
WAKULLA RIVERFRONT

Solving Park Mysteries

Digging for answers.

By Madeleine H. Carr

Often, when cruising downriver, guides explain the name of the Wakulla River. It either means river of the crying bird (a reference to the limpkin), or mysterious waters.

I prefer mysterious waters.

Taking the river cruise certainly evokes many questions in addition to the excited pointing left and right as wildlife is spotted. There are not many arms stretching out to point at some of the majestic bald cypresses and other fauna.

Guides tell us some of these cypresses are hundreds of years old. Could it be that the hapless Spanish conquistador, Panfilo de Narvaez, came across some of these in 1528?

Other trees are not that old. They might look majestic but they are maybe 60 or 100 years old. And while there are many certified champion trees at Wakulla Springs State Park, nobody talks about the trees that simply sprouted in what used to be large fields of corn.

So here's a mystery for you: Who grew that corn?



Archeology to the Rescue

Our organization, the Aucilla Research Institute (Monticello) and PAST (Panhandle Archeological Society at Tallahassee) begin an ambitious project we call **Wakulla II**.

On August 3 former state archeologist Dr. James Dunbar heads a team that begins a couple of weeks of an initial grid survey on over 10 acres west of the lodge. We will keep updating our website (www.wakullasprings.org) for volunteer opportunities and findings.

It is hoped these investigations will confirm evidence of Seminole villages. Then, in October, this project moves to a third site downriver to solve another mystery. More about that in our next newsletter.

Summertime – You Know Where to Hang Out

Wakulla Spring is crystal clear as of this writing. Unfortunately thick mats of algae mar the visibility into the main spring boil. The swimming area is clear and cold.

Hundreds and hundreds of people walk to the waterfront and pass our butterfly garden.

Volunteers maintain the garden, but they, too, go away to enjoy the world.

Sometimes it needs a dedicated person who comes to the park anyway to turn on the sprinklers to keep these flowers going so our flying jewels have plenty of nectar.

Let us know (www.wakullasprings.org) if you want to be a regular water bearer.



Prefer Fall Weather to Help?

If you have a green thumb, October and November might be the months for you. A landscaping plan for around the lodge is in the works. We will buy the plants and the park could use some volunteers.

More Volunteer Opportunities on the River October 12-23, 2015:

You are invited to join in one or more of these sampling events. Volunteers with a wide range of prior experience will be welcome to participate. We will form a number of teams for each study.

Some possible teams include:

- Physical indices (bathymetry, velocity, discharge, residence time, sediment nutrients and texture, solar inputs and light attenuation, etc.)
- Water quality (recording data sondes, field parameters along longitudinal and vertical profiles, analytical sampling, etc.)
- Biology including the following teams: Primary producers (submerged aquatic vegetation, attached algae, etc.); Invertebrates (aquatic insects, snails, mussels, crayfish, etc.); Fish (species diversity, density, and biomass); Herptiles (frogs, snakes, alligators, turtles, etc.); Birds and mammals; Human use counts

If you wish to be part of this new type of citizen science, contact

<https://www.facebook.com/floridaspringsinstitute>

Our Freshwater Superhighway



Exploring and mapping the longest cave system in the USA this summer sees the return of the Woodville Karst Plain Project (WKKP). Here team members (all volunteers) enter Emerald Sink to explore north and connect underground to Big Dismal in the Leon Sinks geological formations.

Cave Research Keeps Springs Healthy

Data derived from mapping is important to educate resource managers and the public of the main water resource. The divers took advantage of the clearing trend in June but kept their fingers crossed that dark water keeps away. As of the end of June the sinkholes, sadly, are going dark again and nobody knows why.

Another mystery.

The divers install cave radio transmitters and have 18 hours above ground to locate and activate the signal before those batteries die. Once a location is fixed, divers return underground to remove the equipment.

The location for the underground conduits of our Freshwater Superhighway is particularly important now that the U.S. 319 expansion is planned. There are eels, catfish, and isopods in the caves 13 miles north of Wakulla Springs. The water moves 1 mile per day. The Leon Sinks section, below ground, is a very jagged cave suggesting a high water flow that could be impacted by surface water drainage.

