

Florida State Parks

Monthly Newsletter, March 2008

Special Events March 2008

[The Battle of Natural Bridge at Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park](#), Sat. & Sun., March 1 & 2, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

[The Way We Were: Forts, Frontiers and Families at Hillsborough River State Park](#) and Fort Foster State Historic Site, Sat., March 8, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

[Garden Festival at Fanning Springs State Park](#), Saturday, March 15, 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

[Barnacle Under Moonlight at The Barnacle Historic State Park](#), Friday, March 21, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

[Grand Opening of the Legacy Trail at Oscar Scherer State Park](#), Fri., March 28 – Sun., March 30, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Florida Hiking Festival

Hike Florida at the Florida Hiking Festival! Join hundreds of hikers gathering along the Florida Trail on March 28-30 in the Florida Trail Gateway Community of White Springs at [Stephen Foster Folk Culture State Park](#) for a weekend of guided hikes, bike trips, paddling trips, seminars, workshops, interpretive walks, vendors, crafts and more. It's the nationwide kickoff of "A Decade for the National Trails System" with guests from National Scenic and Historic Trails from around the United States. Celebrate 25 years of Florida's own National Scenic Trail with the Florida Trail Association. Early registration ends March 7. Register now at www.floridahikingfestival.org



Share your Photos

Do you have great photos from your visits to Florida's state parks? Every month, we conduct a photo contest at www.FloridaStateParks.org/photocontest. Our Web visitors vote to pick the winning photos. Visit the Web to see the great photos submitted, to vote for your favorite and to get the rules for submitting your own photos.

Changes to Camping Reservations

We are pleased to announce that we are upgrading our reservation system to better serve you. To complete the upgrade, reservations will not be taken from Wednesday, April 2 through Tuesday, April 15. If you are planning to camp during April, please make your reservations early.



Join Friends of Florida State Parks

The Friends of Florida State Parks, Inc., the citizen support organization for the Florida Park Service, is undergoing new and exciting changes. The Friends of Florida State Parks, Inc is working hard to support and promote parks across the state. To learn more about this beneficial organization, visit www.floridastateparks.org.friends.



Let's Go  Outside



Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

21ST ANNUAL REAL FLORIDA 5K RUN & FUN WALK

Wekiwa Springs State Park

Date: Saturday, March 1, begins at 7:00 a.m.

Description: Participants register to compete in a 5K race through the trails of Wekiwa Springs State Park. An award ceremony and free raffle will be held after the race and all competing participants will receive a free t-shirt. Proceeds from the race go towards the construction of an education pavilion for the park. [Registration Form](#) or [To Register and pay online.](#)

Fees: Entry fee is \$25.00.

Contact: Christiann.Burch@dep.state.fl.us.

Directions: Wekiwa Springs State Park is approximately 20 minutes north of Orlando and approximately 45 minutes north of the attractions. It is easily located off I-4 at Exit #94. Take State Road 434 west to Wekiwa Springs Road. Turn right on Wekiwa Springs Rd. and travel approximately 4 miles to the park entrance, which will be on the right.

AUTHOR BOB SANFORD - 'A VIEW FROM THE BAR'

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

Date: Saturday, March 1, 11:00 a.m.

Description: If you ever wanted to learn more about John D. MacArthur, come to the park to hear local author, Bob Sanford. A former employee of Mr. MacArthur's, Bob will share stories from his book, *A View From the Bar*

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

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.

SHARKS TEETH

Little Talbot Island State Park

Date: Saturday, March 1, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Join a park ranger for a discussion on the different types of shark teeth that can be found on the area's beaches. The program will take place at pavilion six on Little Talbot Island. No reservations are necessary.

Fees: The program is free with regular park admission.

Contact: (904) 251-2320.

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

STEP UP, FLORIDA!

Hillsborough River State Park

Date: Saturday, March 1, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Hike Your State Park – Come enjoy the outdoors in one of Florida's oldest state parks. Hillsborough River State Park will offer three hiking opportunities: Beginning hike on our half-mile loop on the Rapids Trail; Intermediate hike on our one-mile loop on the Baynard Trail and Advanced hike on our 3.4-mile loop of the Florida Trail. All hikes are guided; proper footwear and water are recommended.

Fees: These activities are free and open to the public. Please inform the Ranger Station that you are participating in Step Up, Florida! for park entry.

Contact: (813) 987-6771.

Directions: Hillsborough River State Park is located nine miles north of Tampa and six miles south of Zephyrhills on U.S. Highway 301. From I-75 southbound from Ocala, take State Road 54 (Exit #279) east to Highway 301, travel south for six miles. The park will be on your right-hand side. From I-75 northbound from Tampa, take Fowler Ave.

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(Exit #265) east to Highway 301. Travel north for nine miles. The park will be on your left-hand side. From I-4 westbound, take Exit #10, go north on County Road 579 to U.S. 301. Follow the signs and go north seven miles. The park will be on your left-hand side. From I-4 eastbound, take Exit #7 (be careful of the merges) and go north on U.S. 301 for 14 miles. The park will be on your left-hand side.

GREAT OUTDOOR ADVENTURE DAY!

Lovers Key State Park

Date: Saturday, March 1, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Description: Bring the entire family out for this fun-filled adventure. Discover the best of Lovers Key through guided bike tours, beach walks, birding programs, kayak tours, live music, living pirate and Calusa history, and more.

