

# Eastern Apopka Driving Tour Locations

**Instructions:** Begin the tour of about 10 historical or environmental locations in the Eastern Apopka area of Orange County. This Driving Tour is a part of the Ahapopka Explorer Program for 4<sup>th</sup> grade honors students. Students read material from *Ahapopka: A History of Apopka and its Elementary Schools*. Books are available at schools and the Northwest Orange County Library. More material is available on FB: Ahapopka page.



## Piedmont Community

1. **Piedmont Historical Marker**  
1700 S. Orange Blossom Trail, Apopka, FL 32703
2. **Lake Page Drainage Well**  
1106 Piedmont Wekiwa Road, Apopka, FL 32703
3. **Historic Swedish House**  
1250 Piedmont Wekiwa Road, Apopka, FL 32703

## Wekiwa (Clay) Springs

4. **Wekiwa Springs State Park**  
1800 Wekiwa Circle, Apopka, FL 32703
5. **Camp Thunderbird**  
909 East Welch Road, Apopka, FL 32703
6. **Champneys House on Ustler Road**  
1432 Ustler Road, Apopka, FL 32703

## Rock Springs

7. **West Orange Trail**  
1495 Rock Springs Road, Apopka, FL 32703
8. **Dr. Kelly Historical Marker & Park**  
400 East Kelly Park Road (Rock Spring)  
Apopka, FL 32703
9. **Lake Lucie Conservation Area**  
43 Rainey Road (Sorrento), Apopka, FL 32776

Artist: Lisa Mikler  
Scene from Community of People



Christine Moore  
Orange County  
Commissioner District 2  
2018 -

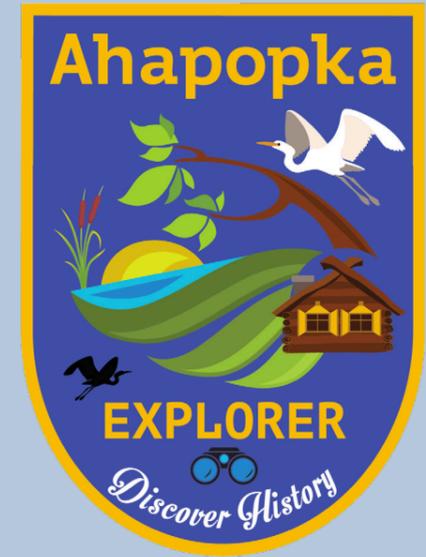


The driving tour requires ninety minutes of time and covers about seven miles.

**For more information:**  
Commissioner Christine Moore  
201 S. Rosalind Drive • Orlando, FL 32801  
407.836.5850 • District2@ocfl.net

**YouTube: Christine Moore or FB: Ahapopka**

It is recommended students read *Ahapopka* prior to taking the Eastern Driving Tour. The entire series of driving tours is available at the North Orange Library and Canon Coffee.



# A Driving Tour of Eastern Apopka

*Piedmont, Wekiwa Springs, and Rock Springs*

By Christine Moore  
Orange County Commissioner District 2  
2018 -

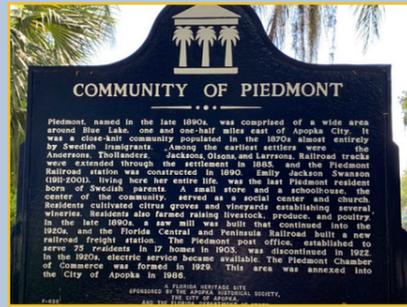


## Piedmont

The Piedmont community was a close-knit, citrus-growing community of mostly Swedish immigrants founded on Christmas Eve 1877. The center of the Piedmont community was a small store and schoolhouse which served as the social center and church. By 1941, Piedmont was no longer on the map and is now considered part of Apopka.

### 1. Piedmont Historical Marker

The marker placed by the Apopka Historical Society commemorates the industrious Swedes who survived in the Central Florida wilderness.



**ACTIVITY:** Consider how children entertained themselves during these pioneer days without any electronics, transportation, or Internet.

