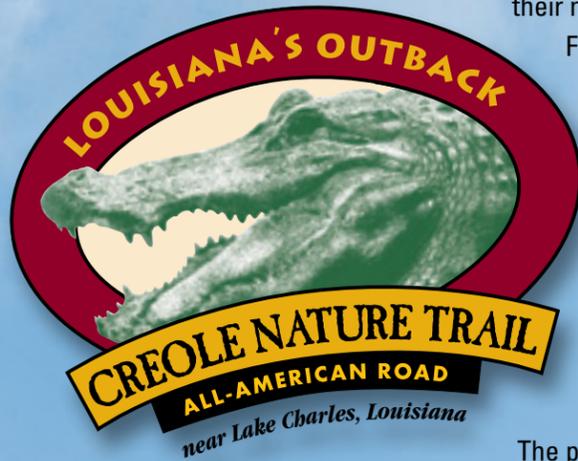


Affectionately known as **Louisiana's OutbackSM**, the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road winds through more than 180 miles of prairies, marshland and shores along the Gulf of Mexico. It is an amazing blend of man and nature, and a rare opportunity to view Louisiana's abundant wildlife in their natural habitat.



From a vehicle the prairies and marshes of *Louisiana's Outback* appear peaceful and tranquil, but don't be fooled. These lands and waters are teeming with life and activity. Not only is the trail the endpoint for two major migratory flyways, the region also benefits from the little understood phenomenon of western birds migrating east in the winter. Large water bodies, vast wetlands, tidal beaches, flat prairie and croplands provide a diversity of landscapes for wildlife and people.

The people of *Louisiana's Outback* are as distinct as the marshes and prairies that they love. They depend on the bounty of the land—then celebrate their toil and heritage with a *joie de vivre*, or joy of life, that is like none other.

Take a day or two (don't forget your camera!) to learn about and explore this wild place where the alligators outnumber the people more than two to one. A free self-guided video tour of the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road is available in English, French, German, Spanish as well as close-captioned in English. You can download the app (just search "Creole") from your app store.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CREOLE NATURE TRAIL, PLEASE VISIT CreoleNatureTrail.org or VisitLakeCharles.org.



- 1) Mae's Beach, 2) Long Dun Beach, 3) Little Florida Beach, 4) Gulf Breeze Beach, 5) Constance Beach, 6) Holly Beach, 7) Broussard Beach, 8) Rutherford Beach

GULF OF MEXICO

Exploring Louisiana's OutbackSM

Exiting Interstate 10 in Sulphur (exit 20) or Lake Charles (exit 36), prepare for your journey into *Louisiana's Outback*. Check fuel levels and camera batteries; get snacks and water, make sure you have some bug spray and sunscreen; and, most importantly, assign each person in the vehicle to a window. On the Creole Nature Trail, everyone is a lookout!

The points below are in order as you depart Sulphur headed south on Hwy. 27, taking a detour west on Hwy. 82 to Peveto Woods before traveling east on Hwy. 82, then north on Hwy. 27, including a worthwhile jaunt up Hwy. 82 east of Oak Grove to Rockefeller Refuge.

Highway 27 West

Intracoastal Park is located on the Intracoastal Waterway, which runs from Brownsville, TX all the way to the Manasquan River in New Jersey. A great place to fish and crab, the park features an open-air pavilion, camper and tent camp sites, a boat launch, picnic tables with barbeque pits and a playground for the kids.

Open: Daily, 5 a.m. – 11 p.m.
7955 Intracoastal Park Rd., Sulphur, LA
<http://goo.gl/t4a3F>

Brown's Food Center, a must-stop for both locals and visitors, is a locally-owned grocery store that has fabulous plate lunches (Monday – Saturday), boudin, made-to-order deli sandwiches plus all the supplies you may need to fish, crab or just pack up some fresh Louisiana seafood to go!

Open: Daily, 5 a.m. – 9 p.m.
620 Main St., Hackberry, LA
337.762.4632

Sabine National Wildlife Refuge

Blue Goose Observation Tower & Walking Trail

Accessible observation tower provides great views for wildlife and photography. Paved walk of just over one mile to the edge of Lake Calcasieu with excellent neo-tropical birding in the spring and fall.

Open: Year round, sunrise to sunset.
Coordinates: N 29.890783, W 93.400942

Sabine NWR also features four recreation areas excellent for fishing, crabbing and shrimping:

- 1) Northline Recreation Area
- 2) Hog Island Gully Recreation Area
- 3) Blue Crab Recreation Area
- 4) West Cove Recreation Area

Recreation areas are located on Highway 27.
<http://www.fws.gov/swlrefugecomplex/sabine/>

Wetland Walkway 1.5-mile handicapped-accessible walkway (often over the marsh!) provides close-up views of the birds and other marsh animals as well as an observation tower revealing miles of level marsh terrain, alive with wading birds, marsh birds, waterfowl, songbirds, swamp rabbits and alligators.

Open: Year round, sunrise to sunset.
Coordinates: N 29.866544, W 93.455858

Highway 82 (West of the Calcasieu Ship Channel) Beaches

The Creole Nature Trail's 26 miles of natural Gulf beaches are easily accessible and offer a wide range of water activities. You can swim, tube, surf fish, observe shore birds, sunbathe and shell to your heart's content!

