

# **Park Visitor Welcome Kit: Southwest Florida**

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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](http://www.ParkVisitors.com)

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# **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](http://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.

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](http://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](http://www.floridastateparks.org)

Camping Reservations: [www.reserveamerica.com](http://www.reserveamerica.com),  
(800) 326-3521

Florida Department of Environmental Protection:  
[www.dep.state.fl.us](http://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](http://www.parkvisitor.com)

## **Go Guide**

Exciting articles for exploring Your Florida State  
Parks today!

### **Ranger's Recommendations: The Very Best of Southwest 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**

##### **Cayo Costa State Park**

With nine miles of beautiful beaches and acres of  
pine forests, oak-palm hammocks and mangrove

swamps, this barrier island is a fisherman's paradise on the Gulf Coast. The park is accessible only by private boat or ferry. Saltwater anglers can fish from their boats or throw a line out into the surf and hook flounder, snook, trout, redfish, snapper, whiting, sheepshead and tarpon. Visitors may see manatees and pods of dolphins in the waters around the park, as well as a spectacular assortment of birds. Camping is available.

## **CANOEING & KAYAKING**

### **Collier-Seminole State Park**

The 13-mile canoe trail offers spectacular views into the 10,000 Islands and the Everglades.

Fishing, hiking, bicycling, camping and picnicking are other activities in this park. Keep an eye out for rare Everglades plants and animals.

## **BEACHES**

### **Delnor-Wiggins State Park**

The beach stretches for a mile and boasts white sugar sand that has helped earn the beach recognition as one of the best in the nation. The beach is popular for sunbathing, swimming, beachcombing, snorkeling and picnicking. Fishing, boating and canoeing are popular.

### **Lovers Key State Park**

For years, Lovers Key was accessible only by boat and it was said that only lovers traveled to the island to enjoy its remote and solitary beach. Today, the two mile long beach is accessible by boardwalk or tram and is popular for shelling, swimming, picnicking and sunbathing. Black Island has over five miles of multiuse trails for hiking and bicycling. Anglers and boaters can launch their vessels from the park's boat ramp. The park's concession offers boat and fishing tours, as well as bicycle, canoe and kayak rentals.

## **CAMPGROUND**

### **Koreshan State Historic Site**

The park features 60 wooded campsites. The community campfire circle is for group use, seasonal interpretive programs and camper get-togethers. The Estero River borders the park and flows into the Estero Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. There is a boat ramp and canoes are available to rent.

## **LIGHTHOUSE**

### **Gasparilla Island State Park**

Separated from the mainland by Charlotte Harbor and Pine Island Sound, this island is part of a chain of Gulf Coast barrier islands. The centerpiece of Gasparilla is the restored Boca Grande Lighthouse built in 1890.

### **Out of the Ordinary**

### **Mound Key State Park**

The shell mounds and ridges of Mound Key rise more than 30 feet above the waters of Estero Bay. Prehistoric Native Americans are credited with creating this island's complex of mounds with an accumulation of seashells, fish bones and pottery. Mound Key is believed to have been the ceremonial center of the Calusa Indians when the Spaniards first attempted to colonize Southwest Florida. The only access to the island is by boat.

## **Hiking**

### **Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park**

This park, comprised mainly of mangrove forests and salt marshes, offers unique opportunities to spot wildlife and rare plants along its trails. Public access points have been established at strategic upland points in the park. The Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) is a non-profit group that has a visitor's center, offers environmental education programs, interpretive guided hikes and

approximately six miles of marked trails. Don't miss the Old Datsun Trail, which is approximately 1.75 miles long and traverses oak/palm hammocks, pine flatwoods and wetland sloughs.

## **BEST IN THE STATE**

Scour the beach for unique shells and sharks' teeth at Stump Pass Beach State Park. Take a hike or enjoy a swim or snorkel in the cool, clear waters of the Gulf.

## **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](http://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](http://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.

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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, [www.solio.com](http://www.solio.com)

### **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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.cnaturenet.org)). Learn more and find additional resources at [www.lastchildinthewoods.com](http://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](http://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.

The endangered bald eagle has made a comeback in Florida and across the nation. Look for their nests in high trees along the shoreline.

