

## History & Nature

In the decade following the Second Seminole War (1835-1842), tensions between settlers and Seminole Indians prompted Federal authorities to establish a trading post in Florida's interior. The Kennedy-Darling Trading Post was built on the northern end of the Seminole reservation, easy for the Seminoles to reach, but away from settlements. The trading post, constructed in the spring of 1849, was attacked and destroyed in July of that year by renegade Seminoles. Reports of the attack motivated the U.S. Army to establish a chain of fortifications across the Florida peninsula.

This line of forts across the northern boundary of the Seminole reservation was intended to protect the settlers to the north and provide bases for the Army to control the Seminoles. Work began on Fort Chokonikla, the first in the chain, on October 26, 1849. The fort was built on high ground near the former trading post. The Seminoles did not want war and the fort never came under attack. Casualties, however, were high and the Army was nearly defeated by disease-carrying mosquitoes. In July 1850, because of sickness among troops, Fort Chokonikla was abandoned and never reoccupied.

In 1978, the Fort Chokonikla site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The state acquired the 410 acres containing the Trading Post and Fort Chokonikla sites in 1981. The park opened to the public the following year. Although nothing remains of the fort or the trading post, visitors can learn about the history of these at the park's Visitor Center.



## Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks

### Paynes Creek Historic State Park

888 Lake Branch Road  
Bowling Green, Florida 33834  
(863) 375-4717

[FloridaStateParks.org](http://FloridaStateParks.org)

## Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only and must be kept on a hand-held leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating and fires are allowed in designated areas only.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Alcoholic beverage consumption is prohibited except in designated areas.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- For information about joining Paynes Creek Preservation Alliance, call (863) 375-4717.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

Large  
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Alternate format  
available upon  
request at any  
Florida state park



Paynes Creek  
Southwest *Historic State Park*  
Florida

*Site Where Fort Chokonikla (1849) Once Stood*



...the *Real Florida* <sup>SM</sup>

National Gold Medal Winner

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



**FLORIDA**  
State Parks  
...the *Real Florida* <sup>SM</sup>



Created on 7/08

## Real Fun in ...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>

Visitors interested in Florida history will enjoy this park. Historic sites here include the Fort Chokonikla (*chok-o-neek-la*) site, the Kennedy-Darling Trading Post site (visible from a special overlook along Paynes Creek) and the monument site erected in honor of Captain George S. Payne and Dempsey Whiddon, clerks killed at the trading post during a Seminole attack.

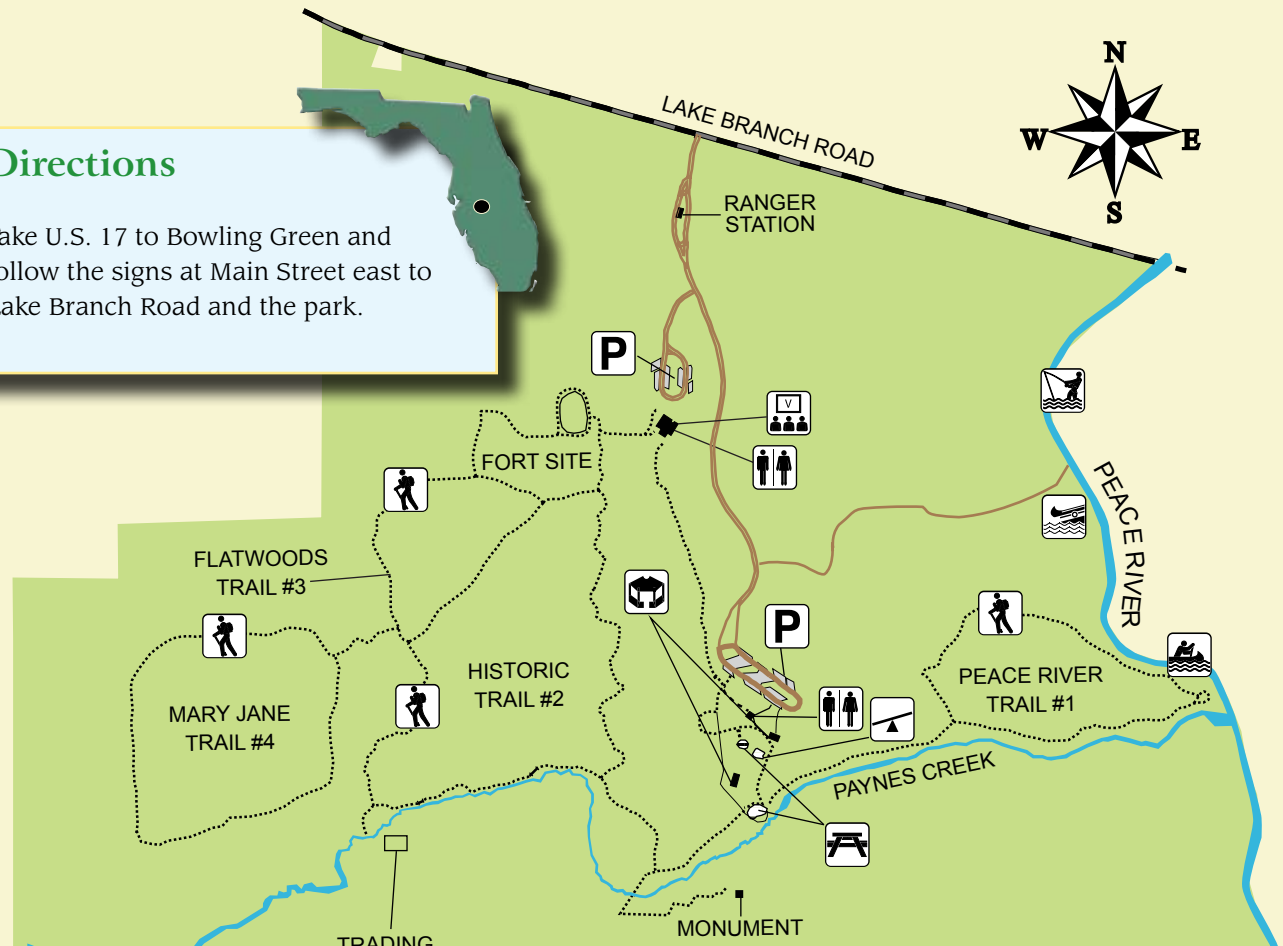
Several **nature trails** introduce visitors to various natural communities ideal for **birding** and **botanical** exploration. Paynes Creek and the Peace River provide opportunities for **canoeing**, **kayaking** and **fishing**. The Peace River is split by tiny islands and joined by numerous creeks. Anglers can fish for bass, bream, catfish or snook from canoe or kayak in the Peace River or along its banks. A **youth camping** area provides primitive camping opportunities.







**Picnic tables** and a nearby **playground** make the park an ideal location for small and large groups to share a meal. **Pavilions** that seat up to 40 people are available for rent.

The **Visitor Center** has dioramas and displays that depict how Florida's pioneers and Seminole Indians lived during the early to mid 1800s. **Video programs**, shown on weekends and holidays at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., provide insight into frontier life at Fort Chokonikla and the events that led to the Third Seminole War (1855-58). The Visitor Center is open 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily

## Directions

Take U.S. 17 to Bowling Green and follow the signs at Main Street east to Lake Branch Road and the park.



- |   |                    |   |                |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------|
|  | Canoeing/kayaking  |  | Picnicking     |
|  | Canoe/kayak Launch |  | Playground     |
|  | Fishing            |  | Restroom       |
|  | Hiking             |  | Visitor Center |
|  | Parking            |  | Youth Camping  |
|  | Pavilion           |   |                |