Holly Beach (N 29.76997, W 93.47244)
Constance Beach (N 29.759386, W 93.577378)
Gulf Breeze Beach (N 29.757255, W 93.591008)
Little Florida Beach (N 29.755770, W 93.605027)
Long Dun Beach (N 29.753795, W 93.627209)
Mae's Beach (N 29.749783, W 93.663960)

Peveto Woods Bird & Butterfly Sanctuary

If you are a birder, Peveto Woods is the place to be in the spring and fall. Found directly at the center of the Trans-Gulf migration path on the edge of the Gulf of Mexico, Peveto Woods is a uniquely located chenier habitat ecologically vital to a host of winged wonders — both birds and butterflies.

Open: 24/7/365
Coordinates: N 29.76110, W 93.60496

Cameron Ferry

Once you drive on board, grab your camera or binoculars and carefully exit your vehicle to catch sightings of porpoises, pelicans, shore birds as well as commercial and recreational boats as they ply the Calcasieu Ship Channel.

Open: 24/7/365
Admission: \$1 fee per vehicle if traveling east to west; no fee if traveling west to east.
Coordinates: N 29.803811, W 93.347023

Highway 82 (East of the Calcasieu Ship Channel)

Cameron Jetty Pier features a fishing pier right into the Gulf of Mexico, RV park, playground, walkway to the beach, bird observation tower and public restroom facilities. Entry fee.

Open: Daily 6 a.m. – 10 p.m.
799 Davis Rd., Cameron, LA

Additional Beaches

Broussard Beach (N 29.775560, W 93.281140)
Rutherford Beach (N 29.75828, W 93.12429)

Highway 27 East

Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

9,621 acres of fresh-water marsh and coastal prairie, Cameron Prairie is considered a wonderland for water birds, and waterfowl in the winter.

Visitors Center – The headquarters for the Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the Visitors Center features interactive exhibits and animatronics about our wetlands as well as a quarter mile boardwalk over freshwater marshlands with a pond.

**Open: Mon – Thurs 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.;
Fri 7:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.**
Coordinates: N 29.973345, W 93.088651

Pintail Wildlife Drive & Boardwalk – This 3-mile driving loop is a wonderful place to view alligators and birds. A half-mile boardwalk over managed moist soil prairies features two accessible viewing scopes as well as platform areas perfect for photography.

**Open: Year round,
sunrise to sunset.**
Coordinates:
N 29.946078, W 93.084828

Grosse Savanne Eco-Tours offers fully customized eco-tours. Grosse Savanne's vast property of over 50,000 acres includes a multitude of ecotypes from fresh and salt water marshes, cypress swamps, native coastal prairies, pine forest plantations to agricultural lands. Personal tours

generally have a maximum of 4 persons per guide. General Marsh Boat Tour - leisurely guided boat ride through 500 acres of private marsh. Viewing opportunities include alligators, a plethora of birds, wetland plants and various other wildlife species.

Open: Daily, year-round. Call ahead to book your tour.
Admission: Fee based on tour selected.
358 Chalkley Rd., Bell City, LA
337.310.4260
<http://www.grossesavanne-ecotours.com>



Highway 82 (East of Oak Grove, LA)

Airboat Rides & Alligators is run by a local family with long (and on-going!) ties to living off the land. Take a ride in an airboat across the marshlands along the Creole Nature Trail followed by a ride in a cart pulled by an ATV to the gator pond where (weather allowing, of course) the alligators will come up right to the wagon for great photo ops!

**Open: Mon – Fri, Noon – 4 p.m.;
Sat – Sun, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**
Closed all major holidays.

Admission: \$35 per person
1151 Oak Grove Hwy., Grand Chenier, LA
337.274.2395; 337.274.2149
<http://goo.gl/PAI0i>



Cheniers

Wooded sandy ridges formed thousands of years ago in this area through a combination of silt deposits from shifting river deltas and water currents from the Gulf of Mexico that carried and trapped these deposits, isolating strips of sandy beaches. Over time, these isolated or "stranded" beaches continued to build up and become ridges. The results are these cheniers which, because of their elevation above sea level, support the growth of hardwood trees such as live oaks. The

word "chenier" is actually French for "oak tree" and oaks you will see—particularly when you pass through **Grand Chenier** where the road is lined with these magnificent trees. It's particularly incredible to know that this is one of only four such areas of oak cheniers in the world!

Rockefeller State Wildlife Refuge

Known worldwide for their alligator research, Rockefeller is responsible for removing alligators from the endangered species list.

5476 Grand Chenier Hwy., Grand Chenier, LA
337.491.2593
<http://goo.gl/WqRdR>

Price Lake Nature Drive, Rockefeller Refuge

Excellent (and very popular!) place to try your hand at crabbing or fishing from the banks.

Open: Daylight to dusk, March – November.
Coordinates: N 29.73269, W 92.83146



Creole Nature Trail Interpretive Visitor Center in Sulphur, LA – coming late 2014

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