

History & Nature

Blackwater River State Park was established in 1967 and opened in 1968 with 360 acres. In 1981 an additional 230 acres were acquired from the Division of Forestry.

Blackwater River State Park has one recorded archaeological site—an unnamed stone scatter, which may be as old as 10,000 years or as recent as a few hundred years old. Since rivers have been major transportation corridors in Florida for more than 10,000 years, it is probable that human activity existed here long ago.

The park and adjoining Blackwater River State Forest are known for their historic trams, sawmills and timber industry, especially near Milton. It is interesting to note the geographical distribution of mills along the streams and watersheds.

When mills were at peak operation, everyone made trips to mills. The earliest roads led to mills and as the community grew, commercial ventures such as the blacksmith shop, livery and general store would spring up nearby.

Atlantic white cedars line the river. In 1982, one of the park's cedars was designated Florida Champion, the largest of its species. The park was also designated a Registered State Natural Feature in 1980 for its "exceptional value in illustrating the natural history of Florida."

White-tailed deer, bobcats and turkeys are common, while river otters and alligators are occasionally seen. A variety of birds live here, including red headed and pileated woodpeckers, hawks, warblers and Mississippi kites.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Blackwater River State Park

7720 Deaton Bridge Road
Holt, Florida 32564
(850) 983-5363

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license is required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Alcoholic beverage consumption is allowed in designated areas only.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521 or (866) I CAMP FL or TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit ReserveAmerica.com.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

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Welcome to Blackwater River State Park. The Blackwater River, one of the most pristine rivers in the nation, provides the perfect setting for this 590-acre park. The Blackwater's sandy bottom, white beaches and large sandbars are a sharp contrast to the dark tannic water that gives the river its name. Designated a *Florida Canoe Trail*, the river and the park are part of the statewide system of greenways and trails.

Swim, canoe or tube in the cool waters of the Blackwater—all great family activities. Canoes may be rented from outfitters in the area. Three-day use areas with restrooms, outdoor showers and picnic tables are within short walking distance of the beaches.

The river usually flows 2-3 miles per hour with an average depth of 2.5 feet. Depending on rainfall, water levels can fluctuate rapidly. *Please contact the ranger station for updated water levels.*

Visitors may **hike** on either of two trails—the *Chain of Lakes Nature Trail* in the park's southeast corner near Deaton Bridge, or *Juniper Lake Nature Trail* that extends from the campground and pavilions. On both trails visitors can view small crescent-shaped lakes called oxbows that are created when the river changes course.

Situated among longleaf pines are two **campground** loops with 30 campsites that offer water, electricity, **picnic** tables and a **playground**. Sites accommodate camping from tents to 35-foot RVs. A facility in the center of the two camping loops has hot showers and clean restrooms. A dump station is located on the campground entrance road. *Juniper Lake Nature Trail* leads from the campground down to the water for swimming and relaxing.



Directions

From I-10 East: take exit 31; turn left on Hwy. 87; then right on Hwy. 90. Turn left on Deaton Bridge Road in Harold - it is 3 miles to the park. From I-10 West: take exit 45; turn right; then left on Hwy. 90 in Holt. Turn right on Deaton Bridge Road in Harold - it is 3 miles to the park.