

Florida State Parks

Special Edition Newsletter, February 2008

Special Step Up, Florida!

Events

February 2008

[Black Island
Bike Tour at
Lovers Key State
Park](#) in Fort
Myers Beach.
Monday, Feb. 4,
10 a.m.

[Lighthouse
Climb at Bill
Baggs Cape
Florida State
Park](#), Key
Biscayne.
Saturday, Feb. 9,
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

[Hike or Paddle
at Werner-Boyce
Salt Springs
State Park](#) in
Port Richey.
Saturday, Feb. 16,
8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

[Nature Hike at
Torreya State
Park](#) in Bristol.
Saturday, Feb. 16,
1 p.m. (Eastern
Time)

[5K Walk/Run at
Highlands
Hammock State
Park](#) in Sebring.
Saturday, Feb. 23,
8 a.m.

Step Up, Florida!

"Step Up, Florida - On Our Way to Healthy Living!" is an annual statewide initiative that takes place during the months of February and March.

The goal is to:

- promote healthy lifestyles for all Floridians,
- highlight local and state level opportunities for people of all abilities to be physically active,
- provide an opportunity to develop partnerships on a state and local level among healthy lifestyle stakeholders, and
- promote healthy nutrition year round.

This year, Florida's state parks are hosting more events than ever to help park visitors in their quest for healthy living. From **hiking, bicycling, yoga and climbing lighthouses** to **canoeing, kayaking and ranger-led tours**, there are more than 60 events in Florida's state parks from Pensacola to Key West to help you participate.

Visit www.FloridaStateParks.org for the latest Step Up, Florida! events across the state. Admission to many state parks is free with participation in a Step Up, Florida! Event.

About Florida State Parks

The first two-time Gold Medal winner honoring the nation's best state park system, the Florida Park Service is one of the largest in the country with 161 parks spanning 700,000 acres and 100 miles of sandy white beach. From swimming and diving in Florida's rivers and springs to birding and fishing or hiking and riding on natural scenic trails, Florida's state parks offer year-round outdoor activities for all ages. Battle reenactments and Native American festivals celebrate Florida's history, while art shows, museums and lighthouses offer a window into Florida's cultural heritage.



Let's Go  Outside



Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - YOGA ON THE BEACH](#)

[Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park](#) in Key West

Date: Daily throughout February, 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Description: Come and awaken your inner spirit, while gazing out at the clear blue waters of Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park. Join yoga instructors Don and Nancy Curran as they guide you through a 1.5-hour session on the beach. If you are not into yoga, visit Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park and swim or snorkel off the southernmost beach in the continental U.S. Live coral and numerous tropical fish are found within the swimming area. Fort Taylor also offers two short nature trails and a bicycle trail that loops around the historic fort, along the Key West Channel and through other areas of the park.

Fees: Class cost \$15.00 which includes park admission.

Contact: (305) 292-6850 or (305) 296-7352.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - NATURE & HISTORY QUEST](#)

[Bahia Honda State Park](#) in the Florida Keys

Date: Daily throughout February, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Description: Learn more about the park by taking a self-guided walk at the west end of Bahia Honda. Your 'quest' will take you through six learning stations, for a total distance of about half a mile. Visit the Sand and Sea Nature Center to get started on your learning adventure. Fun for all ages.

Fees: Free with park admission.

Contact: (305) 872-9807.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED NATURE WALK](#)

[John D. MacArthur Beach State Park](#) in North Palm Beach

Date: Daily throughout February, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Join one of the staff naturalists for a one-mile Nature Walk through John D. MacArthur Beach State Park's four distinct natural communities to learn about the park's ecosystems and history.

Fees: Free with park admission.

Contact: (561) 624-6952.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED NATURE WALK](#)

[Jonathan Dickinson State Park](#) in Hobe Sound

Date: Sundays throughout February, 9:00 a.m.

Description: Enjoy a ranger-guided walk through pine forests and across Wilson Creek or climb the Hobe Mountain Tower Trail. Comfortable walking shoes and insect repellent are recommended. Trails are sometimes wet due to local flooding, so wear appropriate shoes. Check at the ranger station for location.

Fees: Free with park admission.

