



The Spring Board

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Inside this issue:

Resource Management 2-3

Off the Beaten Path 4-5

What Does the Survey Mean? 6-9

Excelsior 10

Thanks for Giving 11

Striving Forward 12

Smokey's 75th 13-14

Volunteer Viewpoint 14

Recycling 15

Students in Service 16

Early Morning 16-17

Beauty of Butterflies 18

Something Unexpected 19

Remake 20

Resource Management News By Patty Wilbur



Duke Energy has been busy with improvements to the powerlines feeding the park.

Lots of work has been going on in and around the park this spring and summer. Contractors completed improvements to many of our park roads and fire lines this June that have greatly improved access for land management. The Northwest Water Management District has contracted WGI to complete an updated survey of the channel in both the Wakulla River and Sally Ward Spring Run, so their small boats have been spotted on our waters lately. And shortly, an archaeologist with Paleo West will begin a Phase 1 archaeological survey of our River Sinks and Turner Sink parcels. This first large-scale testing of those areas will determine if and where there might be archaeological sites. The knowledge will be used to ensure we protect sites as we go forward with future habitat improvements.

Along the park boundaries, Duke Energy has been busy with im-

provements to the powerlines feeding the park. This has involved cutting trees along the right-of-way. In some places, tree trunks have been left standing for now, which looks a little messy. They intend to cut and remove them eventually, but are working as quickly as they can right now to stay one step ahead of the crews speedily installing the new poles and lines.

I'm very grateful to the Friends of Wakulla Springs, as they generously committed funds to our resource management program this spring! We used them to purchase a wide variety of tools, among which were rope, chainsaws, loppers, and hand saws. This should put us in better shape to deal with any storm damage we might have going forward, though I hope we have a quieter hurricane season this year.

Continued on Page 2

Resource Management News (Con'd) By Patty Wilbur; Photos Courtesy of Patty Wilbur



“While the large burn of zone WK-E in early May was the last burn at Wakulla Springs State Park for the season, we assisted some of our neighboring parks in meeting their burn goals for the year.”

While the large burn of zone WK-E in early May was the last burn at Wakulla Springs State Park for the season, we assisted some of our neighboring parks in meeting their burn goals for the year. I took our engine and UTV to Torreya State Park in late May. That day they conducted two large burns simultaneously! I also helped the staff at St. Marks River State Park with a burn this June. By burning during the growing season, we can hopefully keep those longleaf pine/wiregrass habitats open and healthy.

The park has recently added two new parcels of land. These were purchased to compensate for land the park lost due to the expansion of US 319. One is the Quarry Pond tract, which is

12.7 acres adjacent to the south side of our Turner Sink parcel. The other is the Wilson tract, a 20-acre triangle adjacent to Two Bridges Road on the north side of the park. This land contains part of the Northside Spring Run.

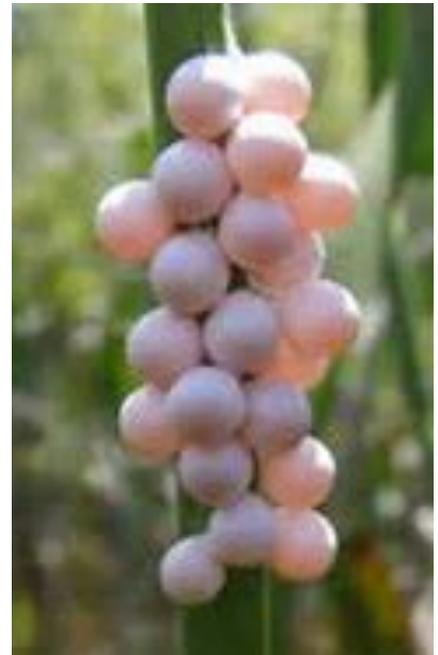
Additionally, the Governor and cabinet have recently approved the purchase of the 717-acre Ferrell property to the north through the Florida Forever program. This land adjoins the east side of our Turner Sink parcel, and contains 669 acres of uplands and 48 acres of wetlands, including a 13 karst features. This will protect an important wildlife corridor, as well as the watershed of Wakulla Spring.

Whenever I can find a moment and the weather cooperates, I've been working to treat exotic plant infestations throughout the park. Earlier this month, Park Ranger Evan Martin and four AmeriCorps members came from Lake Jackson State Park to help. We completed the first exotics surveys and treatments at the new Quarry Pond tract. It has been a popular swimming hole for some time, and is surrounded by private land, so it had a number of invasive plants. Among these were nandina, coral ardisia, Japanese climbing fern, Chinese privet, camphor tree, and

showy rattlebox. We got the property off to a great start, but will return in the future to do battle again.

We have conducted three apple snail egg cluster counts so far this summer, and are happy to see that numbers are up this year. We counted 456 clusters in May, 642 in June, and 571 in July. I've noticed some new eggs laid recently, so will be curious to see what our numbers are for August and September.

The summer Wakulla Full River Survey was conducted on July 31. Thank you very much to park volunteers Nico



The number of apple snail egg clusters are up for 2019.

Continued on Page 3

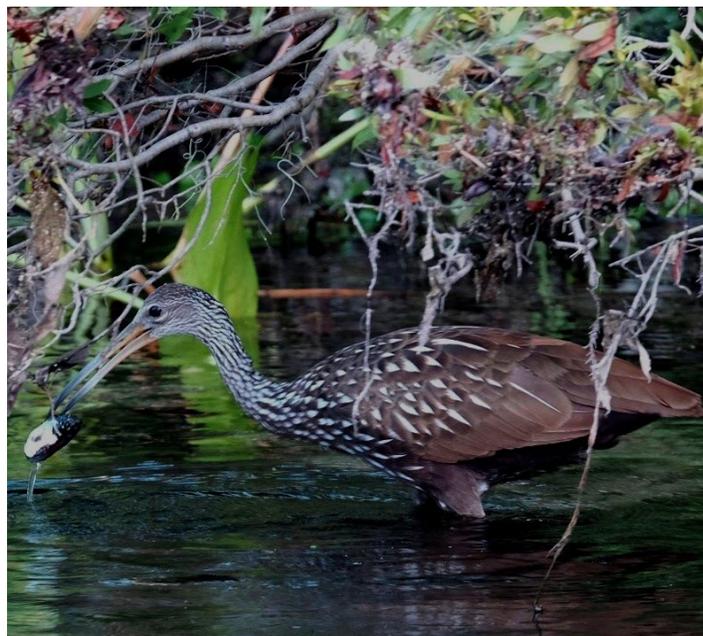
Resource Management (Continued) By Patty Wilbur

Wienders and Les Campbell, FWC biologist Alex Dew, and DEP staff, Jonah Snelling, Eric Grendel and John Melton for their help. I was happy that it was a clear, sunny day with no thunderstorms. While no records were set or new species recorded, I was particularly gratified to see lots of activity at the rookery beyond the boat tour route. It was teeming with over 200 cattle egrets and dozens of little blue herons. We also saw manatees in every section of the river.

