2,000 years of Archaeology and History

Explore Manatee’s Past

Manatee County, Florida

Archaeological Site
- Emerson Point Preserve
- De Soto National Memorial
- Palmetto Village Historical Park
- Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez
- Florida Bay Preserve

Park/Preserve
- Manatee Point Preserve
- Palmetto Historical Park
- South Florida Museum

Museum
- De Soto National Memorial
- Manatee County Agricultural Museum
- Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez
- F.S.I.M. Preserve

Accessibility
- Manatee River
- Palmetto
- Bradenton
- Sarasota

Gulf of Mexico

South Florida Public Archaeology Network
Department of Anthropology

Manatee Point Preserve [1]
5800 17th Street West, Bradenton 34209
941.722.6885
www.chnr.com/mnr/Manatee.html

Palmetto Historical Park [10]
1010 10th Avenue West, Palmetto 34221
941.722.4991
www.manatee.net/park/palmetto.htm

The Manatee Point Preserve is a 200-acre, state-owned preserve that contains a large prehistoric temple mound now used as a park. Visitors can enjoy birdwatching, hiking, bicycling, fishing, and canoeing in a quiet setting.

De Soto National Memorial [4]
8300 DeSoto Memorial Highway, Bradenton 34209
941.722.2685
www.nps.gov/dest

This prehistoric mound and surrounding area are remnants of a larger prehistoric Native American village. The site is currently being developed for archaeological interpretation and public access.

Pillsbury Mound [3]
Northwest Bradenton 34209
941.748.9401
www.chnr.com/mnr/Manatee.html

This site is a prehistoric mound situated on a 19th-century Native American village. It is currently being developed for archaeological interpretation and public access.

De Soto National Memorial [4]
8300 DeSoto Memorial Highway, Bradenton 34209
941.722.2685
www.nps.gov/dest

Learn about Spanish Hernando de Soto’s arrival in Tampa Bay in 1539, and the prehistoric landscape upon which he arrived. Archaeological remain of prehistoric shell middens and mounds as well as the ruins of a 19th-century tabby-built structure comprise the cultural components of the park.

Northeast Bradenton 34209
941.748.9401
www.chnr.com/mnr/Manatee.html

119 acres of prehistoric peoples as well as habitat for a variety of birds including snowy egrets, brown pelicans, and osprey. When completed, the preserve will feature a variety of recreational amenities.

4415 119th Street West, Cortez 34215
941.720.6121
www.manatee.net/museum/FloridaMaritime.html

The handsomely restored 1932 school building houses the museum and displays the history of local commercial fishing and families. The museum is adjacent to the F.S.I.M. Preserve which is currently being restored to its natural habitat, perfect for birding and kayaking.

Palmetto

South Florida Museum [11]
201 10th Street West, Bradenton 34205
941.746.4133
www.southfloridamuseum.org

The South Florida Museum interprets the region from the Pleistocene to present with changing climate-size deserts and dramatic exhibits based on extensive collections of anthropological artifacts, paleontological specimens and objects of cultural interest.

Manatee Village Historical Park [12]
1404 Manatee Avenue East, Bradenton 34208
941.749.7166
www.museum.net/historical/Manatee.html

Visit this collection of restored buildings from Manatee County’s settlement history and experience life in Manatee County in the 19th century, before the arrival of modem conveniences such as automobiles and electricity.

Florida Bay Preserve

Manatee Point Preserve

Emerson Point Preserve [1]
5800 17th Street West, Palmetto 34221
941.722.6885
www.chnr.com/mnr/Manatee.html

This ancient Native American site consists of a flat-topped ceremonial mound in use during at least two periods of Native American cultural time periods. The oldest component dates back 2,000 years.

Gamble Plantation Historic State Park [8]
1700 Pattons Avenue, Ellenton 34222
941.722.4536
www.floridaStars.com/gambleplantation.html

This antebellum mansion was home to Major Robert Gamble and the headquarters of an extensive sugarcane plantation. It is the only surviving plantation house in South Florida.

Manatee County Agricultural Museum [9]
1015 10th Street West, Palmetto 34221
941.722.2041
www.manatee.net/park/Tourism.htm

This museum features equipment, tools, artifacts, and photographs that reflect the rich agricultural heritage of Manatee County. The museum is also the home of the Manatee County Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Ellenton

Gamble Plantation Historical State Park [8]
1700 Pattons Avenue, Ellenton 34222
941.722.4536
www.floridaStars.com/gambleplantation.html

Ellenton

Manatee River

Terra Ceia

South Florida

Sarasota

Palmetto

Bradenton

Palmetto

Ellenton

Palmetto

Bradenton

Palmetto

Ellenton

Palmetto

Bradenton
EXPLORE MANATEE'S PAST

CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE THROUGH MANATEE'S PAST. LONG-TIME RESIDENTS OR FIRST-TIME VISITORS HAVE PLENTY OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY TO ENJOY IN MANATEE COUNTY. MANY OF THESE SITES OFFER FREE ADMISSION. FOR YOU WATER ENTHUSIASTS, SOME SITES CAN BE ACCESSED BY SEA.

Manatee County’s rich heritage centers around the Manatee River. Named for the Manatee, a mammal commonly referred to as a sea cow, the river winds for fifty-five miles from Tampa Bay to the northeast corner of Manatee County. Evidence that prehistoric inhabitants depended on the Manatee River can be seen in the burial, midden and temple mounds located along the river’s banks.

For centuries untold, Indian tribes enjoyed the Florida wilderness. By the 16th century, the Spaniards had arrived and were among the first Europeans to explore the Manatee River. From there, they journeyed into the Southeastern North American continent and beyond.

Upon accepting ownership of the Florida territories in 1819, the United States government began a program to encourage the settlement of Florida. Enticed by the offer of free land, pioneers began arriving in the Manatee River region in 1842. Despite many problems, by 1855 enough settlers lived in the area to justify the establishment of a new county.

At its creation, Manatee County consisted of 5,000 square miles and extended from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Okeechobee. Agriculture, including vegetable farms and citrus groves, along with cattle-ranches, fishing, and tourism, provided a livelihood for its residents.

Today, the community still retains the charm and simplicity of the river settlement established by those early pioneers. Just as the Manatee River winds its way throughout Manatee County, its history and heritage intermingle with our county’s modern day lifestyle.

Time for a Scavenger Hunt!
The photographed items shown here can be found at different locations highlighted in these maps. Tell us where you found each item and register for free prizes by clicking on the Explore Manatee Map link at fl.publicarchaeology.org/wrcr.c