

STATE FOREST SPOTLIGHT

Outstanding Florida Waters

Tate's Hell State Forest is best known for its large expanse of swampland. The natural vegetation of the wetland swamps functions as a filter for water entering the Apalachicola Bay and East Bay. The Apalachicola River and East Bay are designated as Outstanding Florida Waters. Visitors to Tate's Hell State Forest can paddle down a black water river until they reach the white sandy beaches of the Gulf or take a hike on an ancient sand dune with native vegetation near the coast. Camp overnight at one of our isolated primitive campsites on the bank of a river, or take a leisurely drive and enjoy our space, solitude and natural resources.

Love the state forests? So do we!

The Friends of Florida State Forests is a direct-support organization of the Florida Forest Service dedicated to ensuring Florida's state forests are available for future generations to enjoy. Make a difference by joining today to help protect Florida's forests.

Membership dues go to the forests for conservation and improvement projects. To join Friends or for more information, visit:

www.FloridaStateForests.org.



Things to Know When Visiting Florida's State Forests

In keeping with its mission to protect and manage Florida's forest resources for the present and future enjoyment of all Floridians, the Florida Forest Service has developed rules which apply to all visitors to Tate's Hell State Forest. Some of the rules include:

- Driving is permitted on designated roads only. Please use caution as some roads require all-wheel drive during wet or extremely dry weather conditions.
- Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) are only permitted in designated areas and require proper titling and a State Forest OHV Permit. All OHV riders under the age of 16 years must be in possession of their certificate of completion of a State of Florida approved OHV Safety Course.
- Hunting on the forest requires a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) permit and an appropriate hunting license. Hunting is only permitted in designated areas and during appropriate seasons. Hunting is regulated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (see www.MyFWC.com). All visitors are encouraged to check regulations and season dates for the appropriate WMA, on this website, before visiting the forest.
- Please take all garbage with you when you leave the forest.
- Most primitive camping requires a State Forest Use Permit. The Womack Creek Camping Area is first-come, first-serve; no reservation required. All sites require a camping fee.
- Please use caution with camp fires and ensure they are completely out when you leave.
- Visitors may be required to pay entrance or recreation use fees in designated areas. State forest Annual Entrance Passes are available.
- Please use caution while boating and be courteous of non-motorized watercraft.
- Rope swings and diving are prohibited.

For more information, visit:

www.FloridaForestService.com

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Florida Forest Service

Tate's Hell State Forest



Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services

Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner

History

Local legend has it that in 1875, a farmer by the name of Cebe Tate, armed with only a shotgun and accompanied by his hunting dogs, journeyed into the swamp in search of a panther that was killing his livestock. Tate became lost in the swamp for several days, was bitten by a snake, and was drinking from the murky waters. Finally he came to a clearing near Carrabelle, living only long enough to murmur the words, "My name is Cebe Tate, and I just came from Hell!" Since then the area has been known as Tate's Hell.

In the early 1950s, under ownership of private forest production companies, attempts were made to drain Tate's Hell swamp in order to grow trees. They later learned that draining the freshwater from the swamp into East Bay seriously affected the marine condition of the Bay and its estuaries.

In 1994 the first land was purchased by the state to help protect the aquatic and estuarine resources of East Bay by securing the watersheds and upland buffers of the Tate's Hell Swamp.

Forestry

The Florida Forest Service manages these lands using a multiple-use concept, which balances recreation, wildlife and timber with environmental values. Tate's Hell is a working forest that strives to 'earn its keep' while protecting wetlands and native habitats for the enjoyment of future generations. Sound forest management promotes forest health and restoration on thousands of acres of savannah and swamp that were altered over the last century.

Prescribed fire is carefully applied to reduce the risk of wildfire and to promote the fire-evolved native Florida landscape often associated with longleaf pine and wiregrass.

Tate's Hell is a green buffer to the adjacent bays and salt marshes. By restoring the hydrology and native plant communities, a steady flow of clean water flows to coastal fish nurseries to replenish the Gulf.



New River Cypress



Wildflowers in bloom



Picnic pavillion along the river

For more information contact:
Tate's Hell State Forest Headquarters
290 Airport Road, Carrabelle, Florida 32322
Phone 850/697-3734
www.FloridaForestService.com

Natural Resources

Tate's Hell State Forest is approximately 202,500 acres located in Franklin and Liberty counties, sharing a border with the Apalachicola National Forest to the north. Tate's Hell is a large patchwork of flatwoods and savannahs with an intricate web of creeks and wetlands. The forest features the unique dwarf cypress that only reach a mature height of about 15 feet, with some trees estimated at over a century old.

Pitcher plant prairies hold a diverse mixture of carnivorous plants, wildflowers and grasses. The carnivorous plants include glistening sundews, butterworts, bladderworts and several species of pitcher plants which trap insects in their erect trumpet-shaped leaves. Tate's Hell is home to a rich array of wildlife including deer, turkey, black bear, alligators, and many resident and migratory birds. The forest offers space, solitude, and unique natural beauty to the visitor.

Recreation

Tate's Hell State Forest lies between the Apalachicola and Ochlockonee Rivers and offers a variety of recreational opportunities. Tate's Hell activities include canoeing-kayaking on the waterways that run through the forest. The Womack Creek area provides nine tent campsites, three RV primitive camping sites, picnic pavilion, boat ramp, and bath house with hot showers. Primitive camping sites are located throughout the forest for a nominal fee. Gully Branch, Rock Landing and Cash Creek are day use sites for picnicking, fishing or simply relaxing. Other recreational opportunities include the 4.5 mile High Bluff Coastal Hiking Trail, the Ralph G. Kendrick Boardwalk overlooking the dwarf cypress, and the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail system on designated forest roads (permit required). The forest is open to hunting and fishing regulated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. For more information on hunting and fishing, please check MyFWC.com.