



## GULF STATE PARK



## Discover.....

...the beauty and diversity of the *Backcountry Trail*! Seven trails among six distinct ecosystems make up the more than 14 miles of the *Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail* system through Orange Beach, AL and the Gulf State Park. This multi-purpose trail is shared by hikers, cyclists, photographers and nature lovers all year round. It offers a paved path through thousands of acres of natural habitat that is home to countless species of native plants and wildlife.



Visitors will find convenient parking areas at designated trail heads. Along the trails, benches and swings dot the path for

those who want to linger a while and a butterfly garden and pavilion are the perfect spot for a picnic. Whether you're looking for a quick escape or a day-long adventure, the *Backcountry Trail* offers a unique opportunity to explore the natural beauty and diverse landscapes of Alabama's Gulf Coast.



TWIN BRIDGES TRAIL



## ATTRACTIONS

### Butterfly Garden & Pavilion

Relax on a swing, picnic in the screened pavilion or take a stroll through the butterfly garden at this beautiful spot that serves as a hub for several trails. Restrooms and water fountains are located nearby.



### Boulder Park

Near the intersection of **Catman Road, Twin Bridges, Rattlesnake Ridge and Rosemary Dunes** there is a special new adventure for the kid, and the kid at heart:

a boulder park with small, medium and large boulders for climbing! Come check out the view from the top!

### Geocaching

Bring your GPS or smartphone for a round of geocaching on the trail – there are many treasures hidden among the natural beauty!



### Backcountry Loop

A great addition for runners and sports enthusiasts. **Powerline Connection** creates a loop using portions of **Gulf Oak Ridge, Twin Bridges and Catman Road**. With the loop measuring just over 5k... it's the perfect place to train...and even has some extra trail for warmup and cooldown!

## RULES

For your safety, please keep the following rules in mind when visiting the *Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail*.

- Non-motorized vehicle use only.
- Absolutely No Fires or Smoking – wildfires may result!
- Pets must remain on a leash at all times.
- Keep to the right! Be mindful of patrol and maintenance vehicles and give them the right of way.
- 10 mph speed limit – no "road training" allowed on the trail – it is not designed for high-speed road biking.
- No littering. Please dispose of litter or dog refuse in provided bins.
- DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY – no camping allowed.



The trail hosts many sports, holiday and community events during the year. To keep up with the latest trail updates, events and activities or for trail souvenirs, go to:

[www.backcountrytrail.com](http://www.backcountrytrail.com)  
251-981-1180

Join the Conversation



Your Donations Count

Become a partner with us by donating to the trail, either in a donation box or on our website – your support helps us keep the trails beautiful and produce these wonderful brochures! Thank you!

# About the Trail

The *Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail* is a transportation alternative and collaborative partnership between the City of Orange Beach and Gulf State Park. It is named for long-time Gulf State Park Superintendent Hugh Branyon, who managed Gulf State Park from 1970 until his retirement in 2009. The *Backcountry Trail* was designated a National Recreation Trail in 2010 and is a part of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail and the Coastal Connection National Scenic Byway.



