

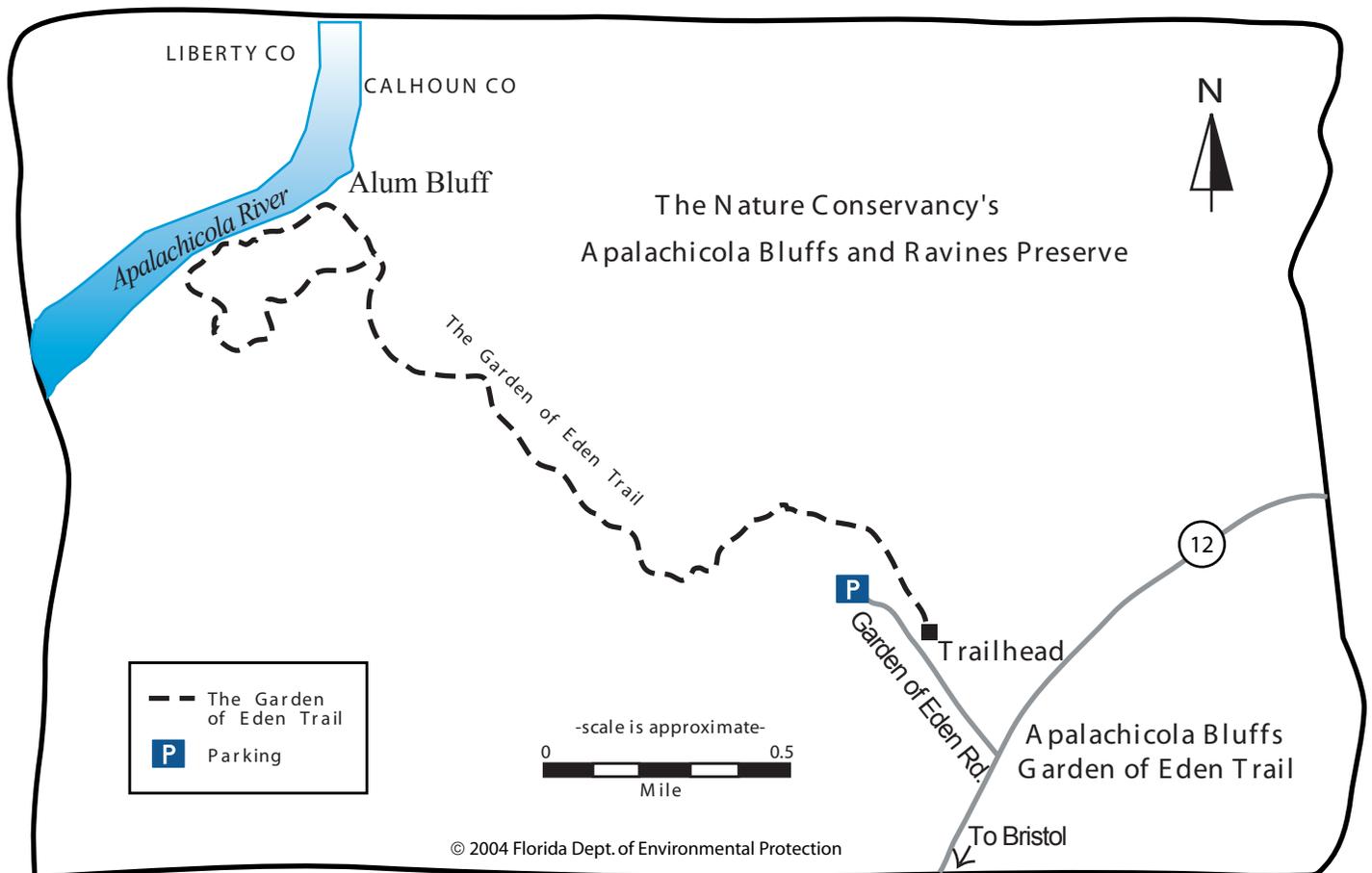
The Nature Conservancy's Garden of Eden

Located in the Apalachicola ravines region in Florida, the Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve protects one of the few areas where steephead ravines exist. Steephead ravines are unique geologic features that provide refuge for a number of rare species of plants and animals, some found nowhere else on earth. The region is biologically unique to Florida and is home to many species more commonly found in the Appalachian Mountains.

A 3.5-mile, round-trip, self-guided trail takes you through an enchanting area that local legend claims is the original Garden of Eden. Beginning in longleaf pine/wiregrass uplands, the trail soon skirts the top of a dramatic steephead, descends the slope forest to cross a steephead stream, climbs up through sandhills, and eventually opens to a spectacular view from a bluff 135 feet above the Apalachicola River. This trail is very strenuous, with steep climbs and descents.

The preserve also protects two of the world's rarest evergreens, the Florida Torreya and Florida Yew. There are yews along the botanical loop trail, but there are no longer live torreya visible from the trail. Other plants of interest are the large-leaved, large-flowered ashe; pyramid magnolias; Florida anise; mountain laurel; oak leaf hydrangea; spring ephemerals, such as trillium and wild ginger; Gholson's blazing star; ferns; and an array of fall-blooming sandhill wildflowers and grasses, including toothed basil and lopsided Indiangrass.

The preserve provides a home to several species of resident and migrating birds including bald eagles, Mississippi kites, swallow-tailed kites, wild turkeys, worm-eating warblers, hooded warblers and Swainson's warblers. By the streams along the bottom of the ravines, you might catch a glimpse of Apalachicola dusky salamanders and fire-back crayfish. Common upland species include cottontail rabbits, white-tailed deer, six-lined race runners, wild turkeys, gopher tortoises and various snakes, including the eastern diamondback rattlesnake. Some visitors may spot an eastern indigo snake or a Sherman's fox squirrel.



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Major Activities: Hiking

Trail Length/Surface: 3.5-miles/unpaved trail

Fee: None

County: Liberty

Nearby Cities: Bristol and Tallahassee

Notes:

For your safety, please observe trail signs at Alum Bluff and stay well back from the edge as you follow the orange-blazed trail along the river bluff. The bluff is an active slide area and abandoned sections of trail are badly undercut and prone to collapse.

How to Prepare for Your Visit:

Only foot travel is allowed on the trail. To protect the preserve's rare plants, animals, and cultural and geologic features, the following are not allowed: pets, smoking, littering, camping, climbing on the bluffs, collecting, firearms, fires, hunting and radios. Visitors should plan on a 3-hour hike. Bring plenty of water and you may wish to bring a hiking stick to assist with the steep climbs and descents.

Hours: The preserve is open to the public from dawn to dusk, year-round.

Access and Directions:

From Bristol

From State Road 20 in Bristol, take State Road 12 east (toward Greensboro) 1.6 miles to Garden of Eden Road, a dirt road to the left. There will be a large "Apalachicola Bluffs - Garden of Eden Trail" sign on the left. Turn left on Garden of Eden Road. Go 0.4 miles to the trailhead.

From Tallahassee: (about one hour west of Tallahassee)

Take I-10 west to exit 174. Turn left on State Road 12 and continue for 20.3 miles (turning left at the blinking light in Greensboro). As you near Bristol, look for at large "Apalachicola Bluffs - Garden of Eden Trail" sign on your right. Turn right on Garden of Eden Road. Go 0.4 miles to the trailhead.



Contact Information:

The Nature Conservancy
Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve
State Road 12
Bristol, FL 32321
Phone: 850-643-2756



Florida.GreenwaysAndTrails.com