Fees: This event is free with park admission: \$5 for 2-8 people in a vehicle, \$3 for individual in vehicle; \$1 per pedestrian.

Contact: (239) 463-4588.

Directions: Lovers Key is located at 8700 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach. The park boundaries are Big Carlos Pass and New Pass. We are 10.5 miles west of I-75 on Exit #116.

FIRST SATURDAY COFFEEHOUSE

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park

Date: Saturday, March 1, 7:00 p.m.

Description: Songs, stories, music or poetry may be performed at this open stage night held in the park auditorium. Coffee and desserts will be available for sale.

Fees: This event is free.

Contact: (386) 397-4331.

Directions: Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to State Road 136** (Exit #439), travel east on State Road 136 for three miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Exit #301), travel nine miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.

'IBINI TERA' - CLEAN UP OUR LAKES

Lake Griffin State Park

Date: Saturday, March 1, 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Description: Ibini Tera is a Timucuan/Spanish term meaning 'clean water' and is the name for a partnership promoting water quality awareness in Lake County. Join us for a 3.5 hour lake and shoreline cleanup. T-shirt and lunch provided for all volunteers.

Fees: Park entrance fee waived for participants.

Contact: Kadie.Ogden@dep.state.fl.us.

Directions: Lake Griffin State Park is located two miles north of Leesburg and 30 miles south of Ocala.

THE BATTLE OF NATURAL BRIDGE

Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park

Date: Saturday & Sunday, March 1 & 2, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: The Department of Environmental Protection's Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park, in partnership with the Natural Bridge Historical Society, The Leon Rifles and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, will host the 143rd annual Battle of Natural Bridge. The event commemorates the 1865 Civil War confrontation that preserved Tallahassee as the only Confederate capital east of the Mississippi River to avoid Union control. March 1: Event guests will mingle with civil war reenactors and observe a Confederate-Union

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

skirmish, cavalry demonstrations, artillery shows and medical treatment examples. March 2: The official Opening Ceremonies and Dedication, sponsored by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, will begin at 1:45 p.m., followed by a full-scale reenactment of the Battle of Natural Bridge at 2:30 p.m. Refreshments, including hamburgers, hotdogs, snacks and soft drinks will be available both days at 12:00 p.m.

Fees: Admission is free and parking is available at the park.

Contact: (850) 922-6007.

Directions: Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park is located six miles east of Woodville, off State Road 363 on Natural Bridge Road.

[BILLIBONG JR. PRO SURF CONTEST](#)

[Sebastian Inlet State Park](#)

Date: Saturday & Sunday, March 1 & 2, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: Come watch the top Jr. Pro mens' surfers shred first peak as they complete for \$10,000.00. The prize money for the Jr. Pro women's is \$2,500.00. This surf contest is for surfers 19 years old and younger.

Fees: Normal park entrance fees apply.

Contact: www.billabong.com.

Directions: From Indian River County: From I-95, take the Fellsmere/Sebastian exit and go east (towards Sebastian) on County Road 512. After a short distance, turn right on County Road 510. This road will intersect with U.S. Highway 1. Continue east, over the Indian River, to State Road A1A. Turn left (north) and go seven miles on State Road A1A to the park. From Brevard County: From I-95, take the U.S. 192 exit and go east until you reach State Road A1A in Indialantic. Turn right (south) on State Road A1A and go 18 miles to get to Sebastian Inlet.

[Step Up, Florida!](#)

[Henderson Beach Florida Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 8, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00p.m.

Description: STEP UP FLORIDA!

Come out and take advantage of the great physical activity opportunities Florida has to offer. Activities will include a walk on either our 1.25 miles of beach or a more vigorous hike on our 7/8-mile nature trail. There will also be Educational Tables and Games at the pavilion.

Fees: Fees have been waived for this event.

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

Directions: Henderson Beach State Park is located east of Destin on U.S. 98.

[THE WAY WE WERE: FORTS, FRONTIERS, AND FAMILIES](#)

[Hillsborough River State Park](#) and Fort Foster State Historic Site

Date: Saturday, March 8, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Description: Fort Foster Historic Site will be hosting Archaeology Day. Florida Archaeology Month 2008 focuses on the significance of fortifications and defensive structures in Florida. Some Native Americans put up defensive walls around their villages for protection from other tribes. When Europeans first arrived in Florida, most of the forts were erected out of earth or wood—plentiful materials at hand for quick construction and defense. Later fortifications would be built out of more permanent material like stone, brick or concrete. They were constructed to protect harbors, rivers, strategic locations or centers of population. Many towns in Florida got their name from forts and numerous forts still exist today. Florida Archaeology Month is coordinated by the Florida Anthropological Society and supported by a grant from the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Additional sponsors include the Florida Archaeological Council, Florida Public Archaeology Network, Florida State Parks, state and local museums, historical commissions, libraries and public and private school systems.

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Fees: This event is free.

Contact: (813) 987-6771 or visit www.flpublicarchaeology.org/wcrc/.

