

Teacher Field Trip Planning Forms

For School Groups



PASSION FOR CONSERVATION ISN'T
JUST TAUGHT, IT'S EXPERIENCED

School Program

contact

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E&FCA Field Education Program

Welcome

Emerald & Forgotten Coast Adventures (E&FCA) is a **501(c)(3) non-profit organization** focused on creating immersive environmental experiences to increase awareness, foster connections with nature, and inspire stewardship among local students, residents, and visitors. Our School Program offers a chance for students to participate in field trips focused on coastal marine ecosystems. Enclosed are details about what to expect, preparing for the trip, and some tips to ensure your students have a memorable and lasting experience. Please review the information and contact us with any questions.

Field Site Locations

E&FCA facilitates activities at Grayton Beach State Park, Camp Helen State Park, St. Andrews State Park, and Tyndall Air Force Base (see details in the following pages)

Field Adventure Options

Seagrass Beds, Coastal Dune Lakes, The Gulf, or CDL/Gulf Hybrid

Activities

Immersive marine science field adventures are designed to support and enhance classroom learning. All activities are aligned to State Standards. Depending on group size, students will rotate through 4-5 activity stations, about 20-30 minutes each.

Grades

K-12. For grades K-1st, additional chaperones are required; please call to discuss.

Group Size

The ideal group size is ~65 students per Field Trip. This allows each station to have <16 students to maximize the best experience for them. Should you have more than 65 students, please book multiple days. If that is not possible, call to discuss, as additional teachers and chaperones will be required.

Cost

Thanks to Grants and Foundation Funding, Field Adventures are offered at no cost to Public & Charter School Groups during the Academic Year. If transportation is a barrier, please contact us for support (varies by season and funding availability).

Private Schools & Special Custom Groups are \$30/participant—a tax-deductible donation (due no later than 30 days out to keep the date; no refunds). An invoice can be provided upon request.

Payment can be made via check or online at
<https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/5057811>.

Business sponsors & individual contributions are welcome and deeply appreciated:
<https://emeraldforgottencoastadventures.org/support-us/>

E&FCA Field Education Program

Preparing For The Trip:

Select Activities – E&FCA Director of Education will assist you in customizing your adventure

See Group Programs at <https://emeraldforgettencoastadventures.org/group-programs/>

Prior to the trip, gather the Required Forms and Documents:

1. Teacher Acknowledgement Form – turn in day of
2. Adult Chaperone Signature Form – turn in day of
3. Each Participant will need **a completed E&FCA Waiver & Release of Liability** – a Google Form link will be provided for you to share with your students' parents and the teachers/chaperones.
 - ***NEW*** If you are part of Bay District Schools, there is a Combined Liability Waiver for BDS & E&FCA to streamline your paperwork. The Teacher is responsible for sending any necessary information to the school principal.
4. ***NEW*** Site-Specific Entrance Requirements:
 - Letter Required by the State Parks to Waive Entry Fee **(due at the beginning of the Academic Year)**
 - See next 2 pages for *FLORIDA STATE PARKS - Approval Process for School Field Trips & Fee Waivers*. Along with the Letter Template
 - Required by Tyndall AFB for entry: **(due 2 weeks prior to your trip)**
 - Option 1) Send us (Full legal name, DOB, Driver's License Number, SSN) for each of the Teachers and Bus Driver coming onto base. And E&FCA will coordinate with the Visitors Center for entrance.
 - Option 2) Go directly to the Visitors Center in Advance to obtain a Visitor Pass.
5. Review the Checklist to help ensure that you're ready to go! ✓ (see last page)

E&FCA Field Education Program

FLORIDA STATE PARKS - Approval Process for School Field Trips & Fee Waivers *NEW Process* (as of August 2026)

In order to grant an official waiver for park entry admission fees, each school must write a letter to each park manager requesting permission to conduct a field trip at the park and certifying that the park visit is related to a specific school curriculum and is for educational purposes rather than a purely recreational outing. Include your school is partnering with Emerald & Forgotten Coast Adventures to facilitate the Field Trip. The letter must be on school letterhead, be signed by a school administrator at the principal level or higher and sent from the school directly to the park manager, or the park manager's delegate. The field trip must be accompanied by one or more teachers.

