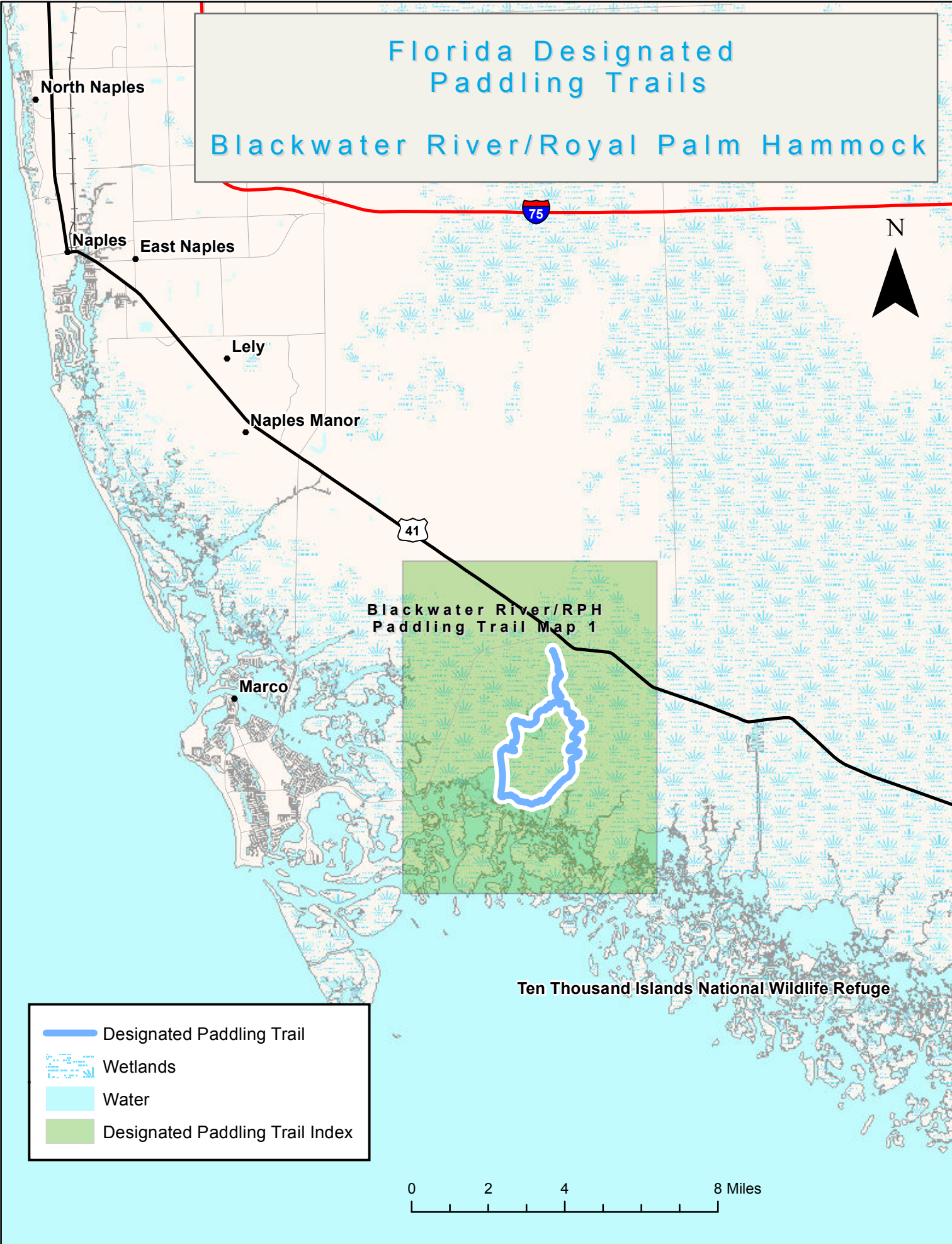


Florida Designated Paddling Trails

Blackwater River/Royal Palm Hammock

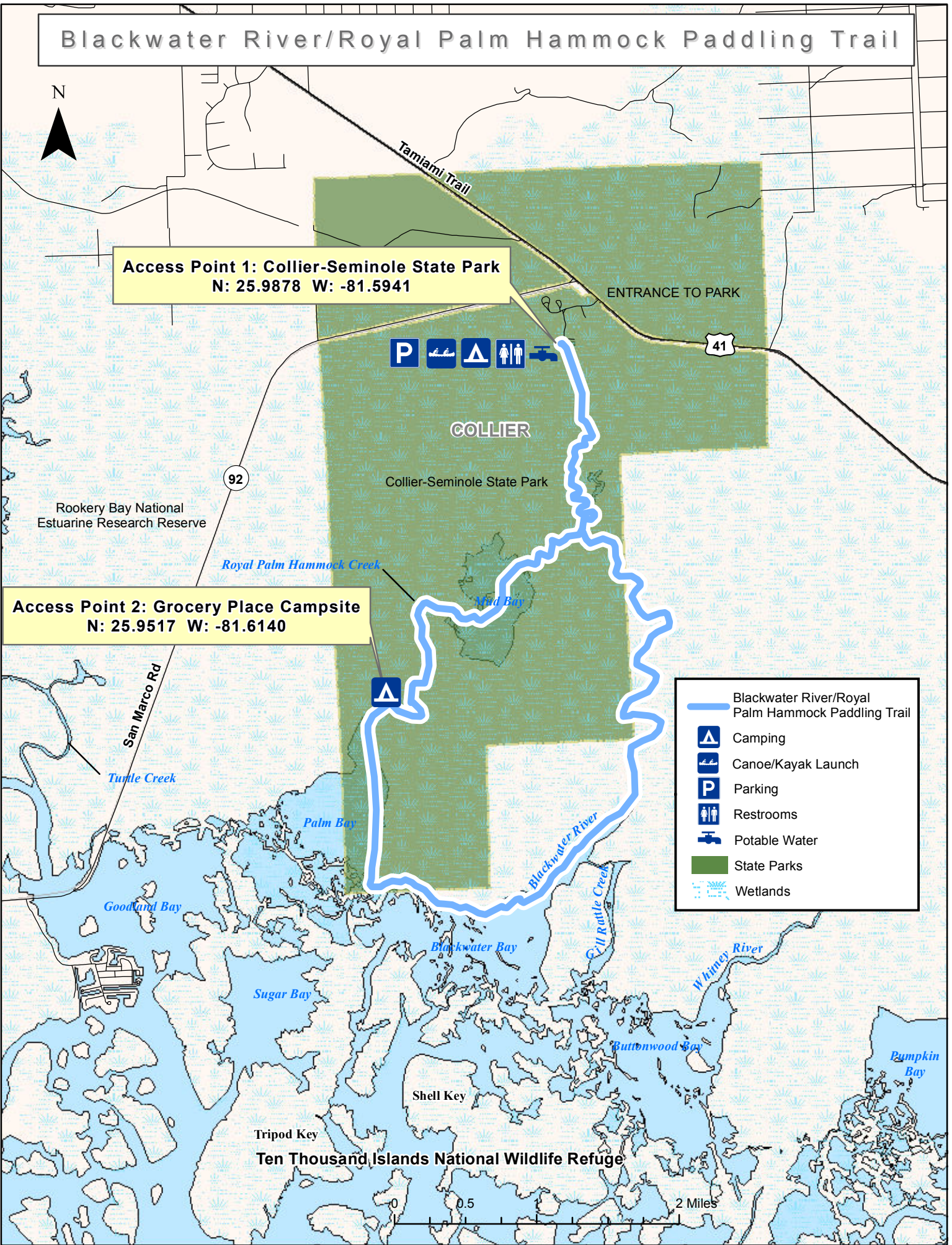


Blackwater River/Royal Palm Hammock Paddling Trail



Access Point 1: Collier-Seminole State Park
N: 25.9878 W: -81.5941

Access Point 2: Grocery Place Campsite
N: 25.9517 W: -81.6140



- Blackwater River/Royal Palm Hammock Paddling Trail
- Camping
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Potable Water
- State Parks
- Wetlands

0 0.5 2 Miles

Blackwater/Royal Palm Hammock Paddling Trail Trip Planning

Overview: This scenic paddling trail winds through mangrove estuaries and salt marsh preserves of Collier-Seminole State Park, part of the Ten Thousand Islands region. The park covers what is historically known as Royal Palm Hammock. Here is found one of three original native stands of royal palms in the state of Florida, resembling the coastal forests of the West Indies and Yucatan.

County: Collier

Nearest town: Naples

Trip length: 13.5 miles

Mileage:

1. Mile 0—Collier-Seminole State Park
2. Mile 4.5—Grocery Place Campsite
3. Mile 13.5—Collier-Seminole State Park

**The provided mileage data is approximate (rounded to the nearest 0.5 mi)

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Skill level: Intermediate skills are recommended due to tides, navigation concerns, and distance

Trip recommendation:

Blackwater River is marked by channel markers to Blackwater Bay. There are also canoe trail signs along Blackwater River. However, from Blackwater Bay to Palm Bay and up Royal Palm Hammock Creek, there is no directional signage as this is a designated wilderness area. The trail signage is designed to direct paddlers downstream on Royal Palm Hammock Creek and return upstream on the Blackwater River. Note that the trail can be paddled either direction to take advantage of tides. Trips should be planned for arrival at Mud Bay to coincide with a high tide. File a float plan at the Ranger Station before leaving.

