

Southwest Florida

# Koreshan State Historic Site

*A historic treasure*

## Real Fun in the Real Florida

At Koreshan State Historic Site, visitors can explore structures and gardens of the 19th century religious settlement. Take a self-guided walk through the grounds or register for a guided tour. Also enjoy hiking the nature trail, picnicking, canoeing and camping in this 200-acre park.

Strolling through the Koreshan Unity Settlement Historic District offers an opportunity to learn about these idealistic pioneers. There are landscaped grounds and eleven restored buildings. Self-guided tour booklets are available at the settlement entrance.

A nature **trail** meanders along the Estero River through pines, palmettos, oaks and palms. Enjoy **fishing, boating** and **canoeing**. A **boat ramp** provides access to the river. Young children can enjoy the **playground** located in the **picnic area**.

A 60-site, full-facility **campground** features secluded sites and seasonal campfire programs.

**Ranger-guided tours** and **interpretive programs** are available upon request and seasonal demand. A schedule of programs and fees is posted at the ranger station and in the camping area.

The nearest beaches are found to the south at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park and Bonita Beach, and to the west at Lovers Key State Park. Estero Bay Preserve State Park, just west of Koreshan State Historic Site, has hiking trails.

## **History & Nature**

The founding of the Koreshan Unity Settlement in Estero, Florida, was the continuation of a movement started in Moravia, New York, in 1880 by Dr. Cyrus R. Teed. His utopian community of 200 followers often had to contend with an unfriendly and hostile society because of their religious, scientific and cultural beliefs. To find an accommodating environment, the movement relocated to the Florida frontier in 1894. Dr. Teed

took the name "Koresh," the Hebrew translation for Cyrus, meaning shepherd.

The colonists believed that the entire universe existed within a giant, hollow sphere. They conducted experiments that seemed to confirm their beliefs.

Encouraged by their visionary leader, the industrious Koreshans built and operated a printing facility, boat works, cement works, sawmill, bakery, store and hostelry. Education, science and art also helped shape their community. Education served an important role, not only for the children at the settlement, but also for the adult members. Artistic endeavors included producing plays and musicals, and creating elaborate Victorian gardens. After the death of Dr. Teed in 1908 at the age of 69, membership of his religious group began to decline. In 1961, the four remaining members deeded 305 acres of their land to the State of Florida as a park and memorial. The Koreshan Unity Settlement Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Directions**

Take I-75 exit 123 (Corkscrew Road). Head west 2 miles, cross U.S. 41 and continue on Corkscrew Road approximately 1000 yards to entrance of park. If traveling U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail), Koreshan is located at the intersection of U.S. 41 and Corkscrew Road at Estero.

## **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. Please help preserve our historic resources.
- 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 and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.

- Consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited except in designated areas.
- Volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- 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.

## **Contact Information**

Florida State Parks  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks  
**Koreshan State Historic Site**  
P.O. Box 7  
Estero, FL 33928  
(239) 992-0311  
FloridaStateParks.org