Directions: Hillsborough River State Park is located nine miles north of Tampa and six miles south of Zephyrhills on U.S. Highway 301. From I-75 southbound from Ocala, take State Road 54 (Exit #279) east to Highway 301, travel south for six miles. The park will be on your right-hand side. From I-75 northbound from Tampa, take Fowler Ave. (Exit #265) east to Highway 301. Travel north for nine miles. The park will be on your left-hand side. From I-4 westbound, take Exit #10, go north on County Road 579 to U.S. 301. Follow the signs and go north seven miles. The park will be on your left-hand side. From I-4 eastbound, take Exit #7 (be careful of the merges) and go north on U.S. 301 for 14 miles. The park will be on your left-hand side.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! & COMMIT 2B FIT

John U. Lloyd Beach State Park

Date: Saturday, March 8, 8:00 a.m. to Noon

Description: Park Rangers and Florida Park Patrol will lead a 10-mile bike ride through John U. Lloyd Beach State Park and along the beach into Hollywood. This will be a joint effort between the Florida Park Service and Broward County Parks to bring awareness to healthy lifestyles and raise money to benefit The Wildlife Care Center. The activities will include a bicycle safety check, music, a bounce house and door prizes. All riders must wear a helmet and bring their own bicycle. Participants will be required to sign a release and waiver of liability.

Fees: \$20.00/family; \$10.00/individual.

Contact: Carmelo Duesler, (954) 924-3859.

Directions: I-95 to Sheridan Street (Exit #21), east to A1A, north 1.5 miles; or Florida Turnpike to Hollywood Blvd. (Exit #49), east to A1A, north 2.5 miles.

TALBOT CRITTERS

Little Talbot Island State Park

Date: Saturday, March 8, 1:00 p.m.

Description: Join a park ranger to learn about the species that inhabit the natural communities of the undeveloped barrier islands of northeast Florida. The program will take place at pavilion six on Little Talbot Island. No reservations are necessary.

Fees: The program is free with regular park admission.

Contact: (904) 251-2320.

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

'TIMUCUA' NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM

Washington Oaks Gardens State Park

Date: Saturday, March 8, 2:00 p.m.

Description: Join us for this hands-on Native America experience and discover the ways of the Timucuan Indians and their relationship to the land that they loved. Spend time among friends and enjoy stories about the Timucuan and the important role the river, forest and ocean played in their everyday lives. Learn about Native American clothing, shelter, hunting and fishing techniques, and how they created exquisite objects of art from the natural materials found around them. Sample some Native American food and learn how to make a bracelet from palm fiber or start a fire with just a bow and drill.

Fees: Regular park admission fees apply.

Contact: (386) 466-6780.

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

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

MY FLORIDA CULTURAL HISTORY SERIES

Myakka River State Park

Date: Saturday, March 8, 7:00 p.m.

Description: Friends of Myakka River presents the My Florida Cultural History Series. Join Hank Mattson, Cracker Cowboy Poet in Tellin' it like it was. A working cowboy poet from Lake Placid, Florida, Mattson has performed at the country's top cowboy poetry festivals and is workin' hard to keep the lore alive by tellin' it like it was. Suitable for pert ner any audience. Treat yourself to something rarefied.

Fees: No charge for all that wish to step back in time.

Contact: (941) 361-6511 or (941) 373-7839.

Directions: Myakka River State Park is located nine miles east of I-75 in Sarasota on State Road 72.

HOMOSASSA HERITAGE DAY

Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park

Date: Saturday, March 8, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: Exhibits and programs will be located in the Florida Room at the Visitor Center on the history of the park and the Homosassa area. Former employees, their families and anyone interested in the heritage of the park and this area are invited to attend. Historical photos will be on display and throughout the wildlife park. Former employees may register as Homosassa Heritage Keepers and will receive a pass for free park admission on this date. Download our flyer, [Homosassa Heritage Day](#).

Fees: Film showings and Florida Room activities are free. Regular admission applies for entrance into Wildlife Park.

Contact: (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.

TOMOKA REMEMBERS

Tomoka State Park

Date: Saturday, March 8, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Description: Each month, discover a different piece of the past from Seminoles to Civil War. Visitors can talk to and learn from living historians.

Fees: Regular park entry fee of \$4.00 per car.

Contact: Ranger Station (386) 676-4050.

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

O'LENO OLE' - CHILI COOKOFF

OLeno State Park

Date: Saturday, March 8. Cookoff begins at 9:00 a.m. Turn in time is 1:00 p.m.

Description: Bring your favorite chili recipe and compete with the best during this CASI (Chili Appreciation Society International) sanctioned chili cookoff. Prizes are awarded for 1st - 10th place in the cook off and 1st - 3rd place for the showmanship competition. Entry fee of \$20.00 per team. All entries must comply with the CASI rules and regulations. For more information go to [Chili Appreciation Society International, Inc.](#) and click on **Resource Center**. For pre-registration & more information contact Harriet Walsh at (386) 454-4806 or email [Friends of O'Leno](#).

Don't want to compete? Come on out and enjoy the shows. Spectators may purchase sample kits and vote for the Peoples Choice Award.

Fees: Regular park admission of \$4.00 per vehicle (up to 8 passengers).

Contact: (386) 454-4806.