Contact: (772) 546-2771.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED PADDLING TRIPS AND NATURE WALKS](#)

[Savannas Preserve State Park](#) in Port St. Lucie

Date: Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout February

Description: Canoe/kayak tours of the Savannas' beautiful freshwater marsh are offered every Saturday at 8:00 a.m. and Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. Tours last roughly two hours. Call ahead to reserve a spot. Guided walks with a ranger or volunteer are a great way to get acquainted with the parks flora and fauna. Walks can be scheduled by calling at least 48 hours in advance.

Fees: \$10.00 suggested donation for paddle. Proceeds benefit Friends of Savannas Preserve State Park, Inc.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Contact: (772) 398-2779.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED NATURE WALK](#)

[Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park](#) in the Florida Keys

Date: Thursdays and Sundays in February, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Description: Celebrate "Step up, Florida!" with a one-hour, ranger-guided nature walk. Breathe deep and relax while taking a leisurely stroll and learning about the tropical hardwood forest on the park's nature trail. Drinking water, and comfortable, closed-toe shoes are recommended. Meet at the park entrance.

Fees: Free with park admission.

Contact: (305) 451-1202.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - NATURE WALK](#)

[Caladesi Island State Park](#) in Dunedin

Date: Each Saturday in February, 1:00 p.m.

Description: Caladesi Island State Park will offer ranger-led nature walks as part of February's Step Up, Florida! program to help promote healthy living in local communities. Participants should meet in front of the Ranger Station, next door to the park concession. Wear suitable shoes, bring drinking water and plan on a comfortable walk of about one hour along the park's hiking trail. Rangers will discuss the natural and cultural history of this unspoiled barrier island. Caladesi Island is accessible only by private boat or via the Caladesi Connection ferry service. Trips depart hourly beginning at 10 a.m. Ferry passengers are allotted a four-hour stay on the island, so plan accordingly if you plan to participate in a guided walk.

Fees: Park admission fees will be waived for Step Up, Florida! participants. Cost for the ferry (which will not be waived) is \$9 for adults and \$5.50 for children.

Contact: Contact the ferry office at (727) 734-1501 or the park office at (727) 469-5918.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - YOGA AND WALKING TOUR](#)

[Ybor City Museum State Park](#) in Tampa

Date: Saturday, February 2. Yoga: 9:00 a.m. Walking Tour: 10:30 a.m.

Description: Join us in the morning for a light yoga session and stretch. Enjoy the tranquil surroundings of the park's Mediterranean-style garden. Please bring a large towel or mat and water. After the stretch, consider signing-up for the Walking Tour of Ybor City. The tour provides a complete overview of the founding of Ybor City, a National Historic Landmark District, and includes stops at various landmarks in the district.

Fees: No fees for the Yoga session, but donations to the Ybor City Museum Society are welcome. Walking tour: \$6.00.

Contact: Call (813) 247-6323 to register for the yoga session.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED BEACH WALK](#)

[Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park](#) south of Eastpoint

Date: Saturday, February 2, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Description: Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park will host its second annual Step Up, Florida! event. This year's activity will be a one-hour guided beach walk. During the walk the ranger will identify sea shells and shore birds and answer questions about beach habitat. Participants should wear comfortable walking shoes and appropriate clothing.

Fees: Fees have been waived for this event.

Contact: Melody Sapp, (850) 927-2111.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Alafia River State Park south of Plant City

Date: Saturday, February 2, 9:00 a.m.

Description: Do you want to meet new people and get exercise while enjoying the great outdoors? Trail maintenance volunteers are needed to lend a helping hand on the off-road mountain bike trails. Participants can receive a campsite for the weekend free of charge. Registration prior to the workday is required and space is limited.

Fees: None.

Contact: Please contact the park for details or to register for a weekend. Contact Art North for additional trail maintenance information at (813) 689-5109 or [Art North](#).

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED ECO TOUR

Oleta River State Park in North Miami

Date: Saturday, February 2, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Join a trained Park Naturalist on a guided Eco Tour of Florida's largest urban park. The one-hour tour will introduce visitors to the native flora and fauna of Miami's best kept secret!

Fees: Free with park admission.

Contact: (305) 919-1846.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - BIKE & HIKE ANASTASIA STATE PARK

Anastasia State Park in St. Augustine

Date: Saturday, February 2, 10:30 a.m.

