

Park Visitor Welcome Kit: West Central Florida

Sponsored by

Canon, Odwalla, Travelocity, Geico, Shutterfly

20% for Parks

The Park Visitor Welcome Kit was created at no cost to Florida State Parks or taxpayers. Funding is generously provided by its sponsors, and 20% of its net proceeds are donated to your state parks. To learn more, visit www.20ForParks.com

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 56

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

Page 4 of 56

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 56

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.

The Park Visitor Welcome Kit was created by Government Solutions Group in partnership with Florida State Parks at no cost to taxpayers.

Nothing in the Park Visitor Welcome Kit should be taken to imply endorsement of products, services, or activities of advertisers by any governmental

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 West 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 Manatee State Park

The lake is one of the premier bass lakes in
southwest Florida. Largemouth bass have been so

plentiful in this 2,400-acre lake that anglers may witness schools of bass leaping out of the water while they feed on scores of baitfish. This lake is also popular for speckled perch, sunshine bass, channel catfish and bluegill fishing.

Oscar Scherer State Park

Anglers and canoers at Lake Osprey can find largemouth bass, channel catfish and bream. The dock on the Lester Finley Barrier Free Nature Trail is a perfect spot to hook snook, tarpon and redfish in brackish South Creek, which flows through the park.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Myakka River State Park

The horse trail will take you across open, sunny prairies, dotted with numerous small marshes, and through shady hammocks of cabbage palms and oak trees. The total length of the four-loop trail is

about 15.7 miles. Additional riding opportunities exist on the Myakka Island Trail which connects the park to the T. Mabry Carlton Preserve.

Alafia River State Park

Horseback riders can enjoy 20 miles of beautiful and well marked equestrian trails that weave around lakes, over hills and through wooded areas. Most of the horse trails are wide enough to accommodate buggies and carriages. Note: Trails are shared with mountain bikes. Looking for an overnight stay? The park has a full-facility campground and equestrian-friendly campsites.

Highlands Hammock State Park

The horse trail begins in an open field-like setting where owners are invited to camp at primitive sites with their horses and/or horse trailers. The trail takes you through hammock areas, open pine flatwoods and even across a bridge over a cypress

swamp. Expect to see white-tailed deer, raccoons, and maybe even a bobcat in the distance.

Little Manatee River State Park

Explore 12 miles of equestrian trails and enjoy four equestrian campsites at this secluded park near Fort Lonesome with the Little Manatee River running through it.

HIKING

Myakka River State Park

A hike takes visitors from pine savannas to maple swamps, through rare Florida prairies or up into the canopy of ancient oaks. The short trail takes you through an oak-palm hammock, over boardwalks crossing grassy marshes, across a suspension bridge through the treetops and up a 74-foot-high tower to view oak-palm hammock, lakes, rivers, wetlands and prairies. A 39-mile

portion of the Florida Trail also winds through the park, offering primitive camping.

BEST SUNSET

Honeymoon Island State Park

At the end of the day, many visitors head to the coast to see the phenomenal sunsets over the Gulf of Mexico at this, the most western point along this part of the state. Arrive early for a hike along Osprey Trail, or a visit to the Nature Center.

BEST BEACH

Caladesi Island State Park

Few shorelines in America remain as pristine as the three miles of white, quartz sand beach here. Fields of golden sea oats sway in balmy breezes and thrive atop huge dunes. This barrier island beach is consistently ranked one of the best in the nation. In 2006 and 2007, Caladesi's beach was voted the second best in the nation by noted

expert Dr. Stephen Leatherman (also known as “Dr. Beach”).

CAMPGROUNDS

Oscar Scherer State Park

Campsites are fully equipped with electric and water hook-ups. The picnic tables and grills provide you a kitchen away from home, and the clean restrooms have hot showers and laundry area for your convenience. There are six accessible sites with paved parking and concrete pads for large luxury RVs.

Hillsborough River State Park

One of Florida’s original state parks, the campground here contains 112 full-facility campsites. The park features a swimming pool; Fort Foster, a replica of an original Second Seminole War military fort; hiking trails, canoeing and kayaking; and bicycling. One primitive

campsite is available via a foot path. Reservations are highly recommended.

BEST IN THE STATE

The off-road bicycle trails at Alafia River State Park are tops in Florida. The reclaimed phosphate mine features topography that offers a wealth of challenges. Roll through 17-miles of bike trails that range from easy to challenging.

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,

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

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.

About 50 of the rare Florida panthers are left in the state hiding in upper dry land areas or cypress forests.

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 3 DAYS//145 MILES

CCC Highlights

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corp's work developing state parks and park facilities throughout Florida. The three parks here embody the best of their work that families have enjoyed for generations.

DAY 1

From Tampa, head northeast to Hillsborough River State Park. The CCC built a network of scenic nature trails along the Hillsborough River through forests of live oaks, sabal palms, magnolias and hickory trees. Camp at one of the campsites or hike into one of the rustic tent-camping spots.