To streamline the process:

District requests that at the beginning of the academic year, each school **write one letter** to each park manager including the list of field trip dates for the year so the park manager can review and approve them at one time rather than receiving multiple letters. If you do not know all of the field trip dates yet, then ask the school to include the dates booked so far. If dates change or are cancelled, or if new dates are added please inform the park manager/delegate immediately by email.

E&FCA will touch base with each park manager prior to the start of the academic year and before each session of field trips for planning and coordination.

Send Field Trip Requests to Selected Field Trip Site:

Grayton Beach State Park: Assistant Park Manager, Patrick Hartsfield
Email: Patrick.W.Hartsfield@FloridaDEP.gov

Camp Helen State Park: Park Manager, Wesley Meyers
Email: Wesley.Myers@FloridaDEP.gov

St. Andrews State Park: Park Manager, Cameron Sager
Email: Mary.Sager@FloridaDEP.gov

Also send copy of email to Emerald & Forgotten Coast Adventures:

Brittany Pace, E&FCA Director of Education
brittany@emeraldforgettencoastadventures.org



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2026-2027 LETTER TO STATE PARK - TEMPLATE

PLACE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Park Management,

(School Name) is requesting permission to conduct a Field Trip(s) at (State Park Name). The park visit is for educational purposes and related to our school curriculum, in partnership with Emerald & Forgotten Coast Adventures, a marine science non-profit organization.

Our students will be engaging in a hands-on learning experience designed to enhance their understanding of environmental science, coastal ecosystems, and the importance of conservation. We believe that (state park) offers the ideal environment for this valuable educational opportunity, allowing our students to connect classroom learning to the natural world in a meaningful way. We are requesting an entry fee waiver for educational purposes.

E&FCA Field Trips Scheduled for the Academic Year:

List all of them – include date, grade level, and approximate number of students, teachers, and chaperones planning to attend

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

(Signed by a school administrator at the principal level or higher)
(Principal Name, Title, Contact)

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What to Expect:

We ask that groups arrive on time and stay on schedule to help our staff provide the best experience for your group. Should you be running behind, please contact us via phone. E&FCA will direct groups on where to meet upon arrival. Teachers should exit the buses first for on-site instructions with our staff. **Please be prepared to provide all requested paperwork at this time.**

Student Groups: **Before arrival**, ask us how many groups your students should be divided into. This will be based on grade, the total number coming with your group, the activities chosen for your trip, and your designated bus departure time. **Make sure the students and chaperones know their group number before unloading.** All belongings for the day should be unloaded as students unload. Restrooms and places to change will be available before and during activities.

What to wear/bring for program activities:

- ✓ Clothes that can get sandy, muddy, and wet
- ✓ **Closed-toed Water Shoes that can get sandy, muddy, and wet**
- ✓ For water activities if your school allows:
Appropriate Swim trunks or Bathing suit
- ✓ Sunglasses and/or hat
- ✓ Reusable water bottle (water will be on-site)
- ✓ Sunscreen, sun shirt, & bug spray
- ✓ If changing: Bring a bag for wet clothes and an extra change of clothes & shoes

After The Trip: We encourage you to send us your field trip photos, write a Google review, and/or send us a testimonial

E&FCA Field Education Program

Teacher Acknowledgement Form

We look forward to your group's visit. To ensure that everyone participating in program activities receives important information, **we require each classroom teacher to share all safety information to adults and students attending the field trip.** Please have all adult chaperones attending sign the Adult Chaperone Signature Form to acknowledge they have received this information. Thank you for your assistance.

