

Search,
Discover,
Share

A Simple Guide to Places to go Scouting!

Preface

Why this book?

As an Eagle Scout, I was proud, excited and elated that my son showed interest in becoming a Tiger Cub. And as many proud parents do, I chose the path of becoming a very active Scouter, Den Leader and Cubmaster. During my tenure as a Tiger Cub Assistant, I very quickly found that there were few comprehensive, up-to-date information sources for finding and scheduling our required Go See It activities. It was not until after I had been the Cubmaster and attended several years of Roundtables, Powwows and three years University of Scouting Arts not to mention attending Wood Badge that I realized that there really was not a good current source or location for this type of information.

As a Wood Badge participant, I quickly realized that although I finished the requirements and met the goals of my "ticket" I would never be through working my ticket and now I find the next item is to complete my USA Doctorate. In seeking a project or thesis topic, I realized that my topic chose me and like my ticket it will never be complete. I can only hope that it will inspire other to help extend, maintain and improve upon this first draft or to even take this one step farther and create an interactive online version.

Audience

This guide is intended to be a quick reference for use by Scout Leaders and Scouts looking for locations and ideas for activities. Due to the dynamic nature of some of its content such as prices, hours, and current activities, it is best to make sure you check with the actual organizations before making plans. Any prices, hours and activities are merely the advertised prices at the time of this documents publication and do NOT reflect any agreements or negotiated contracts. They are merely intended to give reasonable estimates of costs, seasonality and availability.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank all of those who assisted me with this project by sharing their favorite places to go and allow our boys to play this wonderful game we call scouting. If you find this guide beneficial, I hope that you will contribute your time and effort to improving, maintaining and sharing it. If you like it, please send it to a fellow scouter or friend but please do not attempt sell it or its contents.

Much of the information was taken from many of the public websites and public advertising sources. Any direct quotations from any of these resources are the intellectual property of the respective sources. This document is intended as merely consolidation and means of easily locating the information they provide.

How to use this Guide

This guide begins with event ideas, planning tips and guidelines; followed by several chapters containing detailed information broken down by organization or location type. If you are feeling curious or lucky or just can't decide on where to hold your next event, I recommend that you close your eyes and just flip through the pages to see where you land.

Table of Contents

Preface	1
Why this book?	1
Audience	1
Acknowledgements.....	1
How to use this Guide.....	1
What do YOU want to do?	4
Bicycling	4
Camping	4
Health, Safety and Preparation.....	5
Training and Information on Policies	5
Training and Information on Camping	5
Fishing	5
Hiking	6
Geocaching.....	6
Reenactments and Rendezvous.....	7
Sporting Events	7
A Quick Word About Service Projects.....	8
Where do YOU want to go?	9
Florida State Parks	9
Advantages.....	9
Disadvantages	10
Florida State Park - Alafia River.....	10
Florida State Park - Dudley Farm	10
Florida State Park - Egmont Key.....	11
Florida State Park - Gamble Plantation	11
Florida State Park - Highlands Hammock.....	12
Florida State Park - Lake Manatee	13
Florida State Park - Little Manatee River	13
Florida State Park - Madira Bickel Mound	13
Florida State Park - Myakka River	14
Florida State Park - Oscar Scherer	15
Manatee County Parks.....	15
Advantages and Disadvantages	15
Manatee County Parks – Duette Preserve.....	16
Manatee County Parks – Emerson Point Preserve	16
Manatee County Parks – Jiggs Landing	17
Manatee County Parks – Robinson Preserve.....	17
Manatee County Parks – Rye Preserve	18
Pinellas County Parks.....	18

Pinellas County Parks – Fort De Soto	19
National Parks, Monuments and Recreation Areas	19
Advantages and Disadvantages	20
National Parks – De Soto National Memorial	20
Aquariums, Museums, Nature Centers and Zoos	21
Advantages and Disadvantages	21
Apollo Beach Manatee Viewing Center	21
Bok Tower Gardens.....	22
Crowley Nature Center	22
Dakin Dairy	23
Florida Aquarium	24
Kennedy Space Center	25
Lowry Park Zoo.....	26
Manatee County – Agricultural Museum.....	27
Manatee County – Florida Maritime Museum	27
Manatee County – Manatee Village Historical Park	28
Manatee County – Palmetto Historical Park.....	28
Mixon Fruit Farms	29
MOSI – Tampa.....	29
Mote Marine Aquarium	30
Parrish Railroad Museum.....	30
South Florida Museum & Bishop Planetarium.....	31
Historic Spanish Point Park	32
Appendix A – Available Activity Cross Reference	34
Appendix B – Cub Scout Camping Information for a Pack.....	35
What do I bring?	35
Appendix C – Cub Scout Camping Checklist.....	38

What do YOU want to do?

There are so many activities and adventures available for Cub Scouts and Scouts. With that being said, so many times we find ourselves doing the same activities over and over again. "Scouting is a game with a purpose." However, like all games if you just play it over and over again it will get old and boring. So when was the last time you tried something new with your unit? Here are a few ideas...

BICYCLING

All scouts love to climb on a bicycle, scooter and show off their speed or skills as tricksters. Bicycle trips that include a safety inspection and picnic are guaranteed to bring out a large group. Not to mention that it counts as a safety event for your Annual Unit Award. Here you can find the [BSA Bike Safety Guidelines](#)

Things you should remember when holding a cycling event is group the boys by skill level, emphasize safety and do a quick inspection and don't forget to emphasize "Leave No Trace" courtesy practices. Often we must hold these events in public areas, so we need to ensure that our Scouts demonstrate the values and principals we are trying to teach them.

Skill level is a key factor in choosing the appropriate locations and helmets are required by law in many places. Several parks require additional safety equipment like elbow and knee pads, or even specific off-road shin guards, shoulder and chest pads. A location like Alafia River will offer challenges to all levels but also provides an opportunity for someone to attempt to exceed their skill level. This usually results in some avoidable injuries so a safety inspection and skill test should be the first activity of the day.

Last but not least, make sure you have enough snacks, cold fresh water for all to remain hydrated, and don't forget the first-aid kit for the few skinned knees that are guaranteed to occur.

CAMPING

Almost everyone loves a campout BUT... when you say campout everyone interprets this in a different way. To many family campers their idea of a campout is a night in their air-conditioned RV at Disney. One thing to remember is that with Cub Scouts many families have never camped before and have no idea of what should occur or how. So Cubmasters, the key to great camping events is preparation, coordination and communications. All three of these must be completed well in advance to the actual camping event. That being said, camping can be a great way to spend a weekend doing a Derby event.

Family camping is an important part of the Cub Scout program. Each year my unit participates in at least one pack overnight campout and usually several council or district family camping events. Cub Scout camping is a family event. That means that everyone in your entire family including siblings is welcome. Regardless of the type of camping event, with Cub Scout camping you can always count on having bathroom facilities, clean fresh water and a safe camping environment for the entire family. Typically there are two types of Cub Scout family camping events: Pack Overnights and Council or District Events.

Pack overnight campouts – These are pack-organized overnight camping activities involving more than one family from our pack. These must be conducted at council approved locations with a planned age-appropriate scouting activities or program. These are typically "entry level" camping experiences where it is expected that we have many cub scouts and families camping for the first time. At these events, the pack volunteers and parents typically plan and prepare meals together for the entire pack. We also have volunteers assist with the cleanup and other camp duties including assisting less experienced campers with preparing and setting up their camping equipment.

Council or District camping events – These are organized by the local council or district and often held at Boy Scout camps, special event locations and any council or district selected location. These events often offer special activities that are not typically available to a single pack, in addition to, meals being planned, prepared and served to you. Of course, they typically charge per person for these events. There are several of these events planned or approved throughout the year by our council and district.

Of course, if a parent or scout really does not want to camp overnight; they should always be welcomed to just “day camp” and attend the daily events. Overnight camping should always be totally optional. If a family is interested in camping but doesn’t have any experience. Ensure that they feel free to arrive on Saturday, observe, participate and enjoy. They can decide to stay or leave at any time. Many times families will arrive early on Saturday morning and only camp one night to help avoid having to set camp up in the dark on Friday evening. Encourage them to use their own good judgment and experience level in deciding what is right for them and their family. Regardless of when they arrive, they should be able to always count on having fun and getting assistance from other experienced camping families in the pack.

Health, Safety and Preparation

As with all scouting activities proper preparation, planning and a few rules will help ensure that every event is fun, safe and enjoyable for everyone. We have BSA approved health, safety and youth protection guidelines that apply at all scouting events. All youth participants including siblings and relatives must be supervised at all times by a parent, guardian or parent specified adult (This requires a special form).

Training and Information on Policies

My unit highly recommends that all parents familiarize themselves with all of these policies by taking the free online training courses available at MyScouting.org. This will better help your parents understand the rules and policies that all must follow when camping safely with the pack. This is especially important with our BSA Youth Protection Policies since they govern many of the practices we all must follow while camping. Remember, every pack member is responsible for being familiar with and following the BSA approved policies and procedures during ALL pack events. No excuses!

Training and Information on Camping

If you really want to learn more about Cub Scout camping, you can take the Basic Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) course when it is offered throughout the year. This one day course will teach you camping skills, planning and familiarize you with the policies that we all must follow. There is an even more comprehensive camping course available for Webelos leaders and parents called Outdoor Webelos Leader Skills (OWLS). You should encourage your parents to check with the pack trainer, camping coordinator, council website, or the Cubmaster for more information on any of these courses.

FISHING

Baden-Powell once offered the advice: “Every Scout ought to be able to fish in order to get food for himself” Of course, we don’t have to fish for food much anymore but I don’t know of too many Cub or Boy Scouts that don’t like fishing. And with all of the fishing belt loops, pins, merit badges and patch programs out there it makes it easy to provide a great program for scouts of all ages. When you are planning to hold a fishing event, I would recommend that you search the internet for any local fishing rodeos or tournaments. Many times there are free youth categories that your unit can take advantage of.

One organization that many scouters don’t know about is **Take Me Fishing™**. You can find information on their scouting fishing programs at: www.takemefishing.org/community/scouting/home.

HIKING

If you asked a boy why he wanted to join the Scouts, his answer will probably be “To go Camping, Hiking and play games with his buddies” Hiking is a terrific way to explore unknown areas and keep your body and mind in top shape. Regardless of the age of the scout or the location of the event, you can almost always find a place to hike.

With Cub Scouts no campout or event is complete without at least a short hike (with sticks of course). In my pack, Cub Scouts can only use two types of sticks: cooking and hiking. Of course, hiking sticks have one end that is almost always on the ground and never have a sharp point. Cooking sticks have a sharp point but always have food on that end. “Hiking sticks” are well-behaved sticks that would never ever be seen being used for poking, swords fighting, bats or swinging sticks. The only other sticks we have are firewood and of course we don’t play with firewood.