Canoe rentals are available for those who want to explore the river up close.

DAY 2

Head south to Myakka River State Park just east of Sarasota. The CCC-constructed seven-mile scenic drive winds through a shady oak palm hammock—make sure to get out and walk among the trees on the canopy boardwalk. After an active day, pull into the campground for a peaceful night. Five palm log cabins, built in the 1930s by the CCC, have been modernized and are available for lodging.

DAY 3

Drive into the wild interior of Florida and the jungle-like setting of Highlands Hammock State Park, which opened in 1931 and is one of the state's oldest parks. A museum in the park showcases the history of the CCC in Florida and its

extensive work in the park. Complete your visit with a great meal at the park's full-service restaurant.

IN-THE-KNOW PIT STOPS

For a hands-on sea life experience, stop into the Mote Aquarium on City Island, Sarasota (941) 388-4441. Visitors can touch stingrays, horseshoe crabs and other marine life and view dolphins, manatees, sharks, sea turtles, eels, among many other aquatic species.

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

320 Feet

Depth of small salt spring you'll find at Werner-Boyce State Park

1.5 Miles

Page 31 of 56

Length of the south side of the Skyway State Fishing Pier, one of the longest fishing piers in the world

1,200 Pounds

Weight of a record-breaking tiger shark once caught at the mouth of Tampa Bay

West Central Florida

Big Bays, Rustic Islands

From the remote and rustic barrier islands that offer an easy escape from the cities to the deep, dark woods of the inland wilds, this part of Florida has a little bit of everything. You can canoe in placid freshwater rivers, explore dry prairie or cast for big fish on Tampa Bay or the ocean. Rich in history and full of rare wildlife, each park offers a learning experience for all. For more information, visit www.floridastateparks.org.

Alafia River State Park

Located on an abandoned phosphate mine this park is now home to some of the most challenging mountain-bike trails in Florida. Grab a bike or saddle up your horse and explore the park's mixed hardwood forests and rolling hills.

(813) 672-5320 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/alafia

Anclote Key State Park

A lighthouse erected in 1887 keeps watch over the four miles of beach on this island located three miles off the coast from Tarpon Springs. Its remoteness—it's accessible only by private boat—ensures a very quiet and relaxing visit. Primitive camping and picnicking are available on the north end of the island. Take care not to disturb the shorebirds that nest here.

(727) 469-5942 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/anclote

Caladesi Island State Park

This island is accessible by ferry or private boat from nearby Honeymoon Island State Park.

Canoeists and kayakers can enjoy the 3.25-mile water trail that runs through the mangroves and seagrass beds. A 108-slip marina services private boaters.

(727) 469-5918 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/caladesi

Cockroach Bay Preserve State Park

(941) 721-2068 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/cockroach

Colt Creek State Park

Located in the heart of the Green Swamp

Wilderness Area, this park consists of pine

flatwoods, open pasture, cypress domes, two creek systems and three man-made lakes. Facilities are

limited as the park only opened in 2007. Recent park improvements include four covered benches overlooking the lakes and six hitching posts and a water trough for horses.

(863) 661-8196 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/coltcreek

Dade Battlefield Historic State Park

This is the site of the battle that opened the Second Seminole War on December 28, 1835 when 108 soldiers were attacked by Seminole warriors. Only three soldiers survived. Learn more about the battle and the war in the visitors center. Or, explore the natural beauty of local wildflowers along the park's nature trail.

(352) 793-4781 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/dade

Egmont Key State Park

Situated at the mouth of Tampa Bay, this park is a wildlife refuge with beaches and a historic site.

Page 35 of 56

Check out the working lighthouse built in 1858 and gun batteries built in 1898 for the Spanish-American War.

(727) 469-5942 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/egmont

Gamble Plantation Historic State Park

The mansion was home to Major Robert Gamble and once served as the headquarters for a vast sugar plantation that thrived in the days before the Civil War. Most of the furnishings re-create the life in the south during the mid-19th century.

(941) 723-4536 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/gamble

Highlands Hammock State Park

The park opened to the public in 1931. The park now features a museum that showcases the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. Deer and alligators are regularly spotted along the park's scenic drive.

Page 36 of 56

(863) 386-6094 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/highlands

Hillsborough River State Park

This quick getaway from Tampa offers a wealth of recreational activities: camping, picnicking, canoeing, fishing, hiking and swimming in the pool. Take a tour of Fort Foster Historic Site, a replica of an 1837 fort from the Second Seminole War. Or, take a stroll on the Rapids Nature Trail, which meanders through oak hammocks to the edge of the Hillsborough River. The park also has canoe rentals for use on the river.