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

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

## **ROADTRIP 2 DAYS//75 MILES**

### Swamps to Swells

This easy two day adventure kicks off with a tour of the wild swamps of the Everglades, stops at one of the region's best beaches and ends with a campfire around a tree-covered campsite.

### **DAY 1**

Head south to the Fakahatchee Strand State Park for a guided swamp tour by foot or canoe of "the Amazon of North America." Dry out for the night at nearby Collier- Seminole State Park with its campgrounds and hiking, biking and canoeing trails that meander through the Blackwater River and surrounding swampland. Collier-Seminole also

features a wealth of vegetation and wildlife typical of the Everglades, plus a forest made up of tropical trees. Although rare elsewhere, the Florida royal palm is a common tree here.

## **DAY 2**

Make your way north to Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park on the Gulf Coast. You'll find a popular beach half-way between the bustle of Naples and Ft. Myers that's situated on a narrow barrier island and separated from the mainland by mangrove swamps and tidal creeks. Wrap up your day further north at Koreshan State Historic Site, originally a utopian settlement established in 1894 on the banks of the scenic Estero River. Stay in the campground and enjoy one of the park campfire programs. Guided tours of the settlement are also available, as well as "ghost walks" and environmental programs. Contact the park for more info.

## **IN-THE-KNOW PIT STOP**

If you can't get enough of the Everglades, swing into the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary (239) 348-9151. The 13,000-acre preserve is owned by the National Audubon Society and contains habitat for over 200 bird species. A 2.25-mile boardwalk meanders through the swamp and offers plenty of alligator sightings.

## **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](http://www.floridastateparks.org)

## **FL STATE FACTS**

Wrap your head around these Sunshine State Numbers

3,500 Years

Approximate age of the oldest living bald cypress tree in the state

17 Feet, 5 inches

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Length of the longest alligator recorded in Florida  
found in the Everglades

109° F

Hottest day on record in Florida, measured on June  
29, 1931

# Southwest Florida

## Where Nature Shines

Enjoy vast stretches of undeveloped beaches on secluded barrier islands or explore the wild beauty of the Everglades as you spot the abundant wildlife that calls southwest Florida home. Rare species such as the Florida panther, West Indian manatee and vibrant orchids thrive in these parts. The state parks and waters of this region offer the best chances to catch sight of them. Canoeing, camping, fishing, hiking and snorkeling are just a

few of the activities you can enjoy here. For more information, visit [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org).

### **Cayo Costa State Park**

This island, accessible by private boat or passenger ferry, is one in a chain of barrier islands near Charlotte Harbor. Natural features include miles of beaches, pine forests, oak-palm hammocks, mangrove swamps and spectacular bird life.

Visitors can enjoy picnicking, primitive camping, fishing and the beach. Shelling is particularly good during the winter.

(941) 964-0375 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/cayocosta](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/cayocosta)

### **Charlotte Harbor State Park**

Surrounded by five aquatic preserves, the Charlotte Harbor Estuary is one of the most productive in Florida. Canoeing and kayaking are

popular. It's also home to one of Florida's largest Atlantic White Cedar trees.

(941) 575-5861 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/charlotte](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/charlotte)

### **Collier-Seminole State Park**

The tropical-hardwood forests mimic those of the West Indies and the Yucatan Peninsula. The park is home to many threatened and endangered animals including wood storks, bald eagles, red-cockaded woodpeckers, crocodiles, manatees, black bears and panthers. A boat ramp and canoe rentals make it easy to explore the quiet lagoons, creeks and bays in the park.

(239) 394-3397 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/collierseminole](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/collierseminole)

### **Delnor-Wiggins State Park**

This park on the Gulf Coast is an exquisite place for swimming, beach going, fishing and launching a

canoe or power boat into a lush back bay of sea oats, seagrapes, cabbage palms and mangroves. The narrow barrier island is separated from the mainland by mangrove swamps and tidal creeks which make it feel more remote than it is.