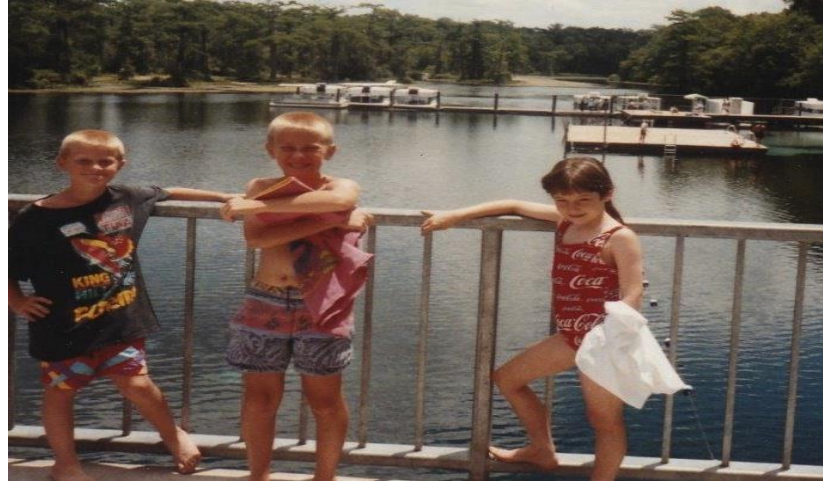
Click this link <http://wakullasprings.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/June-2015.pdf> to the article in the current Wakulla Springs State Park newsletter ***The Spring Board***.

Living History:

One Child at a Time

Board member David Murrell's account of life at Wakulla:

Putting a time capsule in something like a building or statue is both fun and interesting. There is the thought and optimism that some future generation may come upon the time capsule, open it, and see how things were way back when. Wakulla Springs is what I would call a living time capsule. There is no need to wait years to see what life was like at Wakulla Springs and on the Wakulla River.



Kurt, Adam and cousin Shannon Murrell

You see, every day is an ongoing time capsule that shows us how things were many years ago. Wakulla Springs itself, the cold, refreshing water, the cypress trees, the wildlife in the park—these and many more features are today what they were hundreds and perhaps thousands of years ago. That's what makes Wakulla Springs so special for so many people.

My personal time capsule with Wakulla Springs started, as with many of us, when I was an out of town student at FSU (in the late 1970's and early 80's). My wife Karen and I would join our friends, both native to the area and non-native, and enjoy many weekends on the Wakulla River and at Wakulla Springs itself. Of course, back then the diving tower at the Springs was three tiers high, not the current two tiers. Now that was quite the experience, a real death-defying ordeal. There's nothing like being young and stupid—except perhaps being old and stupid, which is even worse.

Fast forward, we moved back to Jacksonville for a few years and then had a job opportunity to come back to the Tallahassee area (but this time not as a poor, down trodden college student). In fairly short order, my wife, two sons, and I found our way back to Wakulla Springs. We were fortunate enough to buy land and build a house on an acreage adjacent to the Park and just a short distance from the Wakulla River itself. Our boys grew up in what I would call a Huck Finn lifestyle and existence; they and their friends would spend hour after hour chasing the wild life (and sometimes it chasing them), jumping from the tower, swimming in the approved area, going up and down the river, and jumping off both the Upper Bridge and Lower Bridge (this was back before the multitudes descended on the area and it was still somewhat legal or excused to jump off the bridges).

I feel sure that both boys would agree that perhaps the best part of their growing up had to do with Wakulla Springs State Park and the Wakulla River. Their time capsule would be the vivid memories of how things were and still are even today at this special place, a living history forever imbedded in their brains. No need to dig up a time capsule way down the road.



We Have Our Own YouTube Channel

Local filmmaker Rafel Fortier has volunteered lots of time to upload existing footage of different programs shot at Wakulla Springs over the years.

The image on the left is from the October 1953 *Creature from the Black Lagoon* shoot.

For your hot summer inside viewing of the Wakulla Springs Archive just click https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=wakulla+springs+archive

Our gratitude to Rafel who lives on the river with his wonderful family (and his sister writes a newsletter for the Mysterious Waters homeowners. She isn't 10 years old yet). Thank you Samiri Hernandez and Paul Fortier for including your neighborhood in your children's activities.



Granny Alert

Trudy Thompson served as a board member and treasurer for decades. Carter is her new-found occupation and she and her husband Bob make sure he spends lots of time at the park.

Please consider becoming a board member to help us further the protection of this valuable natural resource.

Become a Member

When you become a member of **FRIENDS OF WAKULLA SPRINGS STATE PARK** you join others in working to protect this vital resource. Your involvement is critical as water quality problems continue to grow with an ever increasing population. You can help!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone () _____

Email _____

Membership check enclosed

Student	\$15.00
Individual	\$20.00
Family	\$25.00
Good Friend.....	\$50.00
Best Friend.....	\$100.00
Business Friend.....	\$250.00
Lifetime Friend.....	\$1,000.00 or more

TELL US ABOUT YOUR SKILLS AND TALENTS! WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOUR INPUT!

Friends of Wakulla Springs
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