

Florida State Parks

FloridaStateParks.org

Welcome

Experience Florida's abundance of wildlife, natural communities and cultural heritage at our award-winning state parks from Pensacola to Jacksonville and south to Key West. For more than 75 years, Florida State Parks have inspired residents and visitors with recreation opportunities and scenic beauty that helps to strengthen families, educate children, expand local economies and foster community pride. Florida's state parks are critical to our individual peace of mind and personal health. You are invited to visit soon and often and to join our efforts to preserve the natural treasures so they can be enjoyed for generations to come. Please let park staff know if they can assist you in any way.

Welcome to the Real Florida.

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

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Florida State Parks

Whether you enjoy hiking a rugged trail, kayaking a river, sunbathing at the world's best beaches, learning about ancient culture or touring historic homes, you'll find just the right setting at any one of Florida's state parks. A favorite of families for more than 75 years, Florida's state parks will stir your imagination and leave you with a great appreciation for the people, places and events that have shaped this great state. Discover the legacies that remain from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and spend the night in cabins built by young American men during the Great Depression. Enjoy the cozy atmosphere of recently built cabins along the famous Suwannee River or overlooking Central Florida's chain of lakes.

Camping enthusiasts will find well-maintained facilities and a safe, friendly atmosphere to get away from it all and enjoy the beauty of natural landscapes. Many parks feature beaches, lakes, springs or rivers. Canoes and kayaks can be rented at many parks.

Florida's state parks are open from 8 a.m. to sunset every day of the year. Museums, visitor centers and historic sites are closed two days a

week and hours may vary. The mission of the Florida Park Service is to preserve and protect our natural and cultural resources and to provide recreational opportunities to park visitors. Considerable commitment of staff and funding is required to carry out this mission. State park fees help offset the rising costs of providing resource protection, park maintenance and visitor services. Please check with each park for information on entrance fees, which vary throughout the state. In the following pages you will find brief and informative descriptions of every state park and historic site maintained by the Florida Park Service. This guide is organized into geographic regions with color coded sections for your convenience in locating the park of your choice. For more information, call (850) 245-2157 or visit us online at FloridaStateParks.org.

Accessibility

In Florida state parks, we are committed to providing accessible facilities, programs and services for all people. Our goal is that all visitors, including those with disabilities, will be able to participate in and enjoy recreational activities and park experiences. Camping, picnicking, cabins, fishing piers, trails, historic sites, exhibits and

swimming areas are some of the many opportunities available for all visitors to enjoy.

For more information about specific facilities and programs or for alternate formats of publications, please visit our website at FloridaStateParks.org or call or write the park that interests you. For general questions regarding the accessibility of any park facility or program, please call (850) 245-3076 during normal business hours to speak with the state park Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator. Park information is also available in large print. TDD users, please dial 711 for the Florida Relay Service(U.S. only).

Pet Policies

Pets are welcome in most Florida state parks, but only in designated areas. Pets, with the exception of service animals, are not permitted in the following places: beaches, playgrounds, bathing areas, cabins, park buildings and concession facilities.

All pets must be confined, leashed or otherwise under the physical control of a person at all times. Leashes may not exceed six feet in length. Pets

must be well-behaved. Any pet that is noisy, dangerous, intimidating or destructive will not be allowed to remain in the park. Some animals may be prohibited on park property. Pet owners are required to pick up after their pets and properly dispose of their waste. Owners of horses visiting state parks must provide proof of a negative Coggins test.

You may camp with your pets, but only in designated areas. We recommend that you contact the park for its pet policy before making a reservation to camp. Pets must be confined in the owner's camping unit during quiet hours (11 p.m. – 7 a.m.). During normal hours an unconfined pet must be leashed and may not be left unattended for more than 30 minutes. These rules are written to ensure the enjoyment and safety of all park visitors. Failure to abide by these rules may result in the visitor being asked to leave or board their pet outside the park.