(813) 987-6771 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/hillsborough

Honeymoon Island State Park

Visitors can explore beaches on the Gulf of Mexico, mangrove swamps and tidal flats and look for osprey nests and one of the few remaining virgin

slash pine forests in South Florida. The name comes from the 50 honeymoon shacks built here in 1939. The park's beach recently underwent restoration and now offers some of the softest, cleanest sand in the area.

(727) 469-5942 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/honeymoon

Lake June-in-Winter Scrub State Park

This park protects "Florida's desert," a term that refers to the state's endangered sand scrub. Some of Florida's rarest plants and animals, including the Florida scrub-jay, Florida scrub lizard, Florida mouse, gopher tortoise and bobcat live here.

Raptors are common along the lakefront. This park is new and offers a wilderness experience.

(863) 386-6094 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lakejune

Lake Manatee State Park

This park extends along three miles of the south shore of Lake Manatee and contains mostly flatwoods, sand pine scrub, depression marshes and hardwood forests. It offers a quick getaway for campers, anglers and boaters. Swimming is permitted in a designated area of the lake.

(941) 741-3028 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lakemanatee

Little Manatee River State Park

Designated an Outstanding Florida Water, the river offers excellent canoeing opportunities. Canoes are available for rent from the park. The park also welcomes horseback riders with four equestrian campsites along a 12-mile trail.

(813) 671-5005 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/littlemanatee

Madira Bickel Mound Historic State Park

This park was the first place in Florida to be

designated a State Archaeological Site. The flat-topped ceremonial mound-composed of sand, shell and village debris-measures 100 by 170 feet at the base and is 20 feet tall. Archaeological excavations here have revealed at least three periods of Native American cultures, the earliest dating back 2,000 years.

(941) 723-4536 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/madira

Myakka River State Park

A wealth of wetlands animals, fish and other species call the "Wild and Scenic" Myakka River home. A 7-mile scenic drive winds through a shady oak palm hammock and along the shore of Upper Myakka Lake. Check out the canopy boardwalk through the hammock.

(941) 361-6511 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/myakka

Oscar Scherer State Park

The Nature Center highlights the abundant wildlife seen in the park including scrub-jays, gopher tortoises, bald eagles, bobcats, rabbits, river otters and alligators. Visitors can camp, fish, canoe, swim, hike and bike.

(941) 483-5956 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/oscarscherer

Paynes Creek Historic State Park

The visitors center recounts life at what was once Fort Chokonikla, built to protect European settlers from the Seminoles during the early 19th century. The park is also home to 10 different ecosystems and a plethora of wildlife viewing opportunities.

(863) 375-4717 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/paynescreek

Skyway Fishing Pier

Perhaps the longest fishing pier in the world, the converted bridge across Tampa Bay allows anglers

Page 41 of 56

to fish all day and all night—the bridge is lighted and is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Snacks, bait and fishing supplies are available.

(727) 865-0668 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/skywaybridge

Terra Ceia Preserve State Park

(941) 721-2068 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/terraceia

Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park

Venture here to enjoy four miles of coastline on the Gulf of Mexico. The salt spring may look small but it actually bubbles up from a depth of 320 feet. Stop for a picnic or take a stroll on the 3/4 –mile hiking trail.

(727) 816-1890 //

www.parkvisitor.com/fl/wernerboyce

Ybor City Museum Historic State Park

Page 42 of 56

Between 1886 and the 1930s Ybor City was the self-proclaimed “Cigar Capital of the World” thanks to the work of Don Vicente Martinez Ybor. Today park goers can tour La Casita, a cigar worker’s house, and the ornamental gardens.

(813) 247-6323 // www.parkvisitor.com/fl/yborcity

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'

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

20% for Parks

The Park Visitor Welcome Kit was created at no cost to State Parks or taxpayers.

Funding is generously provided by its sponsors, and 20% of its net proceeds are donated to your state parks.

To learn more, visit www.20ForParks.com

Sponsors: Canon, Odwalla, Travelocity, GEICO and Shutterfly

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

Page 46 of 56

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

Page 47 of 56

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

Page 48 of 56

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.

More info: (386) 985-4212

September 6, 2008

First Saturday Coffeehouse at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center

Page 49 of 56

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

Page 50 of 56

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

Page 51 of 56

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,

Page 52 of 56

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**

Page 54 of 56

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

EXTEND YOUR TRIP

We make it a breeze to tell the story of your park adventures. Just upload your favorite shots to Shutterfly free of charge, then you can instantly share them online with loved ones.

You can also create personalized gifts in minutes. We're #1 in quality, having won awards for our photo books, cards and more. This means everything you make will look amazing. We guarantee your satisfaction.

Visit www.shutterfly.com/parkvisitor to see your special offer.*

*To redeem the special offer, user must have an existing Shutterfly account, or create one at www.shutterfly.com/parkvisitor. A valid email address is required. Credit cannot be transferred to another account and may not be combined with other offers, discounts, promotions or credits.