



Accessibility



Many wonders may be seen from a car window, but the Everglades reveals itself best to those who experience it. Each of us have different abilities and needs. This leaflet will guide you to the facilities and resources available to help persons of all abilities take full advantage of the park's sights and sounds. Visitors with impaired mobility, especially those reliant on wheelchairs, will find this information helpful in planning an enjoyable visit to Everglades National Park.

America the Beautiful- National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands –Access Pass



The Access Pass is a FREE lifetime pass for U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities. Documentation is required to obtain the pass. The pass provides access to, and use of, Federal recreation sites that charge an Entrance or Standard Amenity. The pass admits the pass holder and passengers in a non-commercial vehicle at per vehicle fee areas and pass holder + 3 adults, not to exceed 4 adults, at per person fee areas (children under 16 are admitted free). The pass can only be obtained in person at the park. The Access Pass provides a 50 percent discount on

some Expanded Amenity Fees charged for facilities and services such as camping, swimming, boat launching, and specialized interpretive services. In some cases where Expanded Amenity Fees are charged, only the pass holder will be given the 50 percent price reduction.

The pass is non-transferable and generally does NOT cover or reduce special recreation permit fees or fees charged by concessionaires.

Visitor's Centers

All Visitor's Centers in the park are fully wheelchair accessible, and they all have clearly identified van accessible parking spaces. Interpretive programs as well as displays, whenever possible, have been made accessible to visitors with limited visual capacities.

The *Ernest Coe Visitor Center*, located at the park's main entrance near Homestead, is a great place to begin your visit. The large format park film is close-captioned. Assisted listening devices are available.

The *Royal Palm* area's two popular trailheads are fully accessible to wheelchairs.

A wheelchair is available for visitor use.

The *Flamingo Visitor Center* is accessed by a steep ramp from the parking area. It contains a museum exhibit with both print and audio displays. A wheelchair is available for visitor use.

The *Shark Valley Visitor Center* is fully accessible and offers a wheelchair for visitor use.

The *Gulf Coast Visitor Center* is accessible by elevator from the parking area. It contains a museum exhibit with print and captioned video displays.

Camping

There are two frontcountry, drive-in campgrounds accessible from the Homestead entrance to the park. Both Long Pine Key and Flamingo campgrounds accommodate tents and RV's and have designated accessible campsites. Each contains wheelchair accessible restrooms. The parking lots contain van accessible parking spaces identifiable by clear signage.

There is one backcountry site that is accessible to visitors with mobility impairments. The Pearl Bay Chickee, located about a four hour canoe trip away from the main park road, features handrails, a canoe dock, and an accessible chemical toilet.

Ranger Led Activities and Boat and Tram Tours

Throughout the year rangers conduct free activities including informative talks, trail tours, canoe trips, and evening programs. The winter season has the broadest offering of programs. Many of our ranger programs are suitable for people with limited mobility, and assisted listening devices are available. Current ranger program schedules are posted in our Visitor's Centers, and are on our website. Staff can suggest appropriate ranger led activities for any ability level.

Concession-led boat tours from Flamingo and Gulf Coast are wheelchair accessible. These slow-moving pontoon boats offer a narrated glimpse into the mangrove estuary or Florida Bay. Check the visitor's centers for schedules.

The Shark Valley tram tour is accessible as well; trams contain a ramp for wheelchairs. Tour includes a stop at an observation tower which has a steep ramp; it may be accessible with assistance. Call ahead for arrangements.

Trails

A great way to experience the Everglades is to explore the many accessible trails. The following all have firm paved or boardwalk surfaces, are wheelchair accessible, and are less than 3/4 of a mile in distance.

Anhinga Trail-This self-guided trail winds through a sawgrass marsh and wetland. You may see alligators, turtles, anhingas, wading birds, and more...especially during winter. Its abundance of wildlife and photographic opportunities have made it one of the most popular trails in the park. The Anhinga Trail was recently recognized as one of the ten best accessible trails in National Geographic's *The 10 Best of Everything: National Parks; 800 Top Picks from Parks Coast to Coast*

Gumbo Limbo Trail- A self-guided, paved trail that meanders through a shaded, subtropical hammock of gumbo limbo trees, royal palms, ferns, and air plants.

Pineland Trail-This paved trail loops through a forest of pines, palmettos, and wildflowers. Tree roots have made the trail bumpy in some areas. The pinelands are the most diverse habitat in South Florida.

Pa-hay-okee Overlook-A raised observation platform on this 1/4 mile boardwalk loop provides an up-close view of bald cypress trees, sweeping vistas of the "river of grass," and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness.

Mahogany Hammock Trail-This self-guided boardwalk trail winds through a dense tree island. Tropical foliage includes gumbo limbo trees, ferns, strangler fig trees, and the largest wild mahogany tree (*Swietenia mahogany*) in the United States. Barred Owls are frequently spotted here.

West Lake Trail-This 1/2 mile boardwalk trail wanders through a forest of white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*), black mangrove (*Avicennia nitida*), red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), and buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*) trees to the edge of West Lake.

Bobcat Boardwalk- Shark Valley's self-guided boardwalk trail loops through sawgrass prairie and a bayhead.

Service Animals

Service animals are defined as, "any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items."

Due to the concern for wildlife management issues, Everglades National Park's regulation allows the closing of an area to the use of service animals if it is determined that the service animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of people or wildlife.

In determining whether a service animal poses a direct threat, individualized assessments based on current scientific knowledge or on the best available objective evidence to ascertain the nature, duration and severity of the risks have been taken into account and less restrictive measures will not suffice.

Note:

Pets and Service Animals present in areas not permitted, open themselves to predation by wildlife as well as posing a significant danger to the handler and other visitors.