For more information • (850) 245-2157 •
FloridaStateParks.org

Annual Entrance Pass

The Annual Entrance Pass allows you to explore, discover and enjoy the beauty of Florida's state parks for just pennies a day. The Annual Entrance Pass is available for purchase at two levels: an Individual pass for one person or a Family pass good for up to eight people in a group, except at Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park and Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, where it is good for two people. Weeki Wachee Springs State Park offers an endorsement to the Annual Entrance Pass for admission to Buccaneer Bay. Visit the website for more information about this and military discounts.

The Annual Entrance Pass does not waive other special use fees charged at some parks for special events, camping or activities such as boat tours, tubing, fishing piers, gardens admission and use of Buccaneer Bay at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park. Additional local fees may apply (example: Monroe County Surcharge). Annual Entrance Passes waive admission fees at all Florida state parks, except the Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, where they are valid for a 33 percent discount.

Three Ways to Purchase an Annual Entrance Pass:

- By fax or mail. Download the order form from our website.

- In person at a Florida state park ranger station or museum.
- Online at our website.

FloridaStateParks.org/ThingstoKnow/AnnualPass.cfm.

Camping and Cabins

Florida's state parks offer more than 50 family campgrounds statewide. Full-facility campgrounds include water, electricity, a grill and a picnic table on each campsite, along with centralized showers, restrooms and dump station. Cabins are available in many parks with a variety of settings and styles, from fully equipped modern cabins to hand-hewn lumber or palm-log retreats.

For reservations, call ReserveAmerica at (800) 326-3521, TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit <http://FloridaStateParks.ReserveAmerica.com>.

A 50 percent discount is available on camping fees for Florida residents who are 65 or older or 100 percent disabled. When making reservations, please indicate if you qualify for a camping discount. Discounts are applied at the time the reservation is made and proof must be provided at

check-in. For more information, visit FloridaStateParks.org/Staythenight.

Camping and Cabins Reservations • (800) 326-3521 • FloridaStateParks.ReserveAmerica.com

Park Programs

The Florida Park Service offers many different interpretive programs. These programs are an easy and fun way to discover the opportunities available in each park and are also great for meeting and getting to know the many people who make up the Florida Park Service.

The programs offered in each state park are as varied as the locations themselves. Living history reenactments, guided nature walks, historic house tours and interpretive exhibits are just a few of the many enjoyable experiences that are available in our state parks. These programs lead visitors in an exploration of the rich natural and cultural resources Florida's state parks have to offer. One way to become more familiar with these opportunities is to visit the website for scheduled Ranger Programs and Special Events in our parks.

For more information • (850) 245-2157 •
FloridaStateParks.org

Get Involved in Florida State Parks

Volunteer in a State Park

Volunteer and become part of the award-winning Florida Park Service family. Our volunteers experience the natural, historic and cultural significance of the state parks from the inside. And in return, our volunteers make it possible for the state parks to provide the quality programs and settings our visitors have come to enjoy.

Park volunteer opportunities are as diverse and varied as the parks themselves. Our volunteers protect turtle nests, design websites, clean beaches, plant trees, take tickets, photograph wildlife, drive tour boats, repair equipment, conduct nature classes, guide tours through the forests and more. There is an activity to suit everyone's interests and abilities. Our campground hosts are the resident ambassadors in the park and receive a camping space at no cost.

We welcome groups and individuals to volunteer in our parks on a regular or occasional basis. Complete the application online or contact a park directly to discuss your interests and availability. Special volunteer projects can often be designed to accommodate corporate groups, scout troops and other organizations.

Become a state park volunteer and get ready to Experience...the Real Florida.

Become a Member of the Florida State Parks AmeriCorps Program

People of all ages, abilities and locations around the country may apply to join the federally-sponsored Florida State Parks AmeriCorps program. Members may serve on one of two travel teams or be assigned to a specific park location. Our members focus on land management, trail maintenance, volunteer recruitment and educational programs. In the past, members have been deployed to assist in recovery from natural disasters, such as hurricane damage recovery, fight wild fires, rebuild bridges, clean up rivers and restore historic sites.

Members receive a monthly stipend and after successfully completing a year's service, an

educational award for tuition or repayment of student loans.

Visit FloridaStateParks.org for additional details on the program and application information.

Friends of Florida State Parks

Friends of Florida State Parks, Inc., (Friends) is a non profit citizen support organization formed in support of the entire Florida State Park system. The Friends group is recognized as the leading advocate of Florida's state parks.

