

HISTORY AND 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.

The pine and scrubby flatwoods found in the park are host to longleaf pines, scrub oaks, Florida scrub jays, Sherman fox squirrels, gopher tortoises, white-tailed deer, turkeys, bobcats and the gray fox. Additionally, Lake Kissimmee State Park hosts over 200 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 1800s. 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 today.

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.



LAKE KISSIMMEE STATE PARK

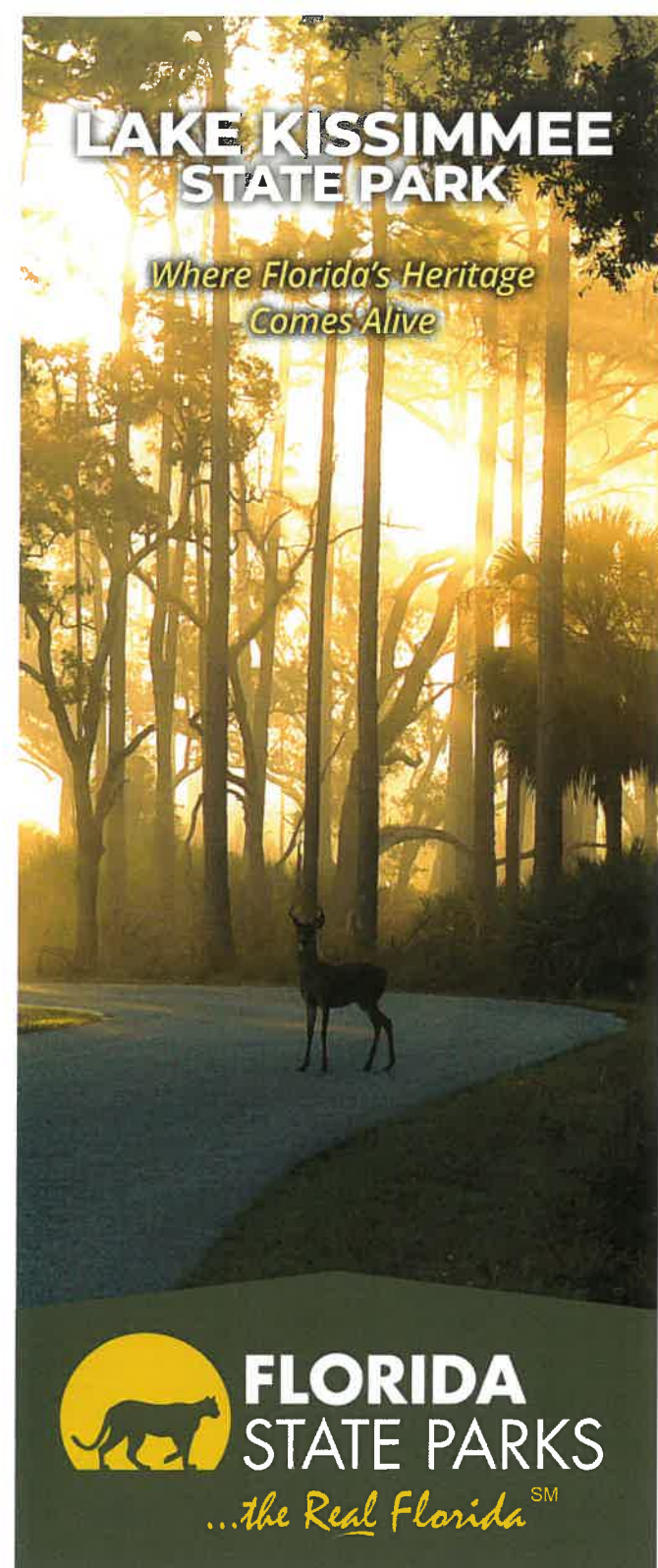
14248 Camp Mack Road
Lake Wales, FL 33898
863-696-1112