Description: Visitors will receive a great cardio vascular workout on one of the most awesome beaches in Florida. Meet at Island Joe's pavilion at 10:30 a.m., bring at least one pint of water, a bike and a healthy bag lunch. This ranger-led event will start with a 3.5 mile low tide bike ride and continue with a three-quarter mile hike into the island, have lunch and then start the return trip. Riders should be prepared for weather conditions on the beach which could be influenced by heat/cold, wind and sand.

Fees: Regular park entrance fees apply.

Contact: (904) 461-2033.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - NATURE WALK, EASE INTO FITNESS

Fort Clinch State Park in Fernandina Beach

Date: Saturday, February 2, 10:30 a.m.

Description: This is a guided nature walk around Willow Pond trail, which winds through a coastal maritime hammock down to fresh water ponds. Through an informative presentation, visitors will discover a wide variety of native plants and animals. NO PETS.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (904) 277-7274.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - NIGHT HIKE

Oleta River State Park in North Miami

Date: Saturday, February 2, 7:30 p.m.

Description: Join us for this popular after-hours night hike along the park's mountain bike trails. The hike lasts about one hour and requires advance registration at the Ranger Station. Sneakers or hiking shoes, flashlights or headlamps are recommended as well as water and insect repellent. Proceeds go to help support park programs.

Fees: Suggested donation of \$4.00 to Oleta River Adventure Association.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Contact: (305) 919-1846.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - BLACK ISLAND BIKE TOUR](#)

[Lovers Key State Park](#) in Fort Myers Beach

Date: Monday, February 4, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Join a naturalist for this three-mile adventure along our Black Island Trail. Learn about the park's history and abundant wildlife as you ride through the maritime hammock eco-system. Bring your own bike or rent one from the park concession.

Fees: Park entrance fees apply.

Contact: (239) 463-4588 to register for this program.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - YOGA ON THE BEACH](#)

[John D. MacArthur Beach State Park](#) in North Palm Beach

Date: Thursday, February 7, 8:30 a.m.

Description: Come and awaken your inner spirit, while gazing out at the clear blue waters of John D. MacArthur Beach State Park. Join yoga instructor Anne Marie Phelan as she guides you through an hour-long session on the beach. Don't forget to bring a beach towel and a water bottle.

Fees: Free with park admission of \$4.00 per carload.

Contact: (561) 624-6952 for reservations.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - WILDLIFE WALK](#)

[Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park](#) south of Gainesville

Date: Saturday, February 9. Call the park for the starting time.

Description: Join one of the Preserve's rangers and take a walk on the wild side. This leisurely paced excursion onto the prairie basin provides a wonderful opportunity to observe the unusual plants and magnificent animals that inhabit the vast 21,000-acre preserve. The three-mile walk leads to an observation deck overlooking Alachua Lake. Walk is 3-4 hours. 25 person limit. Call (352) 466-4100 for reservations and to confirm walk.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 466-4100.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED PADDLING PROGRAM](#)

[Manatee Springs State Park](#) west of Chiefland

Date: Saturday, February 9, 8:30 a.m.

Description: Manatee Springs State Park offers a guided paddling trip leaving from the canoe launch promptly at 8:30 a.m. The hope is to see manatees, most frequently seen in the spring run area during early morning hours. This is a great opportunity to learn about manatees, and to learn the proper behavior to maximize your viewing experience without disturbing these gentle giants. If no manatees are present, there is still other wildlife to experience along the natural serenity of the cypress-lined crystal clear spring run stream. To make sure the experience is the best it can be, and as safe as possible, participation will be limited to the first ten boats. Arrive early. If you need to rent the equipment, contact Suwannee River Tours, at (352) 949-4878 by 3:00 p.m. the day before (Thursday). The park opens at 8:00 a.m.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 493-6072.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - HIKE ALONG THE HISTORIC TRAIL](#)

[Paynes Creek Historic State Park](#) in Bowling Green

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Date: Saturday, February 9, 9:00 a.m.

Description: Participants will take a leisurely walk along the Historic Trail and visit each historic site. A ranger will lead the walk and interpret the fascinating history of the park. The walk will conclude at the Visitor Center and bottled water will be supplied to all participants.

Fees: Waived for event.