One practice that has been recommended is that you start a program for earning your hiking stick. The right to have and use a hiking stick requires the simple act of completing the Hiking Belt Loop safety and leave no trace requirements. Once earned, a hiking stick can be marked starting at the bottom of course with tick marks for miles. Each scout is encouraged to “customize” his own stick and since it now becomes a treasured piece of equipment, the mere thought of losing the stick helps minimize bruise and bumps from the occasional “misbehaving hiking stick”.

Even Tiger Cubs can complete a 3-4 mile hike provided their Adult partner has plenty of water, a couple of snacks and a little patience. So feel free to schedule or take a little more challenging hike for the Boys. Longer hikes may require a lunch break and each scout should be encouraged to carry their own water. Regardless of the length, make sure you are “Prepared” for the unexpected and always carry at least a small first-aid kit.

Night hikes can also be a really great way for Cubs to have fun and burn up that last bit of energy on a campout. Any opportunity to use a flashlight is met with cheers and excitement. When planning a night hike for Cubs don’t forget the glow sticks! Not only are they fun but they make an excellent way of seeing each scout and counting scouts. We have even held glow stick only hikes with our more adventurous Cubs.

Last but not least, you can always spice up a hike with a scavenger hunt, treasure hunt or find the most creatures or plant identification games. I have even been known to have a contest to see who can collect the most tenderfoot treasures (collecting trash using gloves of course.)

GEOCACHING

Everybody loves a treasure hunt. In the past, scouts used maps, compasses and counted steps to find their treasures. Today, many scouts experience the same thrill of exploration and discovery through Geocaching. With the latest technology and a little assistance from an Adult even a Cub scouts can experience the joy of finding hidden treasures. Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (a container) hidden at that location.

The rules for geocaching are very simple:

1. Take something from the cache
2. Leave something in the cache
3. Write about your find in the log book
4. Log your experience (www.geocaching.com)

If you want to learn more about Geocaching, you can find all you need to know at: www.geocaching.com

REENACTMENTS AND RENDEZVOUS

When you are looking for a really unique outing, don't forget to look into local historical reenactments and rendezvous events. There are a wide variety of these ranging from Civil War and Native American events to Mountain Man rendezvous and Renaissance Fairs.

Known for being one of the largest and most well-known Mountain Man Rendezvous east of the Mississippi is the Alafia River Rendezvous. It is an annual gathering at which history buffs create and live in camps to re-enact what life was like before 1840 in America during one of the periodic gatherings for pioneers, hunters, Native Americans and merchants. The participants, wearing period clothing, demonstrate the ways pioneers coped with the hardships of life in that era.

Re-enactors portray early inhabitants from various cultures, including Native American, British, Irish, Scottish, French and Spanish, as well as American. If you want more information on the Alafia River Rendezvous you can find it at the sponsor organizations website: www.floridafrontiersmen.org.

Several other reenactments occur annually at many of the state parks and historical locations including the Gamble Plantation. Scouts of all ages are always amazed at the sound of a firing canon, the crack of a musket or the many sounds of an encampment regardless of the period or era. Many times these encampments welcome the scouts and have activities form them to participate in such as games, chores or crafts. One source of information on Civil War Reenactments is:

www.floridareenactorsonline.com/EventRoster.htm. A source for Seminole Indian War Reenactments can be found at www.floridafrontierguard.com.

If Native American celebrations and history interests you and your scouts you can find information and schedules at the Florida Heritage Trails website: www.visitflorida.com/native_american_heritage_trail.

Regardless of your interest, these events offer our scouts opportunities to experience history firsthand and insights into our past. Definitely consider including these events into your unit event calendars.

SPORTING EVENTS

Almost everybody has a favorite sport that they like to watch or participate in. But often when we think of sporting events to attend we think of profession sports teams and franchises. Regardless of the sport, tickets for professional games and sporting events often present a financial challenge for many of our scouting families and units. Luckily many franchises have group rates and special event days that can lessen the cost for attending. Make sure that if you want to include such an activity that you consider cost, research the special discount dates, remember there are typically addition costs for parking and other incidentals (food); and allow plenty of time for the attendees to earn or save for the admission. I recommend that if you schedule a professional sporting event, schedule another unit event for that month so that people can choose to attend either, both or none. This provides a great opportunity for all to be active without having to bear undue costs.

Another challenge with many sporting events is that the general public does not always follow our values and policies. A great example is baseball and beer. Of course no leader would consider purchasing or consuming an alcoholic beverage when in uniform at a scouting event; but many times the parents need to be reminded that there is a no alcohol policy at ALL scouting events. So even though the person sitting beside you is going to follow his values, you must still follow our policies. I find that typically if all scouts are in uniform then many people will be more considerate and moderate in their behaviors. Regardless, be

prepared to have to explain to your Cub Scouts that someone is behaving inappropriately and demonstrating why a scout does not drink and should always be courteous.

Don't forget that there are many other ways to attend sporting events that are either less expensive or even free. Besides the big leagues there are often minor league events that are seldom crowded and much less expensive. If your local team does not have a Scout Night Special event with group rates or a special offer, definitely contact them. I have found that they are always willing to make a special event just for your group. These often not only include discount tickets but sometimes discounted food, merchandise and an opportunity to promote scouting. Many times your unit can provide service as a color guard or assist with logistics in some way and earn free admission for some scouts. Remember, be creative, flexible and use your resources.

Another favorite of mine is High School athletic events. There is seldom alcohol served at these events and the prices are often very economical. Often Junior Varsity games are held on School nights so they tend to be earlier and free of charge.

A QUICK WORD ABOUT SERVICE PROJECTS...

While we always have a great time on our events and follow the principles of "**Leave No Trace**". We should also try to remember that Scouting is a service organization. If at all possible, we should provide some form of a service to the community or to others when we hold an event. Yes, it can be as simple as cleaning up a little trash; but we should consider assisting with the event when possible. Older scouts can help with parking, be couriers and assist with logistical support. Handing out schedules, programs or other information at a festival or event is an excellent way for Cub Scouts to provide service. Just remember to wear your uniforms and follow safe scouting policies and practices at ALL events.

When planning a scouting event, we should always consider scheduling time for a service project to help improve the environment or the location that is hosting our events. We all have a little time for pulling a few weeds; mulching a flower bed; planting a tree or shrub; or possibly, sweeping, raking, cleaning or painting when we are at an event. These simple acts can go far to not only make a location a better place but also to promote Scouting, its values and ideals.

Where do YOU want to go?

There are so many excellent locations for Scouts to enjoy. In fact there are so many that I could never compile or maintain a complete and accurate list by myself. I have researched and gathered here a few of the favorites from fellow Scouters, my experiences and some I just wanted to visit. Listed in the following sections is information on many locations and where to find more information on them. Since fees and special events change periodically, this information or scheduling information has not been included here. I would recommend that you always review the websites, check with the council and contact the locations to ensure that they are safe, approved and appropriate for your unit.

FLORIDA STATE PARKS

State Parks are one our state's best resources for Scouting Opportunities. There is no limit to the opportunities available for Scouts to hold activities for not only fun but also for providing service to our communities and others. One thing to remember is that these valuable resources are used by many other groups and often these groups provide public events such as heritage festivals, historical reenactment's, and even public events like fishing clinics.

PLANNING TIP! Make sure that you check with the Florida State Park website for the parks you plan to visit. These parks host many special events and dates where park admission is waived.

The activities available at each park vary widely from bicycling, camping, canoeing, hiking to nature viewing and museums. Be sure to take the Age-appropriate Guidelines for Scouting activities and the skill levels necessary for participation in these activities. In some cases, there is a broad range of skill levels available; however, in some cases the skill level required for a particular location, trail or activity will make it unsuitable for activities for younger scouts, family members and even some adults.

One of the best sources for up-to-date information for all Florida State Parks is the [Florida State Park Website \(www.floridastateparks.org\)](http://www.floridastateparks.org). At this site, you can find information on planning events, making reservations, fees and much more.

PLANNING TIP! Make sure that you check with the Florida State Park website for the Park alerts! These alerts will give you current information on unavailable amenities, facilities and activities.

Many Parks have facilities that may be flooded certain times of the year or that may be closed for hunting or maintenance activities.

Advantages

There are many advantages to holding activities at Florida State Parks. These include a wide-range of activities and facilities, in addition to, many parks having accommodations for special access needs. Often, the facilities can be reserved, can accommodate groups of almost any size and can host participants of various skill levels. State parks typically have full-time staff to provide assistance and information. Most parks provide paved roads, hiking paths and easy access to all facilities.

Most Florida State Parks are able to accommodate not only day trips but also multiple night camping events with facilities ranging from primitive remote to group camp sites with full facilities, electricity and special

needs access. This is extremely important when planning family camping activities for Cub Scout units or when trying to ensure your scouts are provided with more interesting, exciting or challenging overnights.

One distinct advantage to camping at a Florida State Park is that these often are already on the councils list of approved Scout camping facilities. Due to the number of individual parks, it is almost guaranteed that you will have at least one if not several within close proximity to your unit so if your preferred destination is unavailable you can probably find another quickly and close by.

Last but not least is the amount of and easy access to information available on each park. This information is invaluable in planning, scheduling and conducting an event.

Disadvantages

Almost all state parks have usage fees for some if not all activities. These fees vary based on park and although some group rates are available you may be required to charge a per participant fee for usage. Often the parks close at dusk and reopen on a schedule. This can cause issues with late arriving participants in some situations. Demand for access to and the high use of many of these facilities can make planning and scheduling difficult. This can be especially evident during certain times of the year. In order to schedule a specific location; reservations and plans may have to be finalized and made months in advance.

As with any public venue, you will encounter a broad range of individuals and not all of them will know or appreciate the Scouting core values, policies or even the principles of "Leave No Trace". Special considerations may be necessary to ensure scouting policies are followed in an acceptable safe environment.

Florida State Park - Alafia River

Alafia River State Park is known for its challenging off road bicycling trails. This reclaimed phosphate mine is home to over 17 miles of bike trails of various skill levels from beginner to extreme. Other activities include bird watching, canoeing, hiking, equestrian trails and fishing. Camping facilities range from primitive to RV. Picnic pavilions with playgrounds, Volleyball and horse-shoe pits are available.

