



FLORIDA
STATE PARKS
*...the Real Florida*SM

Delnor-Wiggins Pass
State Park

Volunteer Handbook

2025





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Agency Information

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the state’s lead agency for environmental management and stewardship, protecting our air, water and land. DEP is divided into three primary areas: Land and Recreation, Regulatory, and Ecosystems Restoration.

DEP’s mission is to protect, conserve and manage the state’s natural resources and enforces its environmental laws. DEP’s vision is to advance Florida’s position as a world leader in protecting natural resources while growing the state’s economy.

DEP Values

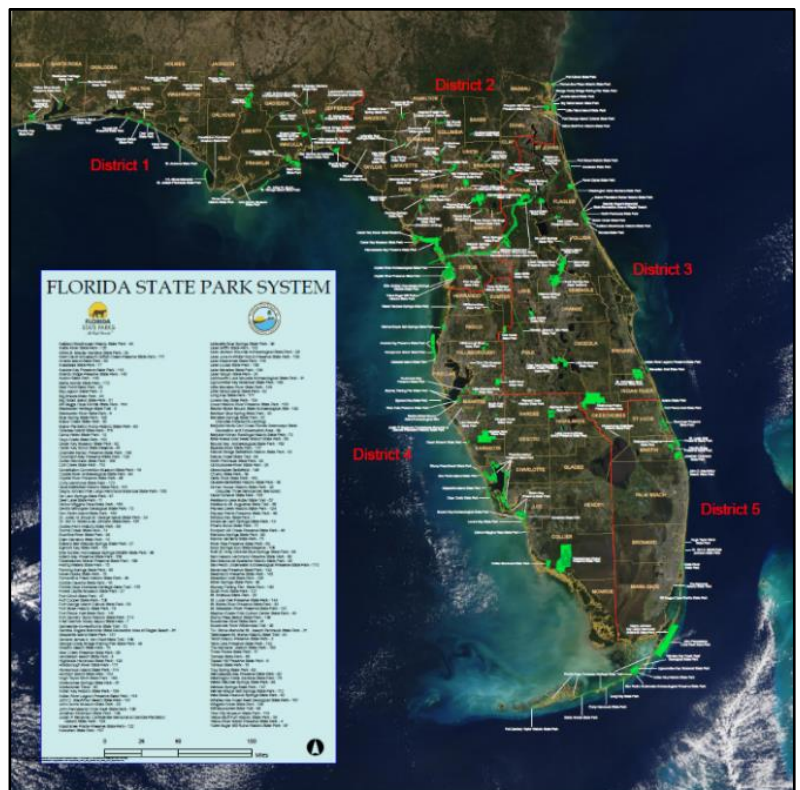
- Leadership: Serve as an example of how to protect natural resources and economic vitality while adhering to the integrity of our shared vision.
- Integrity: Operate ethically, honorably and respectfully.
- Accountability: Accept personal ownership for our actions and responsibilities.
- Communication: Operate transparently, sharing information frequently and honestly.
- Innovation: Seek innovative ways to improve operations and scientific achievements.
- Service: Serve Florida, its environment, the public, stakeholders and each other.

Florida State Parks

The mission of the Florida Park Service is to provide resource-based recreation while preserving, interpreting, and restoring natural and cultural resources. Public service is the central theme of every Florida Park Service endeavor. High standards of management and service are the Florida Park Service trademark. Quality resource-based outdoor recreational experiences assure that Florida's state parks will continue to serve as major tourist destinations, thereby contributing significantly to the State's economy. The accomplishment of this mission requires a great degree of organizational pride and employee dedication. The traditional "Florida Park Service Team" concept ensures success.

In dealing with the various tasks and duties assigned to the Florida Park Service, we categorize everything we do into what is called the Big Five – Administration, Maintenance, Protection, Resource Management and Visitor Services.

The state of Florida contains 175 state parks, trails, and historic sites, covering nearly 800,000 acres, 100 miles of sandy beaches, and 2,200 miles of trails. With 92 concessions, 1 lodge, 205 cabins, and 3,306 fully-facility campsites, Florida State Parks receive 24 million visitors annually. The Florida Park Service hosts 1,033 employees, over 80 friend groups, and 10,411 volunteers with 1,046,977 volunteer hours.





Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park

Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park is a 166-acre park on the north end of a barrier island with the Gulf of Mexico on the west and an estuarine and marine tidal swamp on the east. Eighty percent of the park is an estuarine and marine tidal swamp. The park consists of 1.2 miles of shoreline. Much of the sand on Florida beaches is made up of quartz crystals, which are produced by the weathering of continental land masses, like the Appalachian Mountains. The quartz is washed down America's great rivers into the Gulf of Mexico, then carried onto the beaches by water currents and waves. Shell bits mostly comprise much of the residing sand composition.

The Caloosa Native Americans settled in this region at least 2,000 years ago and were present until the end of the eighteenth century.

In the 1800s, Joe Wiggins, the first homesteader on record operated a small trading post at the pass. He was also known for his apiary. Thus, Wiggins Pass was named after this adventurous pioneer.

In 1965, Collier County purchased the 166-acre property from St. Charles Charities, an Illinois corporation. The St. Charles Charities is now the Dellora A. and Lester J. Norris Foundation. Thanks to the foresight of Lester J. and Dellora A. Norris, the property transferred its obligation to develop and retain this property as open-space land under new ownership.

In 1971, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, for the use and benefit of the Division of Recreation and Parks, leased the land from the county. Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Recreation Area was officially opened to the public in 1981.

Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park offers visitors recreational opportunities to boat, paddle, fish, shoreline walks, picnics, scuba dive, snorkel, swim, and view wildlife.

Friends of Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park

The Friends of Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park are a group of members dedicated to protecting, preserving and enhancing one of the last undeveloped barrier islands in Collier County, Florida.

The friends are a nonprofit citizen support organization chartered in 1987 and has provided continuous support to the park since. They assist park staff with resource management, including removal of exotic plants, restoration of habitats, park repairs, and beach cleanups.

Funds raised by the friends are used for specific projects in the park and to purchase equipment for staff and park use. Additionally, some of the Friends also serve as beach stewards who walk the beach answering questions and greeting visitors to the park.



Website: <https://www.delnorwiggins.org/>
Email: info@delnorwiggins.org



Staff of Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park

Park Manager, Cody Peters
 Park Assistant Manager, Mark Nicoletti
 Administrative Assistant, Jennifer Marques
 Park Services Specialist, Todd Ray
 Park Services Specialist, Lauren Hagen

Park Rangers:
 ➤ David Young
 ➤ Sean Lenick
 ➤ Dual South

AmeriCorps Member:
 ➤ Raquel Martin

Chain of Command

Volunteers should direct all concerns, questions, and suggestions to the Park Services Specialist. If necessary, they will elevate to the next level.

Volunteer Information

Volunteers help to preserve ...the Real Florida

Volunteers provide a much-needed workforce to enhance overall Florida Park Service operations. The history of park volunteerism is long standing. In 1977, an official volunteer program was formalized when the Florida Legislature provided workers' compensation coverage and liability protection to volunteers working in state agencies. A volunteer is a person who performs work for the Florida Park Service under a current signed Volunteer Application and Volunteer Agreement and provides this service free of charge.

Becoming a Volunteer:

- Complete Volunteer Application
- National and Florida Sexual Predator Check
- Complete Volunteer Agreement
- Complete DEP Annual Combo
- Complete Bloodborne Pathogens, Code of Ethics, and State of Florida ADA online trainings
- Review the Volunteer Program Overview (optional)
- Complete the Volunteer Orientation at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park

Volunteer Areas

Florida State Park volunteers assist the Florida Park Service to ensure natural and cultural resources are preserved. Volunteers are vital to the success of stewardship messaging and protection in Florida State Parks.

The "Big Five"

- Administration: clerical work, answering the telephone, certain types of research, orientation and trainings, data entry, grant writing or tracking, etc.
- Maintenance: upkeep, repairs and improvements to facilities, equipment and grounds, carpentry, trail maintenance, plumbing, masonry, painting, preventative maintenance, mowing, trash pick-up, restroom upkeep, vehicle and equipment maintenance, small engine work, electrical work, construction projects, etc.
- Protection: visitor safety, employee safety, emergency preparedness, emergency response, rule enforcement, voluntary compliance, facility and environmental protection, First Aid, CPR, state/vehicle operation, etc.
- Resource Management: natural and cultural resources and refers to exotic species identification and control, plant and animal identification, ecological or cultural restoration, species monitoring, historical collections management, research, etc.
- Visitor Services: providing information and access, customer service, interpretation, special events, educational programs, guided walks, public speaking, visitor program evaluations, etc.



