

Florida State Parks Monthly Newsletter

Welcome!

In contrast to theme parks and beaches lies a rural Florida defined by a river that flows through the cultural and physical landscape of legends and song that tell the story of Florida. That river is the Suwannee, identified forever with the Old South by Stephen Foster's song "Old Folks at Home." You can see the Suwannee River Wilderness trail web site by going to www.SuwanneeRiver.com.



Florida's Official
2005/2006 State Park Photo Contest

Take a look at some of the achieves

<http://www.floridastateparks.org/PhotoContest/Archives-past.cfm?ArchiveDate=2006-October>

News

Start of the 2007 Photo Contest

A new year will bring some changes to the latest version of the photo contest. Please view the latest 2007 rules here. If you have already registered as a photographer we appreciate all your work and for those of you who want to get involved take some time to read over our latest version of the Official Florida State parks photo contest!

<http://www.floridastateparks.org/PhotoContest/default.cfm>

Photo Contest Winner for November



<http://www.floridastateparks.org/PhotoContest/ShowPhoto.cfm?Pics=November2006-1623-776-110>



<http://www.floridastateparks.org/TraditionsInParks.cfm>

Some of the upcoming events in Florida State Parks.

- **NIGHTS OF LIGHTS**

- Fort Cooper State Park**

- Date:** Friday & Saturday, December 8th & 9th, 2006. 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

- Description:** Lights, decorations and luminaries will add a holiday touch to the park. Refreshments and entertainment will be offered. Hosted by the Friends of Fort Cooper.

- Fees:** Admission is a non perishable food item or new toy for local charity.

- Contact:** For more information, call 352-726-0315.

- Directions:** Fort Cooper State Park is located just off US 41, on South Old Floral City Road, two miles south of Inverness.

- **SANTA OVER THE RAINBOW**

- Rainbow Springs State Park**

- Date:** December 8th through 10th AND December 15th through 17th, 2006. 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

- Description:** Santa and Mrs. Clause come up the Rainbow River on their shining, decorated "sleigh" and walk up the hill to their Santa House. Live music most nights; thousands of lights all over the park.

- Fees:** \$1.00 park entrance fee.

- Contact:** For more information, call 352-465-8555.

- Directions:** From I-75, exit at the second Ocala exit onto State Road 40. Take State Road 40, west. Drive until it deadends at U.S. 41. Turn left, the park entrance is on the left-hand side of the road. From Tampa, take U.S. 41, north. Drive through the town of Dunnellon. The park is located on the right-hand side of the road, approximately 2.5 miles north of Dunnellon. From areas in the northwest, take U.S. 41 to the town of Williston. After passing through Williston, you will come to a traffic light where State Road 40 has come to a deadend. Go through this light; the park entrance is on the left-hand side of the road. The campground is separate from the headsprings day use area and is located 2.5 miles north of C.R. 484 off of S.W. 180th Avenue or 2.5 miles south of Highway 40 off of S.W. 180th Avenue.

- **HOLIDAY IN THE GARDENS**

- Washington Oaks Gardens State Park**

- Date:** December 8th and 9th, 9:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m.

- Description:** Washington Oaks Gardens State Park will waive the park entrance fee on Friday and Saturday, December 8th and 9th between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. for the 17th annual "Holiday in the Gardens" celebration. The public is invited to attend and tour the gardens. The gardens will be decorated with festive plantings, holiday figurines, and twinkling lights throughout the large oak trees. In lieu of regular park entrance fees donations of toys and non-perishable food items will be collected at the gate. The toys collected will be distributed by the Flagler County Marine Corp "Toys for Tots" program. The Church Women United Foundation will create food baskets with the food items and distribute to the less fortunate in Flagler County. Park visitors are encouraged to

carpool and attendance is on a first come first serve basis and once the parking is full the park gates will be closed. Participants are encouraged to bring a flashlight and lawn chair. Event admission is one unwrapped toy per vehicle or one non-perishable food item per person. Children may share their holiday wish list with Santa and Mrs. Claus and for a nominal charge, the Friends of Washington Oaks will offer a souvenir photo with the Claus's. Other activities will include Shirley Dunwoody providing holiday stories at the Visitors Center on both nights, and plenty of live entertainment on stage in the event field. Bring the family and plan on eating dinner at the park at one of the food vendor booths. The Friends of Washington Oaks will sell hot apple cider, hot beverages, and holiday sweets. For those last minute gift items stop in at the Friends of Washington Oaks Holiday Gift Shop for holiday ornaments, t-shirts, citrus and poinsettias.