With access to the Alafia River, abundant wildlife and an additional 20 miles of hiking trails, this park provides interesting and fun opportunities for Cub Scouts, in addition to, challenging activities for Scouts of all ages.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight
Facilities for: Bicycling, Birding, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing, Geocaching, Hiking, Picnicking
Website: www.floridastateparks.org/AlafiaRiver
Telephone: 813.672.5320
Address: 14326 South County Road 39, Lithia, Florida 33547

Florida State Park - Dudley Farm

This authentic working farm is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Here you can see the evolution of Florida farming from the 1850s to the mid-1940s. Three generations of the Dudley family lived and worked on this homestead. This is an authentic working farm consisting of 18 buildings, including the family farmhouse with original furnishings, a 1880s kitchen outbuilding, a general store and post office, and a functional cane syrup complex. Park staff members wearing period clothing perform the daily chores,

raise crops and tend to the livestock. Special events at the farm include seasonal cane grindings, corn shucking's and displays of heritage varieties of livestock and plants.

The visitor center, picnic facilities, and nature trail with abundant wildlife provide a great opportunity for Cubs and their families to enjoy a picnic, a hike and a visit to a living museum.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Hiking, Picnicking, Tours, Exploring Historical Site
Website: www.floridastateparks.org/DudleyFarm
Telephone: 352.472.1142
Address: 18730 W. Newberry Road, Newberry, Florida 32669

Florida State Park - Egmont Key

This park is located at the mouth of Tampa Bay, southwest of Fort De Soto Beach. Although this park is primarily a wildlife refuge and requires special accommodations for transportation to and from the island, it can be great location to hike, view wildlife, explore history and hold a picnic. Accessible only by private boat or private paid ferry services, Egmont Key has a unique natural and cultural history, including a lighthouse that has stood since 1858. This island has served as a camp for captured Seminoles, was occupied by the Union Navy during the Civil war and was the site of Fort Dade. In 1898, as the Spanish - American War threatened, Fort Dade was built on the island and remained active until 1923.

PLANNING TIP! If you plan ahead you can schedule an overnight camping event at Fort De Soto Park and schedule council approved transportation to and from the island for an awesome Cub Scout overnight family Camping event with opportunities to explore both parks.

After touring the historic sites, the working light house and many trails, visitors can enjoy fishing, wildlife viewing, and picnicking. This island is home to more than 200 Gopher tortoises and is a great location to bird watch and even see the occasional manatee.

There are several special events during the year including the "Discover the Island!" annual event. This event typically includes Civil War re-enactments, interpretive sites on wildlife, history and nature, in addition to, children's games and historical society presentation's.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Fishing, Hiking, Picnicking, Swimming, Exploring Fort
Website: www.floridastateparks.org/EgmontKey
Telephone: 727.893.2627
Address: #1 Causeway Boulevard, Dunedin, Florida 34698

Florida State Park - Gamble Plantation

Located in Ellenton on U.S. 301 East, this historic plantation house is the only surviving plantation house in South Florida. It was home to Major Robert Gamble and the headquarters of an extensive sugar plantation. It is believed that Judah P. Benjamin, the confederate secretary of state, took refuge here after the fall of the Confederacy while his safe passage to England was secured. The mansion is fully furnished as it would have

been furnished during the mid-19th Century. Six guided tours of the house are scheduled during the day for a fee.

The visitor center and picnic facilities are available for use on the grounds Thursday through Monday; however, it is always closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Special events like the Annual Spring Open House offer special opportunities to visit this historical site with no admission fees. This annual event offers a Civil War Re-enactment encampment, ladies wearing period clothing, music, crafts and free tours.

While I would highly recommend this site for a Den outing or small unit tour, this is a small historical site and unless you are attending one of the events; there is not a lot to keep a Scouts interest. That being said, this site offers excellent opportunities for units or scouts wanting a location to do a service project.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Den Activities and Scout Service Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Picnicking, Exploring Historic Site, Tours
Website: www.floridastateparks.org/GamblePlantation
Telephone: 941.723.4536
Address: 3708 Patten Avenue, Ellenton, Florida 34222

Florida State Park - Highlands Hammock

Opened in 1931 and further developed by the CCC, Highlands Hammock State Park is one of Florida's oldest parks. This Park has an elevated boardwalk that allows visitors to enjoy a walk through an old-growth cypress swamp. In addition to that, there are nine hiking trails and a 3-mile paved loop that is perfect for a Cub Scout biking event.

Having camped at this Park as a youth and enjoyed it, I recommend using either the Group campsites or the full-facility campsites for a unit overnight camping event. I have encountered several Cub Scout units using the facility and it even has a recreation hall available for rental. This would make an excellent site for a Derby weekend event.

PLANNING TIP! Plan ahead when you want to visit this State Park. There are several scheduled public events that offer opportunities for Scouts to experience new things; however, they can complicate the logistics and often will require reservations to be made well in advance for those weekends.

This park is often used for the Annual Civilian Conservation Corps Festival and the Music in the Park Concert Series. Both of these events offer entertainment and the CCC Festival has living history presentations, arts and crafts, educational exhibits, tram tours, hay rides and much more.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight
Facilities for: Bicycling, Campfires, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing, Geocaching, Hiking, Picnicking, Swimming, Tram Tours
Website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/HighlandsHammock>
Telephone: 863.386.6094

Address: 5931 Hammock Road, Sebring, Florida 33872

Florida State Park - Lake Manatee

While Lake Manatee State park is named for manatees, you will not find a manatee there. This park is located on the southern shore of the Lake Manatee water reservoir. It offers an excellent opportunity to go fishing, hiking, picnicking and camping with facilities for families.

If you are looking for a great place to hold a bicycle or fishing event or just a nice place for a weekend campout this may be a location for you. There is a swimming area; however, there are no lifeguards provided and conditions are not always favorable for swimming.

Since this park is located near the De Soto Speedway, it provides an interesting opportunity to combine camping and a trip to the raceway. Of course, if are looking for a quiet campout being near the De Soto Speedway is not a location for you. If you are into racing, you should check out the information on De Soto Speedway found in this guide.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities

Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight

Facilities for: Bicycling, Boating, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing, Geocaching, Hiking, Picnicking, Swimming

Website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/LakeManatee>

Telephone: 941.741.3028

Address: 20007 State Road 64, Bradenton, Florida 34212

Florida State Park - Little Manatee River

Located near Wimauma, the Little Manatee River State Park provides many opportunities for hiking, fishing and camping. The youth camping area only accommodates 20 people so this park is not for big units. There are several primitive campsites located along hiking trails for those wanting to backpack.

This park has many pavilions that may be reserved for a fee; however, unreserved pavilions are available on a first-come-first-serve basis for free. There are many places to fish along the river.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities

Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight

Facilities for: Campfires, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing, Hiking, Picnicking

Website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/LittleManateeRiver>

Facilities for: Campfires, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing, Hiking, Picnicking

Telephone: 813.671.5005

Address: 215 Lightfoot Road, Wimauma, Florida 33598

Florida State Park - Madira Bickel Mound

Although it is not much to look at from a distance, this small ancient Native American site was the first to be designated a State Archeological Site. Archeological excavations of this flat-topped ceremonial mound have disclosed at least three periods of Native American Cultures with the earliest dating back 2,000 years.

This small park is part of the Trail of Florida's Indian Heritage and is excellent for a short Weekend Den outing and is free for all to enjoy. There are picnic tables and a paved trail and elevated stairway that will

allow Cub Scouts to easily explore this 20 foot tall mound of shell, sand and village debris. This site also offers opportunities for Scouts and Leaders to volunteer or provide service. There are future plan for a nature trail and historical kiosk.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Den Activity
Activity Types: Exploring Historical Site and Picnicking
Facilities for: Hiking, Picnicking
Website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/MadiraBickelMound>
Telephone: 941.723.4536
Address: Bayshore Drive, Palmetto, Florida

Florida State Park - Myakka River

With 58 square miles of wetlands, prairies, hammock and pinelands, Myakka River State Park is one of the oldest and largest state parks. This park has something for every unit and level of scouting. From bike trails to visitor centers this park provides you and your Scouts opportunities to participate in many activities at every level.

The Wooden canopy walkway in the tree tops will allow Cub Scouts to check out the view from above and walk across a fun swinging bridge walkway. There is even a 75 foot wooden tower at the end.

From hiking and nature trails with boardwalks to primitive camping in remote areas, you Scouts are almost guaranteed to have fun. If hiking is not your kettle of fish, try fishing, bicycling on or off-road or maybe catch an airboat tour of the lake and its large populations of alligators, birds and turtles. If you prefer a tram tour, you will find armadillos, wild pigs, deer and turkeys in many areas of the park.

If you are looking for a Ranger Program you can check at the Ranger station for an updated schedule of Programs and Ranger Talks. The visitor center, picnic facilities, and many trails with abundant wildlife provide a great opportunity for Cubs and their families to enjoy a picnic, a hike and a visit to a museum. Campsites range from Full-facility to youth group areas.

For older or more adventurous Scouts, the two lower lakes and hiking trails offer a little more remote area to fish and hike. Or there are 6 primitive campsites that can only be reached by hiking or bicycling. If you plan to use these sites you will have to make special accommodations for water and sanitation since water may or may not be available at the campsites.

There are three tent camping areas that can be reserved up to 60 days in advance. Each of these can accommodate up to 20 people. These sites have water, picnic tables, a Campfire circle and full restroom facilities with hot showers.

This park also hosts several public events so make sure you check the website for scheduling your event. Some of the events are quite popular and some are not totally scout appropriate.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight
Facilities for: Bicycling, Birding, Boating, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing, Geocaching, Hiking, Picnicking, Tram and Airboat Tours
Website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/MyakkaRiver>
Telephone: 941.361.6511
Address: 13208 State Road 72, Sarasota, Florida 34241

Florida State Park - Oscar Scherer

Oscar Scherer Park is one of the busiest parks in our area. This park hosts events like the Sarasota Folk Festival, the Kiwanis Fish-a-thon and many other social events. Limited to Canoeing and Kayaking within the Park boundaries, there are many opportunities for fishing and boating. But that is not all that there is to this park. Fifteen miles of trails offer excellent hiking, bicycling and wildlife viewing.

Several picnic areas and pavilions can be reserved for a fee and the park has campsites for group camping, as well as, full facility sites. There are many ranger guided programs available so make sure you check the website for the topics, schedules and other program information. Regularly scheduled Campfire programs, guided walks and youth craft programs are available.

- Recommended For:** Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
- Activity Types:** Day Trips and Overnight
- Facilities for:** Bicycling, Campfires, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing Hiking, Picnicking, Swimming, Tours
- Website:** <http://www.floridastateparks.org/oscarscherer>
- Telephone:** 941. 483.5956
- Address:** 1843 S. Tamiami Trail, Osprey, Florida 34229

MANATEE COUNTY PARKS

We are very fortunate in Manatee County to have several excellent County Parks and Recreation areas that are free and have excellent facilities for many different activities. While these are public areas, many have facilities that can be reserved for your unit. Some even have group camping areas available for youth groups to reserve.