Volunteer Expectations and Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you must adhere to following the responsibilities of Florida State Parks. Park staff and volunteers are not law enforcement, but educators of the natural and cultural resources, as well as policies, of the park to the public. We are all here to support the Florida Park Service mission.

- Represent the Florida Park Service in a professional manner.
- Follow the park’s policies and guidelines and understand its organizational structure.
- Seek and accept guidance and support needed to complete assignments.
- Work as a team with paid staff and respect mutual roles.
- Be reliable in fulfilling assignments.
- Do a quality, professional job.
- Respect access to information, facilities and equipment and other park property.
- Attend and participate in training sessions and regular volunteer meetings.
- Provide adequate notice of absence.
- Make a good faith effort to resolve differences and problems.
- Care for park resources and be a steward for park resources.
- Work safely and smartly.
- Make a significant contribution to Florida State Parks.
- Abide by all rules, regulations and policies that govern the Florida Park Service.

Volunteer Uniform

Florida State Parks is a uniform agency. Volunteers are part of the Florida Park Service team, representing the agency image and philosophy. Therefore, volunteers are expected to wear the Florida Park Service volunteer uniform according to the established uniform guidelines.

Class A: Dress uniform

- Green polo shirt (short sleeve only)
- Khaki pants, shorts, skirt or jeans
- Gold nameplate
- Black belt
- Black close-toed shoes/boots and socks
- Recognition award pin (if applicable)



Class B: Day to Day Uniform

- Green polo, t-shirt (short or long sleeve) or khaki vest
- Same as Class A –bottoms, nameplate, belt, shoes/boots and socks
- FPS cap or wide brim sunhat, and windbreaker (optional)
- Recognition award pin (if applicable)



Workers’ Compensation

Volunteers are covered under Florida Workers’ Compensation Law when volunteering with the Florida Park Service. Additionally, volunteers are protected from personal liability claims for any actions involving their volunteer services. Guidelines and coverage are outlined in the Chapters 110.504, 768.1355, and 440, Florida Statutes.

To receive this coverage, a volunteer must complete and submit to the park a Volunteer Agreement Form.

Reporting an On-The-Job Injury/Illness

Volunteers are responsible for reporting all accidents/injuries as soon as possible to his/her supervisor or the supervisor on duty and request first aid or medical treatment if needed.



Volunteer Accountability

Volunteer work hours, duties and responsibilities will be clearly communicated by the volunteer coordinator. It is important that as a volunteer, you arrive on the days and times agreed. If you cannot arrive at the scheduled time, please call the volunteer coordinator in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If the volunteer coordinator is not available, please call the park office. Please leave a voicemail if need be.

1. Call Volunteer Coordinator
2. Call Park Office
3. Email Volunteer Coordinator

Park contact information is available on the last page of this handbook.

When beginning your volunteer service at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, volunteers must sign-in so staff is aware of who is on the premises and what services they are performing while volunteering at the park. Safety is the key to success. Knowing everyone's whereabouts helps to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all. This accountability also helps to show the stats of how volunteers influence the projects and tasks completed at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park.

Volunteer Benefits

Free Entry Passes

- Complete 50 hours for Volunteer ID free entry to Delnor-Wiggins & 6 additional state parks.
 - Complete 250 hours for Special Volunteer Annual Pass
- *some restrictions apply

Certificates and Pins for Hours Served

- Received at 250, 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000, 6000, 7000, 8000, 9000+ hours.
- With 10,000, 20,000, 25,000 and 30,000 hours receive a plaque and letter from the Director.

Exceptional Service & Dedication certificate given at any time.