Fees: In lieu of regular park entrance fees donations of toys and non-perishable food items will be collected at the gate.

Contact: For more information contact the park at (386) 446

Directions: Washington Oaks Gardens State Park is located two miles south of Marineland, off A1A.

- **REINDEER RUN**

- Fort Clinch State Park**

- Date: Saturday, December 9, 2006. 8:30 a.m.**

- Description:** Join Amelia Island Runners, Inc. for a 5k/10k run or a 1.5 mile walk or a Kids Run for Fun with Santa. The race goes from the Recreation Center on Atlantic Avenue through Fort Clinch State Park. Proceeds from this event will benefit Angel Tree and Healthy Start. Participant's bib race number will be honored as free park entry during the event day.

- Fees:** Race/ walk registration fees apply, please contact Amelia Island Runners, Inc at (904) 491-0369 for more information. Participant's bib race number will be honored as free park entry during the event day.

- Contact:** Amelia Island Runners, Inc at (904) 491-0369.

- Directions:** Take I-95 to the Fernandina Beach/Callahan exit (Milepost Exit 373 - Old Exit 129), and stay to the right. You will then be traveling east on A1A. (This road becomes 8th Street within the town limits of Fernandina.) Stay on this road, (A1A), for 16 miles until you come to the intersection of 8th Street and Atlantic Avenue. Turn right on Atlantic Avenue and go about two miles, Fort Clinch State Park will be on the left.

- **CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**

- Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park**

- Date: Saturday, December 9th, 2006. 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m.**

- Description:** Celebrate the holiday with an evening concert bonfire and festive lighting of the park as part of White Springs' Annual Christmas Parade. Lights are on display Friday and Saturday evenings until 8 p.m. through December 23rd.

- Fees:** Donations of canned goods or toys are accepted and distributed to charity.

- Contact:** For more information, call 386-397-4331.

- Directions:** Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to S.R. 136** (Milepost Exit 439 - Old Exit 84), travel east on S.R. 136 for 3 miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Milepost Exit 301 - Old Exit 43), travel 9 miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.

- **FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AND CHRISTMAS BOAT PARADE**

- Fanning Springs State Park**

Date: Saturday, December 9, 2006. Festivities begin at 9:30 a.m. Boat parade begins at 6:30 p.m.

Description: Activities include live music, arts and craft vendors, a classic car show, food vendors and holiday decorated boat parade at 6:30 p.m.

Festivities begin at 9:30 a.m. Boat parade begins at 6:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the *Fanning Springs Chamber of Commerce*.

Fees: Event fee is \$5.00 which includes park admission.

Contact: For more information, call 352-463-3420.

Directions: Fanning Springs State Park is located on U.S. Hwy. 19/98 in the town of Fanning Springs.

- **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ONLY**

- Fort Cooper State Park**

- Date: Sunday, December 10th through Thursday, December 14th, 2006.**

- 6:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.**

- Description:** Celebrate the holidays with an evening stroll through the park.

- Lights, decorations and luminaries add a holiday touch to the park. Hosted by the Friends of Fort Cooper.

- Fees:** Admission is a non perishable food item or new toy for local charity.

- Contact:** For more information, call 352-726-0315.

- Directions:** Fort Cooper State Park is located just off US 41, on South Old Floral City Road, two miles south of Inverness.

