

# PERMITS NEEDED TO THRU-HIKE THE FLORIDA TRAIL

Updated: July, 2019

THE FLORIDA TRAIL ASSOCIATION is working with land management agencies to streamline the registration and permitting process on all portions of the Florida Trail System. As new trail is being continuously added the permits required are in a constant state of change. The most important requirements and information for thru-hikers are listed below. When in doubt, check with the local land managers. **BE SURE TO CARRY YOUR PHOTO ID AT ALL TIMES WHEN HIKING THE FNST.**

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## **South/Central Region**

Big Cypress - A permit card must be signed by hikers at the southern end of the trail at the Oasis Visitor Center or the I-75 rest stop, north parking lot. This card must be carried while in Big Cypress. Permits can be filled out online and printed here:

<https://www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/upload/Backcountry-Permit-12-13-11-small.pdf> or obtained at the Oasis Visitor Center, or the mailbox at Mile Marker 63.

Seminole Reservation - Permission is needed to hike through the Seminole Indian Reservation and hikers must sign a release form. A limited number of hikers are permitted to hike through per month. Contact the FTA office a minimum of 30 days before starting your thru-hike so we have time to mail you the release, or find the form online at :

[http://floridatrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/7\\_LDH\\_SeminoleReleaseForm.pdf](http://floridatrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/7_LDH_SeminoleReleaseForm.pdf). Fill out the form, get it notarized, make a copy to carry with you on the Reservation and mail it to the Reservation. The Reservation will need about 2 weeks to process the permission. **YOU WILL NOT HEAR ANYTHING BACK FROM THE RESERVATION UNLESS THERE IS A PROBLEM.**

Kissimmee River- Permits must be obtained from the SFWMD to camp in SFWMD campsites: Yates Marsh, Chandler Slough East, Micco Landing, Oak Creek, Starvation Slough, KICCO, Rattlesnake Hammock and Long Hammock. Call SFWMD weekdays 9AM-4PM for free permits, (561) 924-5310 x3333. Thru-hikers are given a several day window for camping.

Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park: To camp at the Prairie Loop primitive campsites, thru-hikers must make reservations in advance by calling (863) 462-5360. No reservations are needed for the Cowboy Crossing or Pine Island Slough campsites. Thru hikers must stop at the Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park office at waypoint 34-5 and pay the \$5 camping fee.

Forever Florida: Thru-hikers must call 407-957-9794 to reserve a campsite. Thru-hikers are given one night of camping free of charge.

Tosohatchee WMA: Camping fees waived for thru hikers. A reservation must be obtained by calling 407-568-5893.

Green Swamp East, Map 30 - Permits waived for thru-hikers but hunting restrictions on camping still apply. Hunt schedules can be found at <http://myfwc.com/hunting/wma-brochures/sw/green-swamp/> or by calling Southwest Florida Water Management District (352) 796-7211, (800) 423-1476 (FL only)

Green Swamp West, Map 29 – Permits waived for thru-hikers but hunting restrictions on camping still apply. Hunt schedules can be found at <http://myfwc.com/hunting/wma-brochures/sw/green-swamp/> or by calling Southwest Florida Water Management District (352) 796-7211, (800) 423-1476 (FL only)

Little Big Econ State Forest and Charles Bronson State Forest: Thru-hikers must call 407-971-3500 for a free camping permit.

Seminole State Forest- The day use entrance fee is \$2.00 per person ages 6 and above. Camping fee for the “Walk-up” camps is \$10 per night for up to five people and \$2 per night for each additional person. If users are camping, then they do not have to pay the day use fee. All fees are paid at the Self Service Pay Stations located at the Bear Pond and Cassia Trailhead. Camping at the Walk-up camps for thru-hikers is permitted during the hunts. The three Walk-up camps along the FNST are Shelter, Black Water and Sulphur. The Wekiva Camp is along the white blazed Wekiva Trail.

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**North Region**

Clearwater Lake Recreation Area, Ocala NF - Map 20 - Campground adjacent to the trail via the Clearwater Lake Trailhead. Sites available on a first come first serve basis.

Alexander Springs Recreation Area, Ocala NF - Map 20 - On a blue spur trail off the Florida Trail. Fee required to camp. Reserve a campsite at recreation.gov. Campsites are \$24.00 dollars a night. During general gun hunting season, this is the last full service campground until Juniper Springs, 18 miles later.

Juniper Springs Recreation Area - Map 20 - Full service campground adjacent to trail. Make reservations at recreation.gov. Sites are \$23.50 per night.

Gold Head Branch State Park, Map 18 - Requires a fee to camp in the State Park including the primitive campsite. Hikers entering from the south end of the park can call the entrance station and pay the next day on the way out.

Camp Blanding, Map 17 – Hikers should check the kiosks located just inside the east and west entrances to Camp Blanding. Camp closures are posted on these kiosks. If the Camp is closed for military exercise hikers should follow the white blazed alternate trail around the base.

Ocean Pond Campground, Osceola NF - Map 16 - Accessed of a blue spur trail. Campsites are first come, first served. There are full service sites for \$18.00 dollars a night and primitive sites for \$8.00 dollars a night.

Stephen Foster State Park - Map 14 - Full service campground located very close to the trail. Make reservations at [reserveamerica.com](http://reserveamerica.com). Sites are \$20 dollars a night.

Holton Creek River Camp - Map 13 - This is the second river camp between White Springs and Branford. To make reservations call 1-800-868-9914. Each platform sleeps up to 8 people, has a ceiling fan and an electrical outlet, hammock hooks for at least 3 hammocks, and a small seat and table. Just outside, each platform has a spigot with potable water, a fire ring and a picnic table. In addition to the five screened sleeping platforms, each river camp also has primitive campsites, hot showers, restrooms, grills and picnic tables and a picnic pavilion. There is no charge to stay at River Camps and they are popular so we encourage you to reserve your spot to guarantee space for your group.

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## **Panhandle Region**

St. Marks, Map 11 - Requires a permit and small fee for each campsite used. Camping is only available to persons hiking the entire length of the Refuge. You must obtain the written permit prior to entering the refuge. St Marks is the ONLY National Wildlife Refuge that allows hikers to camp and that privilege is extended ONLY to thru and section hikers of the Florida Trail.

**Failure to obtain your permit may jeopardize this agreement for future hikers.** St Mark's National Wildlife Refuge, PO Box 68, St Marks, FL 32355, (850) 925-6121

Pinelog State Forest, Map 6 – The established campground (fee) is the only camping allowed in Pinelog during hunting dates.

Eglin East, Map 4, & Eglin North, Map 3 & Eglin West, Map 2 – **Thru-hikers** (backpackers starting and ending their hikes 50 miles beyond Eglin's boundaries), need a special permit from Eglin for Recreation Use and Camping. Thru-hikers need to contact Jackson Guard (850-882-4165 or 4166) for special permitting.

***NOTE: This list may not include every permit and fee you may need while hiking the Florida Trail, but it does include the major ones you need to know about in advance.***