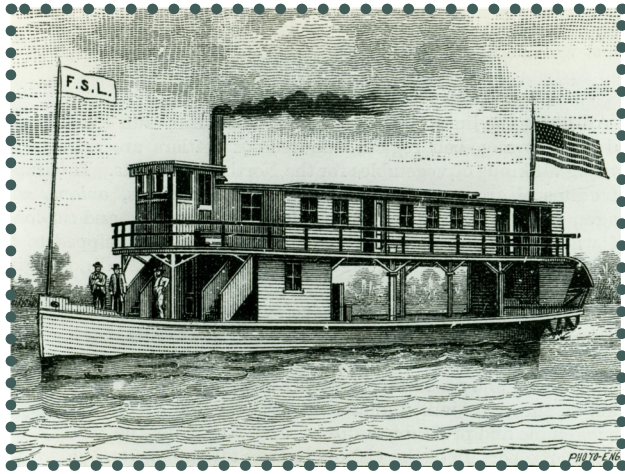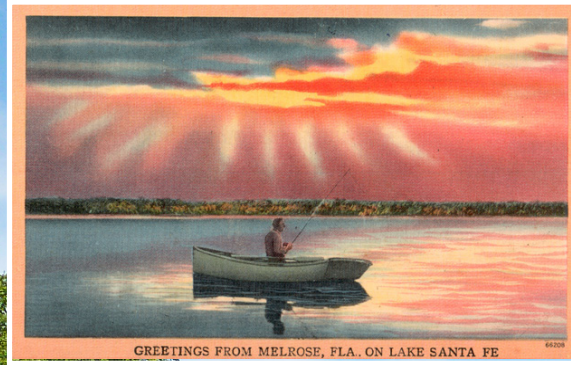## Waldo's Historic Waterways

In the 1870's, Waldo was advertised as a winter playground to tourists escaping from freezing northern temperatures. Downtown Waldo's train depot provided direct access from the railway for visitors to enjoy plays on stage at the newly constructed Opera House, lunches served on the porch of the Waldo Hotel, along with baseball games, fishing, and sunset cruises on Lake Alto. The downtown bandstand, a gift from a sea captain who found Waldo a delightful place, was always busy with music and lively entertainment. Luxurious flower and vegetable gardens, orange groves, and abundant pear and peach trees flourished in and around Waldo, thanks to Florida's mild climate and burgeoning commercial agricultural trade.

On March 9, 1881 the canal connecting Lake Alto and Lake Santa Fe was completed. Steamboats traversed the waterway, transporting goods from the outlying farms to the train depot in downtown Waldo. From there, commercial crops, including oranges, flowering plants and lumber made the trip on the rail line to markets in the north. The first steamboat made its maiden voyage on the canal in April 1881, carrying a happy group of people from Waldo on a round trip to Melrose. Built in Waldo, the steamboat was captained by S.C. Barker and was of the same design as the Mississippi River paddle wheelers. The canal was 30 feet wide and 5 feet deep, and when the water was low, or when soil washed down the canal banks, traffic was blocked until it could be cleared. The Big Freeze in the 1890's destroyed the groves of citrus, and along with it, much of the area's agricultural trade. At this time, tourist cruises became the main source of revenue for steamboats on the canal.

Images courtesy State Archives of Florida and Matheson History Museum

GREETINGS FROM MELROSE, FLA.. ON LAKE SANTA FE

GREETINGS FROM MELROSE, FLA.. ON LAKE SANTA FE

Visit **GAINESVILLE**
Alachua County, FL

LAKE ALTO
Paddle Guide
LAKE SANTA FE

Visit **GAINESVILLE**
Alachua County, FL
Discover What's Good
VisitGainesville.com

WALDO

Legend

- Lake or Canal
- Boat Ramp
- Road
- Paddle Trail

Bring Your Own Watercraft & Plan Your Own Paddling Adventure!

SANTA FE CANAL

Paddle the scenic canal connecting Lake Alto and Little Lake Santa Fe.
Please note that the passability of the canal may vary with changing water levels.

LAKE ALTO PARK ② TO LITTLE LAKE SANTA FE ✓

2.5 miles one-way | 5 miles round trip
2-3 hours paddle time round trip

WALDO CANAL PARK ① TO LITTLE LAKE SANTA FE ✓

Add 2 miles each way for 9 miles round trip
4-5 hours paddle time round trip

LAKE SANTA FE SHORELINE AT MELROSE

Explore the southern boundaries of Lake Santa Fe.
*This is a prime area for osprey and bald eagle sightings.*