- **PLANTATION CHRISTMAS**

- Gamble Plantation Historic State Park**

- Date: Sunday, Dec. 10, 2006. 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

- Description:** Experience a 19th century Christmas at Gamble Plantation Historic State Park. Visitors will enjoy free tours of Gamble Mansion, which will be decorated for the holidays in 19th century southern style. This delightful holiday event will also feature period crafters, living history interpreters, Auntie Clause and Father Christmas, an 1860s Southern Soldier's Encampment, free tours of The Patten House and much more. Join us for a unique holiday experience you're sure to enjoy.

- Fees:** This program is free.

- Contact:** For more information call 941-723-4536.

- Directions:** Exit 224 from I-75. Head west for 1 mile on US 301. Look for the Landmark white picket fence and turn right into the main park entrance.

- **A CHRISTMAS MUSIC CONCERT UNLIKE ANY OTHER**

- Highlands Hammock State Park**

- Date: Sunday, December 10th, 2006 - 2:00 p.m.**

- Description:** *A unique holiday concert to be performed on the Highlands bagpipes*

- A season's musical gift to the community will be performed by David Hiatt Batty in the picnic area of Highlands Hammock State Park. Piper Batty will appear in full Highlands regalia, his kilt of the Baillie Clan tradition, the official Glengarry worn by pipe bands and a Scottish sporrán for dress performances. His African blackwood bagpipes, handcrafted by Edinburgh pipe maker R.L. Glenn of Scotland, date back more than fifty years! Visitors of all ages are welcome to come and enjoy traditional Christmas carols like O Come All Ye Faithful, Deck the Halls, Do You Hear What I Hear, It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, O Holy Night and twenty three other holiday favorites uniquely styled for the Highlands bagpipe. 'I wish to bring an uncommon and unusual rendition of our favorite traditional carols

to the community,' says Piper Batty. 'It will be my privilege to educate and encourage all of my audience to briefly visit history in a way that only such a concert can provide.' Bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on and plan to enjoy this distinctive holiday event.

Fees: There is no fee charged for this performance, it is included with your regular \$4.00 per vehicle park admission.

Contact: Call the park at (863) 386-6094.

Directions: Highlands Hammock State Park is located off US 27 on SR 634 (also known as Hammock Road), four miles west of Sebring.

- **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SHOW**

- Three Rivers State Park**

- Date: Friday/Saturday, December 15-16 and again December 22-23**

- Description:** We are excited to report that we have scheduled a special event for the month of December. As you may have seen in times past, we are bringing back our popular "Christmas Lights Show".

- Fees:** Entrance fees waived

- Contact:** (850)482-9006 or Chris.Hawthorne@dep.state.fl.us

- Directions:** Three Rivers State Park is located at

- 7908 Three Rivers Park Road

- Sneads, FL 32460 Three River SP is easily reached via I-10. Take Exit 158 and travel north into the town of Sneads. At Sneads, turn left (west) onto Hwy 90.

- Turn right (north) onto River Road at the flashing yellow light. Park is located two miles north of Sneads.

- **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ONLY**

- Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park**

- Date: Friday and Saturday, December 15th and 16th, 2006. 5:00 p.m to 8:00 p.m.**

- Description:** Celebrate the holidays with an evening stroll through the park. Enjoy the thousands and thousands of brightly colored lights that transform Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park into a magical wonderland.

- Fees:** Donations of canned goods or toys are accepted and distributed to charity.

- Contact:** For more information, call 386-397-4331.

- Directions:** Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to S.R. 136**

- (Milepost Exit 439 - Old Exit 84), travel east on S.R. 136 for 3 miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Milepost Exit 301 - Old Exit 43), travel 9 miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.

- **HOLIDAY CRUISE AND DINNER**

- Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park**

- Date: Saturday, December 16 @ 5 pm**

- Description:** Take an evening out for a cruise on the Wakulla River followed by dinner in the historic lodge and an old-fashioned sing-a-long in the lobby by the Christmas tree.

