

# NOTICE TO HIKERS

**Title of Notice: NOW OPEN - Choctawhatchee River Section of the Florida National Scenic Trail**

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**FTA Map No. 5**

**Region:** Panhandle

**Perm. Change:** Yes

**Effective Date:** December 14, 2016

**Ending Date:** Permanent

## **Description:**

**TRAIL NOW OPEN:** A new Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) segment in Walton County between the Choctawhatchee River Bridge on SR 20 and the Seven Runs Recreation Area on SR 81 is now open.. The segment is 8.3 miles and crosses lands managed by both the Nokuse Plantation (6.9 miles) and Northwest Florida Water Management District (1.4 miles). The new segment directly connects to an existing FNST segment west of SR 81 and eliminated approximately 10 miles of roadwalk on busy State Roads 20 and 81.

**WATER SOURCES and CAMPSITES:** There are two primitive campsites. Leaning Pine Campsite (3.2 miles north of SR 20) and Seven Runs Campsite (8 miles north of SR 20). There are only two perennial / reliable water sources on this trail segment. At Cypress Creek (1.2 miles north of SR 20) and at the Seven Runs Campsite. There is no reliable water source available at or near the Leaning Pine Campsite. During drought conditions Cypress and Seven Runs Creeks are the only reliable water sources. *All surface and other water sources require treatment prior to human consumption.*

**CAUTION at the Cypress Creek Boardwalk:** This location (1.2 miles north of SR 20) is in the floodplain of the Choctawhatchee River. When the river is at or above flood stage (13 feet) the boardwalk may be covered with water. During flood conditions trail users should exercise extreme caution and consider using State Roads 20 and 81 to avoid the crossing. The U.S. Weather Service / NOAA web page for the river level gage is: <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=tbw&gage=bruf1>

**STAY ON THE TRAIL** – This FNST segment traverses the Nokuse Plantation which is the largest private conservation area east of the Mississippi River. On Nokuse, trail users are restricted to the blazed FNST trail corridor and with the exception of campsites, trail users are not to venture more than 100 feet from the trail. The FNST borders private property when crossing an earthen dam between Dead River Road and SR 81. *Trail users are required to respect private property and not to leave the trail in this area.* The top of the dam is private property and off limits to trail users.

**THE HIKE:** Much of the land on Nokuse was plowed and furrowed by the previous owners for planting pine trees. In areas this makes for washboard / up and down walking. It is only 8.3 miles but is a rough hike and can be physically exhausting.