Through the Friends of Florida State Parks, Inc., you have the opportunity to join in partnership with the nation's best state park system. As a friend, your dues and support help preserve incredible beaches, magnificent wetlands, historic and cultural sites and the fragile beauty of the natural Florida for generations to come.

Membership Categories and Benefits:

Individual Membership

\$25.00: Three one-day park passes, Florida State Park Guide, Florida Parks & Wildlife magazine and a longleaf pine tree planted in a state park.

Family Membership

\$45.00: Six one-day park passes, Florida State Park Guide, Florida Parks & Wildlife magazine and a longleaf pine tree planted in a state park.

Patron

\$100.00: Twelve one-day park passes, Florida State Park Guide, Florida Parks & Wildlife magazine and a longleaf pine tree planted in a state park.

Non Profit Organization

\$100.00: Twelve one-day park passes, Florida State Park Guide, Florida Parks & Wildlife magazine and a longleaf pine tree planted in a state park.

Visit FriendsOfFloridaStateParks.com or call 1-800-338-1980 for additional details about the organization and to become a member

Managing Natural and Cultural Resources

Keeping the...*the Real Florida Real*

Resource management in Florida's state parks is two-fold, encompassing both natural resources like forests and freshwater springs, and cultural resources like Native American burial sites and historic forts. Visitors will see beautiful native habitats such as coastal dunes, hardwood hammocks, longleaf pine forests and sawgrass marshes. State parks are also a treasure chest of historic and pre-historic sites. The Florida Park Service has a statutory charge to acquire lands that represent the "original domain" of the state and to conserve these lands for all time. However, it is not enough to simply acquire these properties; park staff must actively manage the resources to preserve their natural and cultural values.

Natural Resource Management

Influenced by Fire

Before there were roads, canals or big cities, lightning-set fires swept across Florida's landscape. Native Americans also set fires to improve habitat for hunting and gathering food. Over thousands of years, many ecosystems evolved under the influence of fire. Today, most lightning fires are extinguished to protect lives and property. An unintended result of wildfire suppression is a decline in fire-dependent ecosystems and their

associated plant and animal species. Park staff, guided by detailed plans called prescriptions, use controlled or “prescribed” burning to mimic lightning fires. Prescribed burning is an important management tool for ensuring ecosystem health and reducing wildfire risk.

Shaped by Water

Changes in sea-levels shaped the geology of Florida over millions of years. Water levels and flow patterns help shape ecosystems and are important aspects of restoring altered landscapes. Restoration of hydrological resources includes filling ditches and canals, removing barriers to water flow and monitoring for pollutants. Because impacts to water quality and quantity often occur beyond the park boundaries, staff may also participate in their local community’s regional planning efforts.

Restoring the Balance

Just as Florida’s ecosystems evolved with fire, native plant and animal species have evolved with one another. However, humans often contribute to the introduction of non-native plants and animals. Some non-native or “exotic” species are particularly invasive and have few natural controls. Invasive exotic plants and animals out-compete

and displace native species. Exotic plant species such as cogon grass and climbing-fern can even alter the natural fire behavior, further complicating the land managers' efforts to conserve and restore ecosystems. Exotic animals like feral hogs can damage sensitive wetlands and rare plants with their destructive rooting. Park staff remove exotic plants and animals to help maintain ecological balance and preserve the diversity of Florida's native species.

Lending a Hand

Florida's state parks are home to more than 300 species of plants and animals that are considered endangered, rare or imperiled. Sometimes these species need extra help to ensure their survival. Park staff protect sea turtle nests, reintroduce endangered plant or animal species and even close sensitive nesting and foraging areas. State park staff follow scientific monitoring protocols to keep an eye on the health and well-being of species such as the Florida scrub-jay, the Anastasia Island beach mouse and many rare plants.

Contributing to Science

In addition to protecting and managing natural resources, state park biologists both conduct

research projects of their own and provide assistance to other scientists. Researchers from universities, museums, government agencies and non-profit conservation organizations visit state parks to collect, analyze and share scientific data. Florida's award-winning state parks offer researchers diverse opportunities for scientific exploration.

