

Park Visitor Welcome Kit: North Central Florida

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20% for Parks

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Welcome to your Florida State Parks!

Use this Park Visitor Welcome Kit to:

- Find out what's new inside your state parks this year
- Learn how to engage your entire family's interest and create a memorable visit
- Check out the park rangers' top park recommendations for hiking, boating, biking & more
- Plan your next park adventure with the enclosed state parks map & guide
- Take advantage of fantastic offers from our sponsors

www.ParkVisitors.com

Page 3 of 59

Printed on 100% recycled paper. Every piece can also be reused, passed along to a friend or recycled.

Safety Tips, Park Passes, State Park Survey & Contact Information

Florida State Parks Pass

With your Florida State Parks Pass, you can enjoy unlimited entry to more than 160 state parks, historic sites and natural areas for a full 12 months.

Cost is \$40 plus tax for individuals or \$80 plus tax for families. Buy yours today at the Ranger

Stations or go to www.floridastateparks.org to order online or download a form for a fax order.

Pass does not include camping and entitles bearer to a 33% discount on admission to Homosassa Springs and Skyway Fishing Pier state parks.

Florida State Parks Passport

The Florida State Parks Passport is designed to help you discover Florida's award-winning state parks.

As a collector's journal, the passport will help you plan and record your experiences. To qualify for a commemorative gift, be sure to collect a unique stamp at each park you visit. Passports may be purchased for \$7.95 plus tax/shipping at many state parks or by calling (352) 628-1002.

Safety Tips to Help You Enjoy Your Parks

Florida's sunshine provides many opportunities for recreation. Remember to use sunscreen to prevent burns. Drink lots of fluids to remain hydrated. Bug repellent will keep the insects away.

Never hike alone and always stay on trails—it's easy to get lost out here.

Park hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year unless posted.

Pets are permitted in designated areas only and must be on a leash no longer than six feet. Please pick up after your pet.

A helmet is required for all bicycle riders younger than 16.

Page 6 of 59

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 state parks.

Alcoholic beverages are allowed in designated areas only.

During lightning storms, seek shelter or stay in your car.

All boaters under age 13 must wear Coast Guard-approved life jackets.

For a complete list of park regulations, go to the Ranger Station.

Safety Tip!

Take responsibility for your children on the beach and in campgrounds. Make sure they always hike, bike, swim or boat with a partner or group.

What Do You Think?

Give your opinion and you could win a Canon Digital camera!

Help us make the Park Visitor Welcome Kit even better, and you could win a new camera! Visit www.parkvisitor.com, complete a short survey and you will be entered to win a Canon EOS Rebel XSi. Tell us what you like about the Welcome Kit and what changes you'd like to see next year. The survey is anonymous, so your privacy is protected.

Contact Information

Emergency: 911 or go to the ranger station

General Information: (850) 245-2157

Website: www.floridastateparks.org

Camping Reservations: www.reserveamerica.com,
(800) 326-3521

Florida Department of Environmental Protection:
www.dep.state.fl.us

For advertising inquiries, call (626) 229-9991.

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agency. For more information please visit
www.parkvisitor.com

Go Guide

Exciting articles for exploring Your Florida State
Parks today!

Ranger's Recommendations: The Very Best of North Central Florida

Who knows your state parks better than the men
and women who maintain—and enjoy—them? Here
are their top destinations for a wealth of
recreational activities.

FISHING

Lake Talquin State Park

The Jackson Bluff Dam, built in 1927, turned this
part of the Ochlockonee River into a lake. It's now

considered one of the better fishing lakes in the state. Anglers can hook largemouth bass, bream, shellcracker and speckled perch.

St. George Island State Park

In the spring, migratory species like pompano, mackerel and cobia show up in the surf and in East Pass. Meanwhile, redfish, sea trout and flounder head to the grass flats along the northern shoreline of the park. For an angler with a boat, the fishing offshore includes common catches such as grouper, snapper, amberjack, cobia and kingfish.

Bald Point State Park

Surf-fish or wade out to the oyster bars where redfish, trout, flounder and mackerel are found in the brackish tidal waterway.

CANOEING & KAYAKING

Ichetucknee Springs State Park

The park is best known for summertime tubing, but canoeing/kayaking is favorable all year. Local vendors rent equipment for the one-way canoe trip that lasts approximately two hours. Some also offer shuttle services.