- Fees:** \$28.00 per person -- Reservations Required

- Contact:** (850)224-5950

- Directions:** Traveling East on I-10 to new Exit 196 (old Exit 28). Take SR-263

- (Capitol Circle) South 12 miles. Turn right (South) onto US-319/SR-61

- (Crawfordville Hwy) for 2 miles. Bear left onto SR-61 (Wakulla Springs Rd) for 6

- miles. Turn left onto SR-267 at flashing stop light. Turn Right into Park entrance.

- From West I-10 use new Exit 203 (old Exit 30). Take SR-61 (Thomasville Rd)

South. Continue on SR-61 thru Tallahassee for 10 miles. Take US-319/SR-61 (Crawfordville Hwy) South for 2 miles. Bear left onto SR-61 (Wakulla Springs Rd) for 6 miles. Turn left onto SR-267 at flashing stop light. Turn Right into Park entrance.

- **WINTERFEST BOAT PARADE**
Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park
Date: December 16, 6:00 PM

Description: Inspired by a forty-three-year tradition, approximately fifty boats will sail out of the Key Biscayne Yacht Club decked out in Holiday Lights, and sail around Biscayne Bay, making several passes through No- Name Harbor. Food, beverages, and music will be available at the Boaters Grill. There will be a Toy Drive for children in need, so please bring unwrapped gifts. For more information, call the Key Biscayne Yacht Club at (305) 361-8229.

Fees: Free park entry beginning at 6:00 PM

Contact: Key Biscayne Yacht Club, (305) 361-8229

Directions: Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park is located on Key Biscayne. From Miami, take I-95 to the Rickenbacker Causeway, all the way to the end.

- **PAYNES PRAIRIE BY BICYCLE**
Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

Date: Saturday, December 16, 2006. 8:30 a.m.

Description: *A Guided Ride on the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail*

Approximately 3 hours.

Enjoy native plants and wildlife, rare vistas of the grandeur of Paynes Prairie, and backyard Florida culture as you make your way down the trail on this guided ride. Trade your modern life for the days of cattle ranching, citrus groves, small railroad towns, and steam engines and learn about the history, geology, water, flora, fauna, restoration, and archeology of the Preserve. Easy 12 miles stopping frequently to explore points of interest. A bike helmet is required and a serviceable bicycle. Wear comfortable clothes that are appropriate for the weather, sunscreen, insect repellent, snacks, water, binoculars, camera, and field guides...but remember the lighter your load the easier it is to pedal! *15 person limit. Call the Visitor Center at (352) 466-4100 for reservations.*

Fees: Suggested donation of \$2.00 per person.

Contact: For more information, call 352-466-4100.

Directions: Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail State Park starts on S.E. 15th Street and extends to Hawthorne near U.S. 301.

To reach the Boulware Springs trailhead from Gainesville, intersection of University Avenue and Main Street: Travel east on University Avenue and take the right fork onto SR 20. Almost immediately, go south onto SE 15th Street. Travel until you find Boulware Springs City Park on the right. If the road makes a 90 degree left turn, you've passed the park and need to turn around.

To reach the Hawthorne trailhead from Hawthorne: Follow the signs posted on US 301 or CR 2082.

