

History & Nature

Human activities date back to prehistoric times when native peoples hunted, fished and foraged along the river's flood plain. The river was named in the late 1700s when Wills Hills-the British Colonial Secretary and Lord Earl of Hillsborough-given jurisdiction over the area and sent surveyors to report on the new colony.

After Florida became a United States Territory, settlers migrated into the newly opened land which created conflict with the resident Seminole tribes. The U.S. government's plan to transport the Seminoles west to Oklahoma sparked the beginning of the Second Seminole War. In 1835, Fort Alabama was built to protect the bridge over the Hillsborough River on the trail from Fort King (Ocala) to Fort Brooke (Tampa). The fort was abandoned a few months later and destroyed by fire. Fort Foster was built on the same site in the winter of 1836, where visitors can today experience the reconstructed fort.

In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established the area surrounding the river rapids as a public park. Many park structures and the suspension bridge are examples of the CCC style of rustic architecture, designed to be in harmony with the natural environment.

The park's most unusual natural feature is a series of rapids created by the river as it flows over outcroppings of Suwannee limestone. Cypress swamps, pine flatwoods and hardwood hammocks are distinctive features. Commonly seen animals include gopher tortoises, woodpeckers, owls, bobcats and deer.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Hillsborough River State Park

15402 U.S. 301 North
Thonotosassa, FL 33592
(813) 987-6771

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a hand-held leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- For information about joining Hillsborough River State Park Preservation Society, call (813) 987-6771.
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521 or (866) I CAMP FL or TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit ReserveAmerica.com.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

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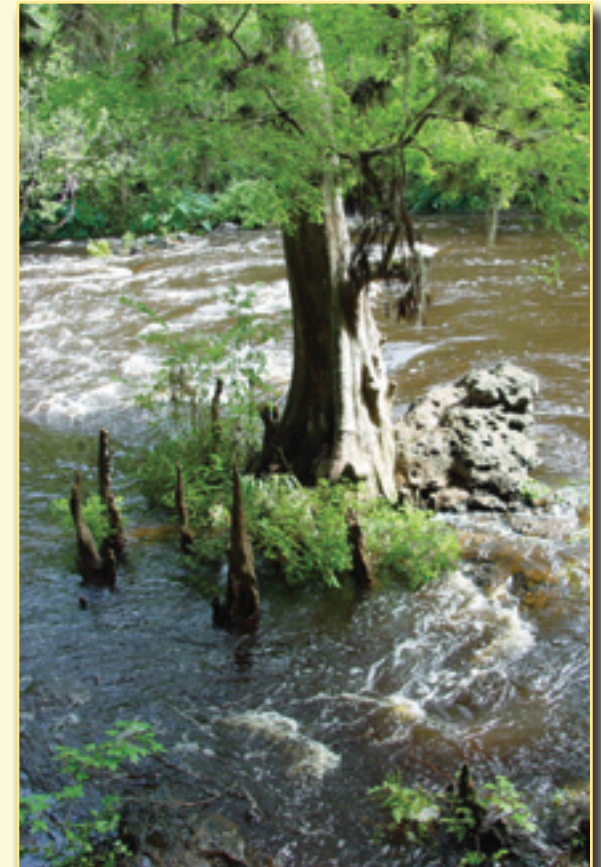
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Hillsborough River
State Park

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Florida State Parks - "America's First Two-Time Winner"



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Real Fun in ...the Real FloridaSM

Hillsborough River State Park is a breathtaking oasis of natural and historical significance. Visitors can stroll along the river rapids, enjoy camping, step back in time at Fort Foster, picnic with family or pursue several water-based activities.

The park provides many opportunities for outdoor recreation. **Anglers** can test their skills at freshwater fishing in the river for bass, bream and catfish (a Florida freshwater fishing license is required). Canoe in the Hillsborough River. Swim in the pool. Visitors can enjoy one of the several trails within the park of **hiking** or **bicycling**. **Picnic** under one of the **pavilions** built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The pavilions and a recreation hall equipped with a kitchen are available for rental.

For tent or RV camping, **campsites** are equipped with water, electricity, fire ring and a picnic table. Campground amenities include laundry facilities, showers, restrooms and a dump station.

The Spirit of the Woods Poolside Café and Gift Shop offers breakfast and lunch menu selections, along with snacks. The gift shop offers necessities, souvenirs and a selection of field guides and books related to the park and to Florida.

Park rangers provide nature and history-based **programs**. Nature walks, campfire programs, Fort Foster tours and special programs are conducted on a regular schedule. Current program information is available at the ranger station.



Directions

The park is located on US Highway 301, 7 miles south of State Road 54 in Zephyrhills, and 14 miles north of Interstate 4 east of Tampa.