Volunteer Opportunities

“Big Five” at Delnor-Wiggins

- Administration: online trainings, in-person trainings, meetings
- Maintenance: litter clean-up, carpentry, electric, plumbing, mechanical, cleaning, power washing, landscaping
- Protection: beach and parking area patrol
- Resource Management: invasive plant removal, prescribed fire
- Visitor Services: educational programs, events, beach stewardship

Volunteer Hours

Your hours of service must be recorded in the official volunteer time record within the Volunteer Portal. Hours can be recorded either on a computer or cell phone. The volunteer manager can assist with recording hours. Volunteer benefits, awards, and recognition are linked to the number of hours contributed.

Volunteer Job Postings

Volunteers are asked to use the Volunteer Portal to sign up for volunteer opportunities. On the volunteer homepage, under the section ‘Search volunteer opportunities and apply.’ Enter Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park in ‘Locations’ and find volunteers opportunities that will fit your preference, and the park’s needs.



Park Guidelines

The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.

- All plants, animals and park property are protected.
- Live shelling is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only.
- Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 ft.
- Fishing, boating, and swimming are allowed in designated areas only.
- Adhere to fishing license requirements: <https://myfwc.com/license/recreational/saltwater-fishing/>.

Common Questions

Do I have to pay for parking?

Yes, payment is required for the use of the park. Payments can be made by the QR code on the sign, which just requires an email address and card payment information. Otherwise, there are blue envelopes in the green Iron Rangers where visitors can place cash and checks for payment. Please place the perforated piece of the blue envelope on the car's dashboard to show payment has occurred.

What if I have an annual pass?

Thank you for supporting Florida State Parks! With an annual pass, we recommend visitors use a paper copy of the annual pass to place on their car's dashboard, instead of their actual pass. The state prefers annual passholders take a blue envelope from the Iron Rangers and place their annual pass number on the envelope to be placed into the Iron Ranger. Take the perforated piece of the blue envelope to place on their car's dashboard.

I have the sticker on my car, so I don't need to pay at the Iron Rangers.

The sticker on your vehicle is the Collier County Public Parking sticker, which allows you to park in Collier County parking areas, like Conner Park on the other side of the bridge. As state property, we require an annual pass or a day use payment.

I was not asked for my license plate number when processing my payment. How will the park know I paid for parking?

Great question. The park payment system is based on an honor system with the green Iron Rangers. Due to the parks inability to have facilities available to visitors, such as bathhouses, parking fees are not being enforced as strongly at the moment. However, parking payments assist the state in continuing efforts to provide and maintain recreational areas like Delnor-Wiggins for public use. Supporting state parks allows us to support our visitors.

Why are these ropes barricading the only shade at the park?

The ropes form a barrier between visitors and vegetation. This is necessary for the beach dune ecosystem to continue to thrive after storm destruction. Railroad vine, the green vine growing towards the beach with the purple flowers, acts as a dune stabilizer which supports beach restoration. It provides a habitat, or home, for many diverse species, including threatened and endangered, such as the gopher tortoise and scrub jays. The park asks visitors to please bring umbrellas or other various equipment for shade when coming to Delnor-Wiggins for a day on the beach.

Do alligators frequent the park?

Alligators are primarily freshwater animals, but they can tolerate salt water for a few hours, or even days. While it is uncommon for alligators to frequent the waters and grounds of the park, Florida is still their home, and they can be present at any time. It is always best to stay vigilant and contact park staff if visitors are unsure of their safety.



Can anything harm you in the Gulf of Mexico?

The Gulf of Mexico is home to many animals, and some of those animals are best to be avoided by visitors. Visitors please be on lookout for jellyfish, stingrays, sharks, and sea urchins. Park staff are attentive and patrol the beach frequently. If staff observe any of these animals present at Delnor-Wiggins, we make visitors aware, secure an area, and raise a purple flag on our posts for those animals that sting. Staff can be busy with many tasks throughout the day. If visitors see the presence of these animals, and they do not see staff present, please notify the office or flag a staff member to indicate their observance.

What are the flags on the beach for?

The flags on the beach indicate the conditions of the surf and/or currents. The park asks visitors to please use caution when swimming, lifeguards are not provided at Delnor-Wiggins. The double red flags towards the pass, or point, mean no swimming because of high winds and undertow currents. The red flag means high surf and/or strong currents. Visitors are to swim with extreme caution. Yellow flag means swim with caution and stay close to the shore. Green flag means that the water is safe for swimming. Purple flag means stinging marine life are present.