While these parks do get a lot of use from local residents, many times you will find these parks seem almost deserted especially in the late spring, summer and early fall when there are fewer seasonal residents in Manatee County.

PLANNING TIP! Make sure that you check with the park you plan to visit. These parks host many special events and dates where park will be full or parking can be a challenge.

Advantages and Disadvantages

These locations have all of the many advantages of the State Parks; however, several do not require daily access fees. If you choose to reserve a picnic area or pavilion you will find that there are fees required; however, it is often free to just go for a hike or for a bicycle ride.

Since these parks are intended for general population usage and offer full access for visitors with disabilities, you will find many paved and well-kept trails with benches for rest, relaxation or just watching wildlife. Yes, you will find a large variety of wildlife including Bald Eagles, Osprey, and Gopher Turtles just to mention a few.

Due to the public nature of these facilities, they have the same disadvantages with the exception that often they do not charge the daily access.

You can find the most up-to-date information on educational events at the Manatee County Parks at <http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/nrd-headlines/edu-program.html>.

Since often these events are free this is a great place to find some fun activities for your unit. Remember, many of these do require reservations so check for availability and plan fast if you have a big group.

Manatee County Parks – Duette Preserve

Duette Preserve is the largest Preserve in the Manatee County Park System. The 21,000 acre management area serves as the principle water source for Manatee and Sarasota counties. Many diverse species of game and non-game animals can be found there, including many of special concern such as burrowing owls, snowy egrets, white ibis, gopher tortoises, scrub jays and the eastern indigo snake.

The preserve is home to several historic homestead sites and Carruthers Mound, a Native American mound site. With that being said, Duette preserve has some very nice Hiking, Bicycling and nature trails. There is a Picnic Pavilion available by reservation (must be made two weeks ahead) or on a First-come-first-serve basis.

PLANNING TIP! Make sure that you check with the park office before you schedule your outing. This Park schedule's several special Managed Hunting events and may be closed due to hunting activities.

One of the lesser known events is a free Ranger and Naturalist lead Wagon Tour called “*Discover Duette – Active Exploration at Duette Preserve.*” This event is only scheduled a couple of times a year so check the website for the dates. Reservations for the tour are required and can be made at 941.792.8314.

- Recommended For:** Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
- Activity Types:** Day Trips
- Facilities for:** Bicycling, Camping, Fishing Hiking, Picnicking
- Website:** <http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/resource-management/duette-preserve.html>
- Telephone:** 941.776.2295
- Address:** 2649 Rawls Road
Duette, FL 34251

Manatee County Parks – Emerson Point Preserve

Emerson Point Preserve is a 364 acre preserve located at the mouth of the Manatee River where it meets Lower Tampa Bay. Located at the tip of Snead Island, Scouts can take in the beauty of native wildlife and plant communities while exploring prehistoric and historic sites. At Emerson Point Preserve, you will find the Portavant Temple Mound, southwest Florida's largest Native American Temple Mound and midden complex.

Multi-use trails and boardwalks are aligned so that the natural habitat and cultural resources will be protected. There are two small picnic shelters available for small gatherings. There is also a large ten table picnic shelter available for rental/reservation. A canoe/kayak launch allows access to the tidal canals and Terra Ceia Bay.

Emerson Point's facilities include bicycling, hiking and nature trails, raised boardwalks, picnic areas, an environmental education center and an Observation tower. All of these make this an excellent location for Cub Scout Activities like a Day hike, and Picnic or a Bicycle Safety Rodeo and quick Ride. Your Scouts can explore the Mound Site and learn about the native eco-systems at the educational center. And no trip to Emerson is complete without climbing the Observation Tower and seeing the view of the entire park.

Make sure that you check the Manatee County Event Calendar so that you can participate in the many events available at this park. From educational programs about Native Americans to Wagon and Kayaking tours; I am sure that there is an event for you and your unit to enjoy. When you visit, don't forget to inquire about what your Scouts can do to help the park for their Service Projects. This park often needs seedlings planted, non-native species removed and other light maintenance that even Cub Scouts can participate in. For older scouts there are many opportunities for service projects or to be a park volunteer.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Bicycling, Fishing Hiking, Picnicking
Website: <http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/resource-management/emerson-point.html>
Telephone: 941.721.6885
Address: 5801 17th Street West
Palmetto, FL 34221

Manatee County Parks – Jiggs Landing

Purchased in 1944 by Al (Jiggs) and Agnes Metcalf with a dream of creating a fish camp on the Braden river, Jiggs Landing has served Manatee County for more than 40 Years. This preserve offers freshwater fishing and canoeing opportunities on Evers Reservoir and the Braden River. If you are looking for a great place to hold an evening fishing belt loop session and picnic then I know the place for you. Jiggs Landing has been renovated and has not only a great picnic area but also boardwalks, docks and a nature-themed Playground.

If you're looking for a place for your scouts to canoe, kayak or motor boat then Jiggs Landing has excellent facilities for practicing dock work and other boating skills. This site includes an accessible canoe/kayak launch for challenged Scouts to access the Braden River.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities.
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Boating, Canoeing, Fishing Picnicking
Website: <http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/resource-management/jiggs-landing.html>
Telephone: 941.742.5980 Ext. 1807
Address: 6106 63rd Street East
Bradenton, FL

Manatee County Parks – Robinson Preserve

Robinson Preserve is a 487-acre sanctuary that has undergone an incredible transformation from disturbed farmland to coastal and wetland habitats. This park features numerous hiking and biking trails, a canoe and kayak launch, an observation tower, picnic areas and a visitor center not to mention plenty of places to fish.

This park is home to Bald Eagles, Gopher Tortoise and many more amazing creatures and access to all areas is via paved or packed shell trails. This park also has a group camp site available by reservation. These facilities make for a great place to take your Cub Scouts for not only a Day Trip but also a weekend overnight campout. From exploring tidal flats on the bay to fishing in the many canals that are home to redfish, trout and snook; I guarantee there is something for of your Cubs to find to do.

Like Emerson Point, you should make sure that you check the Manatee County Event Calendar so that you can participate in the many events available at this park. From Butterfly walks to nighttime star walks, there are many educational activities available. When you visit, don't forget to inquire about what your Scouts can do to help the park for their Service Projects. This park often needs seedlings planted, non-native species removed and other light maintenance that even Cub Scouts can participate in. For older scouts there are many opportunities for service projects or to be a park volunteer.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight
Facilities for: Bicycling, Camping, Canoeing, Fishing, Hiking, Picnicking, Rollerblading
Website: <http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/resource-management/robinson-preserve.html>
Telephone: 941.748.4501 Ext. 1807
Address: 1704 99th Street Northwest
Bradenton, FL 34209

Manatee County Parks – Rye Preserve

Rye Preserve is a 145 acre slice of old Florida. This park features many nature trails, picnic areas and a playground. Rye Preserve's unique trail system leads you through several distinct ecosystems. Here you can view interesting wildlife, early Manatee County Pioneer History and the last remaining fragments of the Old Rye River community.

While there are several areas to bicycle, the trails may be too challenging for Cub Scouts; however, some Scout units may want to consider them for a short day activity.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Bicycling, Hiking, Picnicking
Website: <http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/resource-management/rye-wilderness.html>
Telephone: 941.776.0900
Address: 905 Rye Wilderness Trail
Parrish, FL 34219

PINELLAS COUNTY PARKS

Like Manatee County, Pinellas County has many excellent parks that offer all Scout units excellent locations to enjoy new adventures and environments. Like Manatee County, these public parks are often free or have only a small usage fee. If you plan to use these, I highly recommend you plan and make reservations well in advance due to high usage during certain holidays and tourist seasons.

If you want more information on all Pinellas County Parks you can find it at www.pinellascounty.org/park

Pinellas County Parks – Fort De Soto

Fort DeSoto is the largest park in Pinellas County. If you are looking for a place that has it all this is definitely one to check out. Want to walk on the beach? Want to go Camp? How about going bicycling or going to explore a historic old Fort?

Fort De Soto Park consists of 1,136 acres made up of five interconnected islands (keys). These keys are home to beach plants, mangroves, wetlands, palm hammocks, hardwoods and scores of native plants. Each of these species plays a vital role in the preservation and protection of the natural environment.

If you want to camp, you will have to plan and reserve your campsite early since this is a very popular area with many groups. If you find you cannot reserve a site, I recommend you take a day trip and go explore. Cub scouts have many activities available from bird watching and bicycling to fishing, museums and several forts to explore.

They accept reservations and can accommodate up to 90 people, by phone, up to three months in advance. There is no charge for the youth campsite. You may call 727-552-1862 between 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Monday – Friday, closed Saturday, Sunday, & holidays.

PLANNING TIP! Remember, this area is very popular. Annual park attendance averages more than 2.7 million visitors. It is usually booked exactly three months in advance. Call at 9 a.m. if you plan to reserve.

This park does charge a \$5.00 beach parking fee at the gate. Annual passes are available and anyone with a disabled permit can park is exempt. Anyone entering by bicycle or foot can enter for free.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight
Facilities for: Bicycling, Birding, Canoeing, Camping, Fishing Hiking, Picnicking, Swimming
Website: http://www.pinellascounty.org/park/05_ft_desoto
Telephone: 727.552.1862
Address: 3500 Pinellas Bayway South
Tierra Verde, FL 33715

NATIONAL PARKS, MONUMENTS AND RECREATION AREAS

There are many national parks and recreation areas throughout the state and several nearby. Whether you want to camp in a full featured facility or primitive campsite, you can always find a park, management area that meets your needs. Everything you need to know about our National Park System can be found at: www.nps.gov.

One of the greatest programs available from the National Park System is the Junior Ranger Program. **Explore, Learn, Protect...** These are the keys to the Junior Ranger Program. This program allows youth and adults to earn a Junior Ranger Badge by completing the requirements at many of the parks and national monuments. In addition, you can use the web ranger program to help educate our scouts on many interesting topics and to help teach about conservation, exploration, science, history and more. You can find additional information on the Web Ranger program at: www.nps.gov/webangers

You can find out more about all of the Florida National Parks and Recreation areas at: www.nps.gov/state/fl.

Advantages and Disadvantages

These locations have all of the many advantages of the County and State Parks. Since these parks are intended for general population usage and offer full access for visitors with disabilities.

Federal Parks are almost always staffed with a great highly trained and knowledgeable team of Rangers. Many of these rangers are educators that are retired or work part-time during summer breaks and holidays. All of these are ready and willing to share their knowledge and expertise if you just ask. In fact, each Ranger at a National Park is responsible for researching, authoring and presenting at least one “Ranger Talk” program.

