Grant helps resurrect Spanish history

SPECIAL TO THE DEMOCRAT

The National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution has made a $2,000 grant to the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park to provide for a public display of the park named "Presidio to Statehood." The display will include new information about the First Spanish Period at Wakulla Springs State Park.

The Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park is a non-profit citizen's support organization chartered in 1995 and dedicates itself to supporting the care, stewardship, and preservation of Wakulla Springs State Park and its natural, historical, cultural, and recreational resources.

The Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park serves the state of Florida and beyond, and is a popular destination spot for not only nature enthusiasts, but also historians and archaeologists. The park of this project will be to provide new information, an exhibit, and an interpretive sign in the form of an exhibit panel entitled "Presidio to Statehood".

Once installed, the exhibit will benefit in and out-of-state and international visitors who will gain an understanding of Florida's role during and after the First Spanish Period. The exhibit will provide the background for historical interpretation, and the area will become an important resource to Wakulla County's overall knowledge," said Madeline Carr, park historian.

Carr, working together with the Auclai Research Institute, Monticello, is providing research about the inhabitants around the spring and along the St. Marks River. "The Presidio de San Marcos de Apalachee, now a historic state park, while Georgia's western boundary pushed deeper westward into the Creek Nation, a southern boundary following the border between the Creeks and the Apalachees, and it represented an imaginary line on paper," Carr explained.

"This situation allowed for the free movement of cattle, enslaved people and traders," Carr explained that the necessity to separate Georgia from Florida with a defined region did not happen until the 1800s when the Tom and William Kennard, with homes both at the Wakulla Spring and near Indian's Albany, provided support to the U.S. government's territorial possession through the Treaty of 1819.

The U.S. government provided trade goods to the Timucuan, including guns, ammunition, flour, spices, coffee, sugar, and molasses which the Timucuan could sell to the Indians at discounted prices.

The first Spanish settlement is to place in 1766 to endeavor peace with the Timucuan was supported by the Spanish and La Plata Company Trading Firm. They had a warehouse in Apalachee, a site adjacent to the fort. The Presidio (forty) afforded a broad view of the white traders contact all the way down the coast to the South Carolina colony. Through several generations, the exhibit will illustrate the effects of trade, of Creek War, and the military that did not end well near Jackson arrived at St. Marks," Carr said.

The design phase of the exhibit begins in August. It is anticipated that members of the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park, and the Fort San Luis Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution in Tallahassee will have a presence toward the end of October before production. There will also be a public announcement of the "Presidio to Statehood" exhibit panel planned for March 2018. Funding for this project was made possible through a leadership grant from the Fort San Luis Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, located in Tallahassee, Florida. Through competitive grants, DAR supports local projects that present at least one of the organization's mission areas of historic preservation, education, and patriotism.

The project's continued research is involved in applying for a Special Program Grant from DAR to contact Fort San Luis Chapter Regent Kimberley Berg at regent.sanluis@gmail.com.