Directions: O'Leno State Park is located on U.S. 441, six miles north of High Springs.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

12TH ANNUAL AZALEA DAYS

Ravine Gardens State Park

Date: Saturday & Sunday, March 8 & 9, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: Come enjoy a weekend of old fashion family fun. Start the day by taking a ranger-led wagon ride around a 1.8-mile loop of thousands of blooming azaleas, while listening to the history of this park. Learn why Ravine Gardens played an important role in the economic recovery of the City of Palatka. Walking along the extensive hiking trail system located at the bottom of the ravine, our visitors can enjoy a spectacular view of color and beauty; including azaleas, dogwoods, magnolias and camellias. Vendors and crafters will be located around the Court of States within the park. The Palatka Art League will be located in the Civic Center. Also located this year in the Civic Center will be an archaeological display provided by the Saint Augustine Public Archaeology Regional Center. The sounds of music, by some local and non-local entertainers, will echo throughout the ravines. Food and refreshments will be available to purchase throughout the park. For more information and vendor applications contact Donna Rhein at Ravine Gardens State Park (386) 329-3721.

Fees: Regular park admission fees.

Contact: (386) 329-3721.

Directions: Ravine Gardens State Park is located in Palatka. From U.S. 17/State Road 100, turn south onto Moseley Avenue, then turn east onto Twigg Street.

FLORIDA'S GREAT ESCAPE TRIATHLON

Lake Louisa State Park

Date: Sunday, March 9, 5:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Description: Florida's Great Escape Triathlon is part of the Escape to Alcatraz Triathlon Series that will qualify athletes for the Escape to Alcatraz Triathlon in June 2008. The race is a 1K swim, 25K bike and 5K run, all located inside beautiful Lake Louisa State Park. First activity will be swimming, followed by bicycling and then running. For a detailed schedule, please contact NTC at www.usantc.com.

Fees: Regular park admission fees apply.

Contact: www.usantc.com.

Directions: Lake Louisa State Park is located on U.S. 27, seven miles south of State Road 50.

ELDERHOSTEL

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park

Date: Monday, March 10 through Friday, March 14

Description: Explore North Florida's natural beauty and local culture along the Suwannee River in our learning programs for adults age 55 and older. Leisure, active or service programs are available. Learn more about the life and music of Stephen Foster. Enjoy church suppers, local musicians and craftsmen, or canoe and hike along the Suwannee. Register at Elderhostel.

Fees: Registration fees will apply.

Contact: (386) 397-4478.

Directions: Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to State Road 136** (Exit #439), travel east on State Road 136 for three miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Exit #301), travel nine miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.

ECHO ECO QUEST

Alafia River State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15

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Description: Help raise money for needy families while challenging yourself with the ECHO Eco Quest. ECHO, the Emergency Care Help Organization, provides food and clothing to residents of Eastern Hillsborough County who have experienced a recent emergency. Established in 1987, ECHO has served more than 90,000 individuals. The event is comprised of two adventure races: one for the die hard adventure racer and one for the weekend warrior. This adventure race will include solo and two person teams, and consist of canoeing, mountain biking and trail running. To enter the race, participants are requested to obtain sponsors and donations to cover their minimum entrance fee. They are encouraged to raise more. Prizes are given to top three participants who raise the most money and the top three from each race category who cross the finish line first. Everyone who attempts the challenge is a winner and will receive an event t-shirt.

Fees: Full Adventure Race - \$100 per person; ECO Mini Race - \$30. Fee includes park entry, breakfast, lunch, canoe rental, the after party and a T-shirt.

Contact: www.ECHOEcoQuest.org or (813) 685-0935.

Directions: From the South - Take I-75 north to Exit #240. Turn right (east) onto State Road 674; travel 15 miles. Turn left (north) at flashing light, onto County Road 39; travel for approximately 5 miles. The park entrance is on the right. From the North - Take I-75 south to Exit #246. Turn right (east) onto Big Bend Road; travel one mile. Turn right (south) onto U.S. 301; travel for 1.5 miles. Turn left (east) onto County Road 672; travel for 12 miles. Turn left (north) onto County Road 39; travel for 1.5 miles. The park entrance will be on right. From the East - Take I-4 west to Exit #22. Turn left onto Park Road. Follow Park Road for approximately 2.5 miles. Bear right onto 39B. Turn left onto State Road 39 (James Redman Parkway); continue for approximately 15.2 miles. The park entrance will be on the left.

WILD AZALEA FESTIVAL

[Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 15, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: *This event takes place at the State of Florida's Nature & Heritage Tourism Center in White Springs.*

Join the Town of White Springs and the State of Florida's Nature & Heritage Center as they celebrate the spring bloom of wild azaleas along the Suwannee River. The festival features musical performances, arts and crafts, trail hikes and other outdoor recreational opportunities. Native plants, including wild azaleas will also be for sale.

Visitors will be able to take a free ride on a horse-drawn wagon. The event is sponsored by the *Nature & Heritage Tourism Center* and the *White Springs Special Events Committee*.

Fees: This event is free.

Contact: (386) 397-7005.

Directions: Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to State Road 136** (Exit #439), travel east on State Road 136 for 3 miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Exit #301), travel nine miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.

OBSTACLE TRAIL CHALLENGE

[Lake Louisa State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 15, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: One hundred pre-registered riders will be tested on horsemanship and riding skills on various obstacles along some of the park's beautiful equestrian trails. Judges will be timing and grading the performances. Food and refreshments will be available for purchase.

Fees: Regular park admission fees apply.

Contact: tracleary@aim.com.

