

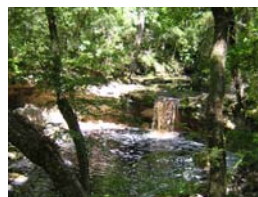
White Springs

Way down upon the Suwannee River...

Centered around the historic White Sulphur Springs, the town of White Springs was first settled in 1835, when Bryant and Elizabeth Sheffield purchased the land around the spring and built a log hotel. By the 1880s, there were 14 hotels in town catering to tourists who came by steamboat and railroad to “take the waters.”

As the riverboat era faded, the town froze in time. Many White Springs homes and businesses date back to the 1880s boom and remain landmarks today, showcasing architecture typical of turn-of-the-century Florida.

The Florida Trail leads you right past the State of Florida’s Nature and Heritage Tourism Center, a great stop for information on outdoor recreation opportunities and the home base of the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail, of which the Florida Trail is a part.



Florida Trail, Suwannee Section



In the late 1960s, volunteers from the Florida Trail Association began to scout segments of trail along the Suwannee River and worked with White Springs landowners to make the trail a reality. The Florida Trail continues to be a public-private partnership through this region, running for nearly 75 miles along the Suwannee River from Big Shoals west to Mill Creek in Twin Rivers State Forest.

Scenic views abound, starting with the beauty of Big Shoals, Florida’s only Class III whitewater, and Little Shoals, a favorite for passing kayakers with its Class II whitewater fun. But what makes the Suwannee so special for hikers is the rugged terrain. Hundreds of small streams and springs feed the river’s 229-mile course, and the

trail drops down into and climbs back out of steep rocky ravines cut by these tributaries. One of the highest points on the Florida Trail is Devil’s Mountain, rising 130 feet above the river, with a commanding view in the wintertime of the surrounding lowlands. Backpackers enjoy this section not just for the challenge but for the camping. When the river is low, beautiful white sand beaches provide places to pitch a tent. Or take in the landscape from the top of the bluffs.



FLORIDA TRAIL SUWANNEE SECTION

★ trailheads ■ access points



THE FLORIDA TRAIL AT WHITE SPRINGS

US 129. The Florida Trail passes under the Suwannee River bridge on the north side of the river. Access from the parking area at Suwannee Springs is via their trails and the old US 129 bridge, or you can walk up the road from Spirit of the Suwannee. This trail crossing is south of the I-75 / Jasper interchange and north of the I-10 / Live Oak interchange.

Camp Branch Conservation Area. Look for the small sign on the left headed east along CR 25 after you pass under I-75. Follow the access road back to this trailhead for the mountain bike

system. Follow the blue-blazed trail downhill for half a mile to the orange-blazed Florida Trail. A connected blue-blazed loop is the scenic and rugged half-mile Disappearing Creek Trail.

CR 25. The Florida Trail touches CR 25 briefly near Sal Marie Branch.

White Springs. Park at the Nature & Tourism Heritage Center or at Stephen Foster State Park (near the gazebo). Please inform rangers if you plan to leave your car overnight.

Little Shoals Trailhead. A well-maintained dirt and gravel access road leads east off US 41 just north of the agricultural inspection station to this trailhead parking area.

Ivy Ridge Studios. Follow Morrell Drive (off Lassie Black Drive) to the end. Park next to the studios. Access is for visitors to the studios.

Deep Creek Trailhead. Several miles east of US 441 on the south side of NE Drew Rd, this large parking area is the primary access point on the north side of the Osceola National Forest.

West Tower. Off FR 233 at the designated campground adjoining the tower. Tent camping, water, latrine.

Turkey Run Trailhead. A large parking area in the heart of the Osceola National Forest along CR 250.

WHERE TO STAY

Sophia Jane Adams House
16513 River St
386-397-1915
\$85-115

Suwannee River Motel
U.S. 41, P.O. Box 412
386-397-2822
\$30-34, small pets welcome

Historic Telford Hotel
16521 River St.
386-397-2000
\$65, shared baths

Lee's Country Campground
I-75, Exit 439
386-397-4132
call for rates

Kelly's RV Park
142 NW Kelly Ln
866-355-9600
www.kellysrvpark.com
\$30 RV, \$55 cabin

Stephen Foster Campground
US 41 N
800-326-3521
www.reserveamerica.com
\$16 tent, \$90 cabin

Suwannee Valley Campground
786 NW Stephen Foster Dr
866-397-1667
www.suwanneevalleycampground

www.whitesprings.org



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