

Little Big Econ State Forest



[Courtesy of the Florida Forest Service](#)

The Little Big Econ State Forest is approximately 10,279 acres and was established on March 24, 1994, by the Florida Legislature. The forest's name comes from combining the names of the Little Econlockhatchee River and the larger Econlockhatchee River, which come together just south of the forest.

The Muskogee word Econlockhatchee translates literally to “earth-mound stream” and means the “river of many mounds.” Long ago, Native Americans named the river for the multitude of man-made earthen mounds along the waterway.

This property has seen many historical uses, such as turpentine distilleries, cattle ranching and row crops. It also contains a portion of the old Florida East Coast Railway grade. Currently the forest is managed to restore and maintain native ecosystems, protect and manage plants and animals, protect archaeological and historical sites, provide outdoor recreation, and practice sustainable forest and agricultural management activities.

Prescribed fire is used as an effective tool to improve forest health, ecological functions and wildlife habitat. Prescribed fire is applied to mimic natural fires and helps to reduce the hazards of wildfires.

Location

The Little Big Econ State Forest is located in the eastern portion of Seminole County in Geneva, Florida, which is less than an hour's drive from Orlando.



[Large Map](#) [ 492.07 KB]

Natural Features



The Little Big Econ State Forest's most notable feature is the narrow, winding Econlockhatchee River, which flows 17 miles through the forest and empties into the St. Johns River. The Econlockhatchee River is designated as an Outstanding Florida Waterway and is the second largest tributary to the St. Johns River.

The St. Johns River, which makes up the eastern boundary of the forest, is designated as an American Heritage River and, at 310 miles long, is the longest river in Florida.

The forest provides a crucial source of protection for wetlands and associated natural communities within the floodplains of the Econlockhatchee and St. Johns rivers. Other natural communities include wet prairie, pine flatwoods, sandhill and scrub.

The forest supports a variety of wildlife such as alligator, Sherman's fox squirrel, gopher tortoise, gopher frog, bald eagle, sandhill crane, deer, turkey, gray squirrel, roseate spoonbill and wood stork.

Recreation

The forest is open during daylight hours for visitors to enjoy hiking, canoeing, horseback riding, bicycling, wildlife viewing and picnicking. Seasonal hunting takes place on sections of the forest east of Snow Hill Road. Please see the hunting section below for dates.

Hiking Trails



The American Hiking Society has named Little Big Econ State Forest one of the country's most family-friendly hikes.

The forest has 16.3 miles of hiking trails, including 8 miles of the [Florida National Scenic Trail](#). The Florida National Scenic Trail can be accessed from our Barr Street hiking trailhead. The trail will lead the hiker through a variety of ecosystems such as pine flatwoods, scrub, sandhill and the majestic oak-palm hammocks along the Econlockhatchee River. The trail provides many scenic views and a chance to see some wildlife.

The Little Big Econ State Forest also offers the Kolokee Trail, which is a 5.2-mile loop trail that is included in the [Trailwalker Hiking Program](#). Participants in the program are rewarded after hiking a number of designated trails.

The hiking trails are maintained by the [Florida Trail Association](#).

[Hiking Trail Brochure](#) [ 498.34 KB]

[Kolokee Trail Brochure](#) [ 645.26 KB]

Paddling Trail



The [Econlockhatchee River Paddling Trail](#) [] was designated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Paddlers can start their adventure at Seminole County's canoe launch on Willingham Road and end their trip 8 miles upstream at the Snow Hill Road canoe launch, or they can paddle the full 20 miles to the C.S. Lee Boat Ramp on State Road 46. If you would like to extend your adventure to a two- or three-day trip, the

Little Big Econ State Forest has offers camping along the Econlockhatchee River. Please see the primitive camping section below.

Along the trail there are two first-come, first-served day-use pavilions where you can have lunch or to take cover from a passing afternoon thunderstorm.