Fanning Springs State Park/ Manatee Springs State Park

For a half-day canoe trip down the Suwannee River, work with outfitter Suwannee River Tours to put in at Fanning Springs and take-out at Manatee Springs. It's a good half-day paddle on the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail.

Rainbow Springs State Park

Starting at and flowing into the Withlacoochee River at Dunnellon, the 5.6-mile-long Rainbow River's crystal clear water flows past moss-draped cypress trees and dense wilderness. Canoe rentals are available, or bring your own equipment. Don't

miss taking a dip in the cool springs!

BEACHES

St. George Island State Park

Enjoy nine miles of pristine beach along the Gulf coast. Visitors can access four miles of the beach along the parks' main drive. For those seeking a wilderness experience, the last five miles of beach is accessible only by foot.

CAMPGROUNDS

O'Leno State Park

The two family camping areas feature 61 sites, each equipped with electric and water, a picnic table and fire ring. O'Leno State Park is located on the banks of the scenic Santa Fe River.

Silver River State Park

Silver River's campground has 59 large sites, all with water and electric and set in beautiful Ocala.

Many pull-through sites will accommodate the most luxurious rigs. Ten modern cabins, each with two bedrooms, fully-equipped kitchen, living room with gas fireplace, central heat and air and large screened porches are nestled in wooded sites.

NATURE PRESERVE

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park

Start your exploration of this 22,000-acre wilderness preserve at the visitors center. A 50-foot-high observation tower provides panoramic views and a chance to see the bison or wild horses. Reconnect to nature at Paynes Prairie on more than 30 miles of trails for equestrians, hikers and bicyclists through a variety of ecosystems.

HORSEBACK RIDING

River Rise State Park

Equestrians, who bring their own horses, will find full-facility camping, a 20-stall horse barn and

camp. Trails meander along the banks of the Santa Fe River and join up with O'Leno State Park and pass by sinkholes, hardwood hammocks, river swamps and sand hills.

DIVING

Peacock Springs State Park is a scuba/cave diving and snorkeling paradise. This park has two major springs, a spring run, and six sinkholes—all in near pristine condition. One of the longest underwater cave systems in the continental United States, about 28,000 feet of underwater passages have been explored and surveyed by cave divers.

Troy Spring State Park

The 70-foot-deep, first-magnitude spring offers opportunities for swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving. The depths of this spring contain the remains of the Civil War-era steamboat Madison, scuttled in the spring run in 1863 to keep it from

being captured. Stop by the log cabin visitor center for the best view of the spring.

BEST IN THE STATE

Suwannee River State Park is the ideal base camp for exploring the legendary Florida Trail, a National Scenic Trail. New cabins and a renovated campground await.

Best New Gear

Recreation in the outdoors gets better with good gear. Here are five new items to help enhance your park experience this year... and most of them are good for the environment too!

Keen Newport Hemp

Woven hemp fiber gives this popular Keen hybrid sandal- shoe a new look. The patented toe guard

protects from errant roots and rocks on the trail, while the airy — and eco-friendly — upper gives your feet a chance to breathe. \$95, www.keenfootwear.com

Jetboil PCS

Conserve fuel and cook food faster. That's the promise of the JetboilPCS, an innovative personal camp stove that captures and focuses its heat. Want proof? This burner boils two cups of water in just 2 minutes, which is twice as fast as comparable stoves. \$89, www.jetboil.com

Solio Hybrid1000

Solar power in a snap. The Solio clips to your backpack while you walk, sucking rays all day and saving the juice in its internal lithium-ion battery. Later, plug in your iPod, or even a laptop computer, to bank off the device's 5-watt output — enough to power most portable devices. \$79,

Garmin Colorado 400c

A top-end GPS, the 400c displays three-dimensional maps and lets you sift through endless navigational options via its “Rock ‘n Roller” input wheel. An electronic compass and altimeter provide direction and altitude readings for further data. \$639.99, www.garmin.com

REI Sahara Tech

This long-sleeve travel shirt has built-in sun protection to the tune of a 50 UPF rating. A neck-shading collar and air vents in back further help you survive a hot hike under the summer sun. \$49.50, www.rei.com

Stephen Regenold is a world-traveling adventurer journalist who writes The Gear Junkie column for several U.S. newspapers. Go to

www.thegearjunkie.com for video gear reviews, fitness, adventure travel and health tips, a daily blog and an archive of Regenold's work.