Does the green flag mean the water is free of red tide?

The green flag is an indicator of the surf conditions. Red tide is a Harmful Algal Bloom, or HAB, caused by microscopic alga called *Karenia brevis*, which produces a toxin that can affect the central nervous system of fish, birds, mammals, and even us. Park staff consistently check the status of this algal bloom in our area. If signs of red tide are present at the park, we will inform our visitors. For visitors, it is always recommended to check the Florida Department of Health website for Collier County for updates and reports.

Can we take shells from the beach?

Yes, shelling opportunities at the park are endless. However, live shelling is not permitted. Please check the shells you acquire to make sure there are not critters using the shell as a home. If you are unsure, it is always better to sway on the side of caution and put the shell back. Empty shells can become much needed homes for growing hermit crabs.

Can I bring my dog to the beach?

Only service animals are permitted on the beach. All dogs are allowed in the parking areas and boat launch but must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 ft. Lee County has a dog beach available called Dog Beach Park off Bonita Beach Causeway heading towards Lover’s Key State Park.

If questioning visitor about service animal, there are **two questions** park staff and volunteers can ask the visitor.

1. Is the service animal required due to a disability?
2. What work or task is the animal trained to perform?

If the visitor answers no to the first question, then kindly explain to the visitor the dog needs to leave the beach area.

*Under **NO** circumstances can staff or a volunteer ask what the person’s disability is, ask for any type of identification or certification documents for the dog or medical documentation from the handler, or ask that the dog demonstrate what task it is trained to perform.*



Why are dogs not allowed on the beach?

Dogs are great companion animals, but they can have harmful effects on the environment. With a dog's natural instinct to hunt, chase, and dig, they can endanger shorebirds, sea turtles, and their nests by decreasing their survival opportunities. Dogs may capture and eat shorebirds, hatchlings, or eggs. They can scare adult shorebirds causing them to abandon their nests, leaving eggs or hatchlings unprotected from predators and heat. Birds require vital energy needed to fly, migrate, and nest which can be depleted when trying to flee from a dog. These conditions make birds reluctant to return to the area. When animal waste ends up in the water it decomposes, using up oxygen and becomes a pollutant in the runoff that drains into local waterways like lakes, rivers, estuaries, bays, ocean, and the Gulf of Mexico. On the sand or in the water, the waste left by our pets can spread harmful diseases through various types of bacteria and parasites. Nesting female sea turtles can also be disturbed by dogs and abandon their nesting attempt. Delnor-Wiggins has seen a significant return in sea turtle nesting populations, as well as shorebird reappearance, and patrolling the beaches to remove disturbances is a part of that success.

Are grills allowed in the park?

Grilling is not allowed in the park. Grilling is a safety hazard to our visitors and environment. Please bring premade food to the park and pack out all items brought into the park.

What is that pungent smell?

That would be the marine tidal swamp, one of the three ecosystems here at the park. Mangroves give off a distinct odor often described as a "rotten egg" smell. This odor is caused by the natural breakdown of organic matter in the mangrove soil by bacteria, releasing hydrogen sulfide gas, a compound with a distinct rotten egg smell. However, mangroves play a vital role in the health of the barrier island and therefore Delnor-Wiggins. Mangroves stabilize shorelines, filter pollutants from the water, allow sediment to settle, supply the base of the food chain, sequester carbon from the atmosphere, and provide nursery grounds and habitat for a wide range of species. Mangroves are essential to the health of the ecosystem, from their roots to their leaves. The smell is worth the importance.



Park Contact Information

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY – Call 911

If 911 must be called, please call the office or ranger on duty to immediately alert staff of the emergency.

Lauren Hagen, Park Services Specialist:

Work Cell: (239) 821-1618

Email: Lauren.Hagen@FloridaDEP.gov

Park Office:

(239) 409-0637

Park Contacts:

PM Cody Peters' Work Cell: (239) 253-6143

APM Mark Nicoletti's Work Cell: (239) 253-7622

PSS Todd Ray's Work Cell: (239) 273-0655

Park Ranger A: (239) 571-0885

Park Ranger B: (239) 571-1477

Park Ranger C: (239) 571-0849

Park Ranger D: (239) 571-0904