- **CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION OF LIGHTS**
Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park
Date: December 20th through 24. 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Description: The community is invited to come out and enjoy the park decked out for the holidays with thousands of twinkling lights and Christmas decorations during this multi-evening event. A variety of entertainments will be scheduled and refreshments will be available.
Suggested donations: \$2.00 for adults. \$1.00 for children ages 6 through 12 years. Free admission for children ages 5 and under.
Sponsored by the Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park.
Fees: See suggested donations above.
Contact: For more information, call 352-628-5343.
Directions: Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park is located in Homosassa Springs, 75 miles north of Tampa on U.S. 19 and 90 miles northwest of Orlando.
- **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ONLY**
Rainbow Springs State Park
Date: Friday and Saturday, December 22nd & 23rd, 2006. 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Description: Santa Claus has gone back to the North Pole but the thousands and thousands of brightly colored lights still make a magical wonderland of the park.
Fees: \$1.00 park entrance fee.
Contact: For more information, call 352-465-8555.
Directions: From I-75, exit at the second Ocala exit onto State Road 40. Take State Road 40, west. Drive until it deadends at U.S. 41. Turn left, the park entrance is on the left-hand side of the road. From Tampa, take U.S. 41, north. Drive through the town of Dunnellon. The park is located on the right-hand side of the road, approximately 2.5 miles north of Dunnellon. From areas in the northwest, take U.S. 41 to the town of Williston. After passing through Williston, you will come to a traffic light where State Road 40 has come to a deadend. Go through this light; the park entrance is on the left-hand side of the road. The campground is separate from the headsprings day use area and is located 2.5 miles north of C.R. 484 off of S.W. 180th Avenue or 2.5 miles south of Highway 40 off of S.W. 180th Avenue.
- **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ONLY**
Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park
Date: Friday and Saturday, December 22nd and 23rd, 2006. 5:00 p.m to 8:00 p.m.
Description: Celebrate the holidays with an evening stroll though the park. Enjoy the thousands and thousands of brightly colored lights that transform Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park into a magical wonderland.
Fees: Donations of canned goods or toys are accepted and distributed to charity.
Contact: For more information, call 386-397-4331.
Directions: Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to S.R. 136** (Milepost Exit 439 - Old Exit 84), travel east on S.R. 136 for 3 miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Milepost Exit 301 - Old Exit 43), travel 9 miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.
- **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ONLY**
Rainbow Springs State Park
Date: Tuesday & Wednesday, December 26th & 27th, 2006. 6:00 p.m. to

8:30 p.m.

Description: Santa Claus has gone back to the North Pole but the thousands and thousands of brightly colored lights still make a magical wonderland of the park.

Fees: \$1.00 park entrance fee.

Contact: For more information, call 352-465-8555.

Directions: From I-75, exit at the second Ocala exit onto State Road 40. Take State Road 40, west. Drive until it deadends at U.S. 41. Turn left, the park entrance is on the left-hand side of the road. From Tampa, take U.S. 41, north. Drive through the town of Dunnellon. The park is located on the right-hand side of the road, approximately 2.5 miles north of Dunnellon. From areas in the northwest, take U.S. 41 to the town of Williston. After passing through Williston, you will come to a traffic light where State Road 40 has come to a deadend. Go through this light; the park entrance is on the left-hand side of the road. The campground is separate from the headsprings day use area and is located 2.5 miles north of C.R. 484 off of S.W. 180th Avenue or 2.5 miles south of Highway 40 off of S.W. 180th Avenue.

○ **JOIN THE MIGRATION**

Fort George Island Cultural State Park

Date: Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, December 27, 28, & 29th, 2006.

Description: This free, 3-day series will introduce children to animal migration and teach them how and why animals migrate. Park staff will host a Ranger program and activity each day. Children **MUST** wear closed toe shoes! Parents are required to remain with the group and are asked join in the fun. This camp will run from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm each day and is intended for children ages 6-12. Participants will meet at the Ribault Club on Fort George Island. **This day-camp is limited to 25 kids so call early to reserve your spot! (904) 251-2320.**

Fees: This event is free!

Contact: For more information, call 904-251-2320.

Directions: Fort George Island Cultural State Park lies approximately 16 miles east of downtown Jacksonville on S.R. A1A, or three miles south of Little Talbot Island State Park.

○ **26TH ANNUAL DADE REENACTMENT WEEKEND**

Dade Battlefield Historic State Park

Date: December 30 & 31, 2006 - 9 am to 4 pm

Description: Step back in time with the staff and volunteers of Dade Battlefield, during a weekend of activities and events for all of the family to enjoy. Take a stroll down the Old Fort King Road, visit Soldier's in their camp, view Native American crafts in the Seminole camp, walk through the Sutler's Row, watch demonstrations of skills such as blacksmithing, or kick back and enjoy the period music that fills the air. The highlight of the weekend is the battle reenactment which takes place at 2 PM each day.

Fees:

Contact: Please call the park office at (352) 793-4781

Directions: Dade Battlefield Historic State Park is located off I-75 and S.R. 48, west of Highway 301.