Easy Ways to Spark Your Children's Love of the Outdoors

If you've brought your kids to the park today, let me congratulate you! You're doing your part to reverse what I call 'nature-deficit disorder.' You're probably already aware of this condition—your kids probably play outside less than you did or they play video games, not outdoor games, and they have little or no interest in, say, fishing, hiking or camping.

In my exploration of the disconnect between children and nature, I've found that parents almost always tell stories about their own childhoods: this

tree house or fort, that special woods or ditch or creek or meadow. They recall those “places of initiation,” in the words of naturalist Robert Michael Pyle, where they first sensed with awe and wonder the largeness of the natural world, both seen and unseen.

Knowing this, I’ll bet that’s one big reason you’ve brought your family here to the park. You want your kids to experience the joy and wonder of nature, like you did. You want them to create their own special memories. Fortunately, it’s easy to give that gift to them. Just get them outside and then let their natural curiosity take over.

FOUR FUN TIPS FOR KIDS OUTDOORS

Invent your own nature game: Encourage them to find evidence of ten ‘critters’ in the form of actual animals, footprints, holes, nests or other signs of activity.

Have your kids sit under a tree or in a meadow and use all five senses: Listen to every bird song and bug call, feel the grass or dirt underneath, smell the land, watch the breeze blow through the grass, trees or on the water.

Try wildlife photography with a digital camera. When capturing beautiful images, you and your children will actively “look” at nature—and appreciate it more.

Go fish. Let kids explore the water’s edge, and start fishing with simple techniques and gear. Bend down the barbs on the hooks for safety and to make it easier to release the fish.

The more your family explores nature together, the closer your family will become. Grown-ups often mention outdoor adventures as their best

childhood memories. Share them with your children.

Adapted from *LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*

(© 2008 Algonquin Books), by Richard Louv,

Chairman of the Children & Nature Network

(www.cnaturenet.org). Learn more and find

additional resources at

www.lastchildinthewoods.com. Reprinted by permission.

Wellness Tips from Chris Carmichael

By visiting your state parks, you've taken a step toward living a healthier and more enriching life.

As you experience the park, take this chance to unwind a bit, get a little—or a lot—of exercise, and

reacquaint your senses with the land. The myriad of recreation activities available and the nature surrounding you will stimulate and strengthen your body and mind.

Embrace Life. I've traveled all over the world and learned that to get the most out of one's surroundings, you have to get outside and experience Mother Nature with all your senses. Only then will you rediscover the thrill of nature's power and beauty.

Live Vigorously. When you get outside, you'll feel compelled to do something. That's natural; we were meant to move. And the ball fields, trails, rivers, and lakes in our parks are the perfect place to get a move on and start living healthier lives that improve our well-being.

Earn Your Rewards. The mental satisfaction that

comes from accomplishing something new is incredibly powerful. It can be as simple as paddling a boat, climbing a mountain, riding a horse, or for me, jumping on a bike. Fortunately, your state parks are full of such opportunities.

Chill Out. Interacting with nature on a regular basis in the form of fishing, a picnic, or a bike ride reduces stress and offers a retreat from the demands of our modern world. And reducing stress has been proven to lead to a healthier body. So make a park visit a regular habit—for your health!

CHRIS CARMICHAEL is an Olympian and former professional cyclist, and coach to Texas native and 7-time Tour de France Champion Lance Armstrong. For more of Chris's ideas and tips on training and nutrition, visit www.trainright.com.

IT'S WILD IN FLORIDA

The lands and waters in Florida provide some of the most unique animal habitats on earth. If you're lucky you may spot one of these Florida natives.

There are only 3,000 endangered West Indian manatees in the U.S. Many of them enjoy wintering in Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park and River, as well as Blue Spring and Manatee Springs state parks.

The American alligator makes its home in freshwater swamps and marshes, lakes, and in the brackish waters of coastal canals.

Sea turtles have used the beaches of Florida to lay their eggs for eons.

ROADTRIP 2 DAYS//140 MILES

Springs Break

There are several freshwater springs located within a quick drive of each other in this region. Some are giant, some are home to rare manatees, and all of them are magical places to swim and explore.