Responsibilities Program Activities – E&FCA staff; Discipline and Safety – Teachers/Adult chaperones.

Behavior At all times, participants in program activities must be respectful of each other, their teachers and chaperones, E&FCA staff, and park employees. If at any time a participant does not acknowledge or follow instructions from E&FCA staff, they will be asked to be removed from the program activity to maintain the safety of other participants as well as preserve the group's enjoyment and experience.

Parking All vehicles must be parked as required by Park employees.

Accidents Please talk to the teachers in case of any accident and follow school procedures. E&FCA will have a first aid kit, and one or more team member(s) certified in First Aid, CPR, and Lifeguarding.

Medical Emergency Please coordinate with school teachers and notify E&FCA staff of any emergency. Call 911 if required.

Prohibitions Water balloons, shaving cream, water guns, skateboards, firearms, fireworks, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and drones (except as part of a sanctioned activity). Cell phones must be collected and secured by the teacher to prevent damage and/or loss.

Swimming Swimming is not allowed during program activities. However, if the school allows, students can wade in the water to participate in sampling activities up to their knees.

Park/AFB Rules Specific to each park/location. Make sure your group follows their rules as well.

I have read and understand the above rules of conduct for E&FCA participants. I accept the responsibility of informing my group members of these requirements.

Name of Teacher (print) _____ **Date** _____

Teacher Signature _____ **Teacher Cell** _____

School Name (print) _____

E&FCA Field Education Program

Adult Chaperone Signature Form

SCHOOL: _____ FIELD TRIP DATE: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____

E&FCA holds teachers and chaperones responsible for the activity and conduct of individuals in their groups. All adults attending are encouraged to participate and assist to help keep students on task. Students are more engaged when the adults they know and respect are active participants.

Each classroom teacher is responsible for reviewing the *Classroom Teacher Acknowledgement Form and Safety Information* with all chaperones attending the field trip. By signing this form, all chaperones acknowledge that they have been told or personally reviewed such forms and understand their responsibilities while participating in E&FCA programs.

Chaperone Name:

Chaperone Signature:

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E&FCA Field Education Program

Important Safety Information

Select staff have completed First Aid and Lifeguard safety training to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge needed to keep students safe near/in the water and during program activities. A First Aid kit will be available on site.

Supervision

We ask that all teachers and chaperones actively supervise their assigned group of students throughout the field trip and handle any discipline issues directly. However, E&FCA staff will ask students to step away from an activity if their behavior becomes disruptive, if they are not following volunteer instructions, or if they are impacting the enjoyment of the experience for others. Also, if any safety concerns arise, please bring them to the attention of our staff.

Field Program Activities

Note: Areas of some specific activities are listed. This does not mean your group is participating in "all" of the following activities or will be in every location listed. You should identify which item is associated with your planned field trip and discuss safety rules with your students and chaperones.

Trees: Students should not climb or swing from the trees during field trip activities.

Sand Dunes: Students should not climb or run through sand dunes in any State Park or Tyndall AFB.

Coastal Dune Lake & Seagrass Beds: **Closed-toed shoes are required** for general exploration and seining. This is to protect your feet. **Students will not be allowed into the water if they do not have closed-toed shoes on.** Wading allowed up to the knees.

Beach: Older students are allowed to wade up to their knees for beach seining, if conditions permit. No digging of holes or disturbing any visitors during planned activities.

Weather

For the safety and best experience for your students, outdoor field trips may be canceled or rescheduled in the event of inclement weather. A trip will be canceled if sustained wind speeds exceed 15 mph, if thunderstorms, lightning, or rain are forecasted during trip hours, or if the temperature or heat index is deemed unsafe for extended outdoor activity. The decision will be made based on the most current weather forecast by the afternoon before the trip, or at the latest by 6:00 a.m. on the day of the trip, to ensure the best possible experience for all participants. Should a cancellation occur, E&FCA will work with you to determine a rescheduled date, if possible.