There have been some interesting wildlife sightings lately. A limpkin was once again seen in the park on several occasions this July. I was lucky enough to see it swallow a fat apple snail while giving a boat tour. Other drivers noted it eating freshwater mussels. And it was even heard calling one day! Let's hope we hear more of that sound on the river again.

Also in July, a purple gallinule was seen on two separate days. This beautiful bird hadn't been sighted in the park since 2013, so we were happy for its visit.

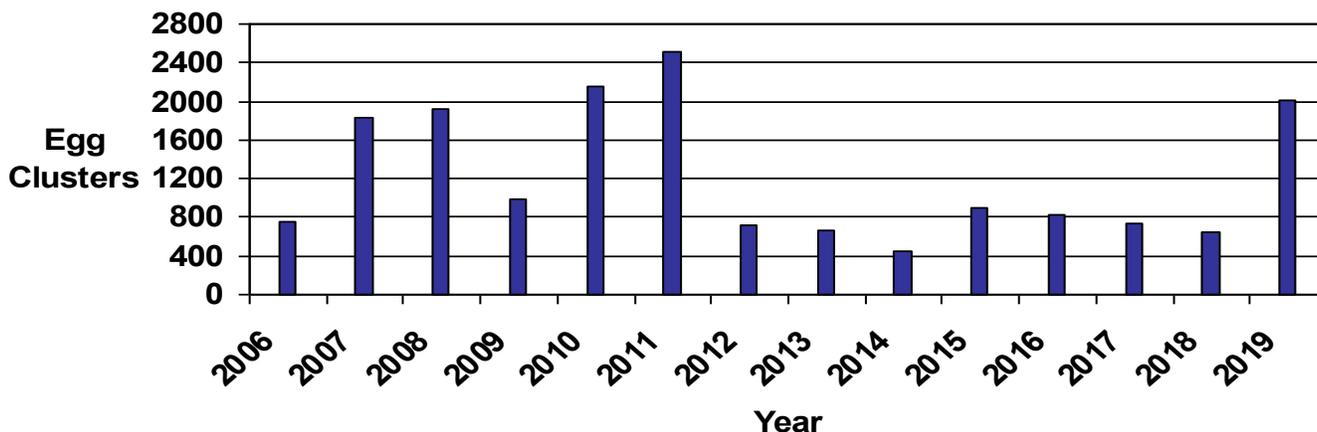
More recently, I noticed a new gopher tortoise burrow along Sanctuary Road. That's always



A limpkin is standing with a mussel in its beak.

exciting, but this time I got a bonus. A male gopher tortoise was doing a courtship dance for a female at the burrow's entrance! He was bobbing his head up and down energetically, while swinging it from side to side. Perhaps, if she likes his dance, we'll have some hatchlings there in the future.

Apple Snail Egg Clusters 2006-19



Off the Beaten Path By Madeline Carr Photos by Madeleine Carr



Above: Park Manager Amy Conyers and Dr. Madeleine Carr pose by the recently conserved “Hole in the Water”.

Below: The “Shingle Saw” conserved with a protective plexiglass sheath.

I often think of the many 6th-graders in Wakulla County who have participated in the LIFE (Learning in Florida’s Environment) experience at Wakulla Springs. Do they have the photos of themselves standing inside the large round metal object that has windows?

Some were told that this was a “diving bell.” As I watched them take a brief respite in their rush from one scientific field experience at the waterfront to another at the cypress dome to catch newts, I wondered about this. What was the strange object doing here? What were all the other weird saws, pumps and even a plough doing here?

One thing I did know. All of the objects were suffering out there. They showed conditions related to outdoor exposure but neither I nor anyone else knew what could be done.

Friends of Wakulla Springs agreed that I should apply for a conservation grant. I would like to have had a permanent covering. When the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources approved the request for funding that perma-

nent installation was nixed.

It would be a canopy. But there was money to hire a professional conservator of metal artifacts. My initial choice, approved by the State, after several months of conversations, was a no-go. Six months into the grant period the search began anew and we were so lucky to contract with Amy Jones Abbe from Athens, GA.

Jones Abbe Art Conservation specializes in metal sculptures, and when she completed her on-site conservation survey, those objects became sculptures. The fun could begin to uncover what the objects were, how they were used and how to conserve each one.

Ms. Abbe reserved the work of conserving the “diving bell” for herself and returned for the three-day job. In the



Continued on Page 5

Off the Beaten Path (Continued) By Madeleine Carr

meantime, a few volunteers started to follow her instructions and pressure washed the lichen and other vegetation and spiders along with hand cleaning all other objects. She completed the diving bell, which I, in the meantime, had researched. I found out it was called the “Hole in the Water.”

Its history is another part of the Edward Ball era at the park. Suffice it to say that the glass pieces of the object were windows into the crystal-clear water of the spring. Several movies were filmed through these windows in 1940 and 1941. A decade or two later, it was anchored so visitors could climb in for a glimpse of what was “down there” below the water’s surface.

Those windows were sealed with pitch (made from pine resin). Almost 8 decades later the resin has fossilized into amber. It would be really cool to find out what kind of wood was used on the windows. The entire *Hole in the Water* was built in Wisconsin and shipped to Wakulla Spring by boat down the Mississippi River and finally up to Wakulla via St. Marks.

Each of the 20th century artifacts is accompanied by images of their purposes in the long process of maintenance and construction during the 1930s, ‘40s, 50’s and 60’s. Once their usefulness was outdated, most were literally “left to rot,” discarded in the woods.

Within a few years after the Florida Park Service acquired Wakulla Springs from the Nemours Foundation in 1986, park rangers arranged to consolidate them on an existing concrete pad. It’s an interesting part of the park’s history, a bit off the beaten path but open for curious eyes near the park’s administration building.

The LIFE participants won’t be able to stand inside that precious artifact called *Hole in the Water* any longer. But it may have more meaning to them. Maybe some of the previous students can return with their parents and be proud of what they encountered apart from newts and salamanders.



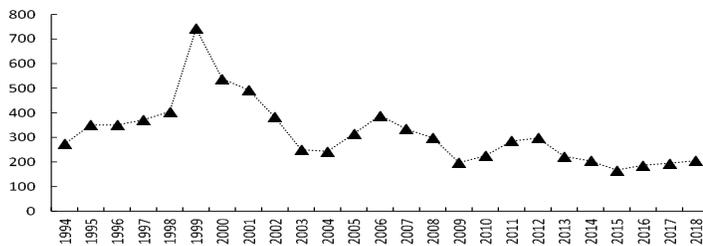
Top: 20th Century Artifacts conserved.

Middle: John Canetta (L) and Dana Wilson (R) clean and power wash the artifacts.

Bottom: John Canetta uses plenty of elbow grease and Penetrol on the oil burner.

