

## Northwest Florida

# Big Lagoon State Park

*One of Florida's Best Water Parks*

## Real Fun in the Real Florida

Since opening in 1978, Big Lagoon State Park has attracted recreational enthusiasts from around the world. With 678 upland acres located along the Intracoastal Waterway the park offers visitors many opportunities to enjoy natural Florida. Come for the afternoon, the weekend or longer.

The park beckons visitors with opportunities for **camping, swimming, fishing, boating, canoeing** and **hiking**. Fishing can bring in catches of redfish, bluefish, flounder and sea trout. Crabbing and fishing for mullet in the lagoon are also popular. There are four sheltered **picnic areas** along the shores. The Governor 's Pavilion accommodates larger groups. Swimming and beach activities are popular attractions at Big Lagoon. A **boat ramp** and dock provide easy access to the Intracoastal Waterway and the Gulf of Mexico.

The park offers **75 campsites** equipped with water, electricity, fire ring, and picnic table. A

dump station is also provided. **Guided walks, campfire programs** and **recreational skills programs** are offered seasonally and upon special request for groups.

**Narrow beaches, shallow bays, open woodlands,** and **5 miles of hiking and nature trails** offer opportunities for nature study. The **observation tower** at East Beach provides an incredible view of the park, Gulf Islands National Seashore and Perdido Key. As a gateway site for the **Great Florida Birding Trail**, the tower overlooks areas popular to nesting shorebirds, wintering ducks, and numerous marsh birds.

## **History and Nature**

This park sits on the northern shoreline of its namesake, Big Lagoon, which separates the mainland from Perdido Key and the Gulf of Mexico. Natural communities, ranging from saltwater marshes to pine flatwoods, attract a wide variety of birds, especially during the spring and fall migrations.

A variety of plant communities occur in the area. Look for sandpine scrub on the sandy relic dunes. Vegetation dwarfed, twisted and gnarled, provide

evidence of the harsh conditions on the dunes that protect the mainland from storm winds. Slash pines growing in "swales" (elongated troughs parallel to the dune ridges) often grow in wet or even water-logged soil and become impenetrable thickets.

The sandy beaches and salt marshes bordering Big Lagoon add variety to the scenery. Valued as wetlands, the salt marshes attract and provide important habitat for numerous birds and animals. Gray foxes, raccoons, deer and opossums are often observed in the park. Great blue herons and other waterfowl can be seen near Big Lagoon while upland portions of the park provide refuge for cardinals, towhees, brown thrashers and nuthatches.

Big Lagoon State Park derives its name from the bordering body of water along its southern shore. Natural communities, ranging from tidal salt marshes to pine flatwoods, attract a wide variety of birds, especially during spring and fall migrations.

A variety of plant communities occur in the park. Look for sandpine scrub on the sandy relic dunes. Dwarfed, twisted and gnarled vegetation provides evidence of the harsh environment that exists here

to protect the inland habitats from heavy storms and high winds. Slash pines grow throughout the dune "swales" but also grow in wet or waterlogged soil among impenetrable thickets. The sandy beaches and salt marshes of the area add variety to the scenery. Valued as wetlands, marshes attract and provide important habitat for many birds and animals. Foxes, raccoons, deer and opossums are often observed in the park. Great blue herons, king rails and other waterfowl are daily visitors. Upland portions of the park provide refuge for cardinals, towhees, brown thrashers and nuthatches.

## **Directions**

From I-10 exit 7, go south on Pine Forest Rd; right on Blue Angel Pkwy (SR173); right on Sorrento Rd (SR292); left on Bauer Rd (CR293); park entrance is at the end of Bauer.

## **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. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- Join Friends of Big Lagoon/Perdido Key State Parks. Call (850) 492-2785 or visit [friendsofbiglagoon.org](http://friendsofbiglagoon.org).
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521 or (866) I CAMP FL or TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit [ReserveAmerica.com](http://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.

## **Contact Information**

Florida State Parks  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks  
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12301 Gulf Beach Highway  
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[FloridaStateParks.org](http://FloridaStateParks.org)