[Econlockhatchee River Paddling Trail Brochure](#) [ 934.19 KB]

Primitive Camping

The Little Big Econ State Forest offers camping opportunities in primitive camp zones along the Econlockhatchee River . The West Camp Zone is located near the Barr Street hiking trailhead and can be accessed only from the hiking trail and by canoe or kayak from the Econlockhatchee River Paddling Trail. The East Camp Zone can be accessed only by canoe and kayak at this time.

Overnight camping is allowed by obtaining a State Forest Use Permit available at the Little Big Econ State Forest office. For more information and to get a State Forest Use Permit, please contact the forest at (407) 971-3500 or [email the Little Big Econ State Forest](#).

[West Camp Zone Brochure](#) [ 746.37 KB]

[Econlockhatchee River Paddling Trail](#) [ 934.19 KB]

Horse Trail



The Little Big Econ State Forest has 9.3 miles of horse trails that are included in the [Trailtrotter Program](#) and can be accessed from the Equestrian Trailhead on Snow Hill Road. The trailhead has a water trough to water the horses after your peaceful morning ride and picnic tables where you can eat lunch. As you ride along the trails you will go through a pine forest and you may see deer, turkey and other wildlife.

NOTE: ALL horses must have proof of current negative Coggins test results when on state lands. ALL children under the age of 16 are required to wear a protective helmet while riding on state lands. [Horse Trail Brochure](#) [ 829.03 KB]

Bicycle Trail



The Little Big Econ State Forest has 12.1 miles of bicycle trails that can be accessed at the Jones East Trailhead on Snow Hill Road. The trails go through a variety of ecosystems such as pine flatwoods, sandhill and scenic oak-palm hammocks along the Econlockhatchee River. The beginning sections of the trail are easy, but the trails get more challenging the farther west you ride. If you are up for a challenge then come and explore the bicycle trails at the Little

Big Econ State Forest.

Helmets are recommended for all cyclists and Florida law requires helmets for cyclists age 16 and under.

The bicycle trails are maintained by [SORBA Orlando](#).

[Bike Trail Brochure](#) [ 737.39 KB]

Hunting and Fishing



Hunting and fishing on the Little Big Econ State Forest are regulated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

The Kilbee and Yarborough tracts of the Little Big Econ State Forest are open for hunting and are part of the [Little Big Econ Wildlife Management Area](#), which is managed cooperatively with the FWC.

Please check the [Little Big Econ Wildlife Management Area Hunting Brochure](#) for dates.

Wildlife hunted on the forest includes deer, ducks, hogs, rabbit, squirrel and turkeys.

Fishing is a popular activity along the Econlockhatchee and St. Johns rivers, where largemouth bass, catfish, crappie, bluegill and other fish are frequently caught.

[Recreational Hunting and Fishing Licenses](#)

Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail



The Demetree and Kilbee tracts of the Little Big Econ State Forest are part of the [Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail](#). (On the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail website, select trip planner and go to the east region.) Little Big Econ State Forest has over 160 bird species. Some of the birds you may see on your visit are the bald eagle, crested caracara, sandhill crane, wood stork, swallow tailed kite and Bachman's sparrow.

Visitor Center



The visitor center at the Little Big Econ State Forest is open:

Monday - Friday, except holidays:

8 a.m. - noon and 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Hours may change without notice. Please call ahead if you plan to stop by.



At the visitor center we have educational exhibits about land management, recreation, wildlife and history.

Picnic Pavilion



The picnic pavilion near the visitor center can be reserved for special events.

Please call the Little Big Econ State Forest for more information and fees.

Boardwalk



After you stop by the visitor center, take a walk down our boardwalk near the pavilion. The boardwalk provides access to the Econlockhatchee River, where you can launch your canoe, fish, or just sit and relax.

In keeping with its mission to protect and manage Florida's forest resources, the Florida Forest Service has developed rules that apply to all state forest visitors.

[Find out more about state forest fees and rules.](#)