What Does the Survey Mean? By Robert Deyle

Figure 1. Total Wildlife Abundance - Annual Mean Total Animal Counts per Survey 1994-2018



Every Saturday morning one or two volunteers board the 9:40 river boat tour and count critters – manatees, alligators, snakes, Suwannee cooters, Florida softshells, and 29 bird species. The data they collect are entered into a data base that now comprises almost 550 records for each species, extending back to September 1992, when park staff began the wildlife monitoring initiative.

Staff surveyed the river monthly until November 2012 when then-recently-retired park ranger Bob Thompson organized the volunteer weekly survey program. Bob T. compiled the data and prepared annual summaries of abundance trends for 24 of the more prevalent species. He passed on the project in 2018. Park volunteer manager Jackie Turner, now oversees the volunteer surveying and Bob Deyle enters and analyzes the data.

Bob D. recently completed an analysis of the data through 2018 (See Wakulla Springs Alliance website under resources tab) as is often the case, there is good news and bad news.

The big picture appears grim – **bad news** – but intriguing. Over the past 27 years total wildlife abundance, measured as total animal counts per survey, has declined at the rate of 10 fewer animals per year. However, the trend has not been a simple straight-line decline. A graph of annual mean counts per survey for the past 25 years (see Figure 1) reveals that abundance increased dramatically from 1994 to 1999, then declined

back to slightly lower levels by 2004, followed by several peaks and valleys that have generally trended downward, with a modest upward trend since 2015. These last four years may be a sign of improving conditions – **good news!**

This pattern suggests that there has been a long-term decrease in the overall biological productivity of the upper Wakulla River ecosystem – it is unable to support as much wildlife as in the past. But it also suggests that there may have been some events – perturbations of the ecosystem – at different times.

As shown in Table 1 (on page 7), the overall long-term pictures for individual species also suggest a declining ecosystem – **bad news:** 14 species (58%) have experienced statistically significant decreases in abundance since 1992; only four (17%) have increased, while the remaining six (25%) have exhibited no significant trends. However, seven species have shown significant increases since 2012 – **good news!**

As for total wildlife abundance, annual means for the individual species suggest a dynamic mix of factors behind the trends. Abundance peaked in 1999 or 2000 for nine species, five of which then immediately declined. Five other species experienced dramatic declines between 2000 and 2002, but now we see increases over the last six years. What has been happening on the upper river that might explain these patterns?

April 1997 marked the beginning of the hydrilla invasion when the exotic aquarium plant began to interfere with swimming at the spring. Fueled by high levels of nitrogen in

Continued on Page 7

What Does the Survey Mean? (Continued) By Robert Deyle

the ground water from septic systems and the Tallahassee wastewater spray field, it had spread to the first turn by December, approximately one quarter mile past the boat dock. During 1998 it invaded the spring basin. The state park began to remove it by hand pulling and applied an aquatic herbicide Aquathol in the swimming area. The herbicide proved ineffective, and despite removing some 570,000 lbs. during that year, the hydrilla continued to spread downriver.

Intensive mechanical harvesting augmented hand pulling in 1999 and 2000. Nevertheless, the hydrilla expanded further down river past the first turn, beyond the tour boat turnaround, and another mile downriver.

The hydrilla mats that spread across the surface of the water shaded out much of the native submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), but they also provided habitat for invertebrates and juvenile fish. Species that prefer such habitat, and others that feed on the animals that live there, experienced significant increases in abundance between 1992 and 2000: American coot, American wigeon, green heron, little blue heron, purple gallinule tricolored heron, white ibis, and wood duck. Osprey, which feed on larger fish, also increased, perhaps because its prey fed on the critters in the hydrilla habitat.

The mechanical harvesting proved ineffective in reining in the hydrilla, and park staff concluded that

the by-catch of fish and invertebrates was unacceptable. Park biologist Scott Savery observed that “each succeeding time we harvest, there are less snails and crawfish.”

In 2002, the state park resorted to treating the upper river with liquid Aquathol. The initial treatment succeeded in killing back the stems of 70 to 80 percent of the hydrilla. However, several of the native SAV species also succumbed. The rapid hydrilla die-off led to a surge in river flow that scoured the bottom sediments of the upper river and likely caused additional loss of native SAV.

The hydrilla recovered to some extent each year, necessitating regular treatments which continued almost every year through 2012. Native SAV species also recovered, some more readily than others, resulting in changes to the species composition of the SAV community. Algae recovered most

Table 1. Summary of Long-Term Trends in Wildlife Species Abundance 1992-2018

Abundance Trend	Species	Annual Rate of Change (Animals Counted per Year) 09/1/92 – 12/29/18
Decreasing	American wigeon	-17.37
	Common gallinule	-2.92
	American coot	-1.46
	American alligator	-0.72
	Wood duck	-0.59
	Anhinga	-0.50
	Blue-winged teal	-0.31
	Cooter turtle	-0.28
	Green heron	-0.18
	Limpkin	-0.17
	Osprey	-0.12
	Snowy egret	-0.08
	Tricolored heron	-0.08
Purple gallinule	-0.05	
Increasing	Hooded merganser	1.84
	Cattle egret	0.86
	Pied-billed grebe	0.59
	White ibis	0.55
No significant trend	Double-crested cormorant	0.00
	Great blue heron	0.00
	Great egret	0.00
	Little blue heron	0.00
	Manatee	0.00
	Yellow-crowned night heron	0.00

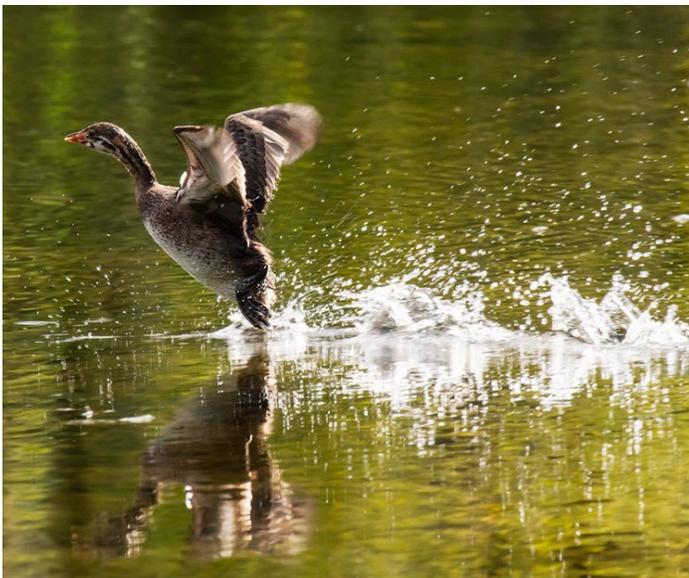
What Does the Survey Mean? (Continued) By Robert Deyle

quickly and began to dominate some areas of the upper river.