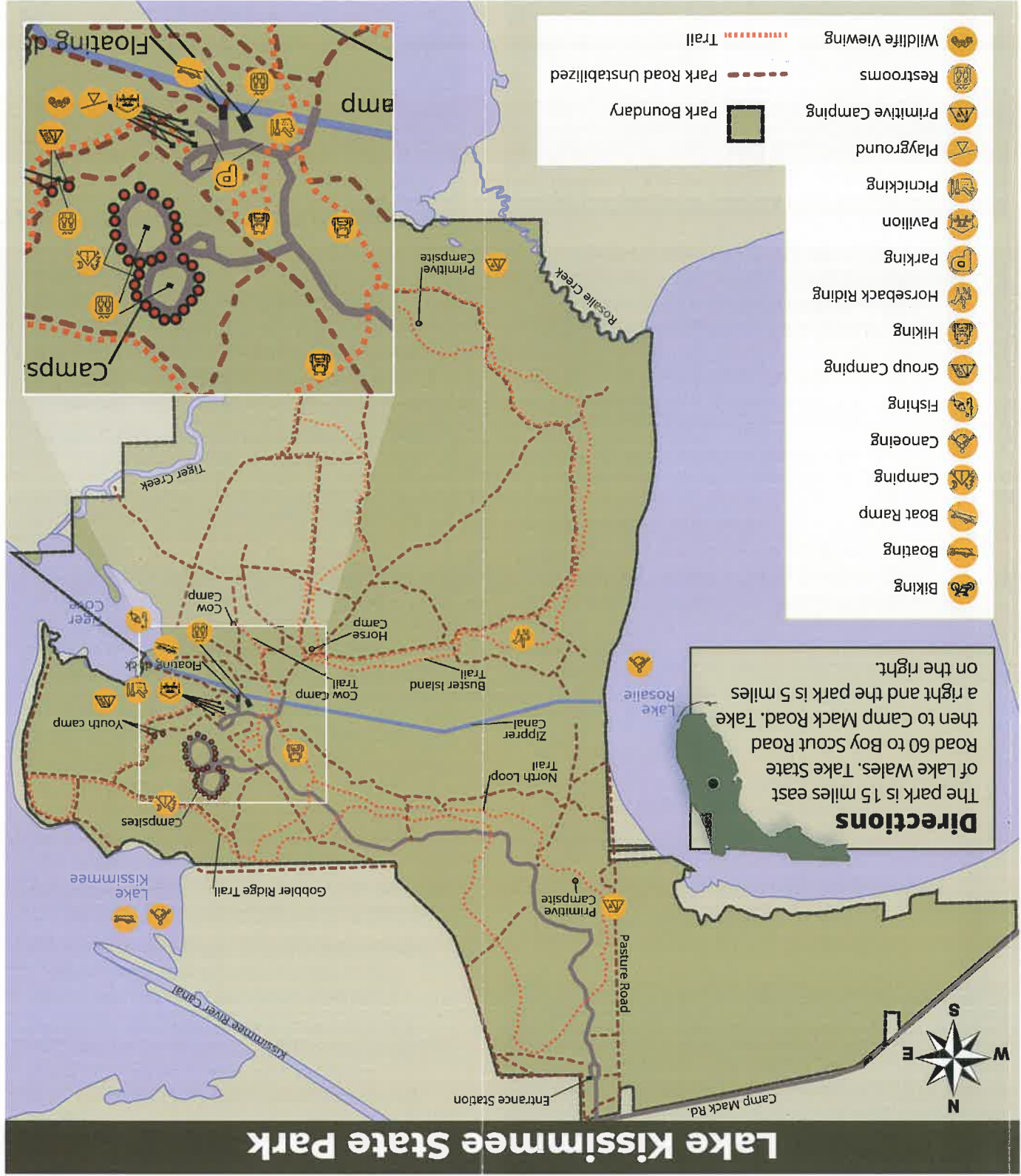
PARK GUIDELINES

- Hours are 8 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 handheld leash no longer than six feet and be well-behaved at all times.
- Fishing and boating are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required. Fireworks and hunting are prohibited in all Florida State Parks.
- To become a volunteer, please inquire at the ranger station or call 863-696-1112.
- For camping information, contact 1-800-326-3521 or visit Reserve.FloridaStateParks.org
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access for visitors to all facilities and programs. If you need assistance to enable your participation, please call 863-696-1112.

FloridaStateParks.org

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EXPERIENCES AND AMENITIES

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 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every Saturday from October 1 to May 1, including holidays.

Visitors can enjoy **boating, canoeing, kayaking, touring and fishing** in the upper Kissimmee chain of lakes that include 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. Additionally, park visitors can hike more than 13 miles of trails and observe or study the abundant plant and animal life found within the park's boundary. Over **six miles of trails are currently open to equestrians** on Buster Island. A large, **shaded picnic area** with pavilions, restrooms and playground can be found in the main use area near the boat ramp. The park has **60 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.

