



Canaveral National Seashore © NPS

FACT SHEET

National Parks in Florida

Big Cypress National Preserve • Biscayne National Park •
Canaveral National Seashore • Castillo De San Marcos
National Monument • De Soto National Memorial •
Dry Tortugas National Park • Everglades National Park •
Fort Caroline National Memorial • Fort Matanzas National
Monument • Gulf Islands National Seashore •
Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve

Florida's impressive natural landscape is also home to some of the nation's earliest architectural treasures. The fortresses of early Spanish settlers are protected alongside the beaches, wetlands, and islands of Florida's extensive coastline.

Big Cypress National Preserve - Authorized in 1974. The 729,000-acre Big Cypress National Preserve was set aside in 1974 to ensure the preservation, conservation, and protection of the natural scenic, floral and faunal, and recreational values of the Big Cypress watershed. The importance of this watershed to the Everglades National Park was a major consideration for its establishment. The name Big Cypress refers to the large size of this area. Vast expanses of cypress stands span this unique landscape.

Biscayne National Park - The lands and submerged bottom-

lands of Biscayne National Park are rich with archaeological remains that document the cultural history of southern Florida and the Florida Keys. Submerged archeological sites include an array of shipwrecks and other representations of maritime casualties, demonstrating the international maritime heritage encompassed in the waters of Biscayne National Park.

Canaveral National Seashore - Established in 1975. Canaveral National Seashore is on a barrier island which includes ocean, beach, dune, hammock, lagoon, salt marsh, and pine flatland habitats. The barrier island and adjacent waterways offer a blend of plant and animal life. Records show that 1,045 species of plants and 310 species of birds can be found in the park.

Castillo De San Marcos National Monument - Proclaimed in 1924. The Castillo de San Marcos, built 1672-1695, served primarily as an outpost of the Spanish Empire, guarding St. Augustine, the first permanent European settlement in the continental United States, and also protecting the sea route for treasure ships returning to Spain.

De Soto National Memorial - Authorized in 1948. Commemorates the landing and legacy of the 1539 expedition of



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Hernando De Soto.

Dry Tortugas National Park – Made up of a cluster of seven islands composed of coral reefs and sand, along with the surrounding shoals and waters. The area is known for its famous bird and marine life, and its legends of pirates and sunken gold. Fort Jefferson, one of the largest coastal forts ever built, is a central feature.

Everglades National Park - Established in 1947. Spanning the southern tip of the Florida peninsula and most of Florida Bay, Everglades National Park is the only subtropical preserve in North America. The park is known for its rich bird life, particularly large wading birds, such as the roseate spoonbill, wood stork, great blue heron and a variety of egrets. It is also the only place in the world where alligators and crocodiles exist side by side. Everglades National Park has been designated a World Heritage Site, and International Biosphere Reserve, and a Wetland of International Importance.

Fort Caroline National Memorial - Authorized in 1950. Two centuries of French and Spanish colonial rivalry in North America began here with the establishment of a French Huguenot settlement, 1564-65.

Fort Matanzas National Monument - Proclaimed in 1924. This Spanish outpost fort was built in 1740-1742 to guard the Matanzas Inlet and to warn St. Augustine of British or other enemies approaching from the south. In addition, the park, which is located on barrier islands along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the Matanzas estuary, provides a natural habitat rich in wildlife with the salt marsh, scrub, and maritime hammock now protecting endangered and threatened species like the historic Fort Matanzas protected St. Augustine long ago.

Gulf Islands National Seashore - Authorized in 1971. More than 80 percent of Gulf Islands National Seashore is submerged lands but the barrier islands are the outstanding features to most who visit. The seashore stretches 150 miles from Cat Island in Mississippi to the eastern tip of Santa Rosa Island in Florida. Visitors can explore 19th century forts, enjoy shaded picnic areas, hike on winding nature trails, and camp in comfortable campgrounds. In addition, Horn and Petit Bois Islands located in Mississippi are federally designated wilderness areas.

Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve - Authorized in 1988. The 46,000-acre Timucuan Ecological and Historic

Preserve was established to protect one of the last unspoiled coastal wetlands on the Atlantic Coast, and to preserve historic and prehistoric sites within the area. The estuarine ecosystem includes salt marsh, coastal dunes, and hardwood hammocks, all rich in native vegetation and animal life. Archaeological evidence indicates 6,000 years of human habitation in the area.

Key Issues Facing National Parks in Florida

Taking care of America's national parks should be a national priority. With the 100th birthday of the National Park System approaching in 2016, it is more important than ever to address the ongoing problems that our parks are facing. The National Park Service is suffering from an operations funding shortfall now estimated at \$750 million annually. In addition, several billion dollars are needed to protect archaeological sites and historic buildings, and repair the extensive backlog of maintenance projects. Many park friends in Congress have spent years highlighting the fiscal crisis in America's national parks. The Administration and Congress responded in fiscal year 2008 with a \$122 million increase in the budget for park operations. This is a strong first step in our parks and improving the experiences of visitors. The FY 2008 budget also launched the National Park Centennial Challenge, which will help restore the parks for their 100th birthday and for generations to come. In addition to the operational shortfall, the National Park Service has a \$1.9 billion land acquisition backlog consisting of over 11,000 tracts of land and covering more than 1.8 million acres. In many instances, failure to acquire these lands makes operating the parks more complex and costly. Unfortunately, funding for national park federal land acquisition has declined dramatically in recent years, from \$130 million five years ago, to only \$21 million in the fiscal year 2009 request.

- Critical research needs are not being met at many south Florida national parks because important scientific staff positions remain unfilled. Approximately 25 scientist positions have been unfilled at Everglades National Park, limiting their ability to evaluate restoration projects.
- Big Cypress National Park lacks the funding to adequately serve the public during the busy winter season. Continued increases would allow the park to hire additional seasonal positions to help deal with the influx of visitors.
- In 2004, Hurricane Ivan wiped out the road to Santa Rosa Island, part of Gulf Islands National Seashore. The road has yet to be repaired as the Federal Highway Ad-



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ministration, the National Park Service, and other outside groups can't agree on what is the best balance between road stability and environmental protection.

Park Visitation in Florida

In fiscal year 2006, the national parks in Florida welcomed nearly 8 million visitors.

Budget Information

In fiscal year 2008, the operations funding for the national parks in Florida is \$42.6 million. For fiscal year 2009, the Administration is proposing a 7 percent increase, which would bring operations funding to \$45.8 million.

Contact Information

For more information on the national parks in Florida, please contact NPCA Regional Director John Adornato at 954-961-1280 or NPCA Legislative Director Blake Selzer at 202-223-6722, ext. 250.

NPS Unit	FY03 Enacted	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Enacted	FY06 Enacted	FY07 Enacted	FY08 Enacted	FY 09 Requested	% Change FY07-08	% Change FY08-09
Big Cypress National Preserve	\$5,272	\$5,243	\$5,338	\$5,414	\$5,507	\$6,282	\$6,507	14	4
Biscayne National Park	\$3,456	\$3,434	\$3,531	\$3,589	\$3,649	\$3,753	\$4,307	3	15
Canaveral National Seashore	\$2,219	\$2,212	\$2,411	\$2,484	\$2,558	\$2,979	\$3,113	16	4
Castillo de San Marcos National Monument & Fort Matanzas National Monument	\$1,416	\$1,413	\$1,483	\$1,559	\$1,586	\$1,788	\$2,132	13	19
De Soto National Memorial	\$473	\$487	\$549	\$556	\$572	\$632	\$1,020	10	61
Dry Tortugas National Park	\$1,286	\$1,276	\$1,311	\$1,346	\$1,381	\$1,462	\$1,775	6	21
Everglades National Park	\$13,860	\$14,038	\$15,086	\$15,483	\$15,840	\$16,984	\$17,352	7	2
Fort Caroline National Memorial & Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve	\$1,860	\$1,775	\$1,824	\$1,897	\$1,941	\$2,076	\$2,420	7	17
Gulf Islands NS	\$5,965	\$5,939	\$6,105	\$6,274	\$6,434	\$6,672	\$7,167	4	7
All Florida parks					\$39,468	\$42,628	\$45,793	8%	7%

All dollar amounts in thousands

Last updated April 2008



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