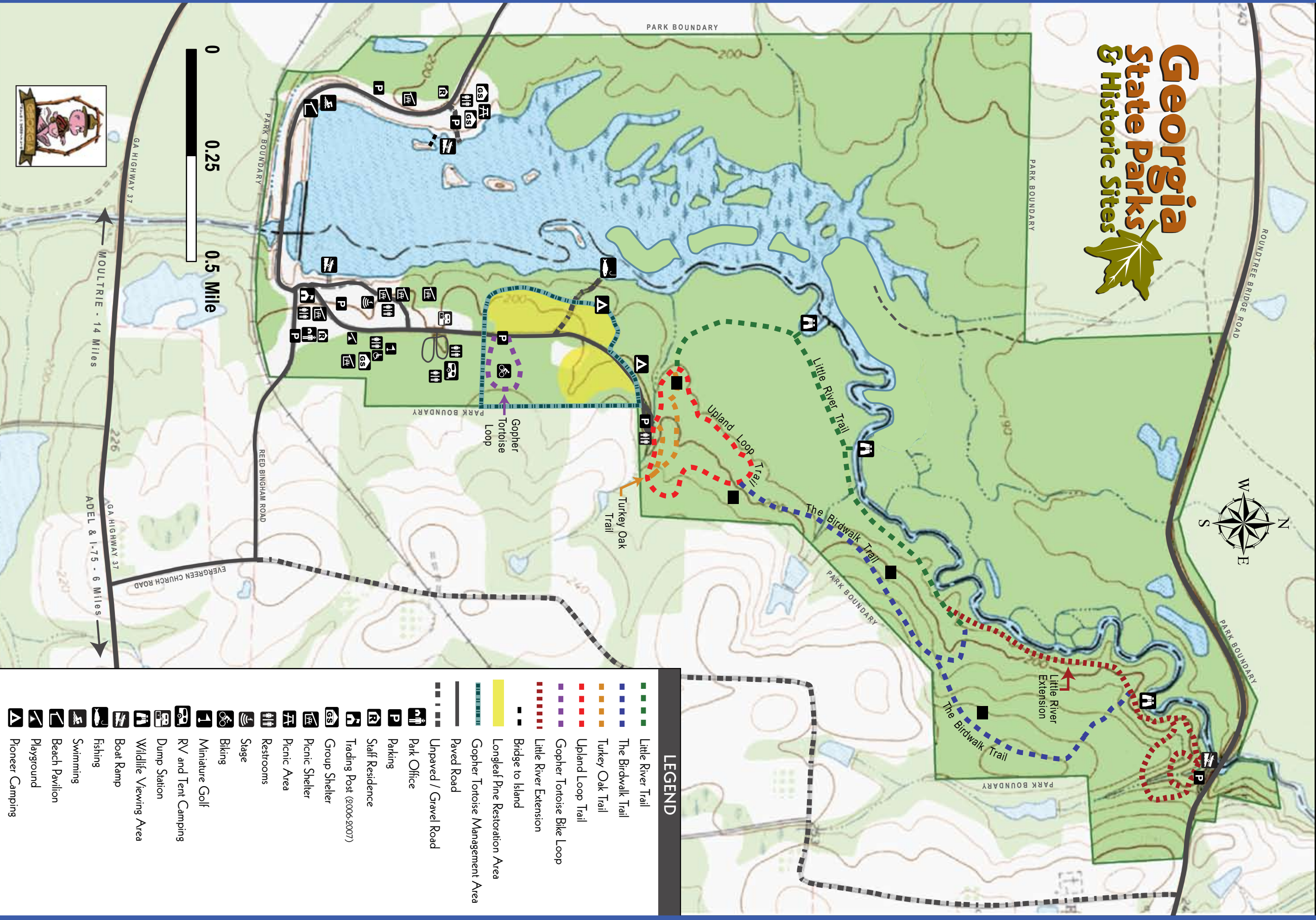


# Reed Bingham State Park Trail Map

5492 Reed Bingham Road, Adel, GA 31620 • Park: 299-896-3351 • Emergency: 911 • Reservations: 1-800-864-7975 • [www.GeorgiaStateParks.org](http://www.GeorgiaStateParks.org)