Of course with all public parks and recreation areas, you will find that some are quite busy and they can be difficult to reserve on short notice. The best rule is to plan early and then you can work it into your unit’s annual schedule when you can get the location or when the park census is low.

National Parks – De Soto National Memorial

One of my favorite outings is to take a Den or the Pack to the De Soto National Monument. Here you can attend an interactive program on the De Soto expedition including hands-on exhibits of armor and equipment used by De Soto’s army. If that is not enough, there is a small hands-on museum; a video presentation; a great Junior Ranger Program; and several places to hike, picnic, fish and learn.

My typical event starts with the program and the boys earning their junior ranger badges, we have a picnic and then practice a little “Leave no trace” while we take a hike on the nature trails.

Although it is small, De Soto National Memorial also offers a mile worth of hiking trails were your scouts can experience a coastal mangrove ecosystem, featuring a 480 foot boardwalk. Park Rangers offer daily schedule trail walks along the trails for visitors who would like to learn more about the history and environment. The topics and schedule vary so this is a location that you can use over and over again.

PLANNING TIP! The living history talks and demonstrations at Camp Uzita, located in the Western portion of the park are only available from Mid-December until Mid-April. You should contact the visitor’s center for a schedule of the programs and for special events.

There are several special events during the year including a special reenactment of De Soto's landing in 1539. This held each year on the last scheduled day of the living history encampment. As with all National Parks, group tours are always welcome but they do ask that you register at least 30 days prior to your visit. There is no daily access fee or charge for any of the programs.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Fishing Hiking, Picnicking
Website: www.nps.gov/deso
Telephone: 941.792.0458
Address: 8300 De Soto Memorial Hwy.
Bradenton, FL 34209

AQUARIUMS, MUSEUMS, NATURE CENTERS AND ZOOS

With well over 300 museums listed in the Florida Association of Museums directory, I am sure that your unit can find a museum, historic location, aquarium, nature center or zoo that will interest, entertain and even thrill your scouts. One of my favorite summer events is to schedule an overnight at the museum event, which allows my scouts to not only explore the museum but also to sleep inside where it is cool.

One thing to remember when planning these events, make sure that you follow all BSA policies and all of your participants follow all of these policies as well as those of the location. With some more of these locations, your unit will be interacting with other units, non-scouting groups or possibly sharing a facility with Girl Scout units. This can create issues with scheduling a specific date so try to be flexible and always considerate.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The biggest advantage of these locations is that they span a broad range of topics, categories and types so it is very easy to find something your scouts will enjoy. Sometimes they combine several categories in one. For example, South Florida museum and Planetarium has a Museum, Planetarium and an Aquarium. Since many of them are private, often you can schedule and reserve the entire facility but be prepared to pay for that luxury.

Of course the biggest disadvantage is that almost all of these charge a per participant fee. In some cases, it can be a challenge for a large scout family to attend. Make sure that you leave your parents enough time to plan and save for the expenses or hold unit fund raising events to help cover the expenses.

Remember, careful early planning is the cure to many of the disadvantages and will help you ensure that all members have the opportunity to participate.

If you would like more information on museums that are included or on many more that are not you can find it here at: www.flamuseums.org.

Apollo Beach Manatee Viewing Center

In 1986 people started noticing a large number of manatees collecting at the Big Bend Power Station in Apollo Beach. Since this power plant uses salt water from Tampa Bay for cooling and discharges the warm water back into the bay; the manatees can be found in great numbers in the discharge canal any time the bay water reached 68 degrees or less. Today, the discharge canal is a state and federally designated manatee sanctuary. It not only provides critical protection for the manatees from cold but also provides a haven for other species such as Tarpon, Redfish, Rays and more.

At the viewing center you will find an excellent education center that will immerse you in the world of the manatee and its habitat. In addition, you will find information on environmentally responsible methods of power generation, hurricanes and hurricane preparedness.

PLANNING TIP! This facility is only open from November 1st until April 15th. It can get crowded during many of the chillier weekends so if you have a large group you should definitely make a group reservation. You can send a request for a group reservation from the Manatee Viewing Website: (www.tampaelectric.com/company/mvc).

This facility also includes an award-winning butterfly garden that was created as an Eagle Scout Project and an excellent tidal walk where you will find wildlife and native coastal plants. In the parking lot you can see

the largest of Tampa Electric's photovoltaic arrays in the community and then go track its real-time output from the education center.

As demonstrated by the Butterfly garden, this is an excellent facility for your scouts and parents to volunteer service to the community so if you are looking for a service project opportunity this is a great place to do it. All in all this location provides the perfect opportunity for your scouts to learn about the environment, conservation and being conservation minded and responsible scout. Best of all, it is totally free. All you have to do is schedule, plan and arrive.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Hiking, Exploring
Website: www.tampaelectric.com/company/mvc
Telephone: 813.228.4289
Address: 6990 Dickman Road
Apollo Beach, FL 33572

Bok Tower Gardens

This national historic landmark was built by Dutch immigrant Edward W. Bok and presented to the American people on February 1, 1929. Since then Bok Tower Gardens has had over 23 million visitors. Here you will find a 1930s Mediterranean-style mansion and gardens where you can hike, picnic or just sit and listen to the Carillon housed in the "Singing Tower".

PLANNING TIP! Bok Tower hosts many popular events and activities throughout the year including many concerts, night hikes and even running events. Make sure you check the website prior to planning your events.

Here you will also find two Cub Scout sized nature and hiking trails through areas that are home to the Gopher Tortoise, the Indigo Snake, the Gopher Frog, the Florida Mouse and many other less endangered species. The Gardens are a partner in the Polk County Trek Ten Trails program and you will find several geocaches here if you and your unit are into Geocaching. If you don't have a GPS, you can even find the step-by-step walking instructions so you too can have a treasure hunt with your Cubs.

With advance reservations, you will receive special scout rates. The most current rates and the reservation request form are available on the website.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips
Facilities for: Hiking, Geocaching, Picnicking
Website: boktowergardens.org
Telephone: 863.676.1408
Address: 1151 Tower Blvd
Lake Wales FL 33853

Crowley Nature Center

Crowley Nature Center is comprised of encompasses 185 acres of sensitive lands along the Myakka River. It is only open four days a week in order to minimize the impact on the landscapes and wildlife.

Crowley Nature Center is home to the Pine Level trail that winds through the Crowley property. This wide trail offers easy hiking conditions where you will find a wide-variety of native flora and fauna. If you want to explore an Oak Hammock and a typical Florida swamp and marshland, then the ½ mile Boardwalk will let you explore and keep your feet dry. Located at the end of the Boardwalk is the two-story Observation Tower where you will often find Bald Eagles, Red-shouldered Hawks, Ospreys and many other Birds of Prey.

PLANNING TIP! Crowley Nature Center hosts many popular events, groups, workshops and activities throughout the year including many concerts, night hikes and even camping events. Make sure you check the website prior to planning your events.

At the nature center you will find a 3/8 mile path with discovery stations where scouts can learn about southwest Florida's native animals, birds and insects. These include: eagles, bats, the gopher tortoise, spiders, and the Florida panther. Each station also includes a fun, hands-on activity where hikers can jump, climb, see and feel what it is like to be one of these creatures. There is an additional per youth fee for using this trail.

There is a small per person admission fee so check the website for the latest rates.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Events
Facilities for: Hiking, Picnicking
Website: www.crowleyfl.org
Telephone: 941.322.1000
Address: 16405 Myakka Road
Sarasota, FL 34240

Dakin Dairy

With fewer than 150 dairies remaining in Florida and most scouts living in cities, Dakin Dairy offers scouts a unique opportunity to visit a live working Dairy Farm. Scouts and adults will learn and see where milk comes from and watch it go from the cow to the bottle. If you schedule a group tour, you and your scouts will even learn how-to and make butter from the Dakin Cream.

Here your scouts will learn:

- ◆ Where Milk Comes From
- ◆ About Sustainable Farming
- ◆ About Pasteurization
- ◆ The Difference between whole, 2%, 1% and Buttermilk

To schedule and receive the group rates for your unit alone you need to have at least 30 members; however, you can call the tour director and request to join up with another group.

From visiting the animal barn to digging for fossil shells and sharks teeth, there are many activities for your unit to enjoy. Although many are free, several do involve addition fees or charges so I recommend that you check out the website and plan the activities well in advance. Food is available there for purchase if you want to have a picnic and they do not allow outside food and beverages to be brought in.

Dakin Dairy is open seasonally (usually October through April) and does host several popular public special events so you will want to take that into consideration when planning your visit. As always, check the website for the most current events, schedules and admission fees.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Events
Facilities for: Exploration, Picnicking
Website: www.dakindairyfarms.com
Telephone: 941.322.2802 Ext. 302
Address: 30771 Betts Road
Myakka City, FL 34251

Florida Aquarium

“You’re gonna be sleeping with the Fishes!” If you are looking for a great indoor overnight event for your pack where they can sleep indoors and enjoy a fun filled evening of activities and adventures then this might be the place for you.

PLANNING TIP! If you want to dive into sleeping bags in front of snoozin' sharks and evening eels and enjoy a wet and wild sleepover! Reserve your sleepover as soon as possible, as dates are limited and fill up quickly. Minimum of 15 paid participants.

The Florida Aquarium has many great programs for scouts of all ages. If you’re looking for an overnight adventure you can pick from four adventures:

- ◆ **Aquarium Adventure** – On this adventure you will take a Wetlands Night Trek, tour the facility from behind the scenes, take a trek around the Coral Reef, encounter live animals, play in the touch tanks and even dissect a squid.
- ◆ **Aquarium Trek** – On this adventure you will complete a Wetlands Field Investigation, test your animal identification skills using Animal Bio-facts, create an animal track imprint, encounter live animals, play in the touch tanks and dissect an owl pellet.
- ◆ **Sharks!** – On this adventure you will play shark trivia and view shark artifacts, create a fish print, test your fish identification skills, play in the touch tanks and dissect a bony fish.
- ◆ **Birthday Bash** – It doesn’t have to be someone’s birthday to enjoy a Wetlands Night Trek, take a behind the scenes tour, create fish prints and a shark’s tooth necklace, play in the touch tanks and watch a Dive Show.

All of these adventures com with pizza, a light breakfast and next day admission to the aquarium. There is a minimum age of 6 and the cost is dependent on the group size. There is a non-refundable deposit required when you schedule and you get 1 free chaperone for every 10 youths. Check the website for the latest programs, prices and contact information on the overnight educational programs.

Of course, if you are looking for a little shorter or more economical event you will find many Age appropriate Scouting programs for each level of Scout from Tiger to Boy Scouts. These typically last 2 hours and include same day admission to the aquarium. There is a 10 scout minimum and you receive 1 free Adult for every

10 Scouts. These programs cost 12.00 per scout for Cubs and 18.00 for Boy Scouts and require non-refundable deposit two-weeks prior to the your event date.