Contact: (863) 375-4717.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - RANGER WALK

Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park northwest of Gainesville

Date: Saturday, February 9, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Get your heart pumping by traversing the sink hole stairway 120 feet into the ground.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (386) 462-7905.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - LIGHTHOUSE CLIMB

Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park, Key Biscayne

Date: Saturday, February 9, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Description: Get a great cardiovascular workout by ascending and descending the 109-stepped spiral staircase of the historic Cape Florida Lighthouse at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park on Key Biscayne. The lighthouse will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with park rangers and volunteers present to answer your questions and provide assistance.

Fees: Free admission to event participants.

Contact: (305) 361-5811.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - COASTAL DUNE LAKE HIKE

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park in Santa Rosa Beach

Date: Saturday, February 9, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Description: Meet at Morris Lake Nature Trail off Hwy 98. Rangers will hike 2.5 miles around a rare coastal dune lake while explaining how the lake was formed, which animals call it home and why it is important to Walton County.

Fees: Entrance fees waived for this event.

Contact: (850) 267-0299.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - PLANT A DUNE

Honeymoon Island State Park in Dunedin

Date: Saturday, February 9 or Sunday, February 10, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Description: Volunteer to plant native dune plants such as sea oats, railroad vine and others which are critical to building a dune system, helping to prevent erosion. Bring gloves; sunscreen closed toed shoes and water.

Contact: Karen Malo (727) 469-5942.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! WALK THROUGH HISTORY

Dade Battlefield Historic State Park in Bushnell

Date: Saturday, February 9

Description: Join the Dade Battlefield staff as we take a walk through history to exercise your body and mind. The staff led walk will take participants down the Old Fort King Military Road where Major Dade and his command were ambushed by 180 Seminoles on December 28, 1835. Meet at the visitor's center at 10 a.m. to start this journey

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

into Florida's history.

Fees: Free to the public.

Contact: (352) 793-4781.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - OSPREY TRAIL HIKE](#)

[Honeymoon Island State Park](#) in Dunedin

Date: Sunday, February 10, 11:00 a.m.

Description: Join park volunteers for an informative walk on the Osprey Trail focusing on the ospreys and great horned owls. The walk is a short and easy one of approximately a quarter mile after which visitors may return to the parking lot or continue on their own with a challenge to find all the nests on the trail. A map will be provided.

Contact: (727) 469-5942.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - CANOE OR KAYAK RAINBOW RIVER](#)

[Rainbow Springs State Park](#) in Dunnellon

Date: Wednesday, February 13, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Meet a park ranger at the canoe dock at the headsprings or day use section of the park. The trip is about one mile downriver and back. Round trip takes about 2.5 hours. A \$25 deposit with a driver license is required for rental. Rentals are \$10/hour. RSVP is necessary.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 465-8555.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - HIKE THE TRAILS](#)

[Honeymoon Island State Park](#) in Dunedin

Date: Thursday, February 14, Valentines Day, 9:00 a.m.

Description: Hike the tall slash pines along the scenic Osprey Trail and Pelican Trail. Wildlife abounds, with osprey and great horned owl nests, and a variety of birds. This 2.5 mile walk will allow participants to see the natural north end of Honeymoon Island. An after hike visit to the new nature center with its scenic observation deck is highly recommended.

Contact: (727) 738-2903.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA!--BEACH WALK](#)

[Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at Flagler Beach](#)

Date: Friday, February 15, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Description: Join a park ranger for a guided hike along the beach. Participants will learn the importance of beach vegetation and the wrack line. Find amazing creatures such as coquina, crown conchs, lightning whelks and sea stars. Participants have the possibility to see shore birds, dolphins, ghost crabs, and maybe, right whales. Even if these animals stay out of sight you will still learn about the wildlife that calls the beach home.

Fees: Fees waived for participants.

Contact: (386) 517-2086.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - 8TH ANNUAL SCRUB JAY 5K](#)

[Oscar Scherer State Park](#) in Osprey

Date: Saturday, February 16, 7:30 a.m.

Description: Run for the Scherer delight of it! Amenities, goodies and awards provided. 5K-run at 8:00 a.m. and 1-mile run/walk starting at 8:05 a.m.

Fees: [5K Information and Registration](#)

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Contact: (941) 483-5956.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - TACKLE THE RAINBOW TERRAIN](#)

[Rainbow Springs State Park](#) in Dunnellon

Date: Saturday, February 16, 11:00 a.m.

