



# The Spring Board

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## The Greatest Results By Jeff Hugo



**“It’s the little things done on a consistent basis that produce the greatest results.” Charlie Baisden**

It was a little thing. Charlie leant me *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. He had a feeling that I would enjoy it. He was right.

The author wove together a compelling narrative set along the North Carolina coast and bays. Charlie confessed that the setting reminded him of his childhood. He grew up in rural Live Oak and spent the summers with his grandparents along the Florida coast. It forged a love for the outdoors that never left him.

Charlie admitted in a 2010 interview, “I always wanted to be a ranger.”

But, initially that was not to be the case. He got his degree at FSU as an accountant. It wasn’t long after he and his wife Cindy moved to Tampa. There he worked for a large C.P.A. firm. As years past, it was on to Orlando and eventually Fort Lauderdale.

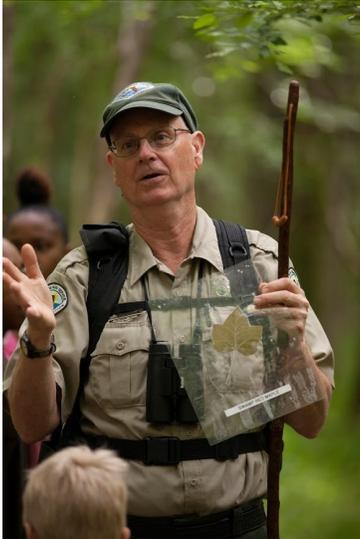
Along the way he did the little things. He learned more and more about his profession. He supported his family as he took on more and more responsibility. He learned to navigate the urban jungles. But all the while, there was a part of him that felt like he was in exile.

By 2005, plans were laid for that exile to end. He and his wife would move back to Tallahassee. They had come to love the area in their college years. Cindy would teach in an area school and Charlie would pursue his latent dream of becoming a ranger.

It began with little things. He had to choose a park. He chose Wakulla Springs. There was lots of visitation. There was lots of opportunity for interpretation. There was lots of potential to be outside and perhaps find a position.

In October of 2010, though, there were no ranger positions to be had. Undaunted, Charlie did a little thing and became a volunteer.

**The Greatest Results** By Jeff Hugo



**Charlie leading a Morning Nature Walk.**

He immediately began learning the little things. He emptied the garbage cans and cleaned the bathrooms. He greeted park guests as he received their entrance fees. He picked up litter and helped to maintain the park grounds.

A part time (OPS) ranger position became open a month after he began volunteering. Charlie was thrilled to be chosen for it. He would now learn to captain the river boat tours. He would also guide the often hectic waterfront and the boat tour schedule.

By the summer of 2012 a full-time park ranger position became available. Charlie would be the perfect fit.



**Charlie Baisden—Master Gardener.**

Charlie saw a park need which he envisioned filling. The landscaping on park grounds needed attention. The azaleas and camelias had gone unpruned for many seasons. Their health was suffering. The beds around the lodge were unkempt and needed attention. The butterfly garden needed more plantings. And the list went on.

To offer the park landscape the best expertise possible, Charlie did another little thing (actually it was a major thing). Over the course of a year, he spent the 80 hours it took to become a Master Gardener.



**Charlie teaching the value of Tree Habitats.**

The park afforded him the time and scheduling to complete the course. He did the rest. On the rare field days he had, he did as much as he could to begin the process of rejuvenating the Wakulla Springs landscape. It would be an ongoing process over the course of years.

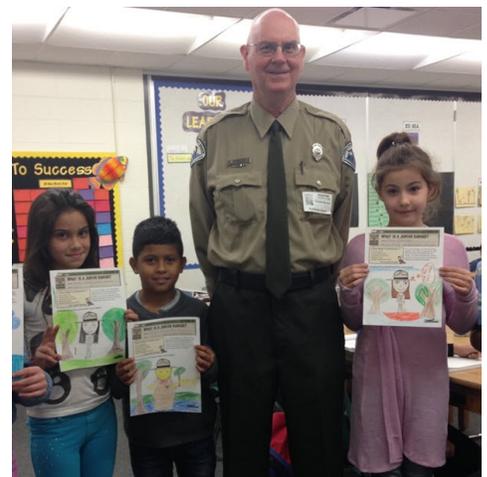
Charlie also wanted to be the best interpreter he could be. He once again took courses with the University of

Florida to become a Master Naturalist. He incorporated his training into his river boat tours. But he wanted to expand his interpretive offerings both inside and outside of the park.