DAY 1

Kick off your day with a dive into Madison Blue Spring, located just east of Madison near the Withlacoochee River. Its crystal clear pool is about 82 feet wide and 25 feet deep. After toweling off, make your way south to Peacock Springs, about 16 miles southwest of Live Oak on State Road 51. See if you can spot a cave diver setting off to explore the underwater cave system that's part of the spring. As the sun starts to go down, head to a cabin at Fanning Springs and enjoy the last swim

of the day in a spring that feeds the Suwannee River. Occasionally, manatees will use these springs as a warm-water refuge. When manatees are present, swimming is prohibited.

DAY 2

Make the quick drive south—or grab a kayak or canoe and float down—to Manatee Spring, so named for the manatees that swim up the Suwannee River each winter to be near the spring's warm waters. The park offers camping, birding, canoeing, fishing and other activities. Next stop is Rainbow Springs located 3 miles north of Dunnellon. It's one of Florida's largest springs and has been used by Native Americans for over 10,000 years. Rent a canoe or kayak at the headsprings or the campground and you can explore this serene area on the water.

IN-THE-KNOW PIT STOPS

For an added adventure, grab an inner tube and float the Rainbow River near Rainbow Springs State Park. Launching is available for tubers at K.P. Hole County Park in the town of Dunnellon. Tube rentals are also available at the county park. Contact: (352) 489-3055

LEAVE NO TRACE: Handle With Care

The manatees and sea turtles need your help! They're two of a hundred endangered plants, animals, birds, and fish living in or passing through your state parks. It's up to you to help preserve their critical habitat during your visit. Follow the tips below and your parks and beaches should stay wild and vibrant for yours and future generations.

Pack It Out

Deposit all litter and food scraps in designated receptacles. Pick up any litter you may find along the way. No trash cans? Haul your waste out of the park.

Protect the Water

Clean water is a precious resource in this region. Even a puddle can support a vibrant ecosystem. Stay out of water unless designated for swimming or boating. Camp at least 200 feet away from, and never wash dishes, yourself or deposit waste, in lakes and streams. Thousands of animals, insects and plants depend on that water.

Observe, Don't Disturb

Leave rocks, plants and other nature elements as you found them. Same goes for cultural or historic construction and artifacts.

Be Fire Wise

Use a camp stove for cooking. Where fires are permitted, only use established fire rings or BBQ grills. After wood and coals burn to ash and cool, scatter the ash.

Follow the Rules

Specific park regulations were researched and designed to preserve the local ecology and let nature thrive.

Stick to Existing Sites & Trails

Only camp in designated or existing campsites and keep your impact small. Stay off vegetation.

Always walk single file down the middle of an established trail, even when it's wet or muddy.

VOLUNTEER!

Help maintain a trail, restore a natural area, or join a group to clean up your beaches or parks. Inquire

at the ranger station for a list of Citizen Support Organizations working with your favorite parks or inquire at the ranger station to discover how you can help. www.floridastateparks.org

FL STATE FACTS

Wrap your head around these Sunshine State Numbers

170 Miles

Length of the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail

168 Million

Gallons of cool clear water produced each day from the first-magnitude spring at Lafayette Blue Springs

270

Species of birds to be seen at Paynes Prairie
Preserve State Park

North Central Florida

Springs & Things

Special to this area of Florida are numerous freshwater springs, which are popular areas for canoeing, kayaking or picnicking along the banks. At certain times of the year, you can take on the challenge of Class III rapids. Enjoy breathtaking sunsets from lovely Cedar Key. Or bring your binoculars and watch the hundreds of migratory birds that pass through this region. The mockingbird, Florida's state bird, is common here. For more information, visit www.floridastateparks.org.

Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park

The beautiful ornamental gardens feature hundreds of camellias and azaleas, a reflection pool and brick paths that wind around a walled garden.

(850) 487-4556 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/maclaygardens

Bald Point State Park

Located where the Ochlockonee River empties into Apalachee Bay, Bald Point attracts bird-watchers on the lookout for bald eagles and other migrating raptors.

(850) 349-9146 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/baldpoint

Big Shoals State Park

When the water runs high on the Suwannee River, the Big Shoals rapids turn into Class III whitewater and form the largest rapids in Florida.

Page 33 of 59

(386) 397-4331 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/bigshoals

Cedar Key Museum State Park

The museum exhibits cover the colorful history of Cedar Key during its heyday as a port city and railroad connection during the 19th century.

(352) 543-5350 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/cedarkey

Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve

(352) 543-5567 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/cedarkeyscrub

Crystal River Archaeological State Park & Preserve

A National Historic Landmark, this complex of six mounds served as a Native American ceremonial center and burial ground for an estimated 1,600 years.