Description: Take advantage of the manmade hills in the park garden trails to get your heart pumping while walking through shady gardens laced with azaleas, oaks and magnolias. These hills are a product of the areas boom-time phosphate mining era. Meet on the veranda and learn about the interesting history of the park, as well as some of the plants and animals that call it home. The walk is on uneven brick walkways and lasts 30 to 45 minutes. No RSVP necessary.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 465-8555.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - RIM RAMBLE](#)

[Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park](#) south of Gainesville

Date: Saturday, February 16, call for time.

Description: Experience the Real Florida by following in the footsteps of noted naturalist and artist William Bartram. The rim ramble is a half-day hike, 3.5 miles ranger-led. The heavily shaded trail rambles around an array of fragile sinkholes. A panoramic view of the freshwater wetland is seen from Persimmon Point. 20 person limit.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 466-4100.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - HISTORIC RIVER WALK](#)

[O'Leno State Park](#) north of High Springs

Date: Saturday, February 16. Call the park for starting time.

Description: Learn the history of the park, the town of Leno and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) while you walk a healthy 1.44 miles. As you follow the River Trail down to the river sink, exercise your cardiovascular system during a discussion about the flora, fauna, the sink holes, the underground river and the natural bridge. Program lasts approximately 1 hour.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (386) 454-1853.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - FULL MOON HIKE](#)

[Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park](#) between Keystone Heights

Date: Saturday, February 16, 6:00 p.m.

Description: Enjoy a guided hike for approximately three miles on the Ridge Trail and a portion of the Florida Trail. This is a moderately paced hike with varying terrain. It is recommended that participants wear comfortable clothing and shoes and bring insect repellent and water. Camping and cabins are available through [Reserve America](#) if you would like to stay the weekend.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 373-4701.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - HIKE AND PADDLE](#)

[Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park](#) in Port Richey

Date: Saturday, February 16, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Description: Hike and/or paddle for good health! Staff and volunteers of Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

will be leading groups on leisurely two mile hikes in the park out from the west end of State Road 52, starting at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. There will also be one hour and two hour paddle tours leaving out from 9120 Old Post Road, Port Richey starting at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Bring your own kayak/canoe or there will be some boats available for rent. No reservations needed.

Fees: Event is free to the public.

Contact: (727) 816-1890.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - NATURE TRAIL HIKE](#)

[Topsail Hill Preserve State Park](#) in Santa Rosa Beach

Date: Saturday, February 16, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Description: Topsail Hill Preserve State Park is hosting a Nature Trail Hike. Meet at the Day-Use Area off Hwy 30A. Rangers will be hiking down our paved tram path then onto our beach for a 2.5 mile round trip hike while interpreting Florida's vanishing habitats and wildlife.

Fees: Entrance fees waived for this event.

Contact: (850) 267-0299.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - NATURE HIKE](#)

[Grayton Beach State Park](#) in Santa Rosa Beach

Date: Saturday, February 16, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Description: Grayton Beach State Park will host a 4.5 mile nature hike. This hike will take participants through the forest at Grayton Beach State Park and will take approximately 3 hours. The public is invited to experience the flora and fauna that call Grayton Beach home. Participants need to wear appropriate shoes/clothing, water, and bug spray.

Fees: The entrance fee is waived for participants.

Contact: (850) 231-4210.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! HEALTH AND FITNESS FAIR](#)

[Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park](#) near Tallahassee

Date: Saturday, February 16, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Description: Lake Jackson Mounds Archeological State Park will be hosting a Health and Fitness Fair in support of Step Up, Florida! The "Step Up, Florida!" Health and Fitness Fair will feature informational booths promoting healthy lifestyles and outdoor fitness opportunities along with guided nature walks scheduled throughout the event.

Fees: Fees have been waived for this event.

Contact: (850) 922-6007.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT](#)

[Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park](#) in Niceville

Date: Saturday, February 16, 11:00a.m. to 3:00p.m

Description: Check-in at day area pavilion at 11:00 a.m.. The Photo Scavenger Hunt will begin at 11:30 a.m.

Rangers will lead trail walks from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Educational Tables & Games will be located at the check-in pavilion.