Accidents/Injuries

If an accident occurs during the field trip and the student or chaperone needs medical attention, inform the E&FCA Director of first aid treatment. Anything other than a first aid incident should be referred to a clinic or the hospital for treatment.

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GRAYTON BEACH STATE PARK

357 Main Park Rd, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459



E&FCA Field Education Program

CAMP HELEN STATE PARK

23937 Panama City Beach Pkwy, Panama City Beach, FL 32413



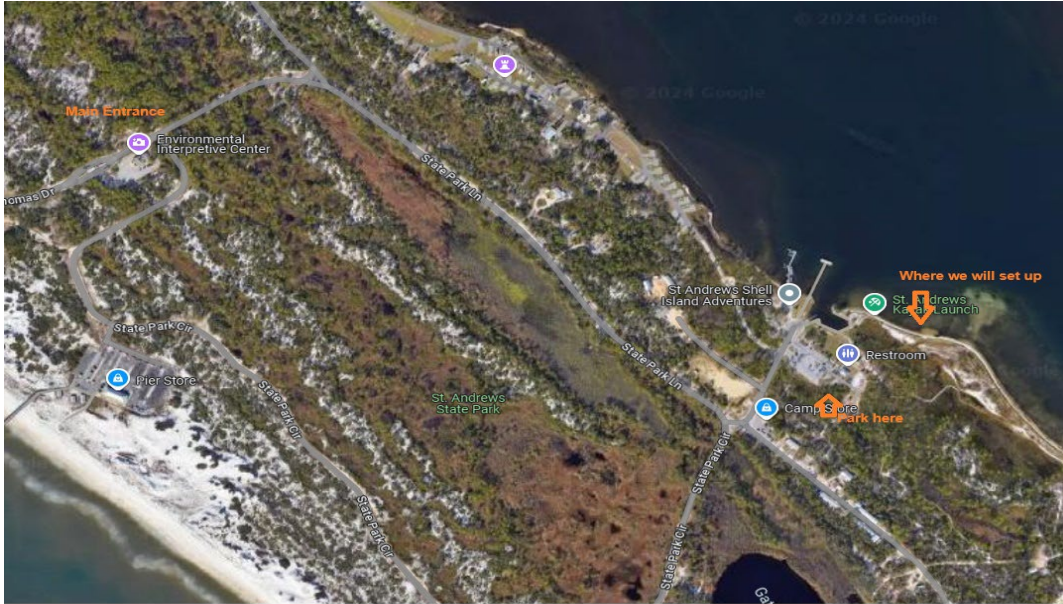
Note: There are two options at this location – lakeside or Gulfside.
The Gulf trip requires a long walk to the beach.

