

## History and Nature

The Preserve protects the largest remaining expanse of Florida dry prairie, an ecosystem found only in south and central Florida. It is characterized by large, flat, open views of grasses, flowers and saw palmetto. Frequent **growing-season fire** and an inundating wet season keep the prairie healthy by maintaining knee-high vegetation.

**Plant communities** are transformed by an elevation difference of inches, which results in meandering wet prairies, and sloughs through the dominant dry prairie. With the arrival of each season, different colors of **wildflowers** explode onto the scene. Spring and summer paint the prairie with fresh grasses and splashes of pink from meadow beauties and marsh pinks. Bladderworts carpet the wetlands with paths of yellow while seas of purple pickerelweed connect one marsh to another. Autumn is heralded with yellow goldenrods and purple Liatris species. Large orange pine lilies are set against a background of tawny bunch grasses waving in the breeze.

The early **pioneers** benefited from the abundance of free roaming cattle left in Florida by the Spaniards. Crackers, cattlemen that made a 'cracking' sound with their whips drove herds to train depots or to the coasts then returned to their **homesteads**. There are several historic homestead sites within the Preserve. **Peavine Trail** was a railroad that led to Kenansville; it was dismantled when Henry Flagler built his train route on the east coast.

During World War II, the United States military obtained the land to conduct training missions. After the war, the property was returned to the crackers. Potentially dangerous unexploded ordnance still exist within the Preserve.

### Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks

#### Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park

33104 NW 192 Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida 34972  
(863) 462-5360

[FloridaStateParks.org](http://FloridaStateParks.org)

### Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required. Additional user fees may apply.
- Speed limit is 25 miles per hour.
- All plants, animals and property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a hand-held leash no longer than six feet and must be well behaved at all times.
- Fires are allowed in designated areas only.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the Preserve office or online at [www.floridastateparks.org/volunteers/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/volunteers/)
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521 or (866) I CAMP FL or TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit [ReserveAmerica.com](http://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 Preserve office.

Large  
Print

Alternate format  
available upon  
request at any  
Florida state park.



**FLORIDA**  
State Parks  
*...the Real Florida*  
Created on 11/14

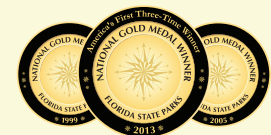


## Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park

*Largest remaining expanse of Florida dry prairie*



*...the Real Florida*<sup>SM</sup>



**National Gold Medal Winner**

Florida State Parks - "America's First Three-Time Winner"



## Real Fun in ...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>

Sweeping vistas of Florida **dry prairie** are coupled with an amazing array of wildlife to ensure an inspiring experience for all who visit. With less than 10 percent of this ecosystem left, the Preserve offers guests a distinctive snapshot of Florida's frontier wilderness. From many areas within the Preserve, man-made objects are not visible and prairie graces the horizon.