Directions: Lake Louisa State Park is located on U.S. 27, seven miles south of State Road 50.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

ANTIQUUE ENGINE SHOW

Koreshan State Historic Site

Date: Saturday & Sunday, March 15 & 16

Description: Presented by the Florida Flywheelers, see all kinds of engines, tools and more from days gone by in the historic settlement.

Fees: Park entrance fees apply.

Contact: (239) 992-0311.

Directions: I-75 Exit #123 Corkscrew Road, head west two miles, cross U.S. 41 and continue on Corkscrew Road approximately 1,000 yards to entrance of park. If traveling U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) Koreshan is located at the intersection of U.S. 41 and Corkscrew Road at Estero.

GUIDED OVERNIGHT BACKPACKING TRIP

Lake Kissimmee State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15

Description: Join a park ranger for an exciting guided overnight backpacking trip. The trip is approximately seven miles long, and will pass through several diverse plant and animal communities. On Saturday, the group departs in the early afternoon and will hike about three and a half miles to the primitive campsite on either Buster Island or Fallen Oak. Sunday's hike will be about three and a half miles long ending late in the morning. The trail is level and might be wet in places. The overall trip is considered easy to moderate in difficulty for the experienced hiker.

Reservations are required for the trip.

Fees: \$10.00 per person (plus tax).

Contact: (863) 696-1112.

Directions: Lake Kissimmee State Park is located off State Road 60, 15 miles east of Lake Wales.

NATURE HIKE

Fort George Island Cultural State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15, 10:00 a.m.

Description: Join a park ranger at the Ribault Club for a leisurely-paced hour long hike to discover the island's natural communities. Bug spray and a water bottle are recommended. No reservations are necessary.

Fees: This program is free.

Contact: (904) 251-2320.

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

CONFEDERATE GARRISONS

Fort Clinch State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 16, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Description: Living historians re-create life at Fort Clinch during the War Between the States. Activities may include black powder artillery demonstrations and marching drills, as well as soldiers and civilians taking up duty in the laundry, infirmary and kitchen. There will be a candlelight viewing on Saturday evening.

Fees: Park entrance fee plus \$2.00 per person for Fort admission.

Contact: (904) 277-7274.

Directions: Take I-95 to the Fernandina Beach/Callahan exit (Exit #373), 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.

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GARDEN FESTIVAL

Fanning Springs State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Description: You are invited to attend Fanning Springs State Park's Spring Garden Festival to learn more about "Florida Friendly" landscaping and living. A number of local environmental organizations and state agency representatives will set up educational booths to supply the tools to the public to achieve springs and groundwater protection in North Central Florida. Vendors will be selling plants, non-polluting pesticides, fertilizers and cleaning solutions, water conservation irrigation devices and other green products. The Suwannee River Partnership and Master Gardeners will hold "right place, right plant" workshops. There will be native landscape demonstration walks around Fanning Springs State Park. Educational kid's games and crafts will be taking place throughout the day. To learn more, visit [Fanning Springs Garden Festival](#).

Fees: This event is FREE.

Contact: (352) 463-3420.

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

STAR PARTY

Sebastian Inlet State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15, 8:00 p.m to ...

Description: Join the Indian River Astronomy Society for a [Star Party](#). Telescopes provided or bring your own.

Fees: Free.

Contact: (321) 984-4852.

Directions: From Indian River County: From I-95, take the Fellsmere/Sebastian exit and go east (towards Sebastian) on County Road 512. After a short distance, turn right on County Road 510. This road will intersect with U.S. Highway 1. Continue east, over the Indian River, to State Road A1A. Turn left (north) and go seven miles on State Road A1A, you will have arrived at Sebastian Inlet. From Brevard County: From I-95, take the U.S. 192 exit and go east until you reach State Road A1A in Indialantic. Turn right (south) on State Road A1A and go 18 miles to get to Sebastian Inlet.

STEP UP, FLORIDA! BEACH WALK & LITTER CLEAN-UP

Fort Clinch State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15, Registration at 9:45 a.m. Walk begins at 10:00 a.m.

Description: Join us for a relaxing walk on the beach to promote active living and help free our beaches from tobacco litter. This event is sponsored by *The Nassau County Health Department and Fort Clinch State Park*.

Fees: FREE park admission and GIVEAWAYS for those participating in the walk and clean-up.

Contact: (904) 548-1853 or visit [Step Up, Florida!](#)

Directions: Take I-95 to the Fernandina Beach/Callahan exit (Exit #373), 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.

ARCHEOLOGY DAY

T.H. Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Description: Archeologists from the Florida Archeology Network and the University of West Florida will be present to give an interpretive show, identify artifacts and answer questions.

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Fees: Entrance fee and event are free for participants.

Contact: (850) 227-1327.

Directions: St. Joseph Peninsula State Park is located near Port St. Joe. On U.S. 98 (heading east) turn onto State Road 30-A, travel to State Road 30E, turn and travel to the park. From Apalachicola, take U.S. 98 west, turn left on County Road 30A, then turn left on County Road 30E. Travel to park.

PIONEER FIBER ARTS GUILD

De Leon Springs State Park

Date: Saturday, March 15, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Description: Members of the guild demonstrate how things were made in the old days with spinning, weaving and quilting. Many beautiful fiber items of yesterday are re-created using authentic period methods, tools and materials.

Fees: Regular Park Admission fess apply.

Contact: (386) 985-4212.