E&FCA Field Education Program

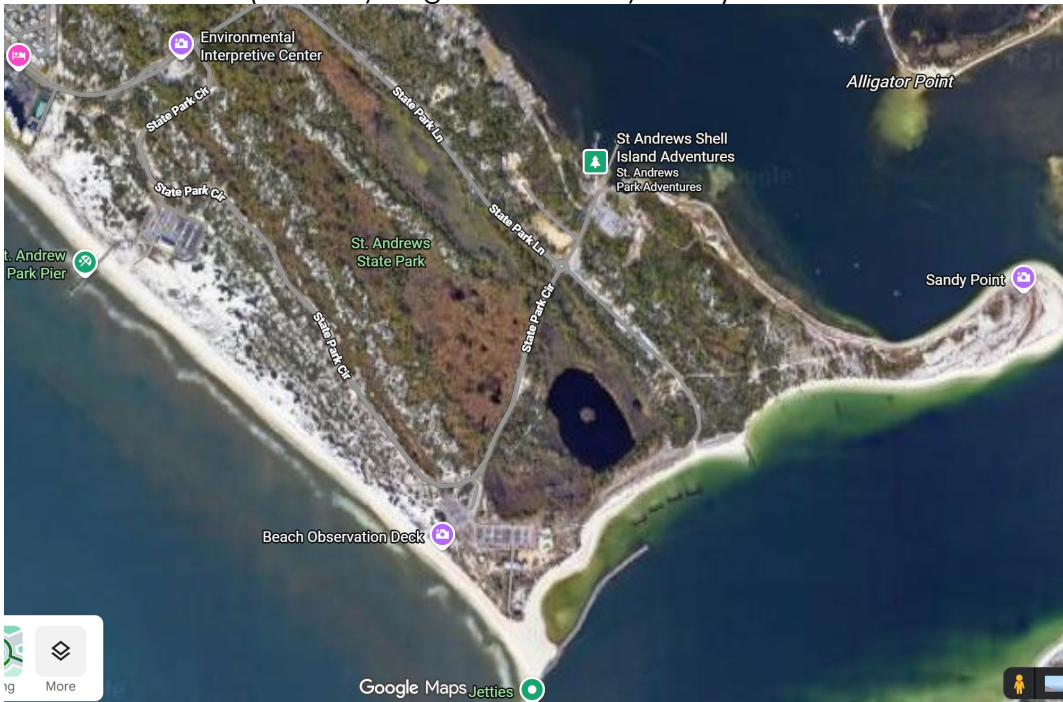
ST. ANDREWS STATE PARK

4607 State Park Lane, Panama City, FL 32408

FOR A SEAGRASS TRIP: Enter at the Main Entrance, stay straight on State Park Lane, Take a left at the roundabout once you reach the Camp Store. Head towards the Boat Ramp/Marina Area. Take a right into the parking lot and unload students near the restroom facilities. Field Trip will take place on the Lagoon/Marina side.



FOR A GULF TRIP: From the Main Entrance - turn right (towards Beach Access) - go all the way around to the Jetty Parking Lot. Not the first parking lot you come to (where the pier is) but the second. Once you enter the JETTIES parking lot, you will see a Bathhouse (before you get to the Jetty Store) - that is where we will meet.



