

Northeast Florida

# O'Leno & River Rise Preserve State Parks

*One of Florida's First State Parks*

## Real Fun in the Real Florida

O'Leno State Park is one of Florida's first state parks. Along with River Rise Preserve State Park, these state parks offer over 6,000 acres of camping, swimming, canoeing, hiking, cycling and many miles of equestrian trails. Some of the most diverse recreation in the area can be found here.

The park accommodates **family, youth, primitive and group camping**. The two **family camping** areas feature 61 sites, each equipped with electric and water, a picnic table and fire ring. There are centralized restrooms with showers for each area.

**Youth tent camping** areas are reserved for organized non-profit youth groups. Other **primitive camping** is available at Sweetwater Lake, accessible by a 6.5 mile hiking trail.

O'Leno's **Group Camp** has 17 cabins, a dining hall, meeting building and an open-air pavilion. The

dining hall is equipped with cooking utensils and place settings for 125. The cabins can accommodate 60. Pillows and linens *are not* provided.

Visitors may explore the Santa Fe River by **canoe** to **observe** the area's scenic beauty and wildlife. **Canoe** rentals are available at the Ranger Station.

**River Rise Preserve State Park** provides equestrians with over 20 miles of trails to explore. At the end of the day, equestrians can camp overnight with their horses at the horse camp complete with primitive campsites, restrooms and a 20-stall horse barn available on a first come, first serve basis.

## **Nature & History**

The Natural Land Bridge that spans the distance between River Sink and River Rise provided an easy passage over the Santa Fe River from as early as 7,000 BC. The old Spanish trail and the first federally funded road connecting St. Augustine and Pensacola used this crossing.

In the mid 1800s, the town of Leno was founded along the banks of the Santa Fe River just

upstream from where the river disappears. The first telegraph linking Florida to the outside world passed through Leno. In 1896, the railroad bypassed the tiny town, causing Leno's inevitable decline. By the turn of the century the settlement was only a memory. The old wire road and mill dams are all that remain of this early pioneer town. Acquired in the early 1930s by the Florida Board of Forestry, the park was developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Authority primarily for use as a summer forestry camp. Several of the original structures are still in use today.

O'Leno State Park is located on the banks of the scenic Santa Fe River, a tributary of the Suwannee River. The distinctive geological feature of the park is the *River Sink* where the Santa Fe River disappears underground to re-emerge three miles south at River Rise Preserve State Park. Numerous sinkhole lakes may be seen from the trails throughout the park. The Limestone Trail guides visitors to an abandoned quarry that played a significant role in providing building materials for construction during the CCC era.

There are 18 distinct natural communities within O'Leno and River Rise Preserve. These diverse

habitats host a variety of wildlife including white-tailed deer, turkey, gray fox and gopher tortoise.

## **Directions**

The entrance to O'Leno State Park is 6 miles north of High Springs on U.S. 41/441.

The entrance to River Rise Preserve State Park is two miles west of High Springs on U.S. 27.

## **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 not allowed in any primitive camping areas.

- 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, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Alcoholic beverage consumption is allowed in designated areas 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](http://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

**O'Leno State Park**

410 S.E. O'Leno Park Road

High Springs, FL 32643

(386) 454-1853

[FloridaStateParks.org](http://FloridaStateParks.org)