

## History & Nature

From floodplain marshes to flatwoods and shady hammocks, the park has 12 distinct natural communities that hold over 30 listed species of flora and fauna. The park's botanical bounty includes delicate mosses, butterfly orchids, sawgrass, cutthroat grass, fetterbush and gallberry with expansive, colorful fields of lotus and pickerelweed that stretch towards the sun.

The pine and scrubby flatwoods found in the park are host to: long leaf pines, scrub oaks, Florida scrub jays, Sherman fox squirrels, gopher tortoises, white-tailed deer, turkeys, bobcats and the grey fox. In fact, Lake Kissimmee State Park hosts over two hundred species of birds, making it one of the best birding areas in central Florida. Some of the more notable species are the bald eagle, snail kite, sandhill crane and crested caracara.

Europeans arrived in Florida in the 1500s, but their presence was not felt until the 1800's. During the Third Seminole War, Fort Gardiner was built nearby as a temporary fortification; after the war the area was widely used for timber and turpentine operations.

During the Civil War the area was used for raising cattle that were shipped to the Confederate Army or traded with Cuba for supplies. After the war, cattle became the main industry and this continues to the present day.

In 1969, the state of Florida purchased 5,030 acres of land from the William Zipperer estate for use as a state park. Lake Kissimmee State Park was opened to the public in August 1977. An additional 900 acres was purchased in 1997 and added to the park's western boundary.

### Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks

#### Lake Kissimmee State Park

14248 Camp Mack Road  
Lake Wales, Florida 33898  
(863) 696-1112

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

### Park Guidelines

- Hours are 7 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- 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 leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, camping and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited in all Florida state parks.
- 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](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 ranger station.

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**FLORIDA**  
**State Parks**  
*...the Real Florida*<sup>SM</sup>

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## Lake Kissimmee State Park

Central  
Florida

Where Florida's Heritage Comes Alive



*...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>

Lake Kissimmee State Park has something for every visitor including access to Florida's third largest lake, shaded camping and picnic facilities; excellent wildlife viewing opportunities; beautiful nature trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding; and a genuine 1876 "Cow Camp."

Florida's cowboy heritage comes alive with living history demonstrations of the early Florida "cow hunters" in an 1876-era cow camp, open 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., holidays and every Saturday and Sunday from October 1 to May 1.

The pine and scrubby flatwoods found in the park host: long leaf pines, scrub oaks, Florida scrub jay's, Sherman fox squirrels, gopher tortoises, white-tailed deer, bald eagles, sandhill cranes, turkeys, bobcats and the grey fox. Visitors can enjoy **boating, canoeing, kayaking and fishing** in the upper Kissimmee chain of lakes. **Tour** the waterways within the park and/or along the shores of Lake Kissimmee, Lake Rosalie and Tiger Lake.

**View** some of the incredible birds and wildlife inhabiting the area known as the "headwaters" to the Everglades. Park visitors can hike more than 13 miles of trails and observe or study the abundant plant and animal life found within the parks boundary. Over **six miles of trails** are currently open to **equestrians** on Buster Island. A large, **shaded picnic area** with pavilions, bathrooms and playground can be found in the main use area near the boat ramp. The park has **sixty campsites**, as well as two primitive campsites for backpackers and a **youth camping** area that can accommodate up to 50 people.

An **observation tower** is located in the picnic area and provides views of Lake Kissimmee and its marsh lands.

