

Nature & History

The area surrounding the park has been inhabited by human cultures for at least 10,000 years. People we now call the Timucua lived here at the time of European contact. The city of Ocala is named after a nearby Timucuan village and chief called Ocale.

Pioneers first settled the headsprings in 1839. By 1883, about 75 people lived in this agricultural community, which had a railroad station, sawmill, hotel, stores and a post office.

In the 1920s, Blue Springs and Blue Run were favorite spots for tourists and locals. As the attraction grew, the river was dredged for glass bottom boat tours; and waterfalls were built on piles of phosphate tailings. A zoo, rodeo, gift shops and a monorail with leafshaped gondolas were added. In the mid-1970s, when larger theme parks lured the tourists away, Rainbow Springs was closed. In the mid-1990s, it reopened as a state park.

In 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated Rainbow River as a **National Natural Landmark**. It is also an aquatic preserve and an *Outstanding Florida Water*.

The river supports abundant wildlife, including otters, alligators, many species of turtles and fish, and every variety of water bird—waders, divers and dabblers. Osprey, hawks and swallowtail kites soar along the river corridor while smaller birds and animals hide in the lush vegetation. Many animal species, including the endangered gopher tortoise, Florida pine snake, indigo snake, Sherman's fox squirrel and the Florida mouse inhabit the uplands surrounding the springs and river.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Rainbow Springs State Park

19158 SW 81st Place Road
Dunnellon, Florida 34432
(352) 465-8555

FloridaStateParks.org

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.
- 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.
- No fishing, tubing or diving is permitted in the headsprings area.
- Fishing is available to registered campers only from the campground. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- 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.

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Northeast
Florida

Rainbow Springs State Park

*A mixture of cultural gardens, a spring fed river
and a natural headspring*



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National Gold Medal Winner

Florida State Parks - "America's First Two-Time Winner"

Real Fun in ...the Real FloridaSM

Welcome to Rainbow Springs State Park. One of Florida's largest springs, the headsprings of the Rainbow River originates in this beautiful 1,472-acre park. Rich in natural beauty and cultural history, it is also a popular spot for swimmers, kayakers, tubers and campers. The magnificent azaleas bloom in early spring, attracting visitors from around the country.

Rainbow Springs is a wonderful mixture of Central Florida's natural and cultural heritage. It is a popular destination to **swim, snorkel, tube, fish, canoe, picnic** or **stroll** the gardens. The day-use headsprings area, tube launch area and the campground differ in the activities they allow, so be sure to ask in advance.

The **gardens** and **waterfalls** are cultural assets that remain from the days when the headsprings were a private attraction. They have been renovated and replanted while preserving their historical significance. In early spring the entire headsprings area bursts into pinks, purples and whites with its famous azalea blooms. **Nature trails** meander into the park's natural areas.

The headsprings and campground have a variety of programs, such as **ranger-guided walks, snorkeling expeditions** and **canoe trips** at different times of year. Canoes and kayaks are available for rent at the headsprings. A **food concession, gift shop** and **visitor center** add to the pleasure and education of visitors. The **picnic pavilions** are perfect for family reunions and weddings.

The campground, about six miles from the headsprings, provides access to the river. More nature trails wind through the sandhill and oak hammock communities. Campground activities are for registered campers only. A camp store offers further amenities for overnight guests.



Directions

Headsprings Entrance: 1-75 to State Road 40 west which dead ends at U.S. 41; turn left. Park is on left.

Campground Entrance: 18185 SW 94th Street, 3.1 miles south of State Road 40 or 2.3 miles north of County Road 484.

Directions (cont.)

Tubing Entrance: 10830 SW 180th Ave. Rd., 4.5 miles south of State Road 40 or 0.9 miles north of County Road 484.