

Welcome to Forest Capital Museum.



The museum interprets the history of forestry in Florida, highlighting turpentine production, forest products and the ecology of the forest. The park features an 1863 Cracker Homestead with antique furnishings and tools, a visitor center, picnic pavilions and playground.

Natural Communities

The forested area of the 13-acre park consists of longleaf pines, live oaks, water oaks and cabbage palms. Dogwood trees and wild azalea bushes bloom in the early spring. Amidst the trees, Spanish moss sways gently in the breeze while animals and birds scamper and flutter about.

At the Cracker Homestead, wild rose vines grace the gated entrance to the cracker home. The yard is sandy and swept clear of debris, as it would have been in the late 1800s. A vegetable garden is planted during the spring and fall. Sugar cane grows during the summer for cane grinding and syrup making in the fall. Pomegranate and fig trees grow just beyond the grapevines behind the home. Florida anise and wax myrtle plants border the split-rail fence surrounding the homestead.

The park lawn is landscaped with beds of coontie ferns (*Zamia floridana*) and hedges of evergreens. Paths throughout the park invite visitors to leisurely stroll and enjoy a day in the park.



Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Forest Capital Museum

204 Forest Park Drive
Perry, FL 32348
(850) 584-3227

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- The museum is open Thursday through Monday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.
- Museum and Cracker Homestead entrance fee: \$1.00 (children 5 years old and under free).
- Call (850) 584-3227 to arrange guided tours for groups.
- The park offers many recreational opportunities to visitors with disabilities. Should you need assistance to enable your full participation, please contact the park office at (850) 584-3227.
- Pavilions and the Cracker Homestead site may be reserved for special occasions for a fee. Call (850) 584-3227.
- Intoxicants [REDACTED] are prohibited.
- Smoking, food and drinks are prohibited in the museum and homestead.
- Leashed pets are welcome in some areas of the park.

Northeast Florida

Forest Capital Museum

Tree Capital of the South



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*...the Real Florida*SM

National Gold Medal Winner

Florida State Parks - "America's First Two-Time Winner"

