

## HISTORY AND NATURE

Ponce de Leon named this area “Cape of Florida” when he led the first Spanish expedition to Florida in 1513.

The Cape Florida lighthouse, the park’s best-known feature, was completed in 1825 but was damaged during the Second Seminole War. The repaired tower, completed in 1846, remains the oldest standing structure in Miami-Dade County. Tours of the 95-foot lighthouse and the keeper’s house museum are available.

The island served as a secret meeting place and port for runaway slaves and Black Seminoles waiting to rendezvous with sea captains or board dugouts for a passage to safety in the British Bahamas. Although the lighthouse was built to save lives and ships, its unflinching light brought an end to this avenue of escape. In September 2004, Cape Florida was designated a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Site.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew uprooted a forest of non-native Australian-pine trees that dominated the landscape and left the park nearly treeless. The storm provided land managers the opportunity to restore the park’s native plant communities. Today, a variety of natural habitats, from mangrove forest to maritime hammock, can be seen at Cape Florida.

Depending upon the season, more than 50 butterfly species and 170 bird species may be seen at the park. The peregrine falcon, piping plover and American crocodile regularly take refuge here. Loggerhead sea turtles nest along the beach each summer. Green sea turtles and Florida manatees often graze in the seagrass beds offshore.



## BLACKWATER RIVER STATE PARK

7720 Deaton Bridge Road  
Holt, FL 32564  
850-983-5363

### PARK GUIDELINES

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required. Additional user fees may apply.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a handheld leash no longer than six feet and well-behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating and ground fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license is required. Fireworks and hunting are prohibited in all Florida state parks.
- 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 TDD 888-433-0287 or visit ReserveAmerica.com.
- Florida state parks are committed to providing equal access for visitors to all facilities and programs. If you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact staff at any ranger station or call 850-245-3076 (Voice) or 711 (Florida Relay Service).



# FLORIDA STATE PARKS

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## BLACKWATER RIVER STATE PARK



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# Blackwater River State Park

## EXPERIENCES AND AMENITIES

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, sewer, **picnic** tables and a **playground**. Sites accommodate camping from tents to 40-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.

