

Central Florida

Lake Louisa State Park

Clermont's best kept secret

Real Fun in the Real Florida

Lake Louisa offers some of the most beautiful vistas in Central Florida and is becoming a showcase for upland habitat restoration and recreational facilities. Its 4,500 acres protects six lakes, two streams, 11 natural communities and 105 acres of lake shoreline.

Voted one of America's Top 100 Family Campgrounds by ReserveAmerica, Lake Louisa's **full-facility campground** is nestled between Dixie and Hammond lakes. At **primitive campsites**, backpack campers can spend the night under an open canopy of longleaf pines, serenaded by the flowing waters of Big Creek. **Equestrian campsites** and a group campground are accessible by trail. Overlooking picturesque Lake Dixie, the park's 20 modern **cabins** are equipped with a kitchen, two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a fireplace.

Anglers can **fish** by **boat** from four of the park's six lakes or from **fishing piers** on Dixie and

Hammond lakes. Picnickers can enjoy a quiet meal under the canopy of magnificent live oaks at **picnic pavilions** along Lake Louisa.

Outdoor enthusiasts can **hike** or **bike** along 23 miles of **trails**, starting under the shade of cypress trees and wandering through a mosaic of beautiful wildflowers. Visitors may encounter deer, turkey, quail, gopher, tortoises and a variety of song birds along the paths. **Sixteen miles of trails** are also available for horseback riding. Parking for the equestrian trailhead is located at the Lake Nellie Entrance off County Road 561.

History and Nature

Set in the northeast corner of the Green Swamp, a vast wetland in Central Florida, Lake Louisa is the largest in a chain of thirteen lakes connected by the Palatlahaha River. The park contains 11 distinct natural communities, including: sandhills, scrub, upland mixed forest, swamp, marsh, wet flatwoods, hydric hammock, blackwater stream and old citrus grove.

Over the past 10,000 years, various Native American cultures have occupied the lands surrounding Lake Louisa. In 1823, the Treaty of

Moultrie Creek designated this area as part of the Seminole Reservation.

In 1910, John and Louise Driggors Hammond settled most of the land surrounding Lake Louisa. The homestead included the family home, a turpentine still, sawmill, shingle mill, a combination school and church, commissary, worker's cabin and cooperage. The family exported their goods by way of steamboats and barges across Lake Louisa.

In 1943, the Bronson family acquired some of the property and established orange groves and a cattle ranch. Acres of old pasture and some of the orange groves from this era can still be seen in the park today.

Purchased by the state in 1973, the Lake Louisa property became a state park in 1974 and opened to the public in 1977.

History still resurfaces today. During the 2001 drought, when the lake level dropped, two prehistoric dugout canoes were found in Lake Louisa. Later that year, remnants of a crashed P-51 Mustang were also found. Flown by First Lieutenant Dean R. Gilmore of Pennsylvania, the plane was lost on a training flight on November 14,

1944. A monument has been erected in honor of Lieutenant Gilmore and all aviators.

Directions

Lake Louisa State Park is located south of State Road 50 on U.S. 27. From State Road. 50, turn south on U.S. 27. Drive 7 miles to the park entrance on right.

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.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only.

- Boats have to be small enough to be hand carried to the water. Electric trolling motors and hand power only. Become a 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
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Lake Louisa State Park

7305 U.S. Highway 27
Clermont, FL 34714
(352) 394-3969
FloridaStateParks.org