Want to go explore and learn about the Tampa Bay dolphins? How about taking a Wild dolphin cruise on a 90-minute eco-tour through the bay aboard a brand new 72-foot catamaran? Cruises leave the Aquarium daily (weather permitting).

PLANNING TIP! If you want to take this cruise you should purchase tickets at least 30 minutes prior to scheduled departure as this popular tour does sell out on busy days. Boarding begins 15 minutes prior to scheduled departure. Large groups should definitely call ahead.

Regardless of whether you choose to just visit, schedule a program or spend the night; the Florida Aquarium has something that will excite and educated every scout in your unit.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight Events
Facilities for: Camping, Exploring, Hiking
Website: www.flaquarium.org
Telephone: 813.273.4042
Address: 701 Channelside Drive
Tampa, Florida 33602

Kennedy Space Center

Did you know that 60% of today's astronauts were active boy scouts or girl scouts?

Have you ever spent a night sleeping underneath a Saturn V Rocket? Well, you can. If you have not heard about the Kennedy Space Center Overnight Adventures then check them out here at the Kennedy Space Center Website: www.kennedyspacecenter.com/overnight-adventures. This unique program provides you and your scouts aged 7-14 an opportunity to meet an astronaut, experience an IMAX movie and to camp under the giant Saturn V rocket. Due to the cost, this is not an activity for all of your scouts but it is definitely one of my favorites. Your adventure includes dinner, a snack and breakfast in addition to, full admission to KSC visitor center and the Astronaut Hall of fame.

I highly recommend that your plan this event well in advance to allow people to plan to attend. Also, you will have to have Chaperones at least 21 years of age. You will need to pay a non-refundable deposit within 72 hours of booking your reservation and the full payment for all will need to be paid 3 weeks BEFORE your date. Don't worry, if you have a couple of no shows they will credit you back the amounts. Dates and space are limited so if you really want to go you need to have at least 10 scouts. Also, if KSC does not get at least 100 youths for a date they can cancel (this seldom happens). I will say that there are certain dates that are Girl Scouts only so find out what dates those are before you announce the event.

PLANNING TIP! Many times you can plan ahead and schedule an event the same weekend as a Launch but be prepared for having to get there extremely early, long lines and crowded conditions. Due to security and the large number of people who go to watch certain launches it can be challenging to get onto the KSC property.

If you have general questions or to plan your trip or request more information, call 877.278.9923. For questions specifically regarding the Overnight Adventure program, please contact the Education Department at 321.455.7036 or kscovernightadventure@dncinc.com.

If staying at KSC is not an option make sure you check out all of their youth programs and special Scouting programs. There are group rates available all year long. This year (2013) in honor of all the NASA astronauts who were scouts, KSC is presenting a special program called "A salute to Scouts". Attendance is limited and there are only a very few number of dates.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight Events
Facilities for: Camping, Exploring
Website: www.kennedyspacecenter.com
Telephone: 866.737.5235
Address: SR 405,
Kennedy Space Center, FL, 32899

Lowry Park Zoo

Although we sometimes refer to our activities or meetings are a zoo, here you have an opportunity to actually sleep over in a real zoo. Lowry park zoo offers several unique fun and sleep over events for scouts aged 6 through 15. Each of these includes up-close encounters with the animals, behind the scenes tours, pizza and other theme specific activities. Small groups are allowed to participate with a minimum rate and you get one free chaperone for every 10 participants.

Of course sleeping with a bunch of animals is not everybody's idea of fun but I know of few scouts that would turn down a day of activities at the zoo. Lowry has group rates and free parking for busses. Activities here range from slides to rides and there are special scouting specific programs available including Cub Scout programs for all levels and Boys Scout Merit Badge Workshops. If you need your World Conservation award or the Wildlife Conservation Pin, you can definitely earn it here. All Scout Workshops are 2 hours, except for Boy Scout Merit Badge Workshops, which are 3 hours.

There are fees associated with the scout programs and workshops do not include admission into the zoo; however, group ticket rates are available so your Scouts can visit the Zoo after the workshop or program is over. A minimum of 2 weeks advance notice is needed to book a workshop.

You can find more information on all of the Lowry park zoo Scout programs here at the zoo website: www.lowryparkzoo.com/education/scout_programs.

Recommended For: Cub Scout and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight Events
Facilities for: Camping, Exploring
Website: www.LowryParkZoo.com
Telephone: 813.935.8552
Address: 1101 West Sligh Avenue
Tampa FL 33604

Manatee County – Agricultural Museum

At the Manatee County Agricultural Museum, the exhibits focus on Manatee County's primary commodities: Livestock, Vegetables, Citrus, Horticulture, and Commercial Fishing. Here you will find displays of tools, equipment, photographs and exhibits that reflect the area's rich heritage. Local farmers and interested citizens have donated many of the artifacts that are contained in the museum.

In addition to the commodity areas, the museum is also home to a library containing books and research materials, a farm shop and a garage where you will find a restored 1925 Model T pick-up truck. The barn is home to the larger pieces of farm equipment that are on exhibit. Here you will also find the William and Marie Selby Foundation Community Education Room, where you can experience additional programming and view various films.

The Agricultural Museum co-hosts a wide variety of programs and events designed to appeal to scouts of all ages. Gospel and Games in the spring, summer socials, our annual Heritage Day Open House, and adult educational programs are just some of our offerings. Definitely check the website for the most current programs and event dates. All events are free of charge; however, donations are accepted and appreciated.

If you are an educator, this museum is also home to eight traveling Learning Barns. These are traveling exhibits that used to tell the story about agriculture. The Agricultural Museum lends these boxes to schools in the county for three weeks at a time on a rotational basis. They are filled with agriculture-related educational materials such as books, lesson plans, puppets, videos, curriculum, toys and games, to enhance the learning of children, from Kindergarten through 5th grade. Barn topics include: butterflies, fruits and vegetables, dairy and cattle, nutrition, farming, livestock, bees, worms and other bugs, and gardening. Check the website for the most current reservation contact information for more information or to reserve a learning barn.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips, Den Outings and Scout Activities
Facilities for: Exploring, Hiking
Website: www.manateeclerk.com/historical/AgMuseum
Telephone: 941.721.2034
Address: 1015 6th Street West, Palmetto, Florida 34221

Manatee County – Florida Maritime Museum

This museum facility is housed in the restored historic 1912 Schoolhouse located on the park like grounds of the Cortez Nature Preserve. Here you will find the Banks Shell collection, ship models, historic boats and a butterfly garden. Families and community members will have the opportunity to build boats and learn boat related skills in the historic Pillsbury Boat Shop.

Scouts and adults interested in boat building should inquire into working to preserve traditional boatbuilding skills. At the time of the writing of this document, they are working Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM restoring a Bahamas Sloop as well as building a new 12' Coquina Skiff. Volunteers work with a Master Boat builder and prior woodworking experience isn't necessary.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips, Den Outings and Scout Activities
Facilities for: Exploring, Hiking
Website: www.manateeclerk.com/historical/MaritimeMuseum
Telephone: 941.708.6120

Address: 4415 119th Street West
Cortez, Florida 34215

Manatee County – Manatee Village Historical Park

Established in 1976 to preserve Bradenton’s history, this collection of restored buildings from Manatee County’s settlement history allows you to experience life in Manatee County before the arrival of modern conveniences such as automobiles and electricity.

This small historical village consists of the 100 year old K.W. Wiggins Store; the historic Fogarty Boatworks workshop; the Manatee County Courthouse from 1860; a church from 1887; a “Cow Hunters” bunkhouse; in addition to, a “Cracker Gothic” settler’s house with a barn, smokehouse and cane mill, not to mention an unusual “two-seater” out house.

Here you can go for a walk back in time and then explore the old “Cabbage Head” steam locomotive. Admission is free; however, donations are accepted and appreciated. If you want a docent-led tour there is a 3.00 per person charge. Reservations for led tours must be made at least two weeks in advance and require a minimum of 10 people. Check the website for the most current reservation form and contact information.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Den Outings
Facilities for: Exploring
Website: www.manateeclerk.com/historical/ManateeVillage
Telephone: 941.749.7165
Address: 605 15th Street East
Bradenton, FL 34208

Manatee County – Palmetto Historical Park

The Palmetto Historical Park offers scouts the opportunity to learn about the history of Palmetto and the area on the north side of the Manatee River. While touring the park, you can check for mail at the 1880 Post Office, write on slates in the Schoolhouse and try on pioneer clothing in the cottage. Exploring the Heritage Chapel, Cypress House Military Museum and 1914 Carnegie Library can also add to your scouting experience.

There are no admission charges; however, donations are accepted and appreciated. One very unique program they have here is the new “Traveling Trunk” program. If you cannot come to the park, let the park come to your Den or Pack Meeting. This is a new program and you pick the themes include: “What is it?”, “Dress up like a Pioneer”, and “World War II”. You must call for details and you can find the most current contact information on the website.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Den Outings
Facilities for: Exploring
Website: www.manateeclerk.com/historical/PalmettoPark/PPPrograms
Telephone: 941.723.4991
Address: 515 10th Avenue West
Palmetto, Florida 34221

Mixon Fruit Farms

When was the last time you took a nature hike through a Citrus Grove? At Mixon Fruit Farms you can not only walk through a real Citrus Grove and see the packing plant but also you see a working wildlife shelter and preserve whose mission is to rehabilitate injured wildlife for release, promote educations, appreciation and respect for wildlife. Here animals are treated, rehabilitated and if possible released back into the wild.

PLANNING TIP! Throughout the year, Mixon is host to several Festivals, Special Events and Craft Fairs including the Orange Blossom Festival and Concerts in the Grove. These often draw quite a crowd so be prepared to be flexible in scheduling your event and don't forget to check the website for the event dates.

Group Tours for are available with lunch for groups of twelve (12) or more. Be sure to call ahead for reservations. Although many of the public special events and craft fairs are free, the concerts and daily tram tours do require an admission fee. Definitely call ahead to find out the current prices and event dates.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Den Outings
Facilities for: Hiking, Exploration
Website: www.mixon.com
Telephone: 941.748.5829 or 800.608.2525
Address: 2525 27th Street East
Bradenton, Florida 34208-7427

MOSI – Tampa

At the Tamp Museum of Science and Industry you will find a wide-range of programs for Scouts of all ages. Each of these programs is age or rank specific and you can schedule the programs as a private or join other units for regular pre-scheduled dates. The minimum for a private workshop or overnight camp-in is 40 scouts. From astronomy to weather I am sure your unit will find something that is interesting to you.

I highly recommend this as a summer camp-in event and you can select the programs or participate on a pre-scheduled date where there are many offered at once.

