



**Polk County Ordinance #08-003:**

Hours of Operation:

6:00 a.m.– 6:30 p.m. Standard Time  
5:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Daylight Saving Time.

No motorized vehicles beyond the designated parking area.

Enter only through designated parking area.

Pets should be leashed at all times.

Collection or destruction of plants, animals or archeological artifacts is prohibited.

No fireworks, paintball guns, alcoholic beverages or loud music.

Removing, damaging or defacing public facilities is prohibited.

No discharging of firearms per F.S 790.15

**TRAILWALKING TIPS**

Plan ahead and prepare for your hike.

Remember to bring sunscreen, insect repellent and plenty of water.

Wear comfortable, sturdy walking shoes.

Hike with a group whenever possible.

Become familiar with hiking trail distances before starting your walk.

Stay on designated trails for your own safety and to avoid trampling vegetation.

Take your time.

There is plenty to observe out on the trail.

Be advised there are always risks associated with visiting preserves and wilderness areas.

**Take nothing but pictures,**

**Leave nothing but footprints**

**ENJOY YOUR VISIT!**

**Marshall  
Hampton  
Reserve  
and  
Panther Point Trail**




Polk County Board of County Commissioners  
Parks and Natural Resources Division  
4177 Ben Durrance Road  
Bartow, FL 33830  
(863) 534-7377  
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Welcome to Marshall Hampton Reserve

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Marshall Hampton Reserve (1,173 acres) was acquired by the Southwest Florida Water Management District in 2008. The Polk County Environmental Lands Program entered into a management agreement with the Southwest Florida Water Management District in 2010 to oversee the management of the property.

The Marshall Hampton Reserve is also the trailhead for the new Panther Point Trail. The southern reaches of this trail are still under construction. Please keep in mind that there are no facilities of any kind on these trails. Whatever is packed in must be packed out. At times, the property can be extremely wet, often flooding entire sections of land.

**NATURE-BASED RECREATION**

**HORSEBACK RIDING** (Horseback riding is available by special use permit.) -To obtain a free permit contact (863) 534-7377. The trails are multi-use trails shared by hikers and others, so please keep horses at a leisurely walk. Riders should take extra caution along the Osprey Overlook Loop Trail, the ground is uneven and there are numerous holes in the trail, please watch your horse's step.

**WILDLIFE VIEWING** - A variety of wildlife have been observed on the site, such as gators, bobcats, turkeys and pileated woodpeckers. If you listen while you walk you may hear the animals moving about in the palmettos as this is a great place for them to hide.

**MULTI-USE TRAILS**

Visitors have a couple of multi-use trail options to explore the Marshall Hampton Reserve. All trails start on the western edge of the parking area, and leads visitors through the equestrian parking area to the main trailhead. Once past the main trailhead, the trail quickly allows visitors to escape the open pasture and enter a small oak hammock. The shade of the large trees provides great refuge for visitors as well as wildlife. The trail then shortly exits the oak hammock and under the protection of a couple of large oaks, visitors can view the pond. Just a short distance to the west is where the trail splits, giving visitors four options.

**PALMETTO LOOP TRAIL**

(0.1 mile –easy-shaded)

Palmetto Loop is a short scenic path that gives visitors of all ages a chance to experience a shaded oak hammock within short walking distance to the parking area.

**OSPREY OVERLOOK LOOP TRAIL**

(2.5 mile loop - moderate - uneven ground)

Osprey Overlook Loop Trail is a path that follows an elevated berm all the way around the 60 acre pond (approximately 2.5 mile loop). Travelers beware that this manmade feature is plagued with uneven ground and scattered holes. Hikers and horseback riders should watch your footing while traveling this trail. During extreme storm events, sections of this trail may washout and caution should be taken. The advantages of this trail are an elevated view of the pond and its wildlife. Wildlife watchers will enjoy watching the ospreys, cormorants, coots and eagles catching their prey. There are also a couple of resident alligators that patrol the shoreline, waiting for an easy meal.

**ACORN HAMMOCK LOOP**

(3.5 mile loop - moderate - shaded)

Acorn Hammock Loop trail gives visitors the opportunity to hike a 3.5 mile shaded loop trail through a scenic oak hammock. The trail starts at the base of the pond, breaking away from the Osprey Overlook Loop Trail and then meanders into the oak hammock where it loops through historic pine flatwoods. The trail is mostly shaded. Trails may be seasonally wet; look for the old footbridges which allow visitors to cross some of the wetter areas.

**PANTHER POINT TRAIL**

(5.25 miles, to temporary end - moderate - partially shaded)

The first phase of the Panther Point Trail heads south paralleling the eastern shore of Lake Hancock for just over 5 miles to a temporary end. When completed, this trail will terminate at US Highway 98 and Ft Fraser Trail. Hikers must now turn around and return to this Trailhead, so anticipate a 10+ mile hike if walking the length of the trail to the turnaround and back to the parking area. This trail winds through pastures, reclaimed mined areas, scenic swamps and has beautiful lakeshore vistas. Portions of the trail will be shared with cattle; please do not approach or disturb. Alligators may be observed on or crossing the trail so be alert and give them wide berth. There are no exits on the trail, so pace yourself and give yourself time and energy to make the return trip.

# Marshall Hampton Reserve

and

## Panther Point Trail

Marshall Hampton Reserve is open daily, year round, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Standard Time and 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. during Daylight Savings Time. Please call the Environmental Lands Program at (863) 534-7377 for more information or to obtain a special use permit for horseback riding.