## REED BINGHAM STATE PARK

Visitors to this scenic 1,613-acre park will see an abundance of wildlife and plantlife, particularly gopher tortoises and “buzzards.” During winter, thousands of these large birds, which are actually black vultures and turkey vultures, roost in the trees and soar overhead. Throughout the year, large gopher tortoises may be seen digging large dens in the sandy soil. Alligators, herons, egrets, eagles and many other species also live in this protected park. A 375-acre lake is popular with boaters and skiers, and fishing for bass, crappie, catfish and bream is excellent. Facilities include a campground, picnic shelters, playground, swimming beach, hiking trails and fishing docks.

### These Forests Were Once Dominated by Longleaf Pine

South Georgia and most of the southeastern coastal plain from Virginia to Texas were once dominated by Longleaf Pine and a grassy understory. It was home to gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpeckers and many other species. This rich plant and animal community, which scientists refer to as the Longleaf Pine/wiregrass ecosystem, is known to be one of the most diverse natural communities in the world.

It is estimated that less than 3% of this once vast ecosystem still remains. As a result more than 30 plant and animal species associated with the Longleaf Pine ecosystem are considered threatened and endangered.

Reed Bingham State Park is restoring the Longleaf Pine to its rightful place. Returning a landscape to the state it was in before people intervened is a new and largely experimental field of science. It took Mother Nature many years to create complex natural communities of plants and animals. We humans have unraveled these intricate and finely woven tapestries in haste and are now scrambling to put them back together.

When this site became a park in 1965 a few Longleaf Pines remained but much of the land had been cleared for agriculture. In 2005-2006 Reed Bingham State Park became part of a major conservation effort to restore Longleaf Pine in the southeastern United States.

### Fire is a Natural Part of the Landscape

Before people changed the landscape, lightning-caused fires were allowed to sweep across large expanses of land with nothing to stop them. These natural fires were essential for the continued success of the longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem. The flames prevented less fire-tolerant species like oaks from growing and competing with the Longleaf Pine and wiregrass. Longleaf Pines have thicker bark than other pines and are more resistant to fire. Today, Reed Bingham State Park carefully plans “prescribed burns” to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

## COASTAL PLAIN NATURE TRAILS

### The Little River Trail

This 0.9-mile trail introduces you to a River Swamp. Periodically flooded by the Little River, these bottomlands contain plants such as bald cypress, tupelos and spruce pine, that have adapted to wet conditions. This area is the interface between higher and drier uplands and the aquatic river environment. There are extensive boardwalks and two observation points overlooking the river. Look for river otters, spotted turtles and deer.

### The Birdwalk Trail

This 0.6-mile trail takes you away from the river and traverses through five natural communities. The most striking is probably the mixed southern hardwoods, where you'll see towering Southern magnolias, hickory, American holly and the rare silky camellia. Another unique aspect is the boardwalk featuring an observation area among a variety of ferns.

### The Upland Loop

This 0.9-mile trail takes you in a short circle. You'll begin on the edge of a floodplain forest among a mixture of pines (slash, pond and loblolly) and then cross an open pine woodland where longleaf are more dominant. The trail also features wiregrass, flowering dogwood, Yellow Jessamine and Highbush blueberry.

### Turkey Oak Trail

This short 0.3-mile trail cuts through the Upland Loop traversing through a variety of “scrub oaks” -- turkey, blue jack, laurel and blackjack oak. Other plants include sassafras, sparkleberry, persimmon and two species of rare pitcher plants. Gopher tortoises are also abundant in this area.

### The Gopher Tortoise Bike Loop

This one-mile-long bike trail covers an area that was once cultivated and features a variety of scrub oaks, longleaf pine, saw palmetto and wiregrass. You'll also see large live oaks and wax myrtle. This section is also part of our Gopher Tortoise Management Area and the tortoises are commonly seen here.