For a shorter trip, paddlers can paddle to the Grocery Place Campsite and back along Royal Palm Hammock Creek for a total of 9 miles.

Put-in and take-out:

Collier-Seminole State Park
20200 E. Tamiami Trail
Naples, Florida 34114
Phone: (239) 394-3397

Nearest town to put-in: Naples

Miles from put-in/take-out: In town

Directions to Collier-Seminole State Park: I-75, Exit 101 (CR 951/Collier Blvd.). Take CR 951 South to US 41/Tamiami Trail South. Entrance is approximately 8 miles south on south side of US 41.

Other take-out points: None

Topo maps: Royal Palm Hammock (1613)

Gazeteer page: 110

Outfitters within 20 miles of trail:

Collier-Seminole State Park has canoe rentals

Acadia Watersports
19820 Tamiami Trail
Naples, FL 34114
1-888-786-0676

Shuttle service offered: Contact outfitters

Water level info: Check local tide charts or this website:
<http://tbone.biol.sc.edu/tide/tideshow.cgi?site=Coon+Key%2C+Florida>

Break / Lunch areas: Grocery Place

Camping options: Campers must register with the park ranger to stay at the primitive campsite at Grocery Place. A campground is also available at Collier-Seminole State Park.

Other lodging: Numerous hotels in the area.

Food/Beverage restrictions: No alcohol in parks

Expect on the River:

Tidal influence: Moderate.

Pull-overs: None expected.

Low branches: None expected.

Narrow water: Blackwater River and Royal Palm Hammock Creek narrow slightly upstream.

Shallow water: Palm Bay, Blackwater Bay, and Mud Bay are all potentially shallow depending on tide. Mud Bay may be impassable on a low tide.

Strong currents: None expected.

Rocks: None.

Houses: None.

Shoals: None.

Tight turns: None.

Open water: The crossover through Blackwater Bay and Palm Bay between Blackwater Creek and Royal Palm Hammock requires careful navigation to avoid becoming disoriented among the many mangrove islands.

Springs: None.

Wildlife: White ibis, great blue heron, tricolored heron, yellow-crowned night heron, bald eagle, osprey, dolphin, stingrays.

Natural communities: Subtropical hammock, mangrove swamps

Portages: Possible with low water levels

Swimming: At your own risk

Motorboats: The State Park runs a tour boat on Blackwater River. Motorboats are present on Blackwater River, Blackwater Bay, and Palm Bay. None are found on Royal Palm Hammock Creek.

Expect at parking / access points:

- **Park entrance fee:** Visit this website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/collierseminole/> or contact the park for current rates (239-394-3397).
- **Bathrooms:** Yes, at the State Park.
- **Camping:** Primitive site on the trail at Grocery Place. Campground in the State Park.
- **Camping fees:** Visit this website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/collierseminole/> or contact the park for current rates. Full-facility, RV, and primitive camping available.
- **Crowds:** Crowds are possible depending on the season, and peak during the winter months and around special events.
- **Boat Ramp:** There is a concrete ramp at the State Park.
- **Potable water source:** At the State Park.
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** There is a natural surface ramp at the State Park.
- **Other activities:** Collier-Seminole State Park offers off-road cycling, boat tours through a concessionaire, canoe rentals through a concessionaire, interpretive presentations by park staff, food concession, lodge with meeting room, fishing (appropriate license required), guided tours, equestrian trails, hiking trails, interpretive exhibits (including the Bay City Walking Dredge), playground, showers, visitor center, and a youth camp.

Cultural and historical features along the trail:

Collier-Seminole State Park covers what is historically known as Royal Palm Hammock. Here is found one of three original native stands of Royal Palms in the state of Florida, resembling the coastal forests of the West Indies and Yucatan. The park also extends down to the Ten Thousand Islands and includes mangrove river estuaries and salt marsh preserves that are favorite habitats for wading birds.

The Seminole and Miccosukee Indians settled in this area by 1840 and have remained here ever since. In 1841 and 1857 during the Second and Third Seminole Wars, efforts by the Army to drive them out failed, making the Seminoles and Miccosukee people in Florida known as the 'Unconquered'. The visitor center in the park is patterned after a blockhouse from the Seminole War era.

The primitive campsite on the trail, Grocery Place, contains both a prehistoric and historic site. Pottery has been found dating 500 BC and AD 900 and was also a homestead in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with 2 cisterns remaining from that period.