Fees: Fees have been waived for this event.

Contact: Dallas Cox, (850) 259-6444.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - NATURE HIKE](#)

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

[Torreya State Park](#) in Bristol

Date: Saturday, February 16, 1:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

Description: Torreya State Park is planning a ranger-led Nature Hike as part of the Step Up, Florida! events. Hike participants will traverse the challenging terrain along the high bluffs overlooking the beautiful Apalachicola River. The hike will be less than one mile, but strenuous due to the 150 feet change in elevation. It is suggested that hikers bring sunscreen, insect repellent, hiking stick, hat and water.

Fees: Entrance fees waived to participants.

Contact: (850) 643-2674.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! SWAMP RIDE](#)

[Alafia River State Park](#) south of Plant City

Date: Sunday, February 17, 9:00 a.m.

Description: Enjoy Alafia River's spectacular mountain bike trails, while riding along with an experienced SWAMP club member. Rides start time is 9:00 a.m. RSVPs are needed for head count purposes. Helmets are required on all of Alafia River State Park's bike trails.

Fees: Regular park admission applies.

Contact: (813) 672-5320.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - BEACH CLEANUP & NATURE WALK](#)

[Bahia Honda State Park](#) in the Florida Keys

Date: Monday, February 18, 9:00 a.m.

Description: Meet with a Park Ranger at the East entrance to the Wings and Waves Butterfly Garden to begin an informative walk and beach cleanup on Loggerhead Beach. Learn about the wrack line, birds, butterflies and unique plants. Bring gloves and wear old shoes that can get wet and sandy.

Fees: Free park admission for beach cleanup participants.

Contact: (305) 872-9807.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - YOGA ON THE BEACH](#)

[Honeymoon Island State Park](#) in Dunedin

Date: Monday, February 18, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Description: Yoga on the beach. Join long time naturalist and park friend Linda Taylor of *It's Our Nature* for an easy introduction to yoga while enjoying the breathtaking view of the Gulf of Mexico. Bring a yoga mat, beach towel or blanket and water. No experience necessary. Meet in the north parking lot in front of the shell display. Limited to 16 participants. Weather dependent.

Contact: (727) 441-2599 or e-mail Linda@itsournature.com.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! FULL MOON BIKE RIDE](#)

[Myakka River State Park](#) east of Sarasota

Date: Monday, February 18 (weather permitting)

Description: For those of you who want to take a ride on the wild side under the full moon, bring your bike and join a park naturalist for a leisurely 10 mile round trip bike ride on the park drive. Trip speed will average 5 to 8 miles per hour. The ride will start at the Ranger Station and go to the bird walk on the Upper Myakka Lake and return with a stop at the canopy walkway to get up close and personal to the lunar magic. Helmets recommended and bike lights are required. Meet at Ranger Station at 6:30 p.m. to roll out at 7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$5.00 donation per person.

Contact: Lisa Bramlage, (941) 373-7839 or Biology@MyakkaRiver.org.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED NATURE WALK

Fort Pierce Inlet State Park in Fort Pierce

Date: Wednesday, February 20, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Description: Join a Fort Pierce Inlet State Park Ranger at 9:00 a.m. for a beach dune walk and then at 10:30 a.m. for a guided tour down the Coastal Hammock Trail. Each walk will last about 30 minutes and will guide you through many distinct coastal ecosystems. If you'd rather, bring your bike or surfboard. Florida State Parks offer numerous recreational opportunities. So, come on out and walk, run, bike, swim or surf your way to a healthier lifestyle! Make a reservation at the ranger station today.

Fees: Free park admission for Step Up, Florida! participants from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Contact: (772) 468-3985.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Fort Cooper State Park in Inverness

Date: Wednesday, February 20

Description: Tired of making laps around your neighborhood or just looking for a nice place to take a walk and maybe get a little exercise? Then come join a Ranger for a moderate paced walk along the scenic nature trails in the park. Pre-registration for walk is required. You'll have a nice place to walk with scenic views, a chance to meet new people and support your state park. It is recommended that participants wear comfortable clothing and shoes and bring insect repellent and water.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 726-0315.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - YOGA ON THE BEACH

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park in North Palm Beach

Date: Thursday, February 21, 8:30 a.m.