Crayfish kills also occurred after the initial treatment in 2002, and to a lesser extent in 2008, most likely due to dissolved oxygen depletion from the decaying hydrilla.

Two other important changes occurred during the period of intense hydrilla management efforts between 2000 and 2012: first, manatees began to appear in larger numbers in 2003 after appearing sporadically since 1997, possibly because the river bottom scouring after the 2002 Aquathol treatment afforded better access through the shallows at the Shadeville Road bridge. Manatees heavily grazed the hydrilla providing additional control.

In addition, total nitrogen discharges from the City of Tallahassee wastewater spray field to the aquifer that feeds Wakulla Spring began to decline, culminating in a 73 percent drop between 2011 and 2012 as major improvements to the T.P. Smith wastewater treatment plant went on line. The state park ceased herbicide treatments



Pied-billed grebes are among the four species that have experienced long-term increases in abundance.

thereafter because the hydrilla failed to recover from manatee grazing during the winter of 2012-13.

Six of the nine species that increased during the hydrilla invasion period experienced significant decreases during the hydrilla management period, probably due at least in part to loss of habitat and/or food supply. All these species either remained at lower levels during the post-hydrilla management period or decreased further: American wigeon, green heron, osprey, purple gallinule, tricolored heron, and wood duck. The wigeon decline was likely due both to local ecosystem changes as well as a northward shift in its wintering range and a broad geographic decline in breeding populations.

Another six species, which had exhibited no trend during the hydrilla invasion, experienced significant decreases during hydrilla management, most likely because of decreased food supplies. Three of these subsequently increased during the post-hydrilla management period (2012-2018): American alligator, double-crested cormorant, and yellow-crowned night heron. The other three either remained at lower levels of abundance or decreased further between 2012 and 2018: blue-winged teal, common gallinule, and snowy egret.

The four species that experienced long-term increases in abundance include hooded merganser, cattle egret, pied-billed grebe, and white ibis. They offer examples of the dynamics behind some of the long-term trends. The hooded merganser, a winter resident at Wakulla, exhibited short-term declines associated with the initial herbicide treatment in 2002 and/or the crayfish kills that resulted that year and in 2008, yet it experienced a net significant increase in abundance during the hydrilla management period that has continued through 2018. No local ecosystem changes

Continued on Page 9

What Does the Survey Mean? By Robert Deyle



American alligators have seen a significant increase in population.

appear to be related to the most recent increases. However, the long-term increasing trend is consistent with increases in summer breeding populations in eastern North America between 2005 and 2015 and a southward trend in the centers of abundance and occurrence of its wintering populations.

Winter migrants supplement the year-round breeding population of pied-billed grebes at Wakulla from September through March. The grebes decreased in abundance during the hydrilla invasion, perhaps because the hydrilla mats interfered with their diving, but they then posted increases during the hydrilla management period and thereafter. However, annual means declined between 2000 and 2004 during the intensive mechanical harvesting and herbicide treatment of the hydrilla. By-catch from the mechanical harvesting and the crayfish kill following the initial April 2002 Aquathol treatment may have contributed to this period of decline. The long-term increase may reflect a documented southward shift in the bird's winter range and increases in breeding populations in eastern North America.

The increasing abundance trend of the cattle egret, which is most common on the Wakulla River during summer months, appears unrelated to the hydrilla story. Their increases were associated with nesting along the second mile of the

river for three summers between 2012 and 2014. They have since declined.

White ibis, which do not breed on the upper Wakulla River, also exhibit seasonal patterns. In summer their numbers are few, mostly juveniles. The adults begin arriving in October and swell the local population through February. Ibis increased during the hydrilla invasion and have more or less maintained those elevated levels. Preying primarily on insects and crustaceans, their numbers peaked in 1999 during the hydrilla invasion then declined sharply through 2003 during use of intense mechanical harvesting and herbicide treatments. While no significant trends in counts per survey are exhibited during the hydrilla management period or the post-management period, annual mean counts per survey peaked again in 2006, fluctuated widely until 2011 and then more or less levelled off. Some of this variation may be due to other factors affecting the species' choice of nonbreeding-season roosting sites.

As of 2018 we see a mix of discouraging and encouraging signs. Continuing decreases for the common gallinule, wood duck, and osprey, and a new decreasing trend for the great blue heron, suggest that changes to the food web have negatively affected species that feed on a variety of food sources ranging from the mostly plant-eating gallinule to the omnivorous wood duck and top-predator osprey and great blue heron. But recent significant increases for other carnivores, including American alligator, anhinga, double-crested cormorant, great egret, hooded merganser, pied-billed grebe, and yellow-crowned night heron may signal improvements in the overall biological productivity of the river ecosystem. Let us hope so.

Excelsior (Ever Upward) By Amy Conyers



They'll come back for the rush that they get from plunging into that cold spring water! They'll come back for another exciting adventure on the river and the best tour they've ever had. They'll come back to learn something new. They'll come back to enjoy the park, but YOU are the reason they enjoy it so much.

I'm so grateful for the professionalism, the teamwork, the positivity and drive that you all exhibited this summer. I can't say it enough, you ALL (Park staff, Lodge staff, Friends of Wakulla, Volunteers) helped in your own, important ways. Through flexibility and awareness and a healthy dose of creativity, we kept our guests and each other safe and happy. Thank you!

Now, as we say farewell to summer and get ready to tackle the many backlogged projects that fall brings, we have much to look forward to! We will be welcoming cooler temperatures and a different kind of park visitor. We'll be continuing to welcome our incoming resident volunteers. We'll soon be able to welcome a new Assistant Park Manager and strengthen our team even more. We'll see an increase in park programs and events. It only gets better from here!

What a summer! My last article was about change... I think that every quarter I could write an article with the same theme.

Three months ago, we were saying goodbye to an Assistant Park Manager and welcoming another. Within weeks, everyone was asking me what I did do to run off the new Assistant Park Manager. I responded each time with a joke about how intimidating I am, but the truth is that it just didn't work out.

It wasn't because of me or the park, but the fact remained that we were still without an Assistant Park Manager all summer long. Even if we had been fully staffed, it would have been a challenging summer.

We had record temperatures and very strong attendance numbers! Staff and volunteers were spread thin to cover all our bases. We did it though!

We made it through, and we did a great job. We are a stronger team because of it and we'll only get better as we add to and complete our team.

We had several factors adding to our summer increase in visitation. First of all, the heat made our cool spring so very inviting! That's a given. Add to that the fears from news reports of bacteria and amoebas and tides... oh my! Those fears kept people inland this season. We also had many places in the Panhandle still recovering from Hurricane Michael, which redirected some travelers, I'm sure. We welcomed back many, many regular visitors, but we also hosted quite a few first-timers. I'm certain that we made an impact on all who experienced Wakulla Springs this summer.

They'll keep coming back too. They'll come back for the friendly greeting that they received at the Ranger Station. They'll come back for the delicious food in the Lodge.

