

HISTORY AND NATURE

Estero Bay Preserve State Park is a large area of undeveloped conservation land which serves as a land buffer to protect the water, inlets and islands along 10 miles of Estero Bay. With the help of local support groups and the state of Florida, Estero Bay became Florida's first aquatic preserve in 1966 and is one of the most productive estuaries in Florida.

The park's wetlands serve as a filter for non-point source pollution from the surrounding region, thereby protecting the bay's water quality. The preservation and protection of Estero Bay's water quality is a primary focus in managing the preserve. The preserve protects the water, inlets and islands along 10 miles of Estero Bay and provides critical habitat to a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic plant and animal species including bald eagles, gopher tortoises, fiddler crabs, live oaks, slash pine, and red, white and black mangroves.

Invasive exotic species are a constant problem in the preserve and are able to out-compete, displace or destroy native species and their habitats. Park staff are continuously battling these encroachments and restoring areas to native habitats.

The park also protects several important archeological sites associated with the Calusa Indians, European explorers and the Koreshan Unity. The island of Mound Key (Mound Key State Archaeological Site) is centrally located in the heart of Estero Bay and was the capital of the Calusa.



ESTERO BAY PRESERVE STATE PARK

3800 Corkscrew Road
Estero, FL 33928
239-992-0311

PARK GUIDELINES

Please remember these tips and guidelines, and enjoy your visit:

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Where allowed, pets must be kept on a hand-held leash no longer than six feet and well-behaved at all times.
- Fishing and boating are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks, alcohol and hunting are prohibited.
- To become a volunteer, call 239-992-0311 for more information.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing all visitors with equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

[FloridaStateParks.org](https://www.floridastateparks.org)

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ESTERO BAY PRESERVE STATE PARK

Home of wetlands and wildlands



Estero Bay Preserve State Park

EXPERIENCES AND AMENITIES

Estero Bay Preserve State Park contains 11,381 acres of numerous habitats that protect the waters of Estero Bay. The park's natural communities support a productive fish nursery, which, in turn, supports a significant commercial and recreational fishery. The park offers many excellent recreational opportunities including fishing, boating, canoeing/kayaking, hiking, cycling, birding and wildlife viewing.

The preserve is accessible at two locations: the Estero River Scrub entrance on Broadway Avenue West and the Winkler Point entrance on Winkler Road. Suburban sights and sounds fade as you hike the more than 10 miles of trails that weave through the interior of the preserve. **Keep in mind that some trails flood seasonally and potable water is not available.**

The **Winkler Point trails** feature coastal marshes and maritime hammocks where visitors can often view ospreys and bald eagles. Two observation decks near the marshes provide excellent viewing spots for wading birds, waterfowl and other wildlife.

The **Estero River Scrub location** has **four separate trails** which entice visitors to hike through the numerous ecosystems that make up preserve. Areas of mesic flatwoods, scrub, and salt flats are home to Gopher tortoises, snakes, lizards and a myriad of bird species. A **pavilion** and **restroom** are located at the trailhead and numerous benches are located throughout the preserve to allow visitors to stop and rest or just relax and take in the view.

Watercraft can reach Estero Bay from **launch sites** at Koreshan State Park, in Estero (239) 992-0311 and at Lovers Key State Park (239) 463-4588, just south of Fort Myers Beach. For information on paddling trails in Estero Bay and surrounding areas, visit GreatCalusaBlueway.com.

