock, palustrine wet prairie, and rockland sinkhole communities.

**WITNESS POST TRAIL** (± 6-miles): *This is a build your own trail using GPS technologies, therefore the trail length is variable but could reach distances approaching six miles.* The trail takes its name from the points of destination where witness post are found on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation. What is a witness post? It is a visible marker serving “WITNESS” to nearby elevation/survey monuments used to build USGS topographic maps, NOAA coastal charts, establish Section survey corners, serve as spot elevations to calibrate aerial imagery, and study water level communication between sinkholes, karst ponds, and the Floridan Aquifer System. Working through all of the witness post locations will be challenging and therefore completing this trail should be reserved for those experienced with GPS use. The five-step approach described in the **KARST WINDOWS TRAIL** is applicable here: 1) learn the instrument, 2) reserve a campsite, 3) complete the trail, 4) debrief, and 5) do follow-up S.T.E.A.M research and discovery. This trail will traverse all of the natural communities found on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation, inclusive of xeric sandhill and scrub, mesic uplands and flatlands, palustrine wet prairies, lacustrine flatwood/prairie/marsh lakes, and sinkhole lake, and with imagination subterranean aquatic cave.

**1864 BROOKSVILLE RAID TRAIL** (~1.50-miles): *This trail utilizes your pace, the topographic map, and magnetic compass for navigating its path.* The trail recognizes the second Civil War raid around the Brooksville area by the United States to disrupt the export of cotton, salt, and naval stores by blockade-runners. These critical goods to support the Confederacy moved from numerous small and clandestine locations inland, making their way to the coastline’s many small havens where naval blockade-runners could burden the goods and move un-detected between the blockaded ports such as Tampa and Cedar Keys. Bayport, west of Sand Hill Scout Reservation was such a haven for burdening goods and the Reservation’s pinelands were sources for naval stores. This trail traverse several of the natural communities found on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation, inclusive of xeric sandhill, mesic hammocks, palustrine wet prairies, and lacustrine sinkhole lake.
**Prominent Hummocks Trail** (± 7-miles): *This is a build your own trail using GPS technologies, therefore the trail length is variable but could reach distances approaching seven miles.* The trail takes its name from prominent topographic features positioned across the Sand Hill Scout Reservation property. The trail is suitable for older Boy Scouts, Venture Scouts, and/or Sea Scouts often allowing these youth (and their adult leaders) to gain experience with the global positioning systems (GPS) technologies mixed into their program’s advancement requirements. The trail can serve as a controlled training session for a more serious high adventure trek or cruise that requires similar knowledge and skills. Approaching the completion of this trail is suggested along these steps: 1) learn and play with the instrumentation and maps at weekly meetings, 2) reserve a campsite and move operations into the field, 3) use a camp-day to convert you trail plan into footprints, 4) debrief on successes and shortfalls in your planning. Because the trail is variable the natural communities traversed may vary, however, considerable time will be spent in xeric upland sandhill and xeric upland hammock communities.

**Karst Windows Trail** (± 4-miles): *This is a build your own trail using GPS technologies, therefore the trail length is variable but could reach distances approaching four miles.* The trail takes its name from prominent topographic and geologic features positioned across the Sand Hill Scout Reservation property. The trail is suitable for older Boy Scouts, Venture Scouts, and/or Sea Scouts often allowing these youth (and their adult leaders) to gain experience with the global positioning systems (GPS) technologies mixed into their program’s advancement requirements. The trail can serve as a controlled training session for a more serious high adventure trek or cruise that requires similar knowledge and skills. This trail also boasts S.T.E.A.M. interest and challenges. Approaching the completion of this trail is suggested along these steps: 1) learn and play with the instrumentation and maps at weekly meetings, 2) reserve a campsite and move operations into the field, 3) use a camp-day to convert you trail plan into footprints, 4) debrief on successes and shortfalls in your planning, 5) conduct follow-up research and learning for S.T.E.A.M. issues at weekly meetings. Because the trail is variable the natural communities traversed may vary, however, considerable time will be spent in mesic hammock, palustrine wet prairie, and rockland sinkhole communities.

**Smithson Bootlegger’s Trail** (0.7-mile): This is a blazed trail, following “red” blazes generally along an east-west alignment. Other trails connect to this short, forest-entrapped trail. The trail takes its name from the era of the 18th Constitutional Amendment and the prohibition of alcohol circa 1920 to 1935. Distilleries were common in these wooded remotes, and bootleggers moved the moonshine inland and to the coast. Revenuers and G-men pushed to enforce the law, while local officers thwarted their efforts through intimidation, assassination, and murder. Such are the suspicions of a chopped-up Model T vehicle and other artifacts found buried along this trail’s path. Uncertainties pair with accounts of the unsolved assassination of a local city attorney named Herbert Smithson, which took place in front of the Tangerine Hotel a few miles away in Brooksville. Spend some pre-camp time researching this era of our history. The trail meanders along an abandoned rut “BOOTLEGGER’S” road and historic fence line, passing primarily through a mesic upland mixed forest natural community.
PUNTA RASSA TRAIL (mileage 0.29-miles): This nearly straight trail takes its name from a historic location south of present-day Ft. Myers. Spanish for “smooth or flat”, Punta Rassa was used by the Spanish to unload cattle in the 1500s. Three hundred years later these now wild cows were rounded-up by Florida cowmen, known as “Crackers”, and shipped to Cuba from Punta Rassa, one of two major ports on Florida’s Gulf coast circa 1820 to 1920. Cedar Keys, was the other major port of the day. The trail passes primarily through a mesic upland mixed forest natural community, a succession due to fire suppression in a former mesic pine forest. With such a short length, this trail (following “white” blazes) is used for connecting to other trails, which may allow for lengthening or shortening a Sand Hill Scout Reservation trek.