MELROSE BOAT RAMP ⑤ TO SANTA FE BOAT RAMP ④ AND ALONG LAKE SANTA FE SHORELINE
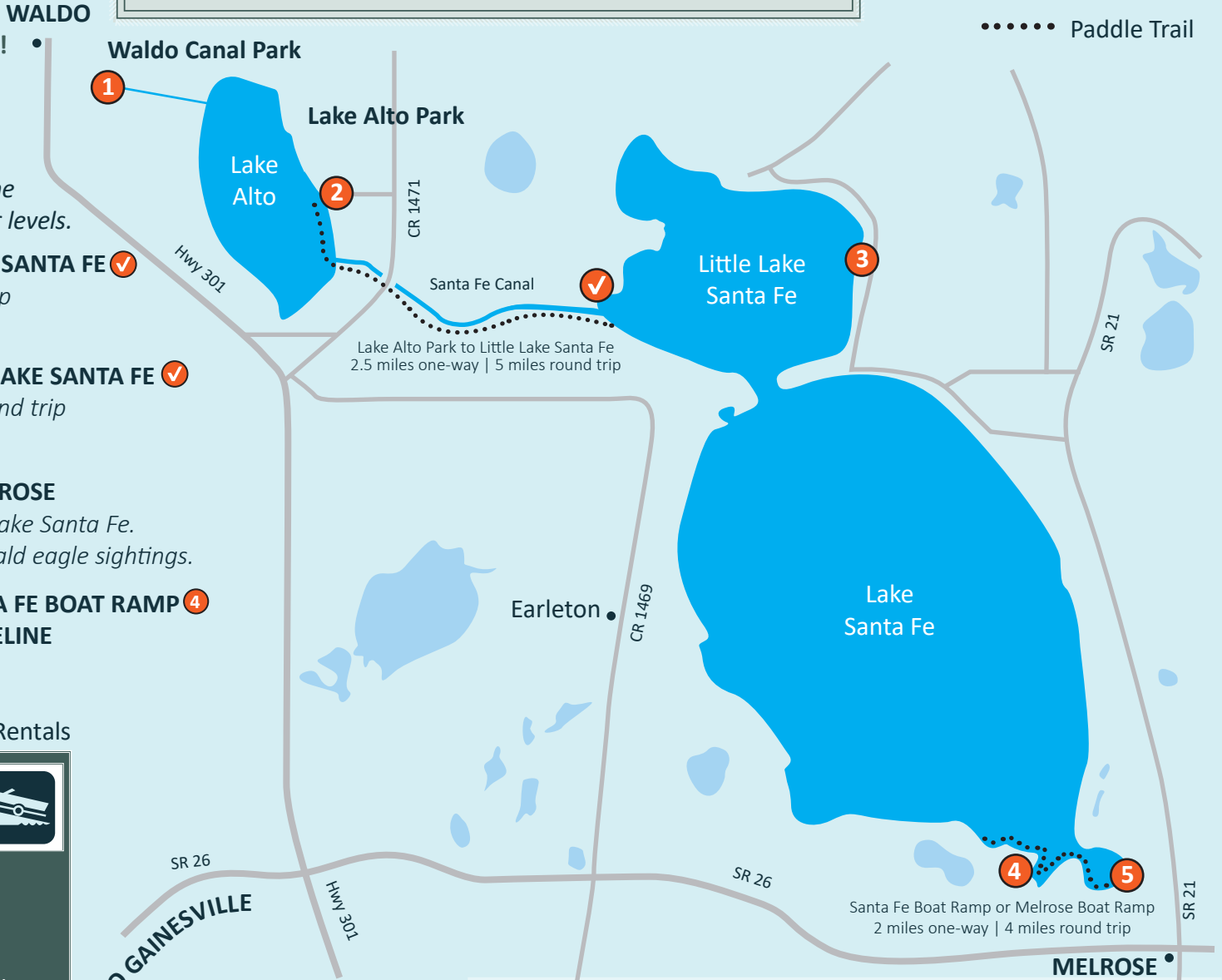
2 miles one-way | 4 miles round trip
2 hours paddle time
Boat rentals available at DJ's Kayak Rentals

Boat Ramps

1. **Waldo Canal Boat Ramp**
   14736 NE 152nd St., Waldo
2. **Lake Alto Boat Ramp**
   17800 NE 134th Pl., Waldo
3. **Little Lake Santa Fe Boat Ramp**
   3786 SE CR 21b, Keystone Heights
4. **Santa Fe Lake Park Boat Ramp**
   24500 FL-26, Melrose
5. **Melrose Boat Ramp**
   6116 Trout St., Melrose

Waldo Canal Park

Lake Alto Park

Lake Alto

CR 1471

Hwy 301

Santa Fe Canal

Little Lake Santa Fe

SR 21

Lake Alto Park to Little Lake Santa Fe
2.5 miles one-way | 5 miles round trip

Earleton

CR 1469

Lake Santa Fe

SR 26

TO GAINESVILLE

Hwy 301

TO HAWTHORNE

SR 26

Santa Fe Boat Ramp or Melrose Boat Ramp
2 miles one-way | 4 miles round trip

SR 21

MELROSE