### Future Trails

This section of trail is currently being developed on the north end of the park and east side of Little River. It is an interconnecting system of trails, featuring the diversity of this higher elevated area. The River Ridge trail will feature a high bluff overlooking the river. Other trails will include the Papa Tree Trail, Rountree Trail, and the North Loop. These new trails will add even more variety to the Coastal Plain Nature Trails. They will be opened as sections are completed.

## GOPHER TORTOISE PROJECT

This pilot project began four years ago after park officials found that excessive predation (especially by armadillos) was claiming nearly 90% of the eggs laid. Unique to any state or national park in the country, this program saves hundreds of tortoise eggs each year and improves the habitat and health for adult tortoises. Using modern GPS technology, volunteers and park rangers identify individual tortoises to specific burrows. The color-coded flag system allows for easy identification from longer distances: White Flags indicate burrows of females; Blue Flags, males; Orange Flags, females that laid eggs; and Yellow Flags indicate that the sex of the tortoise is undetermined. Active from early March to October, the tortoises typically come out twice a day, mid-morning and afternoon, to sun and eat. Gopher Tortoises are protected by state law. Do not touch or disturb the tortoises or their burrows in any way. You may observe and photograph the tortoises at a distance.



## SAFETY TIPS & ETIQUETTE

- Tell someone your itinerary and expected return time.
- Be prepared for unexpected weather changes by dressing in layers and carrying rain gear.
- Take a map, water, snacks, first aid kit, flashlight and whistle. Three short blasts on a whistle are known as a call for help.
- Do not stray from trails. If you become lost, stay in one location and wait for help. This will make it easier for rescuers to find you.
- Don't count on cell phones to work in the wilderness, but if they do, be able to give details about your location.
- Invest in good hiking socks such as those found at sporting goods stores. Avoid blisters by carrying “moleskin” and applying it as soon as you feel a hot spot on your feet. Available in the foot care section of drug stores, moleskin is like felt that sticks to your skin.
- Be prepared for unexpected rain and wind which can lead to hypothermia. Always carry quality rain gear and turn back in bad weather. If you become wet or cold, it is important to get dry and warm as quickly as possible.
- Dress in layers and avoid cotton. Luckily, today's hikers can choose from numerous fabrics that wick moisture, dry quickly or conserve heat. Many experienced hikers wear a lightweight shirt that wicks moisture, while carrying a fleece pullover and rain jacket.
- Pack out all trash.
- Keep pets on a leash.
- Do not pick flowers or disturb wildlife.
- Protect the landscape by staying on trails.

## CLIMATE DATA FOR ADEL, GEORGIA

Month	Avg. High	Avg. Low	Mean	Avg. Precip.	Record High	Record Low
Jan	62°F	36°F	49°F	5.34 in	79°F (2002)	15°F (2003)
Feb	65°F	39°F	52°F	4.17 in	83°F (1989)	13°F (1996)
Mar	70°F	44°F	57°F	5.53 in	90°F (2005)	15°F (2002)
Apr	78°F	50°F	64°F	2.67 in	92°F (1990)	31°F (2000)
May	84°F	58°F	71°F	2.32 in	97°F (1996)	39°F (1999)
Jun	89°F	65°F	77°F	4.49 in	101°F (2002)	53°F (2000)
Jul	90°F	68°F	79°F	4.08 in	102°F (2000)	58°F (1988)
Aug	90°F	68°F	79°F	4.33 in	101°F (1995)	55°F (1997)
Sep	87°F	63°F	75°F	3.79 in	99°F (1990)	44°F (1990)
Oct	79°F	52°F	66°F	2.62 in	92°F (2002)	30°F (1989)
Nov	72°F	43°F	58°F	2.47 in	88°F (2000)	24°F (2002)
Dec	64°F	37°F	51°F	3.03 in	80°F (1998)	10°F (1989)