Cultural Resource Management

Preserving Our Past

The Florida Park Service is charged with identifying and protecting Florida's cultural resources. Cultural resource management in state parks involves identifying and preserving evidence of Florida's past inhabitants. The Florida Park Service is the largest manager of Florida's cultural resources with more than 40,000 artifacts, more than 300 historic structures and more than 1,800 archaeological sites. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic structures and cultural landscapes. Examples include major Native American mound complexes, historic fortifications, battlefields, farmsteads, gardens, communities, homes, engineering resources and even historic attractions. Of special note are the historic Civilian

Conservation Corps parks and structures which constitute the first seven state parks.

Unearthing the Story

State park archaeological sites are managed to prevent deterioration and damage from a variety of causes. Natural processes which can adversely affect archaeological resources include wind and water erosion, burrowing animals and aggressive plant growth. Human activities such as construction, trespassing and looting also threaten the integrity of archaeological sites and often cause damage which is beyond repair.

Many park staff are trained as archaeological monitors to become aware of the types of archaeological sites which exist in their parks and learn the best management practices for dealing with these resources. Their training includes learning when and how to monitor and pre-test areas where ground-disturbing activities may occur. Such monitoring is a crucial portion of cultural resources management and assures that park development and activities occurs away from culturally sensitive areas.

One of the most important responsibilities of the Florida Park Service is to help educate the public regarding the laws that protect archaeological

resources on state lands. Prior to conducting any archaeological digging on state parks or other state lands, park staff or hired contractors must obtain permits from the Florida Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Archaeological Research. Digging for artifacts without a permit on state lands is strictly against the law and artifacts discovered on state-owned lands are the property of the state of Florida.

Saving the Structures

As part of the Florida Park Service's mission to preserve cultural resources, park staff must manage and protect the structures that were acquired for their historic significance as well as those that were built specifically for park use, such as those constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Most historic structures managed by parks are maintained for use in everyday park operations, while others are restored and maintained for interpretive purposes.

Park managers and staff regularly monitor the integrity of historic buildings and assist in preparing detailed plans for their rehabilitation or restoration. However, the highest degree of protection provided to historic structures in state parks is through regular maintenance and repair. Park staff are the first line of defense in preserving

their park's buildings by performing routine but very necessary tasks like re-roofing, painting and window repair. Their efforts help ensure the continued existence of historic structures in Florida state parks for the use and enjoyment of future visitors and staff alike.

Florida Park Police

The Division of Law Enforcement's Bureau of Park Police are state law enforcement officers with full powers of arrest, who patrol more than 800,000 acres of Florida's state-owned lands, providing law enforcement and public service within state parks, preserves, recreational areas, greenways and trails.

The officers also patrol more than four million acres of submerged coastal and aquatic managed areas that include 41 aquatic preserves, three national estuarine research reserves and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Park police officers are called on to respond to hurricanes, civil disorder or other threatening conditions that may endanger life, property, Florida's natural resources, and to support search and rescue missions.

Park police want to make your visit safe and enjoyable. Here are a few basic tips to help you have a great time in Florida state parks.

Parks are home to many types of wildlife. While animals are interesting to watch and beautiful to photograph, their behavior can be unpredictable. Always keep a safe distance when viewing. Never feed a wild animal. Keep all food items safely stored in secured containers or in your vehicle.

A park is the perfect place for bicycle riding. Basic rules of the road are to travel in the same direction as motorized traffic and follow all posted road signs. Bicyclists under age 16 must wear a bicycle helmet.

Everyone likes having fun outside with friends and family. Enjoy your day in the sunshine. Alcohol consumption is allowed only in restaurants and lodges that sell alcohol and during park-sanctioned events, within designated areas only.

For a fun day on the water, make sure that your boat has all required safety gear on board. File a float plan with someone so they will know when to expect your return. If you plan to fish, don't forget

to purchase a Florida fishing license, if required.
Check with local officials for further information.

Please preserve our resources for all visitors. Take as many photographs and memories as you like, but please leave natural and historical artifacts in place for others to enjoy.

Call our hotline at (877) DEP-LAW1 or (877) 337-5291.