

Southwest Florida

Lovers Key Carl E. Johnson State Park

Where outdoor adventures are endless

Real Fun in the Real Florida

This 1,616-acre park between Fort Myers and Naples is comprised of four barrier islands—Lovers Key, Inner Key, Black Island and Long Key. The park offers 2.5 miles of white sandy beaches on the Gulf of Mexico and a variety of recreational opportunities, including wildlife viewing, fishing, kayaking and swimming.

Swim, sunbathe and experience some of the best **shelling** on southwest Florida's gulf beaches. **Hike** or **bike** on eight miles of island **trails** including the three-mile Black Island Trail that follows the inner waterways of the island. **Kayaking** and **canoeing** in the 744 acres of waterways fed by the gulf and bay are favorite pastimes at the park. A **boat ramp** located on the bay side of the park allows access to Estero Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, and a **canoe launch** is located within the park. Enjoy

saltwater **fishing** where catches of snook, redfish, trout and tarpon are common—or try castnetting for mullet. Saltwater fishing licenses are required for non-residents. **Ranger programs** such as guided walks, beginning **birding**, shell crafts and more are offered year-round. Groups call in advance.

The **concession** offers food and drinks, bicycle, **canoe** and **kayak** rentals, bait and fishing supplies, as well as boat and saltwater **fishing tours**. A **tram** service is available to the south beach where a gazebo, restroom and **picnic area** are located. The **gazebo** on the south beach, where weddings and family gatherings are common, may be reserved year-round. Contact the park for details and prices.

History & Nature

In the early 1900s the islands were accessible only by boat. It was said that only lovers made the effort to get to this romantic island – thus the name Lovers Key. A road to the island was built in 1965. Local legend hints that Black Island got its name from Black Augustus, a pirate who had been

captured by authorities, and later escaped, making this island his home for the remainder of his life.

Fish camps were located on Black Island from the early 1900s until the late 1950s. Then, in the 1960s and 1970s, the four barrier islands were slated for development. Preparations for development damaged the islands. Mangrove swamps were altered to uplands by dredging a canal through Black Island. In 1983, the state acquired the islands and in 1996, merged with adjacent Carl E. Johnson County Park to become Lovers Key Carl E. Johnson State Park.

Directions

Lovers Key is located 10.5 miles west of I-75, exit 116 Bonita Beach Road (County Road 865). The park entrance is between New Pass and Big Carlos Pass at 8700 Estero Blvd.

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 hand-held leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming 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.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- For information about joining Friends of Lovers Key (FOLKS), call (239) 463-4588.
- 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
Lovers Key State Park
8700 Estero Blvd.
Ft. Myers Beach, Florida 33931
(239) 463-4588
FloridaStateParks.org