E&FCA Field Education Program

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE SEAGRASS BEDS

Meeting Location: Visitors Center 2359 Roosevelt Blvd, Tyndall AFB, FL 32403

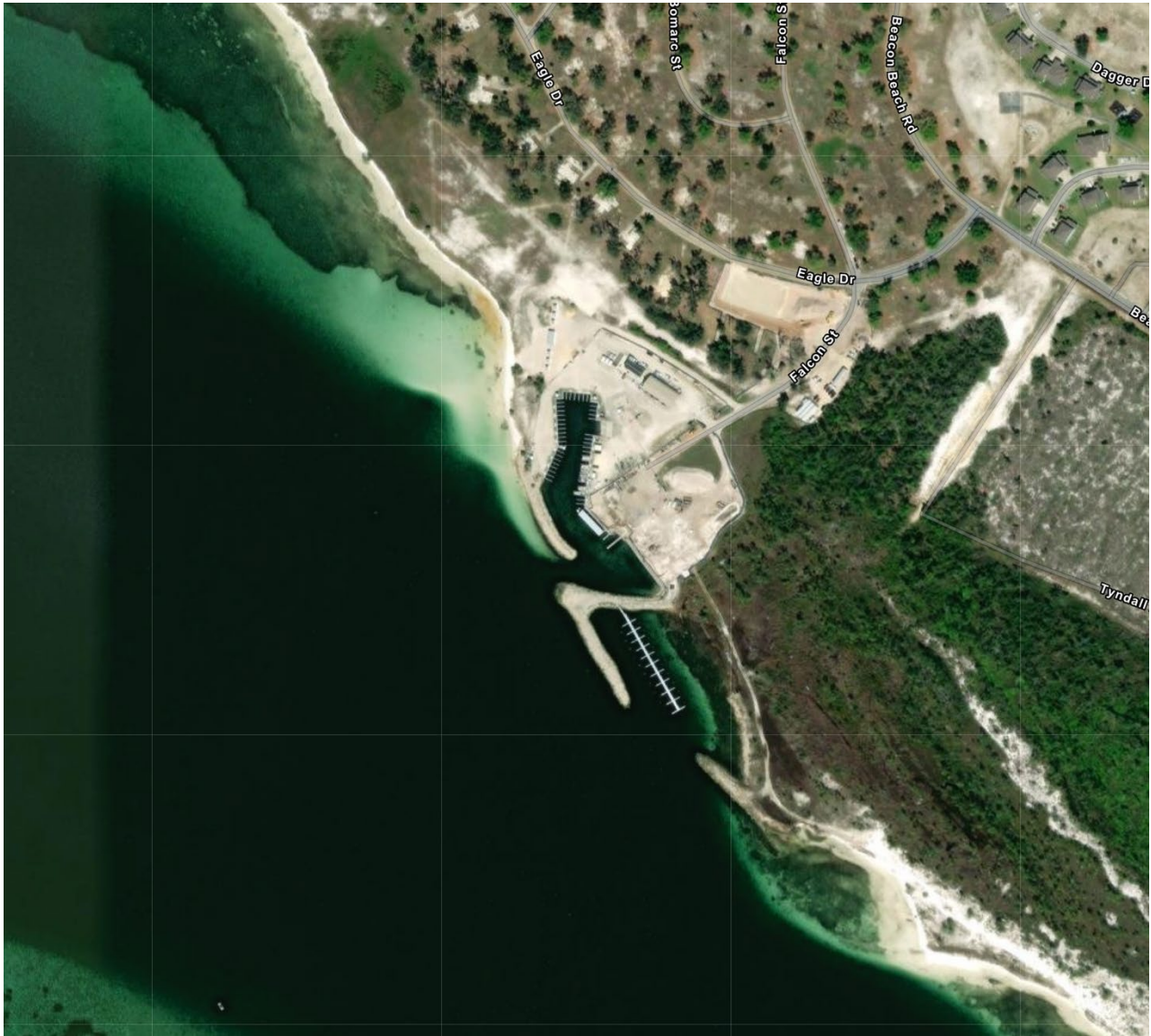
***NEW ENTRANCE PROCEDURE:** 2 Weeks Prior to your Trip – Information Needed:

Option 1) You will need to send us (Full legal name, DOB, Driver's License Number, SSN) for each of the Teachers and Bus Driver coming onto base. And E&FCA will coordinate with the Visitors Center for entrance.

Option 2) You will have to go directly to the Visitors Center in Advance to obtain a Visitor Pass.

**This process is what is current as of August 2026, but subject to change.*

A maximum of **5 adults** (for example, 4 teachers and 1 bus driver) may accompany the students onto the base, escorted by the E&FCA staff member, unless a teacher or chaperone has a military ID.



Note: There are no restroom/changing room facilities at this location, only port-a-potties.

E&FCA Field Education Program

Checklist

Here's a checklist to help you ensure that you're ready to go for your field trip!

- ✓ Students and chaperones know the date and time of your field trip.
- ✓ You have reviewed what to wear, what to bring, and safety information with the students, chaperones, and teachers.
- ✓ You have completed the Teacher Acknowledgement Form.
- ✓ You have all signatures on the Adult Chaperone Signature Form.
- ✓ **You have an E&FCA Waiver & Release of Liability (via Google Forms) for each participant (student, teacher, and chaperone)**
- ✓ Any special needs or concerns are addressed with the E&FCA Director ahead of the planned trip.
- ✓ You contacted E&FCA with your Updated Numbers, no later than one week before the trip.
- ✓ **Completed *NEW* Site-Specific Entrance Requirement: Either the State Park Letter OR obtaining Visitor Passes from Tyndall AFB.**
- ✓ Your students are divided into the appropriate number of groups – PRIOR to arriving on site.

Thank you for choosing E&FCA

See you in the field!