### 2. Lake Page Drainage Well



The Lake Page Drainage Well allows excess water from Lake Page and Blue Lake to drain into the Floridan Aquifer.



**ACTIVITY:** Discuss where all the rain water would go without a well after a hurricane?

### 3. Historic Swedish House

The architecture or style of this house reflects the Swedish influence on the Piedmont area. It is a classic simple design with a typical steep roof and in this case, a defining X-shape is seen across the front of the home.



**ACTIVITY:** Compare the amenities of this simple home with your home.

## Wekiwa (Clay) Springs

The Wekiwa Springs area was known as Clay Springs until 1906. Creeks, later called Seminoles, are the most recent Native Americans to have lived here. Wekiwa means “spring of water” and Wekiva means “flowing water” in the Creek language. Since its discovery in the 1890s, Wekiwa Springs was the first tourist attraction in Central Florida, complete with a hotel, slide, and bathhouse.

### 4. Wekiwa Springs State Park

The Apopka Sportsmen’s Club later acquired the land for hunting and fishing. In 1969, to protect the water resource from excessive growth, they sold the land to the State of Florida.

The National Wild and Scenic River System was created by Congress in 1968, and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values. The Wekiva is part of this system.



**ACTIVITY:** Hike one of the trails, swim in the lagoon, or canoe down the river. This park is a treasure and we hope you will work to protect it throughout your life.

### 5. Camp Thunderbird



Since 1969, Quest’s Camp Thunderbird has been dedicated to providing summer camp experiences for children and adults with special needs.



**ACTIVITY:** Discuss why it would be encouraging for special needs individuals to attend a summer camp on the Wekiwa River.

### 6. Champneys House on Ustler Road

The Champneys family owned a dry goods store, fernery, and innovated greenhouse technology. Their home was first located in the Clarcona area. It was moved to Apopka across from City Hall around 1915. Then, in 1993, the house was moved once again to its location on Ustler Road. *(This road is named after the Ustler family who brought the fern industry to Apopka.)*



**ACTIVITY:** Discuss the similarities and differences between modern housing construction and the wooden Champneys House and why this would have made it worth moving the structure to a new location.

## Rock Springs

The area known as Rock Springs was first settled in the mid-1800s by the Joseph Delk family. There is a 248-acre Orange County Park there now known as Kelly Park. The focal point of the park remains the free flowing natural spring. Fossils of sloths, camels, mastodons, wolves, and bears, dating from the Miocene epoch, have been found at Rock Springs.

### 7. West Orange Trail

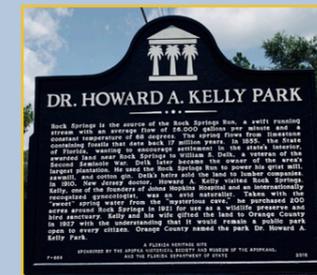
This 22.26 miles of multipurpose recreational greenway is enjoyed by walkers, joggers, hikers, bikers, and skaters. The trail picks up near Welch Road and heads south through South Apopka, Clarcona, Ocoee, and Winter Garden.



**ACTIVITY:** Discuss how your family could enjoy using this trail.



### 8. Dr. Howard A. Kelly Historical Marker & Park (Rock Springs)



Dr. Howard A. Kelly generously donated 260 acres of property to Orange County in 1927. He stipulated that the land be held as a preserve, sanctuary for wildlife, and uplands.



**ACTIVITY:** Get out of the car and read the marker. Additionally, enter the park to hike, swim, or tube in the run.

### 9. Lake Lucie Conservation Area

The Lake Lucie Conservation Area is managed by the Orange County Environmental Protection Division.

The parcel is 166 acres in size and equestrian users and hikers wind their way along The Green Trail through Oak Hammock and the rolling hills of the site. Catch a glimpse of Lake Lucie and the wildflowers that bloom from springtime until fall, while hiking on the Blue Trail.



**ACTIVITY:** Pack a lunch, and picnic along one of the trails.