Page 34 of 59

(352) 795-3817 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/crystalriver

Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park

The 120-foot deep crater in the park is a collapsed limestone cavern. Streams tumble down its sides which are covered in lush vegetation.

(352) 955-2008 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/devilmillhopper

Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park

Surrounded by white beaches and an emerald bay, St. George is well known for swimming, fishing, hiking and camping. Few parks offer better beachcombing.

(850) 927-2111 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/stgeorgeisl

Dudley Farm Historic State Park

Page 35 of 59

(352) 472-1142 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/dudleyfarm

Econfina River State Park

(850) 922-6007 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/econfina

Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park

Dive into one of the largest and deepest freshwater springs in the world.

(850) 224-5950 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/wakulla

Fanning Springs State Park

Visitors can walk along a mile-long nature trail and boardwalk overlooking the spring and Suwannee River. Boating, canoeing, and fishing are available.

(352) 463-3420 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/fanningsprings

Forest Capital Museum State Park

The museum is dedicated to the longleaf pines that dominate Florida's timber industry and the 5,000 products manufactured from them.

(850) 584-3227 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/forestcapital

Fort Cooper State Park

A portion of a reconstructed fort from the Seminole War. Visitors can enjoy hiking, picnicking and primitive camping.

(352) 726-0315 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/fortcooper

Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park

West Indian manatees are found here year round. Wildlife encounters with Florida snakes and other wildlife including alligators occur daily.

(352) 628-5343 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/homosassa

Ichetucknee Springs State Park

Tubing down six miles of the Ichetucknee River for 3.5 hours as it flows through shaded hammocks and wetlands is the popular activity at this park.

(386) 497-2511 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ichetucknee

Lafayette Blue Springs State Park

With five new cabins overlooking the historic Suwannee River, this park offers tranquility in a park that features a first-magnitude spring.

(386) 294-3667 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lafayette

Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park

Inhabited by Native Americans over 800 years ago, this complex consists of six earthen temple mounds and one possible burial mound.

Page 38 of 59

(850) 922-6007 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lakejackson

Lake Talquin State Park

(850) 922-6007 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/laketalquin

Letchworth-Love Mounds Archaeological State Park

Letchworth mound rises 60 feet above the ground and is the largest earthen mound in Florida.

(850) 922-6007 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/letchworth

Madison Blue Spring State Park

(850) 971-5003 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/madison

Manatee Springs State Park

In the winter manatees swim up river to spend the night in the spring's warm waters as it gushes forth millions of gallons of crystalline water a day.

(352) 493-6072 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/manateesprings

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park

This is the restored cracker-style home and farm of the Pulitzer-prize winning author of *The Yearling*.

(352) 466-3672 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/kinnanrawlings

Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park

Springs flow into the park set among the rolling sandhills. Wildlife thrives in the marshes, lakes and scrub. The Civilian Conservation Corps developed the park in the 1930s.

(352) 473-4701 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/goldhead

Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park

Here during the Civil War, Confederate forces turned back a Union attack on the main railroad connection between Tallahassee and the coast.

(850) 922-6007 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/naturalbridge

Nature and Heritage Tourism Center

(386) 397-4461 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/tourism

Ochlockonee River State Park

(850) 962-2771 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ochlockonee

O'Leno State Park

Situated along the Santa Fe River, this park contains sinkholes, hardwood hammocks, river swamps and sandhills. The river disappears

Page 41 of 59

underground in the park and emerges three miles away.

(386) 454-1853 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/oleno

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park

Florida's largest Civil War battle took place here in 1864 and ended with Union troops retreating to Jacksonville. Olustee is Florida's first historic site.

(386) 758-0400 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/olustee

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park

Florida's first preserve, this 21,000-acre wilderness is home to alligators, bison, wild horses and over 270 species of birds. The wildflowers are spectacular.

(352) 466-3397 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/paynesprairie

Peacock Springs State Park

The park has two major springs, a spring run and numerous sinkholes. Swimming and snorkeling are popular activities.

(386) 776-2194 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/peacocksprings

Rainbow Springs State Park

Archaeological evidence shows that people have been visiting the springs for nearly 10,000 years. Today ornamental gardens bursting with azaleas greet visitors.