Directions: Take U.S. Highway 17 North from Deland for approximately six miles, following the State Park signs. Turn left onto Ponce DeLeon Blvd. You will travel approximately one mile to the entrance to DeLeon Springs State Park.

SECRETS OF THE SALTMARSH

Fort George Island Cultural State Park

Date: Sunday, March 16, 10:30 a.m.

Description: Join a park ranger and discover the importance of the estuarine systems that surround the inshore sides of barrier islands. The program will take place at the Ribault Club on Fort George Island. No reservations are necessary.

Fees: This program is free.

Contact: (904) 251-2320.

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

BLUE SPRING BASIN WORKING GROUP

Blue Spring State Park

Date: Monday, March 17, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: Kick-off meeting of the Blue Spring Basin Working Group. The working group is envisioned as a group of interested citizens and local government leaders working together across boundaries to resolve issues that may threaten the long term health of Blue Spring.

Fees: Fees waived for meeting attendees.

Contact: Carol Lippincott, bseinc@myway.com.

Directions: Take Exit #114 off I-4 and follow the signs. Go south on U.S. 17/92 to Orange City, about 2.5 miles. Make a right onto West French Avenue.

BARNACLE UNDER MOONLIGHT - ALHAMBRA ORCHESTRA

The Barnacle Historic State Park

Date: Friday, March 21, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Description: Enjoy a concert on the lawn of The Barnacle Historic State Park. Bring a picnic and blanket or lawn chair and enjoy the moonrise over Biscayne Bay as the Alhambra Orchestra entertains on the grounds of The Barnacle, built in 1891 by Commodore Ralph Munroe. Visit the Alhambra Orchestra website at

www.alhambramusic.org. No pets or alcohol.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Fees: \$7.00 - 10 years and older; \$3.00 – ages 6-9.

Contact: (305) 442-6866.

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

[EASTER EGG HUNT](#)

[Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 22, 8:30 a.m.

Description: The Friends of Homosassa Springs will be holding an Easter Egg Hunt. Activities include an Easter Egg hunt for plastic Easter eggs, which can then be redeemed for goodies, trinkets and savings bonds. Parents can have their children's photos taken with the Easter Bunny (costumed character). Download our flyer, [The Wildest Egg Hunt In Town](#). The file is large; please be patient.

Fees: Donation of \$5.00 for children includes admission to park; adults receive a 33% discount on park admission.

Contact: (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.

[BIRD WALK ON PEPPER CREEK TRAIL](#)

[Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 22, 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. (Meet at 7:45 a.m.)

Description: Novice and experienced birders are invited to take a guided bird walk on Pepper Creek Trail. Bring binoculars and field guide if you have them. This leisurely-paced walk is on an accessible paved trail winding through a hydric hammock along Pepper Creek.

Fees: This event is free.

Contact: (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.

[EASTER EGG HUNT](#)

[Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 22, 11:00 a.m.

Description: Bring a picnic lunch and spend the day with us at our annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Fees: Park entrance fee and event are free for participants.

Contact: (850) 833-9144.

Directions: From the west: Take I-10 east to Highway 85. Travel south until you reach Highway 20. Go east on Highway 20. The park will be approximately five miles on the left. From the east: Take I-10 west to Highway 331. Travel south until you reach Highway 20. Go west on Highway 20 approximately 25 miles until you see signs for the park on right.

[FULL MOON CANOE/KAYAK GUIDED TRIP](#)

[Manatee Springs State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 22, 8:00 p.m.

Description: Venture with others as night crawls in and the full moon rises on a guided canoe/kayak trip. Under the silvery light of the moon, your guides will share secrets of the Suwannee River as you paddle through the nocturnal world. Participation is limited and based upon **first-come, first-served** so arrive early; only 10 boats are allowed and the estimated time of paddle is 2 hours followed by refreshments and fire-side program provided by our Citizen Support Organization, Friends of Manatee Springs Parks, Inc. Don't forget to bring flash light, whistle

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

and life jacket. **DON'T BE LATE as the adventure begins promptly at 8:00 p.m.** Canoes can be rented the day of the trip at the *Manatee Springs Café* located inside the park or by calling (352) 949-4878.

Fees: These trips are free with regular paid camping fees. Day use visitors will need to pay regular day use fee and advise the guide that they will need assistance with the entrance gate upon departure.

Contact: (352) 493-6072.

Directions: Manatee Springs State Park is located at the end of State Road 320, off U.S. 98, six miles west of Chiefland.

[MACARTHUR UNDER MOONLIGHT - KAT EGGLESTON](#)

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

Date: Saturday, March 22, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Description: Join us under the full moon for a magical night of music. This concert series is held every month on the Friday or Saturday night nearest the full moon featuring a different band every month. Come on out and bring the whole family. No reservations required.

Fees: Admission is \$5.00. Children under 10 are free.

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.

[PAYNES PRAIRIE BY BICYCLE](#)

[Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 22, 9:00 a.m.

Description: Join us for an interpretive bicycle ride on the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail.

About the trail: Passing by native plants and wildlife, unique scenery and backyard Florida culture, the old railroad bed turned greenway is both a paved recreational surface and a grassy path for equestrians. As you make your way down the trail on this guided ride, trade your modern life for the days of citrus groves, small railroad towns and coal burning locomotives. The route stretches back even further in time to the days of William Bartram, Seminole Indians and Florida's first people. The Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail totals 16 miles from Boulware Springs Park in Gainesville to the city of Hawthorne, passing through Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park with various overlooks along the way.

