

Girl Scouts Love State Parks

Join Girl Scouts of West Central Florida for an unforgettable weekend & discover the wonders of the great outdoors! Explore the beauty of our state parks while fostering a love for the environment and deep appreciation for nature.

Step One: Choose a State Park to Visit!

Step Two: Learn about 'Leave No Trace'

Step Three: Plan ahead, back your bag

Step Four: Enjoy the Outdoors

Step Five: Reflect on your experiences



Did you know?

- In 1925 Florida officially created the 'Florida State Park System', and in 1935 the system was formally established & funded
- Florida has 175 state parks! How many have you been to?
- You can meet a Mermaid at a Florida State Park? Visit Weeki Wachee in Hernando County.
- There are 10 State Parks in Florida that are only accessible by boat or ferry
- Manatees can be seen daily at Homosassa Springs in Citrus County, even in Summer!



Girl Scouts Love State Parks weekend is
September 12th & 13th, 2026

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of west central florida

Step

1

Choose a State Park to Visit!

Head to our Councils Facebook page to see which parks have activities planned!



Northern Counties -

- Rainbow Springs State Park
- Silver Springs State Park
- Price's Scrub State Park
- Dade Battlefield Historic State Park
- Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins State Park
- Fort Cooper State Park
- Crystal River Preserve State Park
- Crystal River Archaeological State Park
- Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park
- Withlacoochee State Trail
- General James A. Van Fleet State Trail
- Weeki Wachee Springs State Park

Southern Counties -

- Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park
- Anclote Key Preserve State Park
- Hillsborough River State Park
- Fort Foster State Historic Site
- General James A. Van Fleet State Trail
- Little Manatee River State Park
- Alafia River State Park
- Ybor City Museum State Park
- Cockroach Bay Preserve State Park
- Egmont Key State Park
- Caladesi Island State Park
- Skyway Fishing Pier State Park
- Honeymoon Island State Park
- Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek
- Preserve State Park
- General James A. Van Fleet State Trail
- Lake Kissimmee State Park
- Colt Creek State Park

Don't Forget! -

Most Florida State Parks require an entrance fee, typically ranging from \$3.00 - \$8.00. Fees can be per person or by vehicle, and may be 'cash only'.

Step

2

Learn about 'Leave No Trace'

There are Seven Principles that guide Leave No Trace.

Read more about
Girl Scouts &
'Leave No Trace'



'Leave No Trace' is a National Organization that supports protecting the outdoors. The organization accomplishes its mission by providing innovative education, skills, research and science to help people care for the outdoors.

They offer FREE online courses on who they are, what they do, and what YOU can do to help!

1

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know about regulations & notices
- Prepare for the extremes
- Repackage food to minimize waste

2

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails & campsites

3

Dispose of Waste Properly

- If you bring it in, you should bring it out with you
- double check your area for trash left behind

4

Leave What You Find

- Leave nature as you found it
- avoid introducing non-native species to the environment
- Don't build structures

5

Minimize Campfire Impact

- Use established fire rings
- Keep Fires small

6

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife at a distance
- Never feed animals
- Control pets at all times

7

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect others & be considerate
- Avoid loud voices & noises

Step 3

Plan ahead, pack your bag

Being prepared is a core principle of Girl Scouts, ensuring you can handle unexpected situations and demonstrate leadership. Packing for activities is vital, as it provides the necessary tools and supplies for full day of success!

Planning & Essentials for Florida State Parks -

- Choose your park & decide what activities you would like to try
- Check the weather
- Pack your bag:
 - Full refillable water bottle
 - Healthy snacks
 - Sun protection - Sun screen, hat, etc.
 - Rain gear - umbrella, rain jacket
 - Hand wipes, zip lock bag, tissue paper
 - First Aid kit
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Dress for the outdoors & planned activities

Outdoor First Aid-kit Ideas

Make sure your ready for anything, see below for a few recommendations from the American Red Cross for making a First Aid Kit.

- 25 adhesive bandages - varying sizes
- 1 adhesive cloth tape, gauze roll, & bandage roll
- 5 antiseptic wipe packs & sterile gauze pads
- Tweezers
- 1 breathing barrier
- 2 absorbent compress dressings

Check with a local First Aid Instructor or Medical Professional for full recommendations!



Planning a special activity, like kayaking or camping?

Make sure the State Park you are visiting has the proper facilities for your activity. Also, make sure to pack accordingly!

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Step

4

Enjoy the Outdoors

There are so many ways to enjoy the outdoors, Girl Scouts has several ways that helps Girls become eco-adventurers!

Check out a few ways below:

Badges

Trail Adventurer | DBJCSA

Outdoor Art | DBJCSA

Camping | DBJCSA

Hiker | B

Archery | C

Flowers | J

Paddling | S

Water | A

Patches

Love State Parks



Outdoor Challenge

Recreational Activities

Hiking | DBJCSA

Kayaking | B*JCSA

Bicycling | DBJCSA

Tubing | JCSA

Swimming | DBJCSA

Outdoor Cooking | DBJCSA

Geocaching | D*BJCSA

Fishing | DBJCSA

Looking for more? Check out the next few pages for more inspiration!

