

HISTORY AND NATURE

In her will, Elsa Scherer Burrows (1884-1955) left the family's 460-acre South Creek Ranch to the state in memory of her father, Oscar Scherer (who invented a process for dyeing leather in 1872). After a year of preparation, Oscar Scherer State Park opened to the public in 1956.

Three decades later, real estate agent and environmentalist Jon Thaxton began campaigning for the state to purchase land adjoining the park that provides habitat for the Florida scrub-jay, the only bird species unique to Florida. With wide public support and help from The Nature Conservancy and Sarasota County, the state purchased 922 acres from the adjacent Palmer Ranch in 1991.



Oscar Scherer is perhaps best known as a place to see the scrub-jay, whose populations have been greatly reduced by urban development. The park has one of the only protected populations in southwest Florida. Scrub-jays are entirely dependent on healthy scrub habitat, and prescribed fire is an essential management tool used to keep scrub healthy.

Bald eagles nest here in winter and are commonly seen. The habitat is also home to many other unique creatures such as the indigo snake, gopher tortoise and gopher frog. Oscar Scherer preserves more than two square miles of natural land in a rapidly developing region and provides resource-based recreation for over 250,000 visitors annually.



OSCAR SCHERER STATE PARK

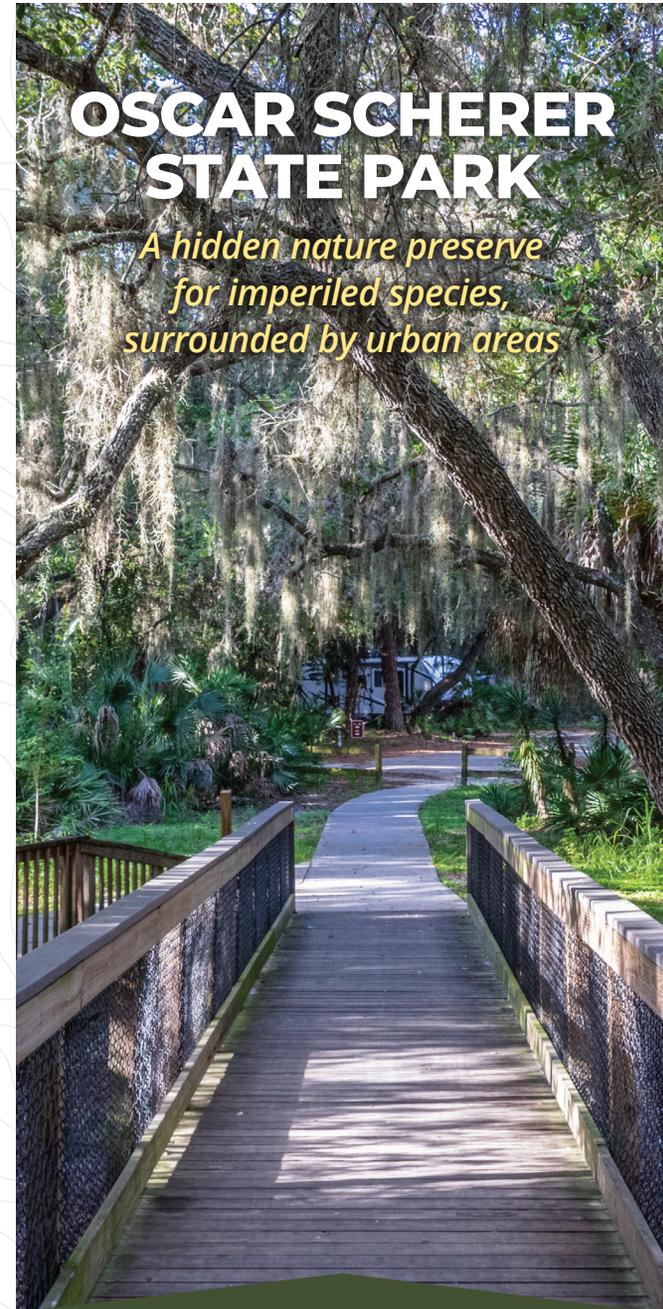
1843 South Tamiami Trail
Osprey, Florida 34229
941-483-5956

PARK GUIDELINES

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet and be well-behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida saltwater fishing license is required unless exempt by law.
- Are you interested in volunteering? Inquire at the ranger station.
- For information about joining the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park Inc., call 941-483-5956.
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at 800-326-3521 or visit ReserveAmerica.com.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access for every visitor to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact staff at any ranger station or call 850-245-3076 (Voice) or 711 (Florida Relay Service).