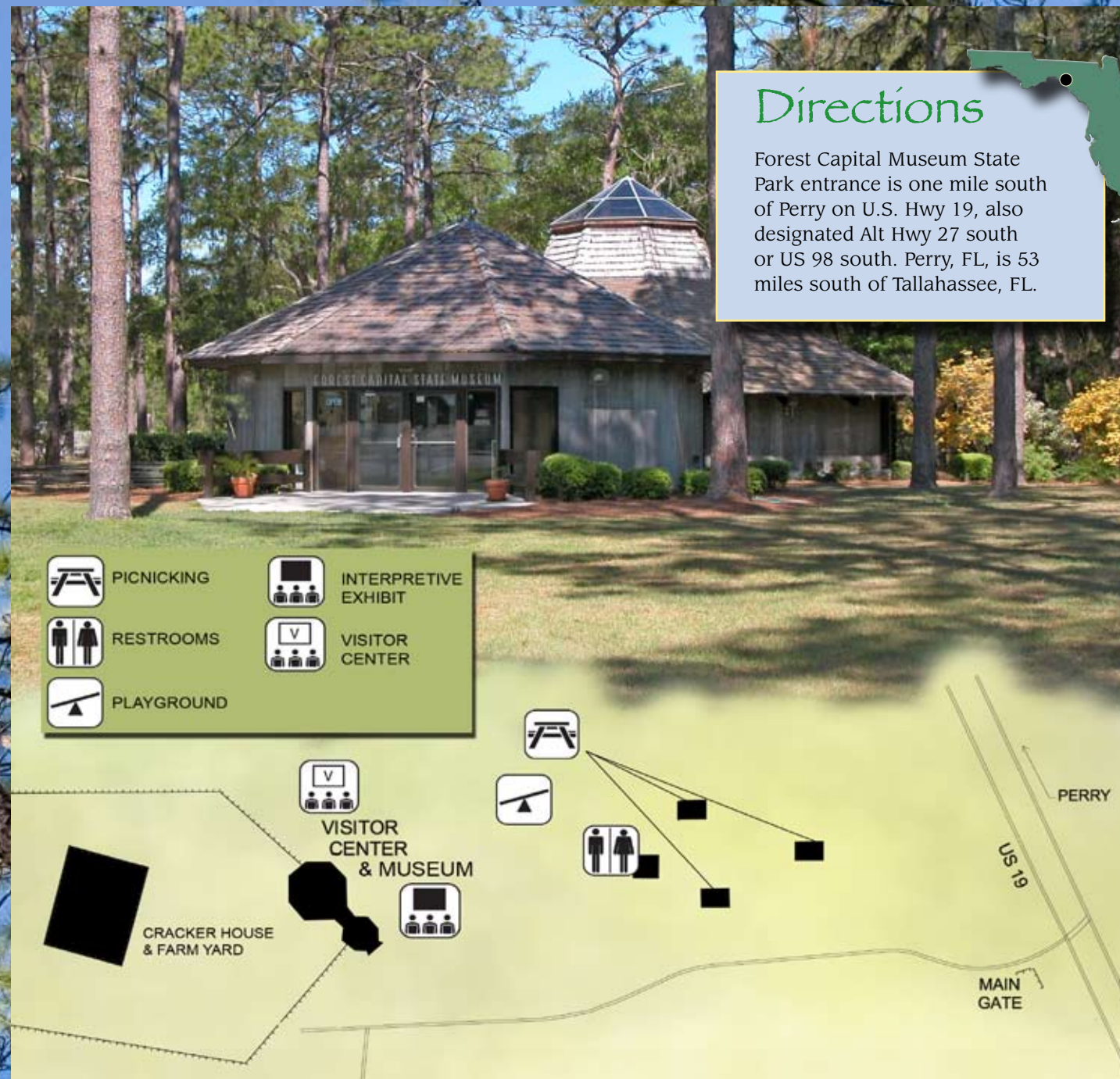
History & Culture

Florida's forest evolved 15 million years ago. Since then, rising sea levels have submerged Florida five times. Each time the water receded, the forest quickly regenerated in the sandy soil. Humans first migrated into Florida's forest 10,000 years ago. In 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon discovered and claimed Florida for Spain. Within a few centuries the world's demand for the area's large cypress, pine and oak trees grew.

North Florida's history and economy is rooted in the business of forestry. In 1965, Congressman Don Fuqua proclaimed Taylor County, with over 525,000 acres of forested land, the "Tree Capital of the South." Commemorating this honor, Forest Capital State Park opened in 1968.

In 1972, Senator Pete Gibson's family donated the Cracker Homestead to the park. Early settlers were often called "Crackers" because many used whips that made a cracking sound to drive cattle. Wiley W. Whiddon's family built this homestead in 1863. The home is a classic Cracker dogtrot design, constructed from hand-hewn logs, with a clay and stick fireplace in each room.

In 1974 the name of the park was changed to Forest Capital State Museum and in 2000, as part of an effort to standardize park names throughout the state park system, the park was named Forest Capital Museum State Park. The museum is dedicated to the beauty and productivity of Florida's forests.



Directions

Forest Capital Museum State Park entrance is one mile south of Perry on U.S. Hwy 19, also designated Alt Hwy 27 south or US 98 south. Perry, FL, is 53 miles south of Tallahassee, FL.

Real Fun in ...the Real FloridaSM

Tour the beautiful octagonal **museum** with its high glass dome ceiling and explore the history of forestry in Florida. Marvel at the incredible number of products produced from the longleaf pine. Enjoy the **displays** of small forest animals and gain an understanding of the ecology of the forest. Listen while "Terry the talking tree" explains the importance of the forest to the environment.

See a **diorama** of a turpentine still along with antique turpentine tools. Appreciate the craftsmanship in a map of Florida, made from 67 different species of native woods, and a handcrafted wooden replica of the **Cracker Homestead**. View photographs of early logging operations, a video and much more.

Step back in time and explore the 1863 Cracker Homestead. Sit in the rocking chairs and enjoy the breezeway. Stroll through the farm area and around the park. Enjoy the **visitor center**, **playground** and **picnic pavilions**.



1513: Juan Ponce de Leon discovers Florida and the abundant natural resources

1863: Wiley Whiddon's family builds the Cracker Homestead

1968: Forest Capital State Park opens

1974: Forest Capital State Museum opens

1978: The park receives "Moon Tree," a pine seedling from the Apollo 14 space mission

Florida Parks Timeline

BP (Before Present)
Early Human Habitation

1500-1700

1513-1564: Spanish exploration
1565-1763: Spanish colonization
1763-1783: British Territory
1775-1783: American Revolution

1800

1783-1821: Spanish Territory
1821-1845: U.S. Territory of Florida
1845: Florida becomes 27th State
1861-1865: American Civil War

1900

1920s: Florida Land Boom
1929: The Great Depression
1940s on: WWII & Population Growth

2000

1999 & 2005: Florida State Parks voted #1 in the nation

1965: Congressman Don Fuqua proclaims Taylor County the "Tree Capital of the South"

1972: The Whiddon homestead is donated to the park

2005: The 50th Annual Florida Forest Festival