Thanks for Giving By Jeff Hugo Photos by Jeff Hugo



Park volunteers enjoy some time together.

It was Thursday, June 20. Volunteer Manager Jackie Turner was positioned at the double doors of the Lodge to welcome her host of volunteers from 2018. Yes, she admitted that her efforts to recognize the volunteers had been delayed; but they certainly weren't forgotten.

Over 60 volunteers came to enjoy the appetizers and the fine repast the lodge had prepared. Many renewed acquaintances and had the pleasure of making new ones. As Jackie said, "We are members of a family."

As she elaborated, it proved to be a family of diverse interests and abilities.

There were the resident volunteers who served to maintain the park, greet park visitors at the entrance, and sell tickets at

the waterfront. Even though pushed out of the park by Hurricane Michael, they were soon back to help pick up the pieces.

A host of local volunteers assisted with road clean ups, National Public Lands Day, and park landscaping.

Les Campbell graciously continues as caretaker on the River Sinks Tract. Stuart Funke d'Egnuff faithfully serves to keep track of the park's chimney swifts. George Apthorp continues to catalog the ancient giants of the park—the champion trees. He then leads walks to share their well-hidden splendor with park guests.

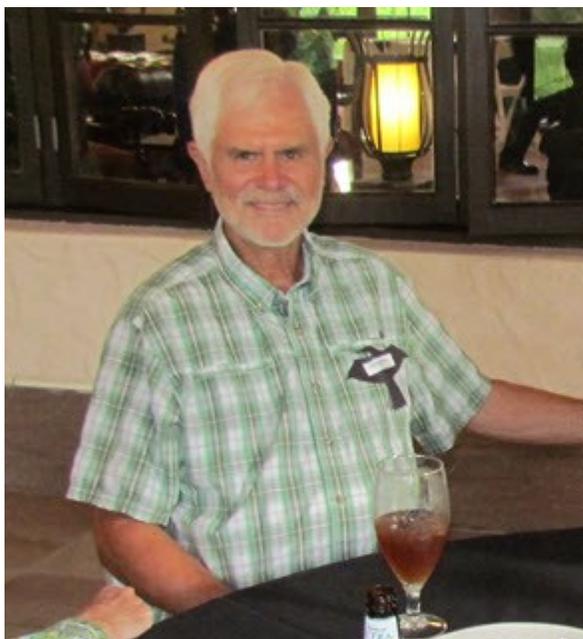
Still others assist with resource management and research. They help with prescribed

burns, weekly wildlife surveys, and water color investigation.

Archaeological Research during 2018 was nothing short of impressive. Everything that was accomplished would not have been possible without a host of volunteers.

The park's citizen support organization, The Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park, is led by a board of volunteers who meet monthly. They plan fundraising events, they organize educational activities, and they reach out for new members and park support.

Yes, so many give time and talent to support Wakulla Springs. As Jackie summarizes, "Thank you to all of our volunteers for all of your efforts on behalf of the park. We really appreciate everything that you do for Wakulla Springs and we could not do it without you. Thank you."



"George Apthorp continues to catalog the ancient giants of the park."

Striving Forward By Michelle Laxton Photo by Jeff Hugo



“More and more families and businesses are booking their events with the lodge.”

We’re striving forward. The Lodge at Wakulla Springs is seeing more and more smiling faces as people are coming back to enjoy the fine food and service in the restaurant while making more and more special event arrangements.

The lodge’s administration has been working to create a cuisine reflective of Wakulla Springs’ history while embracing selections which include the local heritage. The crab-stuffed, bacon-wrapped shrimp is just one example of a local delicacy new to the menu. Of course, the restaurant’s classic fried chicken is a historic offering not to be snubbed.

Gone are the days when patrons stood frustrated waiting to be seated in a near empty restaurant. Whether it be breakfast, lunch, or

dinner; guests are seated promptly. The only issue now is that for some meals there may be a wait because there are no empty tables.

The journey toward improved customer service has been an objective since Guest Services became the lodge concessionaire almost two years ago. The fruits of training, oversight, and leadership are becoming apparent. The goal remains to make local patrons our regulars and first-timers our repeat customers.

More and more families and businesses are booking their events with the lodge. They are not only taking the plunge and giving their event a try, but they are rebooking for future dates. Just in the month of July there were two family reunions for the first time. Before the events had concluded, they booked and signed contracts for the upcoming two years.

Additionally, a large local business arranged a “Family Day” at the park. Employees and their families (as many as 365 people) consumed a buffet in the lodge, swam in the refreshing water of the Wakulla River, and used vouchers to experience park wildlife on a river boat tour. Before the event was over, the company’s leadership wanted to make this an annual event.

Along with good food, great service and one-of-a-kind local retail items; the Lodge is undergoing an extensive make over. There is new artwork in the lobby along with new beds in the guest rooms and new paint on the walls. There will soon be new carpet upstairs. A visit is truly a step back in time with just enough modern comforts to make guests feel at home.

Because patronage is increasing, the Lodge will hire more staff. The Spring Shop, restaurant, and lodging flourish with increasing numbers daily. Our restaurant never seems to slow down! From breakfast to lunch and dinner, guests are lined up at the doors to enjoy the increasing Southern Hospitality.

I’ve had people ask me, “Are you ready for your Off-Season?” My reply was simple, “For the remainder of 2019 and 2020, I don’t see an Off-Season for The Lodge at Wakulla Springs”. We’re striving forward!

Smokey's 75th Birthday By Jeff Hugo Photo by Amy Conyers



The beautiful birthday cake was donated by Karen's Bakery in Crawfordville.

Todd Schroeder is a Mitigation Specialist with the Florida Forest Service. He was also the coordinator of Smokey Bear's 75th Birthday celebrated at Wakulla Springs State Park on Saturday, August 3. Planning for the event began two months earlier when he contacted Park Services Specialist Jeff Hugo at the park. Together they plotted, planned and enlisted the support of Forestry and Park personnel along with volunteers from throughout the area.

They put together a passport guests could use to enjoy eight various activities while earning raffle tickets for the big drawing starting at 12:45pm. Some of the activities involved signing Smokey's birthday card, coloring a t-shirt iron-on, or getting one's face painted. You could also get a picture taken with Smokey, be captivated by Smokey's story

interact with a firefighter, and use a firehose.

By 12:30 it was time to sing *Happy Birthday* to Smokey. Todd lit the candles on the beautiful cake donated by Karen's Bakery in Crawfordville. After the many well-wishers sang, Smokey blew out the candles (with some help) and the cake was served. There were three other half-sheet cakes as well. Everyone ate cake. There were no leftovers.

Many of the guests came up to Todd and Jeff and expressed what a great time they had. They were welcome and appreciated sentiments.

The staff and volunteers had fun as well. As one of the staff members confided, "I was a little gruff as the day began, but the



Miss "L" colors a T-shirt iron-on.