During Literacy Month (September) and Fire Prevention Month (October), Charlie put together a program to visit area second graders and read *The Story of Smokey Bear*. He also talked about fire safety at home and how the park service uses fire as a tool to keep habitats healthy and to prevent wildfires.

His *Tree Habitats* program showed students through hands-on examples the ways plants and animals find food, water, shelter and living space in trees.

Thanks to Charlie's efforts, the fourth grade students at Ft. Braden Elementary were the first classes to become Junior Rangers at Wakulla Springs.



**Charlie with some proud Jr. Rangers at Fort Braden Elementary.**

## The Greatest Results By Jeff Hugo



**“On January 19, 2019, all of Charlie’s Master Gardener, Master Naturalist and interpretive skills culminated in one big event.”**

The program eventually blossomed to include the fourth graders at each of the four elementary schools in Wakulla County.

There were many programs Charlie created at the park as well. Among his favorites were the *Morning Nature Walks*. During the late fall, winter, and spring months, Charlie would lead groups into the forest via the Sally Ward Trail. Together, they would discover the special elements of the unseen forest endemic to each month.

He also led the Bike Ride to Hidden Spring. The spring is truly hidden out past the two bridges on the Sally Ward Trail. Charlie is one of the few who know the way. Fellow cyclists would travel through several different ecosystems created by slight changes in elevation.

Charlie also developed three programs which were paired

with dinner offerings in the lodge. One focused on the artwork within the lobby while another concentrated on the structure itself. A third looked at the advantages of using native plants for landscaping including a tour of the grounds surrounding the lodge.

On January 19, 2019, all of Charlie’s Master Gardener, Master Naturalist and Interpretive skills culminated in one big event. The community was invited to restore a three acre site near the park’s administration building to longleaf pine habitat.

Charlie started planning for the event six months earlier. He solicited and received assistance from the park biologist, staff members, and volunteers. He reached out to other parks and agencies for the materials he would need. He gained the assistance and financial support of the park’s

citizen support agency. He actively worked to publicize the event.

When the event arrived, 50 people from the community ranging in age from toddlers to senior citizens participated in planting 1000 longleaf pine seedlings and 1000 wiregrass plugs. Each participant would feel a new connection and ownership with the park thanks to the well organized and positive experience allowing them to contribute to the future of Wakulla Springs.

Is it any wonder that Charlie was awarded the 2018 District One Interpreter of the Year. There had been a quiet parade of little things from education, to practice, and on to planning and implementation that propelled Charlie to a leadership role at the park.



**Charlie was awarded the 2018 District One Interpreter of the Year.**

## The Greatest Results By Jeff Hugo



### The muhly grass at the park entrance screams, “Come see this amazing park!”

He was a staff member that others turned to for training and advice. He was also leader for volunteers who showed up to assist him to trim, prune, and spruce-up the park grounds. He led by example, always eager to assist and go the extra mile.

A beautiful legacy Charlie leaves the park is a stunning planting of muhly grass at the park’s entrance. The blooming native grass screams, “Come see this amazing park.”

Charlies’ career at Wakulla Springs reflects his remarks from a few months ago. “Often times it’s the little things done on a consistent basis that produce the greatest results.... I appreciate the help of our entire staff and the generous time of volunteers in accomplishing these projects.”

And we appreciate you, Charlie, and the greatest results.