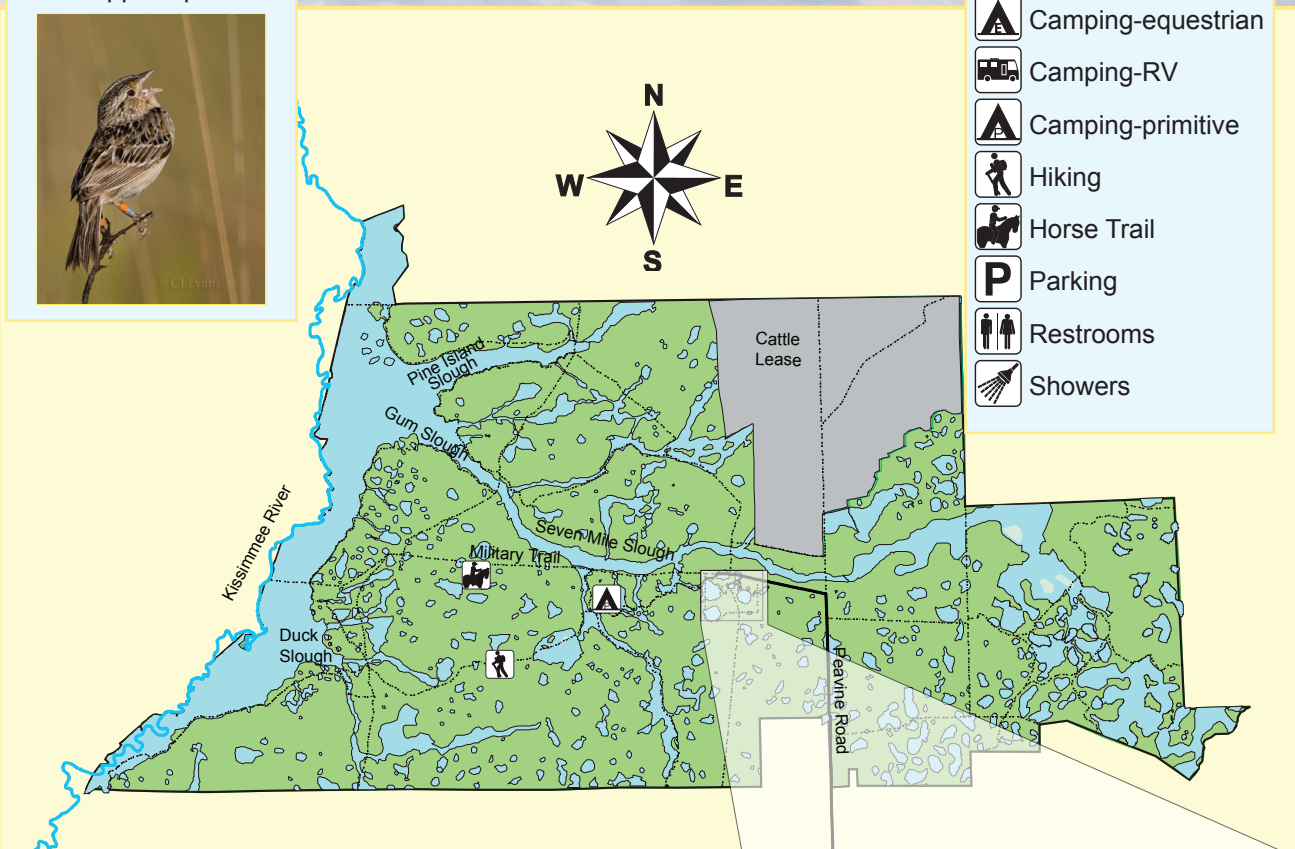
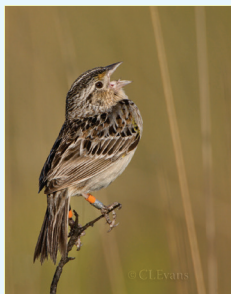
The Preserve provides habitat for at least 12 **birds** that are classified as either endangered, threatened or of special concern. Visitors may see the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, Burrowing Owl, Crested Caracara, Bachman's Sparrow, Swallow-tailed Kite and White-tailed Kite. The prairie is also a haven for migrating and resident **butterflies**.










More than 100 miles of multi-use trails beckon **bicyclers, hikers** and **horseback riders**. The trails etch through dry prairie, wetlands and cool, shady hammocks. November through March, ranger-led prairie buggy tours allow visitors to see remote areas of the Preserve.

Three different **camping** opportunities are offered. The family campground contains a full service restroom with hot showers. The equestrian campground has paddocks available. The primitive camping area offers a wilderness camping experience. The **primitive campsites** are only accessible by foot, bicycle or horseback.

The remote setting makes Kissimmee Prairie a premier location for **stargazing**. On new moon nights, the stars are luminescent legends that present an enriching experience for all who camp at the Preserve. A full moon illuminates the landscape and allows the visitor to take a night walk without a flashlight and explore a different world.

The Endangered Florida Grasshopper Sparrow



-  Camping-full facility
-  Camping-equestrian
-  Camping-RV
-  Camping-primitive
-  Hiking
-  Horse Trail
-  Parking
-  Restrooms
-  Showers

### Directions

Located 32 miles northwest of Okeechobee. Take U.S. 441 north from Okeechobee to County Road 724, turn west. Go to the end of County Road 724 and turn north on NW 192nd Ave. The Preserve entrance is five miles. The office is five miles north of the entrance.

