History & Nature

The sands of this site are always shifting. Historic maps reveal the altered shapes of the islands over time. The islands’ salt-tolerant vegetation preserves the appearance of the Southwest Florida coast before much of it was changed by development.

Beach dunes covered with sea oats slope to the gulf waters. Behind the dunes, seagrape trees often grow in dense thickets. Easily recognized by their large, round leaves, the trees offer a bounty of edible fruit in winter.

Other island plants include bay cedar, Spanish bayonet, gray nicker, coin vine, golden creeper and seaside goldenrod. Mangrove trees are abundant on the bay side of the park.

A variety of shorebirds and wading birds, ospreys and brown pelicans are common at the park. Magnificent frigatebirds fly overhead in summer and bald eagles occasionally soar above the park.

Alternate format available upon request at any Florida state park.
Real Fun in ...the Real Florida™

Stump Pass Beach State Park consists of the southernmost mile of Manasota Key, Peterson Island, Whidden Key and the protected channels between them. A mile of beach provides visitors with opportunities for shelling, swimming, birdwatching, snorkeling, fishing and sunbathing.

The warm gulf waters invite visitors to swim and snorkel year-round. Shell seekers walking the beach may also find sharks’ teeth and skeletal fragments from ancient geologic times among the shells.

Fishing is popular in the adjacent waters and on the nearby submerged grass flats. Game fish include flounder, snook, trout, redfish, snapper, whiting, sheepshead and tarpon. Anglers may want to try their luck fishing from the shore.

The protected waters of the bay are ideal for small boat cruising, kayaking, sailing and waterskiing. Ranger-led turtle walks and beach nature walks are available in the winter.

A hiking trail meanders from the parking area to the southern end of the park.

Six covered tables, one located near the restroom facility and the other five located along the hiking trail, provide ideal picnic settings. A pavilion is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Outdoor showers are available for rinsing off after a day at the park.

Directions
Stump Pass Beach State Park is located at the south end of Manasota Key in the town of Englewood, Florida.