

Florida State Parks Monthly Newsletter

It Starts With Parks!

With over 1600 miles of trails and 100 miles of sandy white beaches, Florida State Parks are excellent destinations for both fitness and fun. Florida's scenic parks provide the perfect setting for a wide range of healthy outdoor activities, from trails for hiking, biking and inline skating to waterways for canoeing, kayaking and swimming. These activities empower individuals to get fit – and stay fit – naturally.



<http://www.floridasprings.org/exploration/featured/wakulla/>

Protecting Nature's Gems

Visit Florida's Springs website to view the new interactive presentation of Wakulla Springs



We Are Growing! Colt Creek State Park

Purchased from the Overstreet Family in May of 2006, this 5067 acre park nestled amongst the Green Swamp Wilderness Area and named after one of its tributaries is one of the newest state park acquisitions. Comprised mainly of pine forests, cypress domes and open pasture land, this piece of pristine wilderness is home to many animal species including the American Bald Eagle, Sherman's Fox Squirrel, Gopher Tortoise, White-Tail Deer and Wild Turkey.

State Recreation Sites Receive Best of Florida Awards



http://www.floridadep.org/secretary/news/2006/10/1009_02.htm

Volunteer at a Florida State Park!

The Florida Park Service manages 158 state parks consisting of over 600,000 acres. With 18,000,000 visitors it is a challenge to provide quality visitor services with just a little over 1,000 employees. The fact is we could not do a very good job without the help of over 7,000 yearly volunteers. Our volunteers contributed over 900,000 hours last year which is the same as 436 additional full time positions.

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

Some of the upcoming events in Florida State Parks

- **PAYNES PRAIRIE BY BICYCLE**

- Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail**

- Date: Saturday, January 13, 2007. 9:00 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.

- **STARGAZING**

- Silver River State Park**

- Date: January 13th 6:00 pm**

- Description:** Join the Ocala Astronomy Club for an educational evening with the stars. They bring telescopes and knowledge. You need to bring blanket or chair. Weather permitting, call park if it looks 'iffy.'

- Fees:** \$4.00 Park entry fee; \$3.00 single occupancy vehicle

- Contact:** deborah.wilson@dep.state.fl.us

- Directions:**

- Silver River State Park is located east of Ocala, 1 mile south of S.R. 40 on S.R. 35. From Interstate 75, take exit 352 onto SR 40 east, about 9 miles to SR 35. From Interstate 95 take exit 268 to Route 40 west, about 60 miles to SR 35.

- **2007 TOUR DE FELASCO**
San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park
Date: Saturday, January 13th, 2007.
Description:

5th TOUR DE FELASCO
50 Mile Off-Road Bike Eco-Tour
Saturday, January 13th, 2007

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE 2007 TOUR DE FELASCO!

Forms can be downloaded at www.sanfelasco.net Registration deadline is December 1st, and the Tour is limited to the first 400 riders.

Join the Friends of San Felasco CSO for a 50 mile mountain bike tour through one of North Florida's most diverse ecological and geological preserves, the San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park.

The Tour is NOT a race, but rather a challenging series of trails opened specially for the event that will test your bike skills and endurance with rolling hills, short climbs, sinkholes, hydric hammock and prairie. Experience areas of the park open to bikes only for the Tour, while supporting the CSO's efforts to improve this magnificent trail system.

A big thanks to our sponsors this year – Bike Route, Bounds Heating & Air, Chain Reaction, Duval Mazda, Gainesville Sports Organizing Committee, Gator Cycle, Harvest Thyme Café, Mr. Goodbike, Recycled Bicycles, Villin, Carmichael Training Systems, Chamois Butt'r, Sunstate Credit Union, Hammer Gel, Lake Area McDonald's, and As Masters.

Fees: See registration form.

