

# Florida's State Parks Score High on Accessibility

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TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, July 23, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Florida's award-winning state parks are committed to increasing accessibility for all, according to a survey conducted by the Florida State Parks Foundation.



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*Gil Ziffer*

The survey of 760 state park users found that ninety percent said they or a family member had not experienced any difficulty accessing some part of a state park because of accessibility issues.

"It is encouraging to see that Florida State Park Service annual improvements have resulted in most people having no accessibility problems in our parks," said Gil Ziffer, Foundation President.

According to the email survey conducted in early May, one in five people have taken advantage of accessibility features in the state parks while a similar number said they did not realize that these facilities were available.

These features include all-terrain wheelchairs that can be used free of charge when booked in advance, roll out matting which allows wheelchairs access to sandy beaches, ramps, handicap kayak launch sites, and special signage for the blind and deaf.

People said they would like to see more wheelchair-friendly trails, ADA-camping spots, more ramps, and more benches on trails.

"The Florida Park Service and the Foundation are committed to ensuring that our visitors with disabilities are included and immersed in our park experience", he said.

This year, the Foundation is funding the design and construction of the first-ever wheelchair-accessible glass-bottomed boat for Silver Springs State Park, and work is expected to start later this year at Wekiwa Springs State Park on the Serenity Garden, a park within a park for people

with disabilities and special needs and the first of its kind in the United States, said Ziffer.

“While it is an ongoing process, the Florida Park Service strives to design and construct accessible buildings and facilities that provide access for all visitors and that comply with applicable laws, regulations, and standards.

“In each of the last several years, the Florida Park Service has budgeted \$4,000,000 for accessibility. The Foundation advocated for and helped secure legislative appropriations dedicated to accessibility projects.

Visitors are encouraged to visit and enjoy our many accessible camping areas, bathhouses, restrooms, recreation halls, fishing piers, environmental education centers, picnic pavilions, and more,” he said.

The Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy.

The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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