(352) 465-8555 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/rainbowsprings

River Rise Preserve State Park

After running underground for 3 miles, the Santa Fe River pops above ground in the park. A 20-horse stall barn is available to equestrian campers.

(386) 454-1853 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/riverrise

San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park

This fort at the confluence of the Wakulla and St. Marks rivers was built in 1679 for a community originally founded in 1528 by Panfilo de Narvaez.

(850) 925-6216 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/sanmarcos

San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park

(386) 462-7905 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/sanfelasco

Silver River State Park

The park is home to dozens of springs, miles of trails, a pioneer cracker village and the Silver River Museum and Environmental Education Center.

(352) 236-7148 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/silverriver

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park

The center celebrates composer Stephen Foster and the more than 200 songs he wrote. The 97-bell carillon tower regularly chimes his tunes.

(386) 397-4331 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/sfoster

Suwannee River State Park

The main attraction in this park is the confluence of the Withlacoochee and Suwannee Rivers. With five new cabins and a newly-renovated campground, this is the perfect location for canoeing and hiking the Florida Trail.

(386) 362-2746 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/suwannee

Troy Spring State Park

Divers can study the ring run or dive down to 70 feet. Boating on the Suwannee River or exploring the trails is popular.

(386) 935-4835 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/troyspring

St. Marks River State Park

(850) 922-6007 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/stmarks

Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park

(352) 543-5567 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/waccasassa

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park

(352) 795-3817 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/yulee

**More ways to ENJOY
your PARKS**

Calendar and Cool Ideas

This Park Visitor Welcome Kit is made possible by sponsors who share our vision for protecting parks and the environment. We think you'll love what they have to say.

I N S I D E

Looking for outdoor photography tips?

Find photography tips from expert photographers and a chance to win a park trip and a camera when you enter the Canon Photography in the Parks Contest.

Planting a tree is as easy as clicking your mouse!

Go to www.odwalla.com and plant a tree in a park in the blink of an eye. No purchase is necessary. Each visitor can plant up to 5 trees!

Learn about ending 'nature deficit disorder'

Page 47 of 59

Also, find out how you can make all your travel,
Travel for Good, with Travelocity

Tips for a responsible park experience

Create lasting memories from your trip

Shutterfly has a special offer only for park visitors.
Go to www.shutterfly.com/parkvisitor to get yours

Florida State Parks Event Calendar

There's more to explore online

For more gear reviews, road trip ideas, loads of
park information, recipes, travel tips, special
offers, and more, visit www.parkvisitor.com

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Florida State Parks Calendar

Check out all the fun events in your state parks—guided hikes, night programs, festivals, kids programs, athletic events, how-to clinics, and much more! Add these to your to-do list today and visit your state parks often.

June 1, 2008

**Mattie Kelley Choctawhatchee Estuary
Festival at Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State
Park**

Come out for a day of family-gearred activities—fish printing on T-shirts, crab races, guided kayak tours, guided hikes, and seining exercises for kids to examine local fish. Learn all about the Choctawhatchee River and Bay, as well as a restoration project for the Okaloosa Darter, a locally threatened fish. Other displays and lectures will focus on snakes, red tide, sturgeon population, and water nitrate testing. More info: (850) 650-5928

June 7, 2008

**Early Boat Tour at Edward Ball Wakulla
Springs State Park**

Get an eyeful of alligators, turtles, deer, birds, and other wildlife on an early morning cruise of the scenic Wakulla River. Reservations suggested. More info: (850) 926-0700

June 14, 2008

Annual Free Kids' Fishing Clinic at Fort Clinch State Park

This one-day clinic helps your kids learn all the basics and how to be responsible anglers. The first 500 kids receive a free rod and reel. Bait is provided. More info: (904) 277-7274

June 16-21, 2008

Wildlife Week in the Park at Homosassa

Springs Wildlife State Park This weeklong day camp exposes the children to Florida's wildlife and their habitats through activities and crafts. Open to children going into third and fourth grades in the fall. Advance registration required. More info: (352) 628-5343

July 4, 2008

Old Fashioned 4th of July Picnic at The Barnacle Historic State Park

Celebrate our nation's birthday with an old-fashioned relaxing family picnic at a 19th century pioneer homesite. Show your spirit by wearing a period costume for all the festivities, including lawn games, fireworks, and kite-making demonstrations. More info: (305) 442-6866

August 2, 2008

A Day in Florida History of De Leon Springs at De Leon Springs State Park

Come and see a battle between soldiers and settlers of the early 1800s and Seminole Indians re-enacted with actual weapons of the period. Afterwards, take in some Indian dance performances before exploring an authentic Indian village and soldier's encampment—complete with Indian artifacts, old rifles and weapons, and artisans.