MOONSHINER’S BACKDOOR TRAIL (mileage 0.20-miles): This trail recognizes the simple fact that any Moonshiner wanted a backway out when the Treasury Department came to their clandestine still location to disrupt the “WHITE-LIGHTNING” drip and arrest the men stoking the fire. The trail passes primarily through a remnant natural community of mesic pine forest. With such a short length, this trail (following “white” blazes) is best incorporated as a connector to other trails allowing planners options for lengthening or shortening their Sand Hill Scout Reservation journey.

1863 BAYPORT RAID TRAIL (mileage ≈ 1.20-miles): This trail utilizes your pace, the topographic map, and magnetic compass for navigating its path. This trail brings attention to the first Civil War raid on the port town to the west of Sand Hill Scout Reservation (i.e. Bayport, Florida) where locals for export by blockade-runners secretly delivered cotton, naval stores, salt, and sugar to the Confederacy. This trail is a “MAP, COMPASS, & PACE” trail that due to the terrain has a moderate difficulty level and is best for older Boy Scouts, Venture Scouts, and/or Sea Scouts that are practicing these navigation skills. If you have mastered the 1864 BROOKSVILLE RAID TRAIL this is your next choice for confronting backwoods navigation challenges. It serves as a connector trail for other trails on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation property, thus extending or shortening a hike. The trail passes through primarily mixed xeric upland scrub and sandhill natural communities.

LARRY DIEPOOLDER TRAIL (mileage ≈ 1.40-miles): This trail utilizes your pace, the topographic map, and magnetic compass for navigating its path. This trail name recognizes the Engineer, Rancher, Conservationist, and Humanitarian...Larry E. Diepolder, owner of the Sandy Hills Ranch...and his visionary willing of this unique property to Scouts for use as a Scout Camp circa 1987. It was Mr. Diepolder’s instruction that the property would remain intact so youth could have a large enough land-tract to explore unhindered, experiencing the natural Florida outdoors. This trail is a “MAP, COMPASS, & PACE” trail that due to the terrain has a high difficulty level and is best for older Boy Scouts, Venture Scouts, and/or Sea Scouts experienced with outdoor navigation. If you have mastered the 1864 BROOKSVILLE RAID TRAIL (low difficulty), and the 1863 BAYPORT RAID TRAIL (moderate difficulty), this is your next choices to test your boondocks direction-finding talents. The trail passes through primarily mixed xeric upland scrub and sandhill natural communities; serving as a connector trail for other trails on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation property, thus extending or shortening a hike.
4Cs Overnight Trail or Coacoochee, Casey Cracker-cow Overnight (5.57-miles): This is a designed (but not the only possible) backpacking trail with an overnight stay at the “Barn” and continuation on the trail the next day. It combines two trails, best approached by starting on the Coacoochee Trail to the powerline right-of-way and continuing partly on the Casey Cracker-cow Trail to the overnight camping location near the “Barn”, which has latrine facilities to manage solid wastes, showers, and provide potable water. The second day is of shorter duration, finishing at the start/finish for the Potackee Trail. Throughout the 4Cs Overnight Trail, a backpacker will encounter all of the major natural communities recorded on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation, and experience the maximum elevation relief the property offers. This trail is appropriate for older Boy Scouts, Venture Scouts, and/or Sea Scouts.

Other Overnight Trail Opportunities for Older Scout Programs: Once your leaders get a knack for planning treks using the trail system on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation, they will surely get a flair for patching trails and Reservation campsites together for an endless combination of overnight outings. These may include other traditional backpacking treks like the 4Cs Overnight Trail, but can also incorporated “Base-camp” approaches developing “Loop” trail day hikes...or using two campsites and a “Split-group”...treks that pass along the trail(s) extending to the other group’s camp from the night before. With the ability to mix & match over 30-miles of hiking trail opportunities, there are near-endless blends for the perceptive leader to experience the Sand Hill Scout Reservation Ranger’s Challenge.

More High Adventure Opportunities for Older Scouting Programs: While you could spend 12-months plus accomplishing all the trail challenges and S.T.E.A.M. missions developed on the Sand Hill Scout Reservation...there is more. Just outside the front gate at the intersection with State Route 50 and a turn left...or... right, you will find yourself within Florida’s Nature Coast.

Inside an hour drive, 60-minutes or less and just outside the Sand Hill Scout Reservation “Base Camp” there are over 333,000 acres or 525 square miles of preserved wilderness with opportunities crossing or co-mingling 24+ high adventure activities. Within these preserved tracts, there are over 1,650 miles of variously improved trails for bikes, foot, horses, kayaks, in-line skates, and/or canoes. In addition, there are the unlimited encounters with un-marked cross-country trekking and/or coastal water voyages for the exceedingly serious outdoor aficionado. Stay tuned in...