

In search of: **Gopher Tortoises**
Smyrna Dunes Boardwalk
Nearest Town: New Smyrna Beach, FL
County: Volusia
A 1.5-mile boardwalk, easy trail



General description:

This 1.5 mile, all boardwalk, “dune walkover,” loop trail protects the fragile sand dunes from foot traffic, while still allowing the public to view the dunes, dune life and the ocean. Along the way you will see Gopher Tortoise dens (holes in the ground that can go 10 feet deep and 30 feet long) and you are likely to see an actual Gopher Tortoise out enjoying an afternoon lunch.



What you may see:

You will pass through lush vegetation as you enter the dunes. But, as you approach the ocean, you will view a much more barren landscape among the sand dunes. There are several beach access boardwalks so you can enjoy the beach, as well as the dune landscape. Shore birds, coastal songbirds and a wide variety of other wildlife may be seen on a good day. What you will find on the beach, well, it’s what you find on the beach. An observation tower will allow you a panoramic view of the Indian River and surrounding area.

Activities at this location:**How to get there:**

Physical address: 2995 N. Peninsula Ave., New Smyrna Beach, FL

Directions: From I-95 take Exit 249 and go east on S.R. 44 toward New Smyrna Beach. Follow S.R. 44 for about 5.4 miles and turn left onto S. Peninsula Avenue. Turn left and follow Peninsula Ave. for about 2.5 miles until you reach the U.S. Coast Guard Station. Just before you enter it, turn right into Smyrna Dunes Park.

Pay your entrance fee and ask for a map of the area. The trailheads are just off the parking lot.

Special attraction;

At various points along the trail, you will have great views of Ponce Inlet Lighthouse as it stands guard over the Ponce DeLeon Inlets and the Indian River. Enjoy the view from here because it is a long and circuitous route around to actually get to the lighthouse from the north.

GPS readings:

Park entrance:

N 29° 03.914'

W 080° 54.838'

Parking lot and trailheads:

N 29° 03.947'

W 080° 54.873'

Cautions:

This is a wide-open boardwalk with little shade. Bring sunscreen and plenty of water. All standard Florida precautions are in effect.

Season-Hours-Fees-Parking:

Open year round, from sunrise to sunset. There is adequate parking. There is a minimal entrance fee, per vehicle, to enter the park (\$10.00 when we went).

Time:

Bring a picnic lunch, a beach chair and enjoy the day.

Pet friendly?

Yes, but lots of rules for them. Check the brochure upon your arrival.

Facilities:

On the actual boardwalk, you will find small, shaded picnic pavilions and grills, many of which overlook the ocean. You will find restrooms at the parking area, or perhaps down on the beach in some locations. There is a large covered picnic pavilion at the parking area.



What we found:

“Wow!” That’s what we said upon seeing this sprawling boardwalk all along the ocean shore and dunes. It is impressive. A lot of wood was brought in to make this massive boardwalk. The views were great, of surfers, boats, the lighthouse and the ocean. The boardwalk is well maintained and a real asset to Volusia County. It is a nice, enjoyable walk on a hot and breezy day.

**Adventure Log
Smyrna Dunes Park**

Day/Date Visited: _____

Notes and Comments: _____

****Times, fees, parking, and other information may have changed since this document was published.***

***** If you know of any updates to this write-up, please email Roger at Roger@RogerFulton.com***