

## Welcome to Highlands Hammock State Park.

This more than 9,000-acre park is known for its beautiful old-growth hammock, cypress swamps, the Civilian Conservation Corps Museum, and an abundance of wildlife.

## Natural Communities

The focal point of this beautiful park is its 500-acre hammock – a shady forest resembling a subtropical jungle. Palm trees and massive live oaks festooned with bromeliads and Spanish moss are the most prominent trees. One oak, measuring 36 feet around, is 1,000 years old.

Minimal light filters down to the forest floor, which is covered with ferns, shrubs and small palms. White-tailed deer, raccoons, and even bobcats may be glimpsed in the shadows.

A *cypress swamp* borders a blackwater stream in the lowest elevations of the park. A stroll across the elevated boardwalk along the Cypress Swamp Trail offers views of ibis, anhingas, herons, American alligators, and turtles.

*Pine forests, marsh,* and globally imperiled *scrub* vegetation surround the hammock. The scrub grows in the highest elevations of the park where coarse white sand marks the seashores of ancient times. These natural communities are dependent on periodic fires, which historically occurred during lightning strikes. Today they remain healthy and vibrant with park-initiated resource management – such as prescribed fires.



### Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks

### Highlands Hammock State Park

5931 Hammock Road  
Sebring, FL 33872  
(863) 386-6094

[www.FloridaStateParks.org/highlandshammock](http://www.FloridaStateParks.org/highlandshammock)

## Park Guidelines

- For your safety, please do not feed or attempt to touch any wildlife. All plant and animal life and cultural resources within the park are protected.
- Intoxicants and firearms are prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in this park. They must be well behaved and kept on a six-foot, hand-held leash at all times. Please check with the park before arriving and inquire about specific pet restrictions.
- The park offers many recreational opportunities to visitors with disabilities. Should you need assistance to enable your full participation, please contact the park office.
- Please be aware of through traffic on the county road and practice safety at all times.
- Open 8 a.m. until sunset 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.