Details: Start at at Boulware Springs Park on SE 15th Street at 9:00 a.m. Ride distance will be about 12 miles and includes some mild hills. There will be multiple stops along the way and a restroom facility is available.

Requirements: All riders must provide bicycles. All riders must have and use helmets. No riders under 10 years of age. Ride is limited to 10 participants to ensure a quality experience.

RSVP: Call the Visitor Center between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. daily at (352) 466-4100.

Fees: \$5.00 suggested donation.

Contact: (352) 466-4100.

Directions: Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park is located 10 miles south of Gainesville, in Micanopy, on the east side of U.S. 441. From I-75: Take Exit #374, the Micanopy exit. Turn left onto County Road 234. Stay on this road 1.4 miles until it intersects with U.S. 441. Turn left onto U.S. 441 and go 0.6 miles to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park (on the right).

[EASTER EGG HUNT](#)

[Fort George Island Cultural State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 22, 10:30 a.m.

Description: The Friends of Talbot Islands State Parks will be hosting an Easter Egg Hunt for children 3 to 10 years

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

of age. Kids can hunt for plastic Easter eggs hidden on the grounds of the Ribault Club and redeem the eggs for an Easter bag full of goodies. Space is limited, so please call the Ranger Station to reserve a spot, (904) 251-2320.

Fees: \$5.00 donation per participating child and every child will receive a prize.

Contact: (904) 251-2320.

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

[HOMEGROWN 4H CLUB - ST. JUDE'S RIDE](#)

[Colt Creek State Park](#)

Date: Saturday, March 22, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: Please note change in date. This event is to benefit the St. Jude Hospital and is sponsored by the Homegrown 4H Club and Colt Creek State Park. The event will take place along the hiking/horse trails in order to raise donations. Participants can either walk or ride their horse along specially marked portions of the trail.

Activities for children will include fishing, pony rides and inflatable bounces. Tram ride tours of the park will also be offered.

Fees: 2:00 per vehicle entrance fee.

Contact: (386) 815-6758.

Directions: The park is located 16 miles north of Lakeland just south of the Withlacoochee River off of State Road 471. From I-4 take Exit #32 and proceed north on U.S. 98 approximately 13 miles, turn right onto State Road 471. From I-75 take Exit #301 and proceed east on State Road 50 for approximately 13 miles, turn right onto State Road 471. The entrance to the park is 3.8 miles north of U.S. 98 and 17 miles south of State Road 50.

[EASTER BUFFET](#)

[Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park](#)

Date: Sunday, March 23, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Description: Make your Easter Celebration even more special. Experience our sumptuous holiday buffet lunch, then stroll the grounds or enjoy a relaxing cruise on the beautiful Wakulla River. Call for reservations & prices.

Fees: Reservations required.

Contact: (850) 224-5950.

Directions: If traveling east on I-10, take Exit #196. Take State Road 263 (Capitol Circle) south 12 miles. Turn right (south) onto U.S. 319/State Road 61 (Crawfordville Highway) for 2 miles. Bear left onto State Road 61 (Wakulla Springs Road) for six miles. Turn left onto State Road 267 at flashing stop light. Turn Right into Park entrance. From West I-10, take Exit #203. Take State Road 61 (Thomasville Road) south. Continue on State Road 61 through Tallahassee for 10 miles. Take U.S. 319/State Road 61 (Crawfordville Highway) south for two miles. Bear left onto State Road 61 (Wakulla Springs Rd) for six miles. Turn left onto State Road 267 at flashing stop light. Turn right into Park entrance.

[ELDERHOSTEL](#)

[Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park](#)

Date: Sunday, March 23 through Friday, March 28

Description: Explore North Florida's natural beauty and local culture along the Suwannee River in our learning programs for adults age 55 and older. Leisure, active or service programs are available. Learn more about the life and music of Stephen Foster. Enjoy church suppers, local musicians and craftsmen, or canoe and hike along the Suwannee. Register at [Elderhostel](#).

Fees: Registration fees apply.

Contact: (386) 397-4478.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

Directions: Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to State Road 136** (Exit #439), travel east on State Road 136 for three miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Exit #301), travel nine miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.

[EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE](#)

[Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park](#)

Date: Sunday, March 23, 6:45 a.m.

Description: Celebrate Easter with gospel choirs, soloists and clergy from the local community who gather together for a beautiful sunrise service.

Fees: This event is free.

Contact: (386) 397-4331.

Directions: Located on U.S. 41 in White Springs. **From I-75 to State Road 136** (Exit #439), travel east on State Road 136 for three miles. Turn left on U.S. 41. Park entrance is on the left. **From I-10 to U.S. 41 North** (Exit #301), travel nine miles to White Springs. Park entrance is on the left.

[THE FLORIDA WOODCARVERS ROUNDUP](#)

[Hillsborough River State Park](#)

Date: Wednesday, March 26 through Sunday, March 30, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Description: For those wanting to give woodcarving a try, a 'Fundamentals of Woodcarving' class is offered on Wednesday and Sunday, tools and materials are available with the class. Additional wood carving classes will be held Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Come see how it is done; watch the figures emerge from the wood. Non-carving companions and visitors are welcome at anytime during the Roundup. Details at

[GeoCities.com - Florida Wood Carvers Roundup](#).