Contact: For more information email info@sanfelasco.net

Directions: To the Hiking Trailhead: Take I-75 to C.R. 222 (Milepost Exit 390 - Old Exit 77) and drive west 2.9 miles to C.R. 241. Turn right onto C.R. 241 and drive 2.0 miles to C.R. 232. Turn right onto C.R. 232 and drive 2.2 miles. The park entrance is on the right just east of the I-75 overpass. (No interchange at this overpass.) **To the Equestrian and Mountain Bike**

Trailhead: Take I-75 to U.S. 441 (Milepost Exit 399 - Old Exit 78) and drive south 2.8 miles (through the city of Alachua). Turn right onto Progress Blvd. Drive 0.7 miles to the park entrance. (Continue past the end of the pavement and onto the grade road.)

- **WHO'S WHO IN THE NIGHT**

- Little Talbot Island State Park**

- Date: Saturday, January 13th, 2007. 5:30 p.m.**

- Description:** Join Park Ranger Michelle for an introduction to the owls of Fort George Island. This guided, evening hike will take you through the woods and introduce you to the wonders of these amazing creatures. Please bring comfortable walking shoes, a water bottle, and a flashlight with red paper to put over the lens. The hike will start from the Ribault Club parking lot on Fort George Island. Space is limited so reservations are required. This is one of Talbot's most popular interpretive programs so book your space as soon as possible by calling the Talbot Islands State Parks Ranger Station at 904-251-2320. The program is free!

- Fees:** This program is free!

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

- Directions:** Take I-95 to Heckscher Drive (Milepost Exit 358A - Old Exit 124A) and then travel east for 17 miles.

- **1ST OSCAR SCHERER ALL TRAILS HIKE**

- Oscar Scherer State Park**

- Date: Saturday, January 13th 2007. 8:00 AM - All hikers must start at this time.**

- Description:** Proceeds go to the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, a 501 (c)(3) citizen support organization for the education and other activities in aid of the threatened Florida Scrub Jay. Open the following link and download the flyer for more information and the registration form: [All Trails Hike Flyer](#)

- Fees:** \$10 per person. Under 16 Free.

- Contact:** Contact the park at 941-483-5956

- Directions:** Oscar Scherer State Park is located on U.S.41, six miles south of Sarasota. Heading south on I-75 take exit 200. Heading north on I-75 take exit 195.

- **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - DAY OF SERVICE**

- The Barnacle Historic State Park**

- Date: January 13, 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

- Description:** Join us for a day of service honoring the memory of Dr. King. Groups will be working on exotic plant removal and shoreline cleanup. The park will provide gloves and wading boots during the project. Be sure to wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty including long pants, full shoes (boots or tennis shoes), a hat and sunscreen. We will have drinks and a light snack following the project.

- Come to The Barnacle and participate in this nationwide day of service!

Fees: Free park entry for volunteers

Contact: (305) 442-6866

Directions: The Barnacle is located in Coconut Grove (Miami) at 3485 Main Highway.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY KICKOFF EVENT

Oscar Scherer State Park

Date: Jan. 13th - 8am

Description: Hike Oscar Scherer State Park in a Day
Sponsored by the Friends of Osacar Scherer Park, Inc.
Please check back for more information on this event.

Fees:

Contact: Call the Park at: 941-483-5956

Directions: Oscar Scherer State Park is located on U.S.41, six miles south of Sarasota. Heading south on I-75 take exit 200. Heading north on I-75 take exit 195.

○ **TOMOKA REMEMBERS**

Tomoka State Park

Date: January 13, 2007, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Description: Living history programs, life and times, story telling, demonstrations of pioneer arts and skills. Discover a different piece of the past. Show themes are subject to change. Please contact the park for more information.

Fees: \$4.00 per car

Contact: Contact park for more information.

Directions: Tomoka State Park is located three miles north of Ormond Beach on North Beach Street.

○ **EDIBLE INSECTS!**

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

Date: January 13, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Description: Kids and adults bring your appetite for an educational and edible program about Florida's insects. The program is given by the Hobe Sound Nature Center. If you ever wondered what a chocolate-covered bug tastes like, this is your chance! There will be different species of bugs to eat and discuss.

Eating bugs can trigger allergic reactions in a small number of diners, causing rashes, runny noses, labored breathing or shock. If you are allergic to shellfish, stay away from bugs to be safe. People around the world have practiced entomophagy (bug eating) for centuries, except in the United States and Europe.