## Southwest Florida

# Highlands Hammock State Park

*One of the first state parks in Florida*



Darrel Smith



**FLORIDA**  
State Parks  
...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>



Printed 01/05 on Recycled Paper

...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>

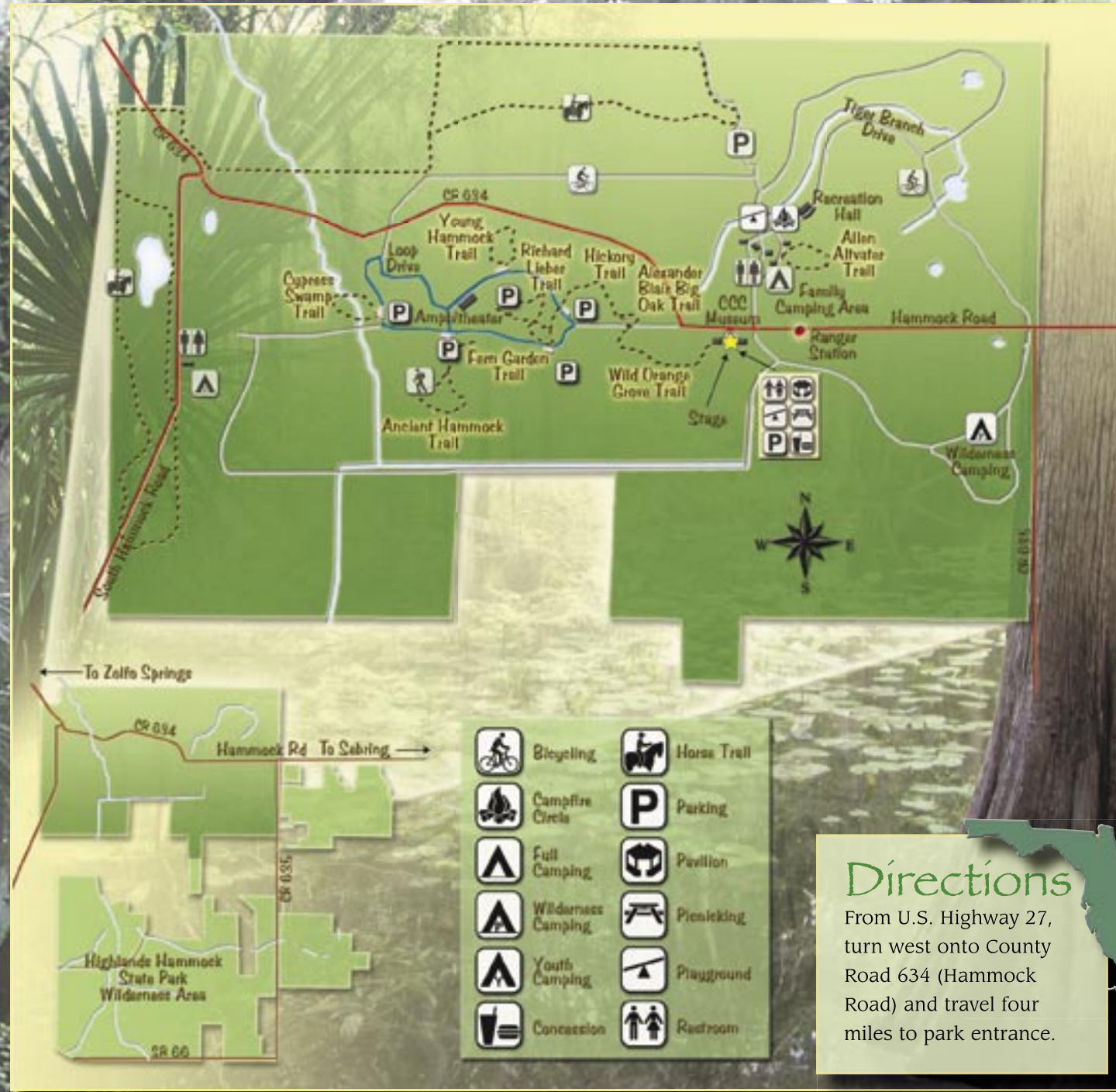
# History & Culture

The concept of the park was inspired by a March 1928 letter published in the *Sebring American* from Dr. F.H. Newell with the U.S. Department of Interior. "It is my belief that you should make special efforts to see to it that this beauty spot is preserved and made known to the citizens of your state."

In February 1930, the land was considered for a national park, but deemed too small. With no state park system at that time, a private group formed to create the park. Margaret Shippen Roebling donated \$25,000 to purchase the land and later another \$25,000, with the condition that the community raise \$5,000 to show its commitment. Almost every citizen contributed – from a dollar (often a real sacrifice) to \$1,000.

After Margaret Roebling's unexpected death in October 1930, her husband, John, decided to complete the project, creating roads, bridges, and nature trails. He asked only that protection of *Highlands Hammock Park* be assured forever. In March 1931, the 1,280-acre park opened.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began a 1,450-acre botanical garden on adjacent land in 1934, and *Highlands Hammock* became one of the state's first parks in 1935. The park and garden merged in 1941, as the CCC camp closed due to impending war. Over these six years, hundreds of men planted thousands of plants and constructed roadways, dams, bridges, and buildings. Although the garden never became a reality, the park's natural beauty endures.



# Real Fun in ...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>

**Natural fun** is waiting at Highlands Hammock – family outings at a large **picnic area** nestled in the forest, 159 **campsites** - most with water and electric, **wilderness, youth, and equestrian campsites, horse trails, playgrounds** for the youngsters, and a **large field** – the perfect place for organized sports.

Take a one-hour **tram tour** through the pine flatwoods and along the historic "South Canal." Learn about park history and natural communities while taking **photos** of alligators. Rangers present a variety of **interpretive programs**, including **guided walks, bike rides, slide shows, and evening tours**

Hike along one of the park's **nine nature trails** that average one-half mile each or bike the 3.1-mile **Loop Drive**. Bicycle rentals and off-road bicycle trail maps are available at the Ranger Station. The park is a link to the county's multi-use path that leads to several miles of paved routes through Sebring, including one around Lake Jackson.

Florida's **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Museum**, housed in a CCC-built structure, offers a glimpse of life in the CCC camps. Experience a "Fireside Chat" with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt or try on a CCC jacket and view early films and photos of actual park construction. **Food, beverages, snacks,** and some **camp supplies** are available in another historic CCC building.

## Directions

From U.S. Highway 27, turn west onto County Road 634 (Hammock Road) and travel four miles to park entrance.

## Florida Parks Timeline

1500s: First Europeans arrive

1817-18: 1st Seminole War

1855-58: 3rd Seminole War

1931: Highlands Hammock opens as a community park

1934: CCC camp begins work here

1937: Park visitation tops 16,000

2001: Park visitation tops 208,000

**BP (Before Present)**  
Early Human Habitation

**1500-1700s**

1513-1564: Spanish exploration  
1565-1763: Spanish colonization  
1763-1783: British territory  
1775-1783: American Revolution

**1800s**

1783-1821: Spanish territory  
1821-1845: U.S. Territory of Florida  
1845: Florida becomes 27th State  
1860-1865: American Civil War

**1900s**

1920s: Florida Land Boom  
1929: The Great Depression  
1940s on: WWII & Population Growth

1999-2001: Florida State Parks are voted #1 in the nation

**2000**

7500 BP: Early Archaic people settle area

1700s: Seminoles move to Florida

1813-14: Creek War

1835-42: 2nd Seminole War

1881: Jonathan Skipper purchases "Hooker's Hammock"

1933: President F.D. Roosevelt initiates national CCC program

1935: Highlands Hammock becomes a state park

1994: CCC Museum opens

2003: CCC Museum is remodeled