GULF OAK RIDGE TRAIL



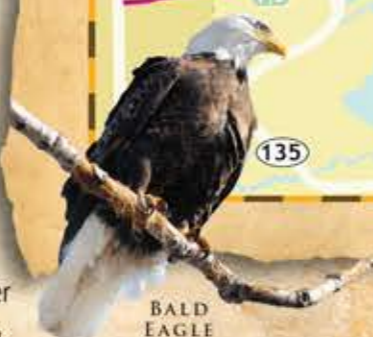
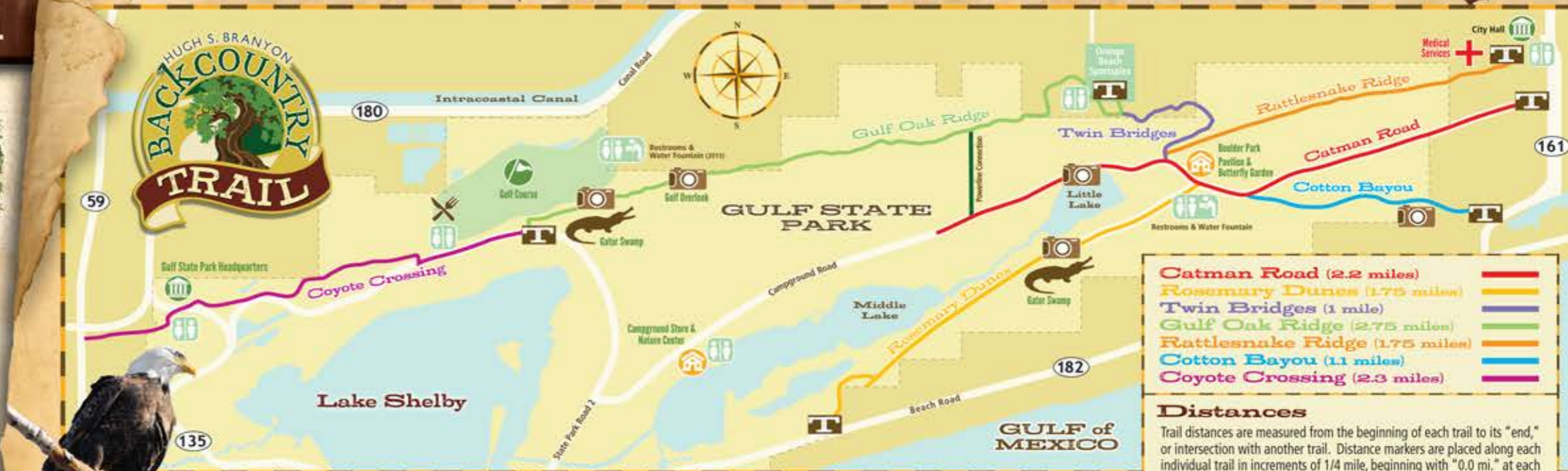
BIKERS ON THE TRAIL

or work on Watchable Wildlife projects. Please call 251.981.1180 for more information.

The *Backcountry Trail* was developed using existing logging trails, abandoned roads and paths. Several sites used by Native Americans have been discovered and it is thought that some of the trails that are now part of the *Backcountry Trail* were used to connect each site. When settlers came into the area in the 1700-1800's they used these same trails which, in modern times, became logging roads, hunting trails and the original **Catman Road**. The *Backcountry Trail* "rediscovered" these old trails, improved them and now, once again, people are using these same paths that are quite possibly thousands of years old.

AMERICAN BOBCAT

The *Backcountry Trail* complex consists of seven trails, totaling nearly 14 miles of paved, multi-use paths. The system is home to several events throughout the year, including fun runs, half-marathons, hayrides and fundraisers. Periodically, volunteer projects and work days are scheduled, offering trail enthusiasts an opportunity to maintain and improve the trail system, restore native vegetation,



BALD EAGLE

## Flora & Fauna

The *Backcountry Trail* system is home to six distinct ecosystems: wet pine flatwoods, live oak maritime forests, coastal dune and swales, longleaf sand ridges, freshwater marshes and coastal hardwood swamps. From the canopies of ancient oaks atop the island's highest bluff to the palmettos and scrub oaks covering acres of sandy swales, the combination of familiar and rare ecosystems in such a relatively small area is unique.



PITCHER PLANT

Each ecosystem contains its own variety of plants, including rare species. Among them are white-topped pitcher plants, needle palms, sundews, Florida rosemary and conradina. There are several rare and threatened plant communities found along the trail and in Gulf State Park as well, making the park and trails a perfect place for a fun day of plant identification.

PYGMY RATTLESNAKE

Be sure to bring your camera when visiting the *Backcountry Trail*! The trail can be a bird-watcher's paradise, with four locations on the trail listed as stops on the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail. In addition to birds, visitors may be lucky enough to catch a gopher tortoise foraging along **Rosemary Dunes**, a bobcat on **Twin Bridges**, or a dandy whitetailed deer on **Gulf Oak Ridge**. The trail is home to many reptile species and has two excellent viewing locations for American alligators, including Lefty and her family on **Rosemary Dunes**. Mammals commonly seen on the trail also include armadillos, raccoons, coyotes, otters, fox, bobcats and even wild boar.



EGRET

OUR RESIDENT ALLIGATOR, LEFTY



## ECO TOURS

TAKE A TOUR OF THE WILD AND LEARN ABOUT THE WILDLIFE OF PLEASURE ISLAND

Friendly and knowledgeable tour guides, representing the City of Orange Beach, will provide a 2 hour trip through pristine woodlands and natural habitats of our *Backcountry Trail*.

- Restrooms & Water Fountain Stops Along The Tour
- Bring Snacks, Beverages & Insect Spray
- Don't Forget Your Camera!

\$15 per person - Reservations only - Seasonal  
To schedule a tour call 251.981.1180 or email [lellis@cityoforangebeach.com](mailto:lellis@cityoforangebeach.com)



RED FOX