You can call 800.995.6674 to make reservations. Scout groups must register at least one month prior to the Camp-In. They do encourage units to partner with other units to fill a camp-in date. A single payment for the group can be made by credit card at the time of registration or in person by check at MOSI. If you must cancel the reservation, you need to do so at least 20 business days prior to the Camp-In to receive a refund. A cancellation fee will be deducted from your refund.

You can find all the details about the scouting programs for MOSI here: www.mosi.org/education/scouts.

Of course, you can skip the overnight and just visit or attend a workshop all you have to do is call and schedule event. Group rates are available if you schedule your event at least two weeks or more from the date and there is a 15 person minimum. There are age based chaperone minimums so check the website and call. All required chaperones get free general admission to the museum (not the IMAX) and they are required to supervise and stay with the scouts at all times.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight Events
Facilities for: Exploring, Hiking indoor Camping
Website: www.mosi.org
Telephone: 813.987.6000
Address: 4801 E. Fowler Avenue
Tampa, Florida 33617

Mote Marine Aquarium

Did you know that you can not only get great group admission rates and participate in scout specific programs at Mote Marine Laboratory but also you can spend a night sleeping in the cool indoors or above the dolphin lagoon? Need a merit badge? You can earn several here. Yes, Mote marine laboratory offers all of these activities.

Their SeaSnooze program is another great opportunity to hold an indoor campout and have excellent age-appropriate program provided for your units. This program allows you to explore the Aquarium at night, learn about our resident animals through hands-on and interactive activities, and snooze peacefully in the indoor galleries or above the dolphin lagoon. These programs need to be booked at least one month in advance and can be scheduled from September until May. There is 15 person minimum and a 50 person maximum. The cost per scout is dependent on the number of scouts and required chaperones are admitted free. Additional chaperones are charged a small amount to cover the pizza, dessert and continental breakfast. There are a couple of different SeaSnooze programs so definitely check out the website before you begin planning.

Mote also has regularly scheduled merit badge programs for Boy Scouts. Check the website or call for the currently scheduled workshops.

Today, Mote maintains a field station for research in Charlotte Harbor, focused on key sport fish like tarpon and snook. Mote Charlotte Harbor studies also include research related to endangered sea turtles, sharks and more. In 2012, Mote created new public education programs in Charlotte Harbor. One of these is the Behind the Science program for youth age 6 and older. In this program you will discover marine animals and environments that inspire local Mote scientists; enjoy outdoor explorations and citizen science projects. Check the website for dates, times, contact information and any associated fees for programs offered at the Charlotte Harbor Field Station.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight Events
Facilities for: Exploring, indoor Camping
Website: www.mote.org
Telephone: 941.388.4441 Ext 229
Address: 1600 Ken Thompson Parkway
Sarasota, FL 34236

Parrish Railroad Museum

The Parrish Railroad Museum is open for train rides every Saturday and Sunday, year-round, excluding a three week holiday around Christmas/New Years and Easter Sunday. The train operates rain-or-shine on a regular scheduled 1 hour and 30 minute 13 mile round trip. You will find the current schedule on the website along with contact information and information on any of the scheduled special events.

Throughout the year, the Museum schedule special event weekends that couple exciting themes with a ride on the train. Examples include a train robbery, a World War II re-enactment and several holiday related themes. Many of the special events sell out early so if you want your unit to attend the Cotton Tail Special, Pumpkin Patch Express, Santa Claus Special and North Pole Express you should plan well ahead and get on their email list so you can get your tickets early.

Tickets for all trains can be purchased in advance online, by phone or at the Ticket Office in Parrish when you arrive. I recommend you purchase them in advance. Purchased tickets are held at Will-Call for pickup on the day of your visit. You will want to ensure you arrive early since Will-Call closes 15 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time unless otherwise noted on your ticket confirmation. For sold out trains, tickets not picked up before Will-Call closes are subject to cancellation. Once cancelled, tickets may not be used even if you arrive before the train departs. All tickets are non-refundable unless the museum cancels your train but you can exchange them for a future date.

In the event of a cancellation by the Museum due to reasons within their control, including mechanical or volunteer availability, passengers may choose to exchange their tickets for another trip or receive a full refund including any ticketing fees.

No food is allowed to be brought on board the train; however, your unit is welcome to have a picnic at the picnic shelter adjacent to the Ticket Office/Gift Shop. Several tables are available on a first come, first served basis.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Den Outings
Facilities for: Exploring, picnicking
Website: www.frrm.org
Telephone: 941.776.0906
Address: 12210 83rd St East
Parrish, FL 34219

South Florida Museum & Bishop Planetarium

One of the little known and highly under-rated treasures of Bradenton is the South Florida Museum & Bishop Planetarium. Here you will find one of the best museums in Central Florida.

The first floor features fossil evidence of Florida's earliest marine and mammal inhabitants and archaeological material representing Paleo-Indian, archaic and pre-contact cultures. You will find the Great Hall, Land of Change, Fabulous Florida seas, Archaic Peoples and the Tallant Gallery brimming with information and objects that reflect the prehistory of Gulf Coast Florida.

On the second floor you can examine the economics, government, culture and geography of the community with a focus of local maritime history; learn about Florida's environment past present and future; or explore through collections of antique medical equipment, toys, cameras and so much more.

If that were not enough, the Bishop planetarium is a multipurpose, all-digital domed theater, boasting one of the most advanced projection systems in the world. Incorporating unidirectional stadium style seating and a digital 25,000 watt Dolby 5.1 surround sound system, the Bishop Planetarium Theater is capable of accommodating a wide range of programs, from lectures to film series to live performances. But first and foremost, the planetarium is a remarkable astronomy education resource, allowing visitors to explore their universe through traditional live star talks and immersive virtual journeys to the far reaches of the cosmos.

Last but definitely not least is the Parker Aquarium. This aquarium, designed to house three adult manatees, holds nearly 60,000 gallons of water, including a medical pool. The pool offers both deep and shallow water, allowing the manatees to maintain natural feeding behaviors. An exhibit area within the facility helps to educate the public about manatee anatomy and offers above and below water viewing.

Here at the indoor aquarium, manatee care specialists provide presentations about manatee habitat, nutrition and physiology. Working closely with US Fish and Wildlife and critical care hospitals for manatees, the Museum's Parker Manatee Aquarium is a second stage rehabilitation facility. A second stage facility provides a temporary home for manatees that will be released back into the wild after having received treatment from an acute care hospital. The Aquarium has housed 24 manatees as part of the rehabilitation program. The facility is the permanent home to Manatee County's most famous resident and the oldest known manatee in the world, Snooty.

So if that is not enough combine a broad selection of educational programs including scout specific programs and you have one of the most amazing locations for your Pack or Den outing or Day trip.

Oh wait, did I mention their night at the museum program that is customized for your unit? Yes, you can spend the night with Snooty, sleep in the planetarium under the stars or sleep inside the museum after having flashlight only treasure hunt through the entire museum. I will say you never know what you will find around the next corner. No museum sleepover would be complete without watching a movie in the planetarium.

This is my favorite summer overnight location. If you're not into sleeping over there are always group rates and scout programs customized to your group. Self-guided group rates allow access to the museum, planetarium and manatee aquarium.

You can arrange for one of the trained docents give your group a guided tour of the highlights of the South Florida Museum. Docent tours can be customized to meet your units goals. Reservations are required and tours are offered based upon availability. A minimum of one weeks' notice is required and is subject to schedule availability. Group rates are available for parties of 15 or more only. Additional notice may be required for guided groups or when requesting special arrangements.

There are some Scout merit badge and belt loop programs are available upon request. Call or check the website for the latest information.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities and Scout Unit Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Overnight Events
Facilities for: Exploring, indoor Camping
Website: www.southfloridamuseum.org
Telephone: 941.746.4131
Address: 201 10th Street West
Bradenton FL 34205

Historic Spanish Point Park

If you are looking for an interesting place to take your Cubs for a short hike and a bit of history you should check out Historic Spanish Point Park. This 30 acre park offers the only archaeological exhibition in the nation built inside of a shell mound. Historic Spanish Point is primarily an outdoor museum with 30-acres of nature trails and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Here your unit can also connect to Florida's inspiring pioneers by seeing Sarasota's first produce packing house, a charming chapel and pioneer cemetery, and the beautifully preserved Guptill House, built in 1901. If plants are your passion, this museum has plenty to see and explore, like Mrs. Palmer's Jungle Walk and Sunken Garden. The Butterfly Garden is one of the largest on the Gulf Coast. Come explore this quiet oasis of history located on the glistening shores of Little Sarasota Bay in the town of Osprey.

There is an admission fee. I would contact the park about group rates and special educational programs.

Recommended For: Cub Scout Activities
Activity Types: Day Trips and Den Outings
Facilities for: Exploring, Hiking
Website: www.historic-spanishpoint.org
Telephone: 941.966.5214
Address: 337 N. Tamiami Trail
Osprey, FL 34229

To be continued...

Of course, there are numerous other locations and places to go for scouting and I look forward to continuing to exploring as many as I can. As I stated at the start I hope that another scouter or scout enjoy's and appreciates this reference and wants to take on the task of updating it or possibly creating an online collaborative version.

Who knows maybe that will be my next doctoral project....

Appendix A – Available Activity Cross Reference

Looking for a particular type of activity? Here is a cross-reference of activities at each location.

	BIRDING	BICYCLING	BOATING	CAMP FIRES	CAMPING	CANOEING/KAYAKING	EXPLORING	FISHING	HIKING	GEOCACHING	OVERNIGHT	PICNICKING	ROLLERBLADING	SERVICE OPPORTUNITY	SPECIAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES	SWIMMING
Apollo Beach Manatee Viewing Center	✓						✓	✓				✓				
Bok Tower Gardens	✓						✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	
Crowley Nature Center	✓				✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	
Dakin Dairy							✓					✓			✓	
Florida Aquarium											✓				✓	
Florida State Park - Alafia River	✓	✓							✓			✓				
Florida State Park – Dudley Farm							✓					✓				
Florida State Park - Egmont Key							✓	✓				✓				✓
Florida State Park - Gamble Plantation							✓					✓			✓	
Florida State Park - Highlands Hammock	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓			✓	
Florida State Park - Lake Manatee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓				✓
Florida State Park - Little Manatee River							✓									
Florida State Park - Madira Bickel Mound							✓	✓						✓		
Florida State Park - Myakka River	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Florida State Park - Oscar Scherer		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
Kennedy Space Center											✓				✓	
Lowry Park Zoo											✓				✓	
Manatee County – Agricultural Museum							✓				✓				✓	
Manatee County – Florida Maritime Museum							✓								✓	
Manatee County – Manatee Village Historical Park							✓					✓			✓	
Manatee County – Palmetto Historical Park							✓					✓			✓	
Manatee County Parks – Duette Preserve		✓			✓			✓	✓			✓				
Manatee County Parks – Jiggs Landing			✓			✓		✓								
Manatee County Parks – Robinson Preserve	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Manatee County Parks – Rye Preserve								✓				✓				
Mixon Fruit Farms							✓								✓	
MOSI – Tampa							✓	✓			✓				✓	
Mote Marine							✓				✓	✓			✓	
National Parks – De Soto National Memorial	✓						✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	
Parrish Railroad Museum							✓					✓			✓	
Pinellas County Parks – Fort De Soto	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
South Florida Museum & Planetarium							✓				✓				✓	
Spanish Pointe Park							✓	✓								

Appendix B – Cub Scout Camping Information for a Pack

The following is a sample of the email I send to all unit members prior to a Pack Camping event. This helps ensure that all participants are aware of the Pack Policies and Rules for Unit camping.