Fees: Park entrance fees.

Contact: Call Jim O'Dea at (941) 697-2002.

Directions: Hillsborough River State Park is located nine miles north of Tampa and six miles south of Zephyrhills on U.S. Highway 301. From I-75 southbound from Ocala, take State Road 54 (Exit #279) east to Highway 301, travel south for six miles. The park will be on your right-hand side. From I-75 northbound from Tampa, take Fowler Ave. (Exit #265) east to Highway 301. Travel north for nine miles. The park will be on your left-hand side. From I-4 westbound, take Exit #10, go north on County Road 579 to U.S. 301. Follow the signs and go north seven miles. The park will be on your left-hand side. From I-4 eastbound, take Exit #7 (be careful of the merges) and go north on U.S. 301 for 14 miles. The park will be on your left-hand side.

[NATIONAL SCHOLASTIC SURFING ASSOCIATION](#)

[Sebastian Inlet State Park](#)

Date: Thursday, March 27 through Sunday, March 30, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Description: National Scholastic Surfing Association's Southeastern Championship Surf Contest will feature the best Scholastic surfers of the southeast United States who will compete for a place in the national finals.

Fees: Regular park entrance fees apply.

Contact: www.nssa.org

Directions: From Indian River County: From I-95, take the Fellsmere/Sebastian exit and go east (towards Sebastian) on County Road 512. After a short distance, turn right on County Road 510. This road will intersect with U.S. Highway 1. Continue east, over the Indian River, to State Road A1A. Turn left (north) and go seven miles on State Road A1A, you will have arrived at Sebastian Inlet. From Brevard County: From I-95, take the U.S. 192 exit and go east until you reach State Road A1A in Indian River County. Turn right (south) on State Road A1A and go 18 miles to get to Sebastian Inlet.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

GRAND OPENING OF THE LEGACY TRAIL

Oscar Scherer State Park

Date: Friday, March 28 through Sunday, March 30, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Description: This event is sponsored by the Friends of Oscar Scherer, the Friends of Sarasota City Parks and the Friends of the Legacy Trail. Come join us for this very special event.

Fees: Open to the public.

Contact: (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.

LEGENDS AND LORE

Falling Waters State Park

Date: Friday & Saturday, March 28 & 29, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Description: The park and the Friends of Falling Waters, Inc. will hold its annual 'Legends and Lore' event that brings to life the history of Falling Waters and the surrounding area through historic demonstrations of various crafts and equipment.

Fees: There is no charge to enter. Donations are appreciated.

Contact: (850) 638-6130.

Directions: Falling Waters State Park is located three miles south of Chipley off State Road 77, turn left on State Park Road and follow it to the park's entrance. From I-10, take Chipley exit south on State Road 77 and follow signs to the park.

EVENING CRUISE & DINNER

Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park

Date: Saturday, March 29, 5:30 p.m.

Description: Spring has sprung in Florida. Celebrate with an evening cruise on the beautiful Wakulla River followed by a delicious dinner in the historic Wakulla Springs Lodge.

Fees: \$29.00 per person. Reservations Required.

Contact: (850) 224-5950.

Directions: If traveling east on I-10, take Exit #196. Take State Road 263 (Capitol Circle) south 12 miles. Turn right (south) onto U.S. 319/State Road 61 (Crawfordville Highway) for 2 miles. Bear left onto State Road 61 (Wakulla Springs Road) for six miles. Turn left onto State Road 267 at flashing stop light. Turn Right into Park entrance. From West I-10, take Exit #203. Take State Road 61 (Thomasville Road) south. Continue on State Road 61 through Tallahassee for 10 miles. Take U.S. 319/State Road 61 (Crawfordville Highway) south for two miles. Bear left onto State Road 61 (Wakulla Springs Rd) for six miles. Turn left onto State Road 267 at flashing stop light. Turn Right into Park entrance.

OLD TIME DANCE

The Barnacle Historic State Park

Date: Saturday, March 29, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Description: Kick up your heels to traditional American music played by Mudhole Control while learning traditional American folk dance steps from Rae Newoman. Dances such as circles, squares, contras and waltzes were all the rage in the 1800s, so come dance like its 1891.

Fees: \$8.00 - 10 years and older.

Contact: (305) 442-6866.

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks

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

[NATURESCAPING 2008](#)

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

Date: Saturday, March 29, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Description: Join us for an educational day of family fun with native plant vendors, demonstration gardens, live animal shows, artwork for sale, children's crafts, local environmental organizations, silent auction, live music and food.

Fees: Free park admission for event.

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.

[EXPLORE THE TIMUCUAN TRAIL](#)

[Fort George Island Cultural State Park](#)

Date: Sunday, March 30, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Description: This environmentally focused event includes boat tours of Ft. George River and Machaba Balu Preserve, kayak demonstrations, Segway demonstrations, educational programs on archeology of the islands and ranger-guided kids programs. Tickets for the boat tours must be picked up from the Ribault Club. The boat leaves from Kingsley Plantation at 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Participants should allow a minimum of 15 minutes to acquire boat tickets and travel to the boat.

Fees: This program is free.

Contact: (904) 251-2320.

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

Upcoming Events in Florida State Parks