**L to R: Charles Lorch volunteers pruning a camelia. The Wakulla County Garden Club dresses up around the Dogwood Pavilion. BB&T Volunteers lead the beautification efforts on the Lodge’s west-side .**

## Paying Attention By Amy Conyers Photos courtesy Amy Conyers



### There is fall color on the Ferrell Property with wildflowers in abundance.

When I moved to Florida in 2004 from the frozen North, it was a bit of an adjustment. My first year was full of acclimation, learning about my new surroundings, and “helpful” advice like ‘just wait until the summer humidity’ and ‘oh you’ll miss the change in seasons’. Through the years though, I found that the people who thought that there was no change in seasons just weren’t paying attention.

One thing that I like most about Florida is the subtlety in the changes in the natural world around us. We don’t see the hard swings between snow

and sun that they do up North. Instead we gracefully cool with a strong breeze. We do see some trees turn to yellow or red, but they are surrounded in shades of green from the trees that retain their leaves.

We don’t have to wait until spring for flowers, our fall has wildflowers in abundance! I love the purple spires and yellow clumps standing out in the browning wiregrass of a pine forest. I love to see another batch of butterflies, monarchs on their migration path or sulphurs carefully depositing their eggs. I think we even see more deer this time of year.

We do have one distinct change though, and that is in our visitation at the park. With the final summer holiday, the switch is flipped, and our summer swimmers are replaced with winter walkers. There are fewer visitors in the cooler months and they have a different focus.

They aren’t headed to the spring to cool off, they are headed to the spring to catch a glimpse of manatees. They are looking for a nice hike through the woods. They are looking for migratory birds on the river or in the forest. They are looking for something new to learn and discover. They WANT to have a conversation with a Park Ranger!

With the shift in visitation comes a shift in job duties as well. With cooler weather and fewer visitors comes projects. We have been busy checking off the items from the lengthy *To-Do* list. With the extra field time this spring when the park was closed to visitors, we were able to keep up with much of our facility maintenance and the usually backlogged list was not as intimidating this year. The *To-Do* list is never done though.

We have completed a boardwalk project; we have renovated the Lodge parking lot. We have replaced the Lodge generator and repaved the side entrance. We have repaired boats, cleaned boats, and pressure washed sidewalks. We have refenced the Ferrell Tract

## Paying Attention By Amy Conyers



### Sidewalks have been pressure cleaned.

and have more fence repairs planned.

Perhaps the most celebrated change for visitors and staff was the return of the boat tours and a few park programs. The boat tours have seen many changes with their return. We are not currently selling tickets daily from the waterfront. Now park visitors can plan their visit in advance thanks to the cooperation and assistance of the Lodge. Their existing software allowed a quick shift to a reservation-based system. We had a bit of a learning curve, but through great communication and teamwork, we are serving our visitors and getting them on the river again.

While we can't get as many people on the boats to accommodate social distancing, those that do go, have a great experience. With fewer people on the boat, there are better views and more interaction with the guide.

The boat tours aren't the only programs we're doing though!

The Friends of Wakulla Springs have started an online speaker series. So far, they have had terrific talks via Zoom from Jim Stevenson, Bob Deyle and Casey McKinley as well as music from Hot Tamale and even some spooky story telling! More talks are coming as they have just been awarded a grant to provide additional speakers. Visit the Friends' webpage at

wakullasprings.org to see recordings of previous programs, sign up for the next talk, or participate in a Virtual Visit activity.

I was also happy to help lead some tours for the Wakulla Springs Alliance on the new Ferrell Tract Property. While we are still in the planning phase for that property, we are able to provide some limited, guided access. On two different, beautiful fall days, I led a caravan of visitors in their own vehicles to see a few of the impressive features on the property. Masked and distant at each stop along the way, we were fortunate to have Cal Jamison share his history and knowledge of the property and the aquifer below.

We have faced so many challenges this year. Each and every one of us. It's hard to know what comes next most days. As we head into the Holiday season, we have experienced loss and distance that will make this year very different from years' past. We do



### We have repaved the side entrance.

## Paying Attention By Amy Conyers



### Mom and the twins enjoy a day in the park

have much to be thankful for though. Our Wakulla family has gotten even closer as we support each other (from a safe distance) and work together. We are celebrating our small victories, every chance we get. We are taking time to find the silver lining and learn new things. We are doing what we have always done in the Park Service, we are using what we have and our creativity to overcome obstacles and get the job done.