Miss "L" listens as Ranger Kat Wilson tells Smokey's story.



Miss "L" gets her face painted by Volunteer Linda Hall.

Smokey's 75th Birthday By Jeff Hugo Photo by Amy Conyers



Miss "L" has her picture taken with Smokey.

event made me smile and laugh inside and out." That can happen when you're doing what you love (even when it's customarily your day off).

Miss "L" was one of the younger birthday party celebrants. Her escapades are captured in the accompanying photos. Enjoy!



Miss "L" uses the firehose.



Miss "L" watches as the cake is cut and prepared for serving.



Miss "L" wraps up her adventure with ice cream in the soda fountain.

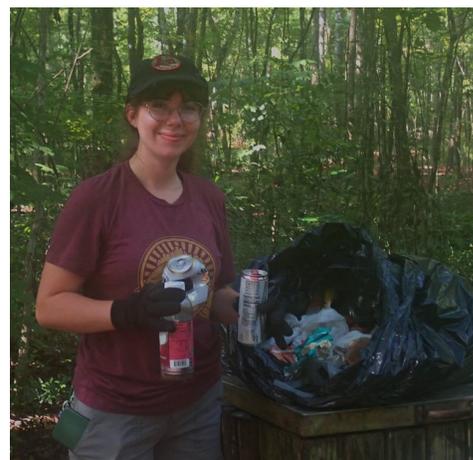
Volunteer Viewpoint By Olivia Sihle; Photo by Jackie Turner

I never thought that I would be grateful for something that can be so gross sometimes. Helping sort the recycling at Wakulla Springs State Park has changed me in a fundamental way.

Seeing how much single-use plastic, glass, and aluminum the average person goes through in a day/week/month has made

me shift to a more low-waste lifestyle and it has pushed me to encourage my friends and coworkers to try harder to be low-waste.

Once you see how fast a massive recycling bin fills up, you realize that this is truly a very fast-moving problem with a lot of momentum.



Recycling Do's and Don'ts By Jackie Turner

The park can recycle aluminum, plastic, glass and paper. However, not all types of these materials are recyclable.

MATERIAL WHAT CAN BE RECYLED

Glass	<i>Bottles and Jars Only</i>
Plastic	<i>Bottles, No 1 "PETE" and No 2 "HDPE" Only</i>
Paper	<i>All types except waxed and paper hand towels</i>
Aluminum and Steel Cans	<i>(steel cans can be added with aluminum cans)</i>

Glass: Only CLEAN AND EMPTY bottles and jars are recyclable. Bottles with liquid cannot be recycled.

Drinking glasses, china plates, and light bulbs CANNOT be recycled

Plastic: Only CLEAN AND EMPTY bottles with the recycling symbol No 1 (PETE) or No 2 (HDPE) are recyclable.

No 1 (PETE) and No 2 (HDPE) without neck CANNOT be recycled

No 3 (PVC) No 4 (LDPE) No 5 (PP) No 6 (PS) No 7 (other) CANNOT be recycled

Plastic bags and Styrofoam CANNOT be recycled

Paper: Most can be recycled (newspaper, copy paper, cereal boxes, etc.)

Waxed paper (milk cartons, waxed boxes)

CANNOT be recycled

Used paper hand towels (think about toilet paper) CANNOT be recycled

Aluminum and Steel Cans: Clean and Empty are recyclable.

Foil and pans CANNOT be recycled

Correct Material and Clean = **RECYCLABLE**

Correct Material and Dirty = **CANNOT be recycled**

Incorrect Material and Clean = **CANNOT be recycled**

Incorrect Material and Dirty = **CANNOT be recycled**

Only CLEAN items that are of the CORRECT MATERIAL can be recycled. All others CANNOT be recycled.

Food contaminated items cannot be recycled. They are considered Municipal Solid Waste (trash) and will be sent to the landfill.



PLASTIC

GLASS

ALUMINUM

CLEAN AND EMPTY

Students in Service By Jackie Turner Photo by Jackie Turner

Elementary and middle school students give of themselves in service to the park. They patrol the picnic grounds to pick up litter. Their assistance helps protect the park's wildlife and they help park rangers keep the area litter free.

Recently, some of these students were in the park. Tallahassee Home School students and their families were here on Thursday June 27. Girl

Scout Troop 67 members and their families from Tallahassee were here on Saturday July 13.

Each group worked in pairs to look for litter. As evidence

by their results, these students are very good at finding tiny pieces of trash. After one hour of service, each group almost filled a five-gallon bucket. That is a lot of small pieces of litter.

Their work helps to prevent littering (if people see litter, they are more likely to litter). More importantly, removing litter protects wildlife, who can be harmed by it (we are now understanding the impact of small bits litter). We are so fortunate to have the volunteer support of our younger visitors.



Tallahassee Home School and their families



Scout Troop 67 and their families

Early Morning on the Wakulla River By Jeff Hugo

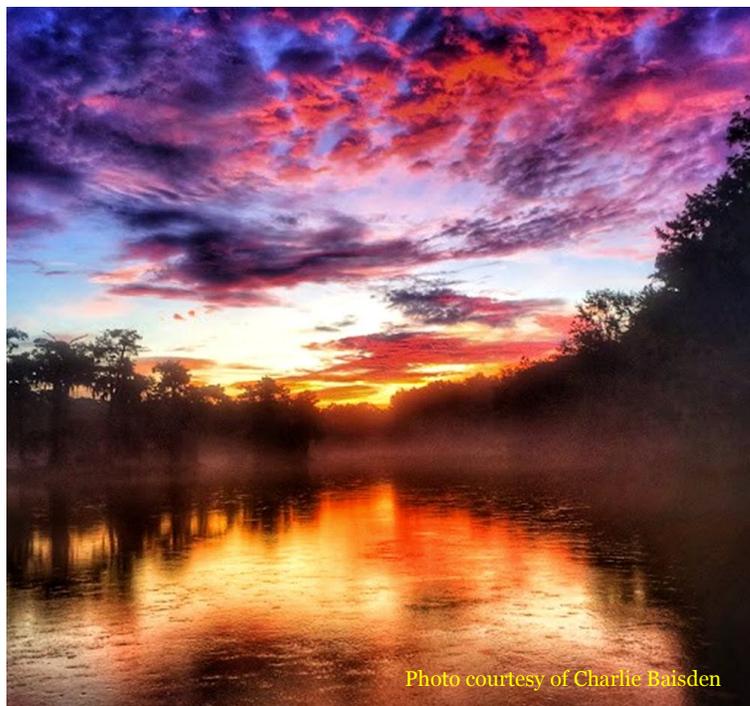


Photo courtesy of Charlie Baisden

Even though the heat and humidity of August is nothing short of intense, the early mornings at the park can be surprisingly comfortable and breathtakingly beautiful.