What do I bring?

While what you want to bring on a family campout depends on you and the particular event; for the enjoyment and safety of all participants, there are several things we should NOT bring on a Scouting camping event.

- ◆ Alcoholic Beverages - Beer, Wine and Alcohol are never allowed on any scouting event
- ◆ Fireworks, Firearms or Weapons of any type - This includes toys. Please no play guns, swords and knives.
- ◆ Tobacco – While smoking and tobacco use is permitted at many of the facilities we use; smoking and tobacco products are not permitted in the campsite or any location where you may be observed using tobacco by a Scout.
- ◆ Gasoline or liquid fueled stoves - Scouting rules prohibit the use of gasoline or liquid fueled stoves unless specifically required for high adventure outings.
- ◆ No RV's or campers
- ◆ No gasoline powered generators
- ◆ No mini-bikes, motorcycles, go-karts or 4-wheeler off road vehicles
- ◆ Non-folding sheath knives - Sheath knives are never appropriate for Cub Scouts to use or carry
- ◆ Portable or personal electronic games, iPods, televisions or stereo devices - Please limit your electronic devices to cell phones and try to be courteous to our fellow campers.
- ◆ Pets - While we all love our pets, it is best that we do not bring them camping with us.
- ◆ Please no open toe shoes, sandals or crocs except in shower areas - These do not protect your feet well enough for hiking or camping activities.
- ◆ Please no camouflage clothing - While this type of clothing is great for playing hide and seek, it makes it difficult to find the boys afterwards should they wander off.

So, really what do I bring?

Well, what do we need to bring on a campout? Of course, you will need your own personal camping gear. If you do not have gear yet; the Camping Coordinator, Den Leader or Cubmaster may be able to assist you in finding some to borrow. Nothing beats having your own gear and knowing how to use it. Remember, there are some situations and policies that may require you to have multiple tents when bringing guests or having extended family camping with you. So, plan ahead. If you are inexperienced don't be afraid to ask for assistance before you buy your gear and then ask for help before you use it for the first time. Nothing takes the fun out of a great campout than being frustrated or damaging your gear while learning how to set up camp. If possible, set up your gear at home in the back yard for a trial run first.

Depending on the campout type, season and planned activities, your gear needs can vary greatly. When selecting, purchasing and packing items for camping it is best to consider the following tips:

- ◆ Avoid aerosol types of anything. These are typically flammable, spray accidentally when packed and improperly closed and often end up in the eyes cub scouts that are attempting to spray themselves or others.
- ◆ Avoid large bottles of insect repellent. Insect repellent tends to be oily and leak easily if not closed properly. Your best bet is the personal wipes available in many brands. These don't leak, can be

easily carried anywhere and even the smallest scout can use them. Also, be aware of and careful of the DEET percentage in the product since sometimes there are allergic reactions or issues when used with children.

- ◆ Pack as light as possible. Feel free to purchase the large economy size but repackage and bring what you will realistically need for this trip. It has been my experience that if it can get ruined on a campout it will. So carry only the amount you need for this trip. It saves you nothing if you have to carry it in and it gets soggy, contaminated or leaks all over your gear.
- ◆ As a Cub Scout Pack, we will not be camping far from civilization. Remember that you live in Florida where it seldom gets colder than 40 degrees. You should definitely consider that when selecting appropriate types and sizes of items such as first aid kits, drinking water containers and much of your camping equipment. Big all-inclusive first-aid kits are heavy and seldom if ever used since you're so close to civilization. Large water containers are too heavy for many to lift. Lightweight mummy sleeping bags may seem like a good investment but they are typically expensive and not the most comfortable to sleep in if it is rated for 20 degrees and the weather is 70 degrees and raining. You should consider and purchase your gear for the types of camping you're most likely and frequently going to do.
- ◆ Don't forget to pack some personal hygiene products like toilet paper or baby wipes. You can find a small personal or travel roll of toilet paper or travel wipes at many stores. This is perfect for that one time when someone beat you to the bathroom and used it all. Unscented baby wipes and hand sanitizer are your friend for cleaning up after meals, etc. Remember, insects are attracted to sweet smells so unscented anything is better than floral or sweet scents.
- ◆ Big flashlights may be nice and indestructible but they usually run on and quickly consume heavy large D-Cell batteries. So, now you are not only carrying a heavy flash light, but also an even heavier supply of replacement batteries. On top of that, they are next to impossible to use to when trying to single handedly (or with your sons help) set up a tent in the dark. Not to mention that they are quite expensive to replace when your son decides to see if the fish in the lake are sleeping with their eyes open and loses his grip. While regular LED flashlights are nice and bright and remedy the battery situation, they too often fail the midnight run to the latrine test that usually ends up with someone losing a flashlight or having to retrieve it from the most undesirable locations. So, what's the solution... the new hands-free headband LED flashlights. Not only will your Cub Scout love playing with it, he can't lose it since it is attached. Besides, you can now have both hands free to put that tent up even with his help.
- ◆ Your Cub Scout can sleep all night anywhere on a rock with sticks poking him and jump up ready to go in the morning; but, you as a parent can't. Family camping it is no fun if you the parent are miserable, wet, cold or were unable to sleep all night because you were uncomfortable. So, feel free to bring that nice cushy but hopefully lightweight air mattress and an extra lightweight fleece blanket. In fact, I find it is much more comfortable camping in Florida to sleep using a sheet and a couple of lightweight fleece blankets rather than a sleeping bag.
- ◆ Lastly, remember to pack in a waterproof pack or container and to pack a nice dry poncho or raincoat for you. This is Florida and while your son can run around in a garbage bag and stay dry, you cannot. There is nothing more miserable than being wet, muddy and cold on a rainy weekend campout. So remember if Mom and Dad aren't happy then nobody is going to be happy.

Remember, the whole purpose of the Family campout is to have fun. That means that you will want to be as comfortable as possible without having to have an entire herd of pack animals to help pack your gear in. Many camps have restrictions on vehicles in camp, so you may have to carry in your gear. Plan ahead and Be Prepared!

Appendix C – Cub Scout Camping Checklist

This is the camping gear checklist that I send out to parents prior to a Camping event.

The following items are always useful or necessary on a family campout regardless of whether it is a council or district event or a pack event:

Shelter – Pack in a waterproof tote box that can be used as dry gear storage

- Tent with the correct poles and stakes – Sorry no RV's or campers
- Appropriately sized ground cloth for tent (tarp or plastic)
- Battery powered lantern or lamp with extra batteries
- Battery powered fan with extra batteries

Bedding - Keep it simple, comfortable and DRY

- Air mattress & pump - Pads work for kids but not too well for many adults
- Lightweight Fleece blanket (can double as pillow if not cold)
- Lightweight sleeping bag or bed roll (blanket and sheet)
- Small Pillow
- Spare large trash bag to help protect if rain expected and tent leaks

Clothing - Pack in Ziploc bags or dry bags in pack

- Scout Uniform and extra Cub Scout T-shirt
- Change of Clothes – Season appropriate 1 per day
- Extra Socks & underwear
- Pajamas or sleep wear
- Sturdy shoes or hiking boots w/extra pair of laces
- Hat
- Lightweight Jacket or Sweatshirt
- Lightweight Poncho or rain gear
- Gloves
- Warm Jacket
- Swimwear

Gear - Pack in a small day pack or easily carried gear bag

- Canteen or water bottle
- Headband or hands free LED flashlight with extra set of batteries
- Insect Repellent wipes (sprays get in eyes and are flammable)
- Personal Toilet paper and/or small pack of tissues
- Personal Toiletries - toothpaste, toothbrush, razor, soap, shampoo, motel sewing kit
- Personal prescription medications (notify the camp the health & safety officer)
- Reusable cup or mug
- Reusable plastic plate and eating utensils (Leave no Trace)
- Small personal first aid kit
- Sunscreen (place it in a Ziploc bag in case of leakage)
- Small unscented hand sanitizer and unscented baby wipes (optional)
- Sunglasses
- Travel sized baby powder (optional)
- Washcloth and towel
- Scout Handbook

Miscellaneous -

- Folding chair or stool
- Small can and bottle opener
- Extra-large heavy duty lawn & garden trash bags

- Matches in waterproof container
- Salt, pepper, sugar and creamer packets in waterproof container
- Emergency kit – string, safety pins, rubber bands, vinyl electrical tape, etc
- Small Cooler or Ice Chest with Ice
- Small cloth or mesh gear bag

The following are typically optional items on district campouts but can be really nice to have. They may be required on pack camping events where the pack has to cook and cleanup.

Camp Equipment –

- Propane lantern with extra mantles & fuel
- Propane camp stove & extra fuel
- Grill or fire grate
- Self-lighting charcoal or firewood
- Bucket
- Pots, pans & cooking utensils
- Hot pads or gloves
- Griddle
- Dutch Oven
- Rain or Dining Fly
- Folding camp table
- Dish soap, scrub pads & dish clothes

The following are typically optional items on any campout but can be really nice to have when you need or want them.

Camp Tools –

- Small Hammer (Hand Axes are not Cub Scout approved)
- Folding Shovel
- Small Rake
- Small Saw
- Tent Broom
- Rope or nylon cord

Personal Items –

- Binoculars or telescope
- Books – Religious, birding, nature, scouting, etc.
- Camera with Film or extra memory sticks & batteries
- Compass & Map
- Small fanny pack or extra day pack
- Fishing Gear – Don't forget your license!
- Group or family oriented games – Remember, no personal electronic games please.
- Personal GPS and geocache logs
- Waterproof gear bags
- Whistle
-

Personal Snacks & Food – Never know when you will need these

- Individual Crystal light or Kool-Aid packets
- Individual Instant coffee
- Individual snack cracker packs
- Trail mix or nuts and dried fruit
- Jerky