Pick up litter, please do not feed wildlife, view at a distance, leave natural artifacts in place.

The Bailey Tract

Open everyday dawn to dusk…No Fee…Suggested activities: Wildlife viewing, Photography, Fishing.

History

- The 100 acres of the Bailey Tract were first owned by Frank P. Bailey, whose descendants own Bailey's Store on Tarpon Bay Road.
- The tract was originally pristine spartina marsh, with cordgrass and sawgrass. Today, cattails have replaced much of the spartina, due to the human impact of nutrient runoff. Strangler fig, and buttonwood are the most common trees, and saltbush and wax myrtle are the most common shrubs.
- The dikes which visitors walk on were built to create open water in order to attract waterfowl. The airplane canal, along the southern edge of the tract is connected to the Sanibel River, into which freshwater drains off the island.
- The first refuge manager, Tommy Wood, used the canal as a take-off and landing strip for the sea plane from which he conducted wildlife surveys.

What can I see?

Birds: Wading birds like White Ibis, egrets and herons are common in the Bailey Tract, and Osprey are frequent, but the freshwater environment offers a habitat for different birds that avoid the salty mangrove habitat. Species of ducks, bitterns, rails, Common Moorhen, Common Snipe, American Kestrel and others are sometimes found here. Songbirds like warblers and sparrows are more likely to be found in the Bailey Tract, especially during migration seasons when the freshwater habitat provides an important stopover site.
Reptiles: Alligators like all reptiles are ectotherms ("cold-blooded") and are frequently seen basking on a sunny bank, frequently accompanied by turtles. Snakes, lizards, and frogs can also be found but are less likely to be seen.
Mammals: River otters, bobcats and armadillos are present in the Bailey Tract, but are rarely seen. Raccoons, marsh rabbits, Sanibel Rice-rats, house mice, and opossum are other mammals of this habitat. Finding a spot to sit and watch quietly is often the best way to get a look at these shy creatures.

Bailey Tract Goals

The refuge hopes to restore the tract to its original spartina marsh habitat, control the invasive plants, continue to protect the native plant and animal species that occur here, and provide wildlife viewing and interpretation opportunities for refuge visitors. Restoration may also encourage past natives, such as the Smooth-billed Ani, to return.

Please remember!

- Keep a respectful distance from all wildlife.
- Please do not collect plants or natural artifacts.
- Respect other visitors' experience.
- Bring water, sunscreen, hat and insect repellant.
- Binoculars & camera are highly recommended.
- Fishing permitted: (Fresh water fishing permit required) Smith Pond and Airplane Canal
- Fishing not permitted: Mangrove Head Pond, Tower Pond, and Tarpon Bay Slough

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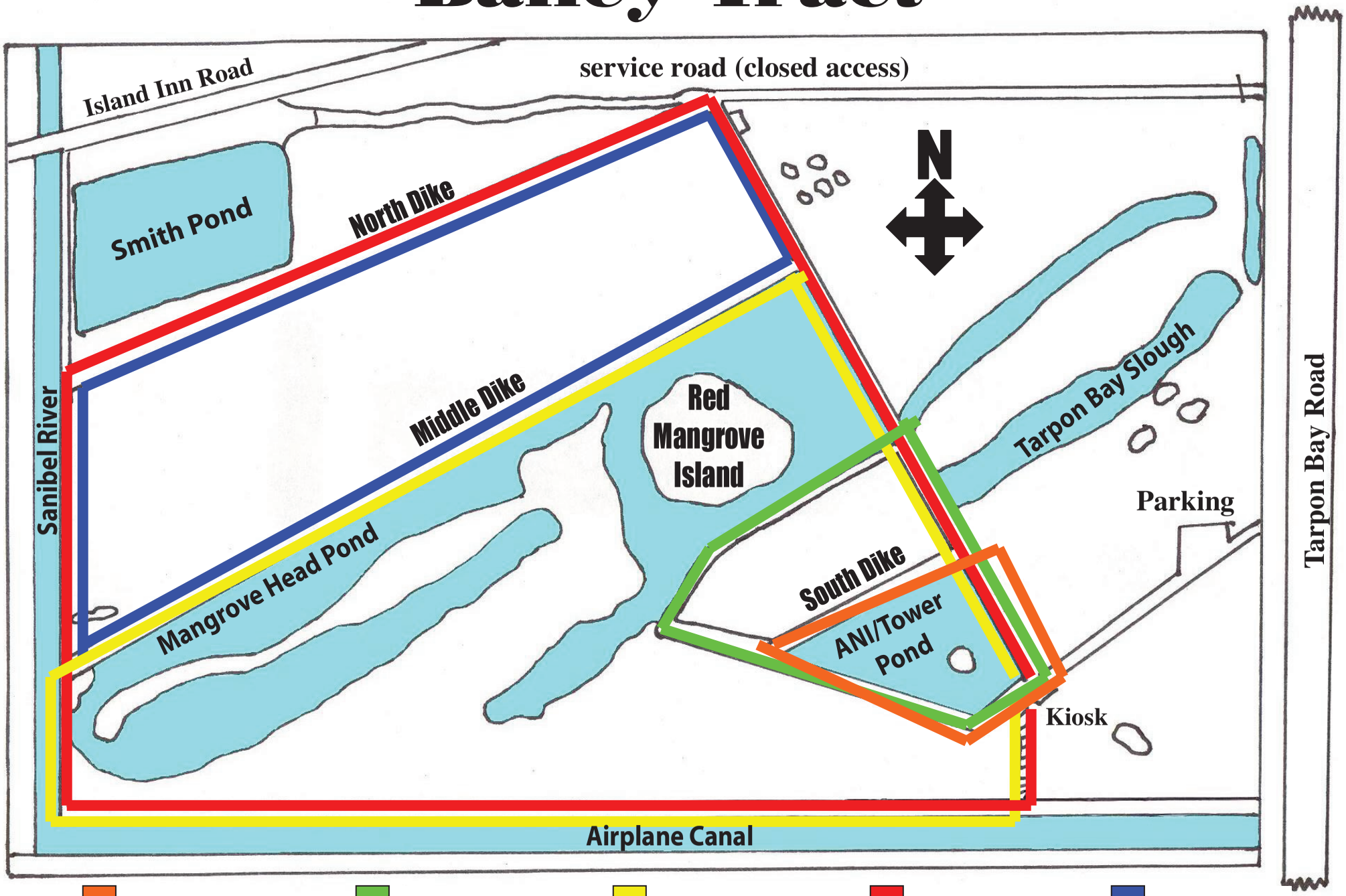
Bailey Tract



.24 Mile	.35 Mile	1 Mile	1.1 Mile	.75 Mile
Orange Trail	**Green Trail**	**Yellow Trail**	**Red Trail**	**Blue Trail**