Page 52 of 59

More info: (386) 985-4212

September 6, 2008

First Saturday Coffeehouse at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center

Enjoy a coffee, tea and dessert while taking in songs, stories, music or poetry at this open stage night at the park auditorium. More info: (386) 397-4331

September 20, 2008

Marion County Springs Festival at Silver River State Park

This annual festival has an incredible program—live music, door prize giveaways, an arts and crafts show, interactive exhibits, storytelling, guided hikes, a silent auction, art show, horse drawn trolley, food vendors, and more. More info: (352) 236-7148

September 20-21, 2008

**Spanish American War Event at Fort Clinch
State Park**

Fascinated by the period of the Spanish American War in 1898? Then, don't miss a day of reenactments and historical presentations. More info: (904) 277-7274

October 4, 2008

**Children's Cane Pole Fishing Tournament at
De Leon Springs State Park**

Leave the fancy rods and reels at home. All you'll need for this tournament are a simple cane pole, bobber, and hook. Bait provided, and prizes awarded for different age groups—the largest, the smallest and the most fish caught. More info: (386) 985-4212

October 11-12, 2008

Confederate Garrisons at Fort Clinch State Park

Civil War reenactors portray life at Fort Clinch with black powder artillery demonstrations, marching drills, and other activities. Don't miss the candlelight viewing on Saturday evening. More info: (904) 277-7274

October 24, 2008

Heritage Day at Forest Capital Museum State Park

Volunteers dressed in period costumes create a living history at the 1863 Cracker Homestead, with exhibitions of: pine straw basket weaving, blacksmithing, plowing with mule, Civil war encampment, cracker cooking, cracker whip demo, cracker cowboy, crocheting, knitting, tatting and more. More info: (850) 584-3227

October 24-25, 2008

16th Annual Haunted Woods at Hillsborough River State Park

Looking for a safe, fun alternative to trick-or-treating? This event has something for the whole family—haunted woods trail, coloring contest, family tram ride, refreshments, games, goodies, moonwalk, costume contests and more. More info: (813) 987-6771

October 25, 2008

53rd Florida Forest Festival at Forest Capital Museum State Park

Don't miss this tree-rific day packed with festivities for the whole family—a downtown parade, the world's largest fish fry, carnival, pageants, parades, storytelling, vendors galore, antique cars, arts and crafts, live music and entertainment, and chainsaw competitions. More info: (850) 584-3227

October 25-31, 2008

Haunting of Fort Taylor at Fort Zachary Taylor

Looking for a good fright? Come experience the haunting of Fort Taylor, a Civil War Fortress in which nearly 400 soldiers died of yellow fever.

More info: (305) 292-6713

November 2-9, 2008

Key West Offshore Powerboat World Championship at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park

View the annual offshore powerboat racing series from the best beach in Key West. More info: (305) 292-6713

November 3-4, 2008

Quiksilver "King of the Peak" Surf Contest at Sebastian Inlet State Park

Watch some of the best surfers in the world "shoot the tube" and compete for \$10,000 in prize money.

More info: www.quiksilver.com

Thursdays, Nov – April 2008

**Gentle Walk & Talk at Paynes Prairie Preserve
State Park**

This gentle walk takes you to the edge of the prairie basin and Alachua Sink, plus areas of the Preserve only accessible with a guide. Challenge yourself to identify birds, butterflies, trees, and wildflowers along the way, or just enjoy a peaceful stroll. This walk is suitable for those who aren't hikers but still want to have an outdoor experience. More info: (352) 466-4100

December 5-7, 2008

**Pirates in Paradise at Fort Zachary Taylor
Historic State Park**

Arrr mate! Best not miss this event, or you'll have to walk the plank. Re-enactors portray the pirate's life in the late 1700s—swords, cannon fire and all. Festivities include a reenactment of the trial of Ann

Page 58 of 59

Bonnie and Mary Reid, as well as mock battles with English Red Coats and the pirates at land and sea.

More info: (305) 292-6713

For more information on these and other State Park events, visit www.parkvisitor.com/fl/events

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Page 59 of 59

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