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Southeast Florida

Long Key State Park

Your Home in the Florida Sun

Real Fun in the Real Florida

Welcome to Long Key State Park, "Your home in the Florida sun." The park offers a glimpse of what the Florida Keys used to be. And, as many have noted, visitors come to Long Key State Park seeking fun and relaxation. They return, year after year, because they found it.

The highlight of Long Key State Park is its 60 **campsites** overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. All sites have water and electric hookups. A dump station is available. Three restrooms provide hot showers for campers.

Educational and recreational opportunities such as **guided walks, illustrated talks, kayaking, canoeing, birding, snorkeling, picnicking** and **flats fishing** are enjoyed by visitors year-round.

Three **trails** are located within the park. The Golden Orb Trail, named after a native spider, is a leisurely one-hour walk. The Layton Trail is located on the bayside of the park and takes about 20 minutes to walk. The third trail is the Long Key Lakes **Canoe Trail**, which covers a shallow, saltwater lagoon. Canoe rentals and a brochure are available for this self-guided one-hour paddle.

Great opportunities for **birders** exist year-round. During the winter and spring, migratory birds are plentiful. Roseate spoonbills, snowy egrets, reddish

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egrets, raptors and many other species are seen in the area. Long Key is listed in the Great Florida Birding Trail (South Florida) for the white-crowned pigeon. Flats fishing for bonefish, permit and tarpon is a major attraction to the area.

Become a **volunteer**. Inquire at the ranger station. Ask about joining the Friends of the Islamorada Area State Parks.

History and Nature

Early Spanish charts show Long Key as *Cayo Vivora*, meaning Viper Key. The name of Long Key was cemented when Henry Flagler's railroad reached this area in the early 1900s, as the bridge that reaches southwest to Conch Key was the

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longest yet constructed along the railroad right-of-way.

By 1912, the Keys were easily traversed by rail, allowing passengers to travel to Key West. The upscale Long Key Fishing Camp became a mecca for the world's great saltwater anglers—including famed author Zane Grey—and and the rich and famous. This glamorous era came to an end when the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 struck the Middle Keys with devastating force. Winds were estimated at over 200 miles per hour and barometer readings were lower than any other hurricane to make landfall in the United States.

Long Key State Park officially opened in 1969, and has grown through acquisition to encompass nearly 1,000 acres of uplands and submerged lands. Long

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before the park was established, the subtropical climate, clear waters and abundance of marine life attracted explorers. The Calusa tribe of Native Americans lived in the Keys before the arrival of the first Spanish settlers. After Spanish occupation, other settlers, called "Conchs," came from the Bahamas and other nearby islands.

Long Key contains the remains of ancient coral reefs that were formed 100,000 years ago when the sea level was 20 to 30 feet higher. West Indian and Caribbean plants such as gumbo limbo, poisonwood, pigeon plum, Jamaica dogwood and crabwood are abundant.

Directions

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Long Key State Park is located at Mile Marker 67.5 on Long Key, 15 miles southwest of Islamorada and approximately 17 miles northeast of Marathon.

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are not permitted on the shoreline, in the water or in park facilities. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Alcoholic beverage consumption is allowed in designated areas only.

- For camping information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521, (866) I CAMP FL, 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

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FloridaStateParks.org