OSCAR SCHERER STATE PARK

*A hidden nature preserve
for imperiled species,
surrounded by urban areas*



[FloridaStateParks.org](https://www.floridastateparks.org)

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EXPERIENCES AND AMENITIES

This park's large acreage of scrubby flatwoods makes it one of the best places in southwest Florida to view Florida scrub-jays, an imperiled species found only in Florida. Ask a ranger for the best place to find them in this 1,398-acre park. In addition to viewing wildlife, an array of other land and water-based recreational activities await you. Check out our program and event calendar online at floridastateparks.org.

The park provides opportunities for **canoeing, fishing, swimming, picnicking, hiking, bicycling, camping** and **wildlife viewing**. Visitors looking for wildlife will find that early and late in the day are the best times. Canoeists and kayakers can **paddle** along South Creek, a tidal blackwater stream that flows to a nearby bay. Canoes and kayaks can be rented. Try both freshwater and saltwater **fishing** from the creek banks, or anglers can fish the shores of Lake Osprey, which is also the park's **swimming** destination.

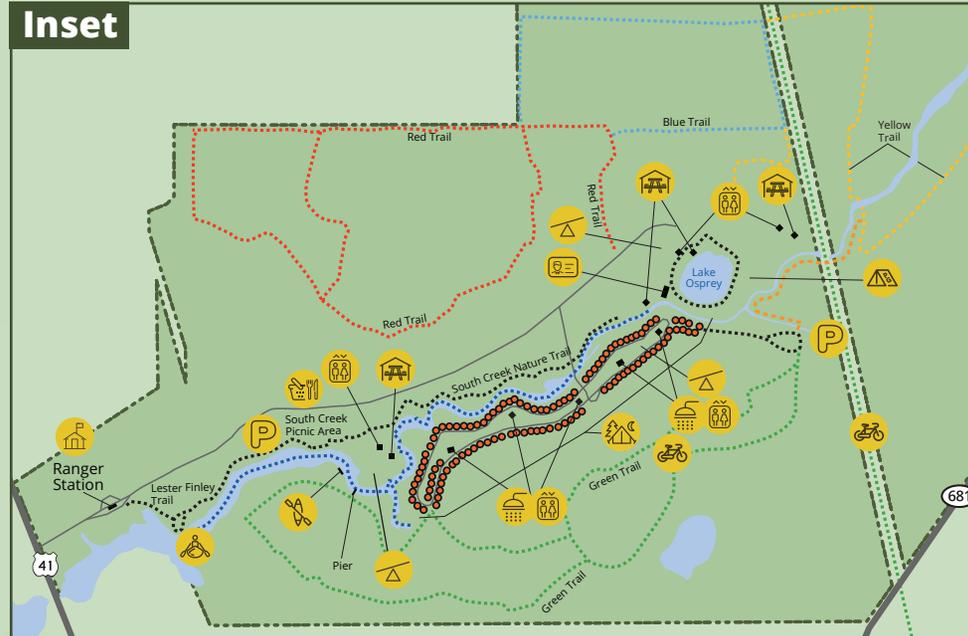
Picnic areas are equipped with grills, and **pavilions** can be reserved for a fee. The park has **campsites** and a **youth/group camp area**. A **visitor center** has exhibits and videos about the park's plants and wildlife.

Fifteen miles of trails provide solitude, beauty, challenge and a healthy adventure for everyone. **The Lester Finley Barrier Free Nature Trail**, located in South Creek Picnic Area, is accessible to those with sight, hearing or mobility impairments. It has a **wheelchair accessible fishing dock, butterfly observation area and drinking fountain**.



Oscar Scherer State Park

Inset



Directions

Oscar Scherer State Park is located on U.S. 41, six miles south of Sarasota.

Heading south on I-75, take exit 200.

Heading north on I-75, take exit 195.



- Biking
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Canoe Ramp
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Parking
- Pavilion
- Picnicking
- Playground
- Primitive Group Camping
- Restrooms
- Showers
- Swimming
- Visitor Center
- Wildlife Viewing

- Hiking Trail
- Hiking/Biking Trail
- Paddling Trail

See Inset