Make sure to always check the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints before starting your adventures.



Florida State Parks also offer a Junior Ranger Program! Check it out here:



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Step

4

Enjoy the Outdoors

Bird Watching in our State Parks | Best for DBJ



Fun Fact:

The Florida State Bird is the Northern Mockingbird. They can be found throughout Florida, but prefer areas with mowed lawns and open understories.

In biology, an understory means the layer of plants that grow under the branches & leaves that spread out at the top of groups of trees that form a type of roof to a forest or woods.

The Audubon Society has some great tips on how to get started with Bird Watching, identifying birds, & a few safety tips.

First steps to Birding? Finding Birds!

The Audubon Society recommends to Stop, Look, Listen, & Repeat for finding birds.

When outdoors, take a moment to stand still and look around, up into the trees, grass, water, or even a light pole! Chances are you'll find a bird. You can also listen for their calls, chirping or even for a woodpecker tapping.

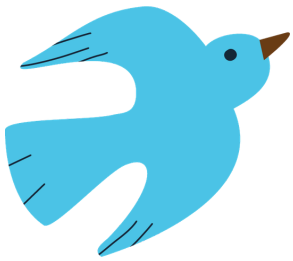
Check out how to make your own binoculars on the next page and try out Birding!

Do you have a favorite bird? Draw it here:



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Easy DIY Binoculars for Bird Watching



Materials Needed:

- Cardboard Rolls (paper towel or toilet paper rolls work great!)
- Duct Tape
- Hole Punch
- String (Yarn, ribbon, twine, or other craft string)
- Coloring craft materials (Markers, crayons, colored paper, paints!)

Step 1: Take two rolls and attach them with tape, side by side

Step 2: Use a hole punch to make a hole on the outside of each side, 1/2 inch from the back edge of the rolls

Step 3: Decorate! Using your craft materials, make your binoculars your own!

Step 4: Cut a piece of string about 17-20 inches long. Using your string, tie one side through one hole punch, and the other side of the string to the other, making a strap for your binoculars.

Step 5: Get outdoors and find some birds!



Works great as an 'Animal
Observer' Daisy badge activity!

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Girl Scouts Love State Parks 2024

My Birding Field Notes



State Park: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Weather: _____

Draw What You See!

Bird Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Description: _____

Bird Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Description: _____

Bird Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Description: _____

My Notes: _____

Step

4

Enjoy the Outdoors

Geocaching in our State Parks | Best for JCSA

Wondering what 'Geocaching' is?

Geocaching is a type of outdoor scavenger hunt or 'hide & seek' game that use GPS coordinates to find objects or a small container, typically one that holds a logbook of those who have found the 'cache'.

Girl Scouts can use their GPS enabled device to locate different caches in our State Parks. A great place to find coordinates is on the Florida State Parks website or at Geocaching.com (They event have an app!). Caches can be disguised as different natural elements or even as fun 3D printed objects.

Girl Scouts can take their Geocaching to the next level by learning about hiding their own cache, or digging deeper into the sport and learning all about 'EarthCaching'.

EarthCaching is an educational based GPS adventure, where seekers are following coordinates to a significant landscape or earth formation. Once found, seekers find deeper understanding or interesting educational notes, can leave their observations in a logbook or online, and get to experience exceptional views.

Scan below to see what Florida State Parks say about Geocaching:



Make sure you get your parents permission before heading to the internet. Always play it safe when reaching for Geocaches, Florida State Parks are home to wild critters.



Works great as a 'Geocacher'
Junior badge activity!

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My Geocaching Field Notes

State Park: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Cache: _____

Coordinates: _____

Description: _____



Cache: _____

Coordinates: _____


Description: _____



Cache: _____

Coordinates: _____

Description: _____



My Cache: _____

My Coordinates: _____

Description: _____

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Step Five: Reflect on your experiences

Now that you have had the chance to experience our Florida State Parks, take time to reflect on your adventure.

Here is a five guided reflections to help:

- 1 Write down ten things that made you feel peaceful
- 2 Write out five words that best describe the sights & sounds you experienced
- 3 Create a story and draw a comic about an animal or plant you observed
- 4 Write a poem about your favorite part of the outdoors or something new you experienced
- 5 Write about how being outdoors helps to improve your mental & physical health

We want to hear from you! Share your story with us at gswcf.org or on Facebook!

Purchase your patch today
using the QR code, or visit
one of our retail locations



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My Weekend Outdoors

State Park: _____

Date: _____ Weather: _____

While at the park I:

My favorite thing I saw:

Being outside made me feel:

My Favorite park memory

Something I learned:

