

Northwest Florida

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park

Crown Jewel of the Emerald Coast

Real Fun in the Real Florida

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park is named for a majestic dune, resembling a ship's topsail, which stands twenty-five feet above sea level.

Visitors can enjoy 3.2 miles of secluded, white sand beaches, three coastal dune lakes and coastal forests.

Swimming and **sunbathing** can be enjoyed along 3.2 miles of beach. Lifeguards are not provided. Anglers are able to **fish** along the beach. A Florida saltwater fishing license required for persons between the ages of 16 and 65. Boats are prohibited in the park.

The Morris Lake Nature Trail is a 2.5-mile **walk** along Morris Lake and ancient coastal dunes. **Hikers** can also enjoy miles of abandoned jeep trails while **picnickers** can lunch at the boardwalk to the beach or at the Morris Lake beach access.

A **tram** shuttles visitors to the beach from the day-use parking area. Visitors may also walk or ride their **bikes** down to the beach on the shared-use trail. **Nature** hikes and educational programs are scheduled regularly. Ask at the ranger station for more information.

Campsites are available and can accommodate RVs up to 45 feet long. **Campground** amenities include sewer, water, electric, cable, bathhouses, swimming pool, shuffleboard, tennis courts and beach access. **Cabins** are also available for weekly rental. To make a reservation, call (800) 326-3521 or go online to ReserveAmerica.com.

History & Nature

Evidence from midden mounds (discarded debris from Native American communities) and a large mound adjacent to the park, indicate that Native Americans used this area for fishing, hunting and camping. The variety of food and natural resources found in the freshwater coastal dune lakes, Choctawhatchee Bay and the Gulf of Mexico allowed Native Americans to camp on this coast for extended periods of time. From the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, workers from the Quarters Turpentine Village turpented old-growth longleaf

pinus in forests now part of Topsail Hill. Turpentine was important for maintaining the wooden ships used to transport goods and people. Chippers carved cat-face patterns into the trees and inserted a metal strip to allow the sap to flow into clay pots. Cat-face scars can still be seen in many living trees in the park.

During World War II, the western portion of the preserve was used as a munitions testing range for developing the first missiles in the United States. Iron and rebar tracks were laid down to allow trucks to travel across the soft sand. Visitors can see these tracks, especially along the hiking trail south of Morris Lake.

This 1,640-acre park features a variety of habitats: pristine beaches, freshwater coastal dune lakes, old-growth longleaf pine forests and wetlands.

Directions

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park is located in Santa Rosa Beach on Route 30A, one mile off U.S. 98.

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. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited in all Florida state parks.
- 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
Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks
Topsail Hill Preserve State Park
7525 W. Scenic Highway 30A
Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459
(850) 267-0299
FloridaStateParks.org