Reservations are required. The program is free with park admission of \$4.00 per vehicle. Call the Nature Center at (561) 624-6952 for more information.

Fees: Free with park admission

Contact: (561) 624-6952

Directions: John D. MacArthur Beach State Park is located 2.8 miles south of the intersection of U.S. 1 and PGA Blvd. on A1A in North Palm Beach.

- **CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP**

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park

Date: Saturday, January 13, 2007. 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Description:

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

--Class covers character development and publishing--

A workshop to help you create and publish your own book will be held at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park on January 13.

Hosted by published novelist Jeffry Boatright of Live Oak, the class covers the fundamentals of starting a book, character development and methods for publishing a book once it is completed. The class also will address ways to overcome writer's block. Boatright has published two novels, "Gray Hammock," and "Journey of Truth."

The class will be held from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the park's Craft Square. Class size will be limited and reservations are suggested. For more information, call 386-397-1920. To learn more about the park's workshops, artist demonstrations and gift shop, visit online at [Stephen Foster Citizen Support Organization](#).

Fees: Park admission of \$4.00 per vehicle.

Contact: For more information, call 386-397-1920.

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.

- **WHO'S WHO IN THE NIGHT**

Fort George Island Cultural State Park

Date: Saturday, January 13th, 2007. 5:30 p.m.

Description: Join Park Ranger Michelle for an introduction to the owls of Fort George Island. This guided, evening hike will take you through the woods and

introduce you to the wonders of these amazing creatures. Please bring comfortable walking shoes, a water bottle, and a flashlight with red paper to put over the lens. The hike will start from the Ribault Club parking lot on Fort George Island. Space is limited so reservations are required. This is one of Talbot's most popular interpretive programs so book your space as soon as possible by calling the Talbot Islands State Parks Ranger Station at 904-251-2320. The program is free!

Fees: This program 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.

- **WILDLIFE WALK (DEPENDING ON WATER LEVELS)**

- Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park**

- Date: Saturday, January 13, 2007. Starts at 8:00 a.m.**

- Description:** Join a Paynes Prairie Ranger for a walk on the wild side. This adventure onto the prairie basin on an earthen dike trail demonstrates why the Preserve is recognized as a National Natural Landmark. See the wetland and Alachua Sink in action, plus observe alligators, 271 species of birds, and dazzling displays of flowers in bloom. The three-mile walk leads to an elevated observation deck. This program is approximately 3 hours long. **25 person limit. Call the Visitor Center at (352) 466-4100 for reservations.**

- Fees:** \$2.00 per person (suggested donation).

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

- Directions:** Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park is located 10 miles south of Gainesville, in Micanopy, on the east side of US 441.

- Coming from the north on I-75:** Take exit 374, the Micanopy exit, and turn left at the end of the exit ramp. You will then be traveling east on CR 234. Stay on this road 1.4 miles until it intersects with US 441. Turn left onto 441 and go 0.6 miles to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park (on the right).

- Coming from the south on I-75:** Take exit 374, the Micanopy exit, and turn right at the end of the exit ramp. You will then be traveling east on CR 234. Stay on this road 1.4 miles until it intersects with US 441. Turn left onto 441 and go about 0.6 miles to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park (on the right).

- **PAYNES PRAIRIE BY BICYCLE**

- Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park**

- Date: Saturday, January 13, 2007. Starts at 9:00 a.m.**

- Description: A Guided Ride on the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail** 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! This program is approximately 3 hours long. **15 person limit. Call the Visitor Center at (352) 466-4100 for reservations.**

Fees: \$5.00 per person (suggested donation).

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

Directions: Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park is located 10 miles south of Gainesville, in Micanopy, on the east side of US 441.

Coming from the north on I-75: Take exit 374, the Micanopy exit, and turn left at the end of the exit ramp. You will then be traveling east on CR 234. Stay on this road 1.4 miles until it intersects with US 441. Turn left onto 441 and go 0.6 miles to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park (on the right).

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