August 21 was one such morning. Park Ranger Charlie Baisden had arrived in the park particularly early. He had walked down to the river to check on things and the magnificent sunrise pictured to the left greeted him. It was one of the most stunning photos of the river I have ever seen.

A few days later on Saturday, August 24, another remarkable morning awaited the *Early Morning Boat Tour* participants.

It was a misty and eerie beginning. Plumes

Early Morning (Continued) By Jeff Hugo



Photo courtesy of Jackie Pope

of mist rose from the refreshing 69 degree water. The rising sun's lemony light intensified as it refracted through the billions of microscopic water droplets.

Sharp eyes could see the ghost-like outline of a manatee or two lazily swimming along underwater. Eventually their noses pierced the surface with a quiet snort as they took in oxygen for another submersed foray.

An anhinga had just crawled from the river following its

fishing expedition. Its form was silhouetted as it sat motionless in the still morning air. A pied-billed grebe belted out its territorial refrain while a baby alligator greeted the dawn atop its mother's protective head.

Even though it was difficult to muster the resolve to meet the 8:00am departure time, there were no complainers in the group. There was just a sense of awe and thankfulness to have been allowed to experience an early morning on the Wakulla River.



Photo courtesy of Cheryl Walters

Christmas in August By Jeff Hugo



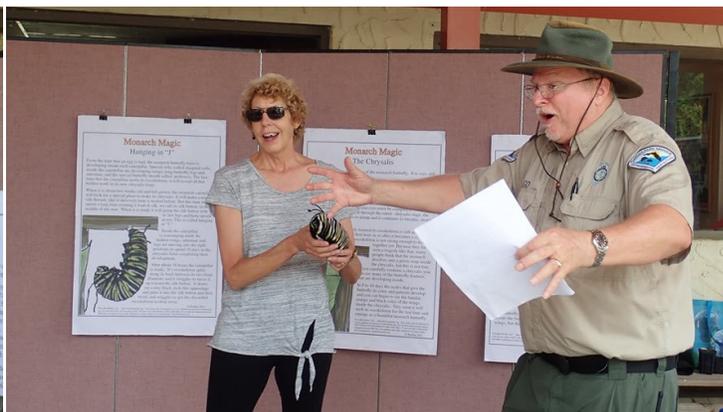
The Honorary Customer Service Troll John Melton searches for his replacement.

School was back in and the pressure of the busy season saw some relief during the work week. It was time to celebrate the contributions and sacrifices the park's administration, staff, and volunteers had made during the last six months of the park's busiest season. On Wednesday, August 21 from 6:00-9:00pm it happened.

It was a time for laughter and camaradery. The group of 35 played the *Customer Service Troll* game, ate tacos and ice cream, and opened gifts. There were plenty of smiles and laughs to go around.

Beauty of Butterflies

By Jeff Hugo Photos by Jackie Turner



John Melton and Jeff Hugo help 'Freda' the monarch hatch out of her chrysalis.

Sally Hugo demonstrates how the creepy crawly caterpillar crawled and ate.

August 24 was hot; but the butterflies loved it. They could be seen on the river, in the butterfly garden, and even on the beach.

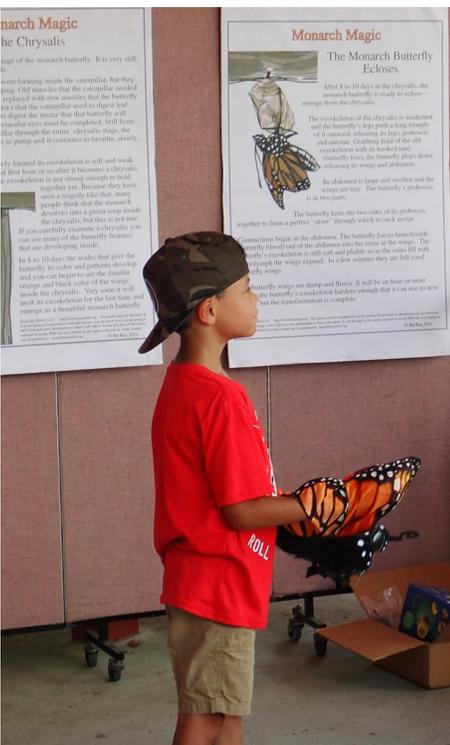
Members of the Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, the Hairstreak Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, and the

Milkweed program at the St. Mark's Wildlife Refuge endured the high temperatures to share their love of the "ambassadors of the insect world".

Park Services Specialist Jeff Hugo and members of the audience participated in an interactive puppet show. Based upon Sam Swope's book *Gotta Go! Gotta Go!*, the story of a monarch butterfly's life cycle brought smiles, laughs and understanding to the audiences who witnessed it.



Marianne Luber makes certain everyone knows where Mexico is.



Local butterfly experts Dean and Sally Jue led five short butterfly scavenger hunt walks. The 30 inquisitive participants found as many as 20 different species and earned a free scoop of ice cream in the lodge.

RIGHT: The creepy crawly creature 'sleeps' in its chrysalis.

LEFT: The creepy crawly creature gets its wings and prepares to fly back to its meadow.



Something Unexpected in the Lodge By Jeff Hugo Photos by Jeff Hugo

While you were in the lodge, did you expect to see the beautiful new theater panels? They are perhaps the most dramatic improvement to the lobby of the lodge since the park acquired the property in 1986.

Many of the lighted theater panels had photos that been discolored, burned, or cracked by the intense heat of the previous lighting. Lodge Custodian Jim Smith upgraded the lighting to LED. Now all that was needed was new photo prints.

With the help of Dr. Madeleine Carr's historic guidance, the talented photography of David Moynahan, and the financial backing of Guest Services, Inc.; the lighted theater panels took on new life. With contemporary wildlife photos, panoramic river scenes, and even close-ups of ceiling paintings; a new vibrancy filled the lodge lobby. David Moynahan painstakingly colored two vintage black and white photos to continue the historic tradition of the panels.

So, as you enjoy a fine meal in the restaurant, a Ginger Yip in the soda fountain, or just sit back in the comfy furniture of the lobby, be certain to take it all in. Be prepared to expect the unexpected.