Description: Come and awaken your inner spirit, while gazing out at the clear blue waters of John D. MacArthur Beach State Park. Join yoga instructor Anne Marie Phelan as she guides you through an hour-long session on the beach. Don't forget to bring a beach towel and a water bottle.

Fees: The program is free with park admission of \$4.00 per carload.

Contact: (561) 624-6952.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GENTLE WALK AND TALK

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park south of Gainesville

Date: Thursday, February 21, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Description: 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 Paynes Prairie experience. The pace is slow and comfortable and your guide will stop and talk about what is encountered. Also learn Paynes Prairie's significant history, including a tour of the old Camp Ranch bunkhouse, now the North Rim Interpretive Center. 10 person limit. Call the Visitor Center at (352) 466-4100 for reservations.

Fees: The entrance fee will be waived for this event.

Contact: (352) 466-4100.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! - GUIDED NATURE WALK

Long Key State Park in the Florida Keys

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Date: Thursday, February 21, 10:00 a.m. to noon

Description: Join a park ranger for a two hour walk along the Golden Orb Trail (weather permitting). The trail is approximately 1.3 miles long and traverses several different plant communities including coastal scrub and tropical hardwood hammock.

Fees: Free with park admission.

Contact: (305) 664-4815.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - 5K WALK/RUN](#)

[Highlands Hammock State Park](#) in Sebring

Date: Saturday, February 23, 8:00 a.m.

Description: Highlands Hammock State Park will host a free 5K walk/run and 1K walk to promote healthy living. For more information call Derek Carlton at Highlands County Health Department.

Fees: Free to the Public.

Contact: (863) 382-7221.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! WALK ON THE BEACH](#)

[Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park](#) in Naples

Date: Saturday, February 23, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Description: Come out to the park and go for a walk on the beach to support Step Up, Florida! The beach at Delnor-Wiggins Pass is approximately 1.25 miles long so plan to walk 2.5 miles.

Fees: Free admittance to the park for the walk.

Contact: (239) 597-6196.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - TWO-MILE WALK ALONG THE INLET](#)

[Sebastian Inlet State Park](#) in Melbourne Beach

Date: Saturday, February 23, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Description: Rangers will hike and interpret different ecosystems, history and wildlife on a two mile hike. We will meet at #1 picnic pavilion on Coconut Point, on the south side of Sebastian Inlet. We will walk east along the inlet, turning right behind the Manager's house and walking on top of the dike, through the mangroves, past hidden lakes with occasional views of the Indian River Lagoon. Next, we will hike north along the bike path to the South Entrance of Sebastian Inlet. We finish up walking west along the inlet to our starting point.

Fees: Fees are waived for participants in this event.

Contact: (321) 984-4852.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! GUIDED WALKS & CANOE TOURS](#)

[Hugh Taylor Birch State Park](#) in Fort Lauderdale

Date: Saturday, February 23 & Sunday, February 24, 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

Description: One-hour, ranger-guided walks and canoe tours of the park's coastal hammock and coastal dune lake natural communities will be offered. The Guided Walks will begin at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. followed by guided canoe tours at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Space is limited to 15 people, so please call for reservations.

Fees: Tours free with park admission. Donations accepted to benefit the Friends of Birch State Park, Inc.

Contact: (954) 564-4521.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA! - DISCOVER LAKE MANATEE](#)

[Lake Manatee State Park](#) east of Bradenton

Date: Saturday, February 23, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Description: Celebrate our 4th Annual 'Discover Lake Manatee' State Park event with a day of fun for the whole family. Join us for guided nature walks, arts and crafts, junior fishing clinics, live bluegrass and folk music courtesy of Myakka Bluegrass, wildlife exhibits and much more.

Fees: Admission to this family event is free.

Contact: (941) 741-3028 to volunteer or ask questions.

[STEP UP, FLORIDA - OSPREY TRAIL HIKE](#)

[Honeymoon Island State Park](#) in Dunedin

Date: Sunday, February 24, 11:00 a.m. **Description:** Join park volunteers for an informative walk on the Osprey Trail focusing on the Ospreys and Great Horned Owls. The walk is a short and easy one of approximately 1/4 mile after which visitors may return to the parking lot or continue on their own with a challenge to find all the nests on the trail. A map will be provided.

Contact: (727) 469-5942.
