

History & Culture

The historic battlefield site was named for the natural feature where the St. Marks River goes underground for a short distance before emerging downstream, thus forming a natural bridge. Important historical, cultural and natural resources have been found on the property, dating from the Paleo-Indian period (10,000 B.C.) to the Civil War. Several First Magnitude Springs are located in the park, discharging more than 100 cubic feet of water per second.

The park is the site of Florida's second largest Civil War battle. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and prior to its preservation, Natural Bridge was cited as one of the top ten endangered Civil War sites by the Civil War Preservation Trust.

In 1865, the battle at Natural Bridge preserved Tallahassee as the only Confederate capital east of the Mississippi that did not surrender to Union forces. During the final weeks of the Civil War, a Union flotilla landed at Apalachee Bay. The federal plan was to capture Fort Ward, located at the confluence of the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers, and march north to the state capital. On March 3, 1865, the large union ships ran aground at Port Leon and could not make it to the Fort. About 900 Union troops, including the 2nd and 99th Regiments U.S. Colored Infantry, continued to advance on Tallahassee over land. The smaller Confederate troop was comprised of about 600 soldiers, including old men and cadets as young as 14 from the West Florida Seminary, now known as Florida State University. With a timely warning, these volunteer soldiers met the Union forces at Natural Bridge and after 10 hours, successfully repelled three major attacks. The battle ended on March 6, 1865 with the Union troops retreating.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park

7502 Natural Bridge Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32305
(850) 922-6007

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.
- 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 hand-held leash no longer than six feet and well behaved at all times.
- Become a volunteer. Call 850-922-6007.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please call (850) 922-6007.



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Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park

A Piece of Florida History



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National Gold Medal Winner

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

Real Fun in ...the Real FloridaSM

Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park is the site of one of Florida's most significant Civil War conflicts. Each year during the first full weekend of March, thousands of visitors attend the annual battle reenactment to watch as many as 250 reenactors portray the soldiers that fought the battle at Natural Bridge in 1865.

A monument at the site honors the soldiers of the Confederacy who defended Natural Bridge. There are picnic areas surround by acres of woods and wetlands, providing a comfortable place to relax and reflect on Florida's history.

Visit the park and take advantage of the peaceful atmosphere found here. The St. Marks River located on the north side of Natural Bridge Road is a popular **freshwater fishing** spot. The St. Marks River and surrounding woodlands provide ample opportunity for **birdwatching** and **wildlife viewing**. Enjoy a **picnic** lunch while listening to the sounds of northern cardinals, red-shouldered hawks, carolina chickadees and pileated woodpeckers.

Guided interpretive tours of the park cover the battle history, as well as the natural features of the park. To schedule a tour, contact the park office two weeks in advance of the tour date.



Directions

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