(239) 597-6196 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/delnorwiggins](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/delnorwiggins)

### **Don Pedro Island State Park**

Accessible by private boat this park is a barrier island in Charlotte County. Visitors can explore the beaches, set up a picnic, or just relax in the surf. Docks are located on the bay side via a channel south of the Cape Haze powerline crossing.

Directions off the Intracoastal Waterway will guide you to the park. Island tours [(941) 697-8825] can be arranged.

(941) 964-0375 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/donpedro](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/donpedro)

## **Estero Bay Preserve State Park**

This is the first aquatic preserve established in Florida, and it's one of the most productive estuaries in the state. The bay is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including the bald eagle. The preserve protects the water, inlets and islands along 10 miles of Estero Bay. Visitors can canoe or kayak in the bay or on the Estero River. Launch facilities are available at Koreshan State Historic Site and Lovers Key/Carl E. Johnson State Park. Miles of trails offer visitors the opportunity to hike, bicycle or study the variety of wildlife and native vegetation protected here.

(239) 992-0311 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/esterobay](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/esterobay)

## **Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park**

The preserve is a narrow thread of forested swamp winding through America's Everglades consisting of royal palm stands, cypress domes and grassy

prairies dotted with wild bromeliads, native ferns and rare orchids. The strand is also one of the last remaining refuges of the endangered Florida panther. Other animal residents include Everglade minks, Florida black bears, wood storks, fox squirrels and alligators. The raised railway beds or trams of the old logging train still crisscross the Fakahatchee Strand and they create a grid of trails, many of which are maintained for hiking.

(239) 695-4593 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/fakahatchee](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/fakahatchee)

### **Gasparilla Island State Park**

Gasparilla Island is part of a chain of barrier islands along the Gulf Coast of Florida. The centerpiece of the island is the Boca Grande Lighthouse built in 1890. Take a tour of this historic site open daily from November through May and Wednesday-Sunday from June to October. Or enjoy the beach

or swimming in the ocean. Shelling is particularly good in the winter months.

(941) 964-0375 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/gasparilla](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/gasparilla)

### **Koreshan State Park**

This park was originally established in 1894 as a utopian "New Jerusalem" by Cyrus Teed who brought his followers to the banks of the Estero River to practice "Koreshanity." Rangers now offer guided walks, tours of the settlement and campfire programs. Other visitors enjoy fishing, camping, boating and canoeing.

(239) 992-0311 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/koreshan](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/koreshan)

### **Lovers Key State Park**

Spot manatees, dolphins, ospreys and bald eagles from the beaches and bayside shoreline of this quiet park. The shell hunting is excellent on the

two-mile long beach. Hikers and bikers can explore more than five miles of trails on Black Island.

Canoe and kayak rentals are available at the park concession in the main parking lot.

(239) 463-4588 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/loverskey](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/loverskey)

### **Mound Key State Park**

Framed in forests of mangrove trees, the shell mounds and ridges of Mound Key rise more than 30 feet above the waters of Estero Bay. Prehistoric Native Americans are credited with creating this island's complex of mounds with an accumulation of seashells, fish bones and pottery. Mound Key is believed to have been the ceremonial center of the Calusa Indians when the Spaniards first attempted to colonize Southwest Florida. The only access to the island is by boat; there are no facilities.

(239) 992-0311 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/moundkey](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/moundkey)

## **Stump Pass Beach State Park**

This park, located at the southwest corner of Charlotte County, includes a mile of beach where seashells and shark teeth wash up, and anglers fish the surf for prize catches. Visitors can enjoy an excellent view of the Gulf of Mexico, as well as a stretch of undeveloped Florida coastline. Visitors come to this secluded beach to enjoy the year-round swimming and sunbathing; shelling is best during the winter months. A hiking trail passes through five distinct natural communities that provide homes for many species of wildlife; covered picnic tables are located along the trail.

(941) 964-0375 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/stumppass](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/stumppass)

**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!**

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Go to [www.odwalla.com](http://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'**

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](http://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](http://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

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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**

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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

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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

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performances before exploring an authentic Indian village and soldier's encampment—complete with Indian artifacts, old rifles and weapons, and artisans.

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

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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

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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,

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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,

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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**

## **Quicksilver "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.quicksilver.com](http://www.quicksilver.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 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](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/events)

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