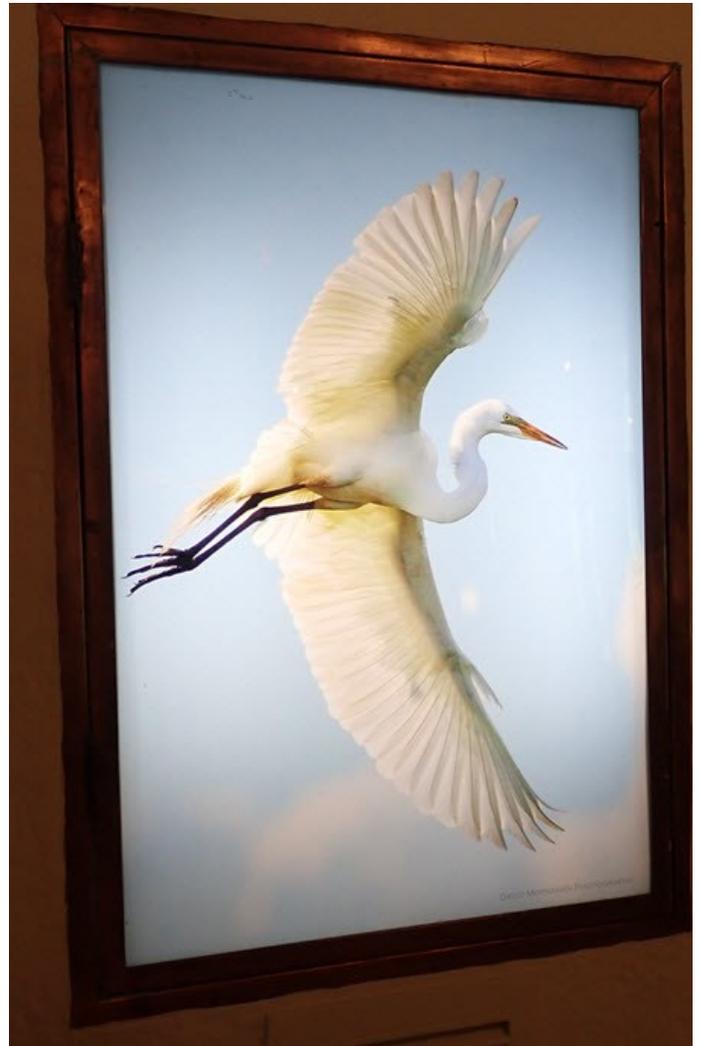
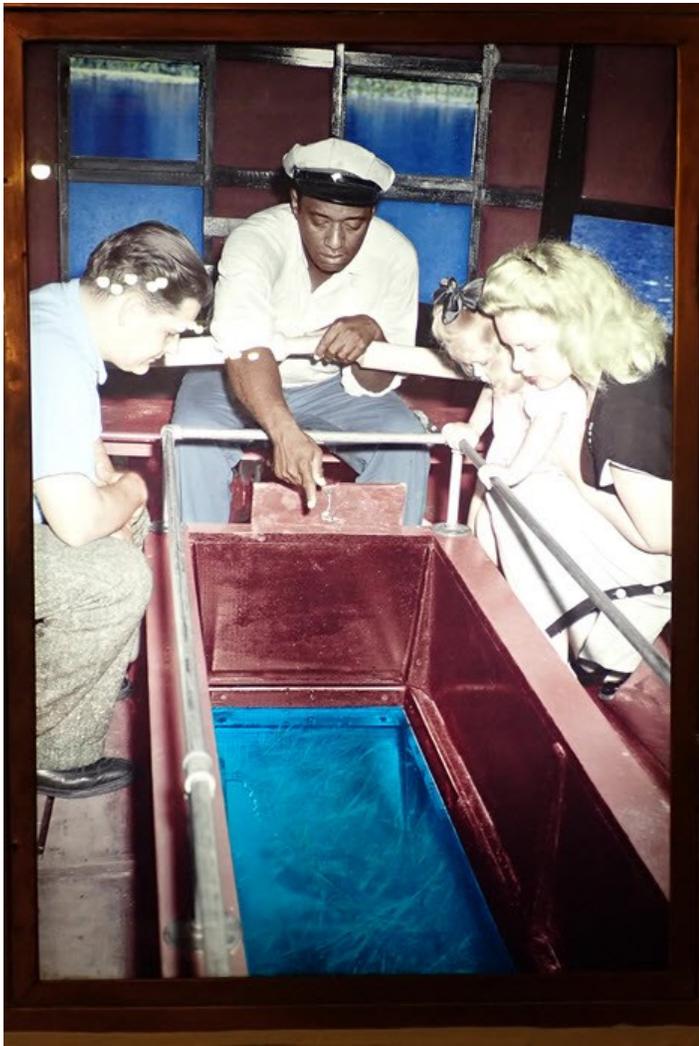




Photo by Bob Thompson

Wakulla Springs State Park
465 Wakulla Park Drive
Wakulla Springs, FL 32327
Phone: 850-561-7276

Upcoming Events!

Saturday,
September 14
7:30pm–8:30pm
Swift Night Out

Saturday,
September 21
9:00am – Noon
Coastal Clean-Up

Saturday,
September 28
9:00am–Noon
Natl. Public Lands Day

Saturday
October 19
9:00am–10:30am
Morning Nature Walk

Sunday,
October 20
5:15–8:00pm
Friends Beach Bash

Saturday
October 26
12:00pm-2:00pm
A History of Horticulture

Saturday
October 26
12:00pm-3:00pm
Spooky Springs Cruises

Saturday
October 26
5:00pm-8:00pm

MISSION: To provide resource-based recreation while preserving, interpreting, and restoring natural and cultural resources

Remake By Jeff Hugo

One of the first things OPS Park Ranger Dan Davis said while we were talking was, “I’m remaking myself.” I wasn’t sure what he meant. After all, since he had started working with the park in April, I had only seen a very talented and hard-working individual. What did he need to remake?

He knew how to prepare a surface for painting and wasn’t afraid to put in the elbow grease to make it happen. The ongoing Administration painting project would prove a challenge. But priorities soon called him away to ready the Assistant Park Manager Residence.

He did more painting. He removed old cabinetry and installed new. He worked on the plumbing. He knew his way around maintenance and repair. He had worked construction his whole life.

So why Wakulla Springs? “It keeps me in shape. And I’ve always liked working outdoors.” He experienced plenty of field work and more during the hectic summer months.

He says of the rangers, “They’ve been so helpful and they’ve treated me as an equal.” He’s learned about the native plants by helping Charlie on grounds maintenance. He’s learned about the electric boat engines from Cecil. And he’s learned about the Point of Sales machines from almost everyone else.

But Dan is not done. He is looking forward to captaining the river boat tours as well. He genuinely enjoys the park guests. When someone walks away with a smile and a “Thank you” he says, “It makes my day!” Even after many an exhausting day, Dan says, “I’ve left here happy.”

So what does he need to remake? He just wants to continue to grow. He wants to enjoy what he does and who he does it with. For then, he will never work a day in his life.



“I want to express my gratitude and admiration to each and every one of you.”

Saturday,
November 2
8:00am–9:00am
Early Morning Boat Tour

Saturday,
November 2
11:00am–3:00pm
HuManatee Festival

Saturday,
November 9
10:30am–12:30pm
Hidden Spring Bike Ride

Saturday
November 9
4:30pm-8:00pm
Dinner Cruise

Saturday,
November 23
9:00am–10:30am
Morning Nature Walk

Saturday,
December 7
10:30am–12:30pm
Hidden Spring Bike Ride