I'm always trying to pay attention. Please know how much I am thankful for where I am and who I work with. . It is always my goal to support you all and give you the tools you need to do your jobs. It is always my experience that you all give me back that support tenfold. Our talks, our triumphs over challenges, our brainstorming sessions, and our laughs are the fuel that I need to keep me going. I am thankful for my Wakulla family every day.



**Masked and physically distanced, participants enjoy a Ferrell Property tour.**

## Seasons Are a Changing By John Melton



### **Yellow foxglove in bloom on the Ferrell Property.**

Seasons are a changing. The Manatee have returned to Wakulla Springs! Manatees are spotted in the river year around but when the weather turns chilly like the last few days, we see a lot more of them in the warmer-than-air waters of the spring. This time of year, you stand a much better chance of seeing manatee from the observation tower. You may also see manatee from our river boat tours! Yes! As of October 5th, 2020, the famous historic Wakulla Springs River Boat tours have returned. Limited seating available. You may purchase tickets at <https://thelodgeatwakullasprings.com/plan-your-trip/jungle-cruise/> or by calling 850-421-2000.

The spring and waterfront areas of the park have slowed down a good bit due to the cooling weather and the Cherokee Sink Nature Trail has reopened. Our Summer swim season has come to an end

and the swim area is now once again “swim at your own risk” as our lifeguards have finished up their summer duties.

One of our lifeguards has crossed over to a regular OPS ranger position. Please welcome Ethan Whaley to our Ranger team. I am happy to have Ethan aboard as we are about to lose one of our full-time rangers.

Ranger Charlie Baisden is retiring. Charlie is a great asset to the park and as the landscaping lead he has over his time here really made a difference in the overall beauty of the park. His high grade of interpretive skills will be missed. Most recently Ranger Charlie took the lead on planning and planting the grass landscaping of the Lodge parking lot with Fakahatchee Grass, Muhly Grass and sod. Charlie has left us some big shoes to fill for sure, but you will see him again after a while. Charlie will likely fill a part time grounds position here in the future.

Field maintenance is forever and ongoing. We have accomplished many things since the last Issue of The Springboard. You might have noticed the new pavement at the Hwy. 61 park entrance. There is fresh paint on the Limpkin tour boat, a newly planted memorial tree, boardwalk repairs and water heater replacement. The Ranger Team at Wakulla Springs is unbeatable! Next time you take a hike on our nature trail, notice the new look of the trail head

boardwalk. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this awesome team. Getting it done in District One!

At our newest land acquisition, the Ferrell Tract the yellow False Foxglove flowers around some of the sinks have just about faded for the season. Black bears have been sighted ambling around and you might notice that the old white wooden fence along Hwy 61 has been replaced with a new field wire fence. Florida Park planning has made an initial visit to the tract, so we are just a little closer to opening this karst gem to the public. Stay tuned!

A wise person once stated: “The only constant is change”. In the life of a ranger that is one of the most exciting things about what we do. Sure the “day to day” might seem mundane from time to time; but there is always something new and challenging here at Wakulla Springs! Come on out and spend some time with us. From Boat tours to Forest Bathing (Google it!) we have something for everyone. Enjoy!



**Collin and Phil work on improving the trailhead boardwalk.**

## Boat Days by Jeff Hugo Photos by Jeff Hugo



The call went out to the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park. The River Tour Boat *Limpkin* needed some work. Extra sets of helping hands were requested to make a daunting job accomplishable.

The *Limpkin* had last been refurbished in late winter and early spring of 2010. It was the first river boat to have a complete overhaul.



After over 10 years of scorching sun, drenching rains, intense humidity, and countless visitors on thousands of tours, the *Limpkin* needed some tender loving care.



Park Ranger Kat Wilson was happy to ensure that she got it. Even with Park Ranger Phil Pouliot's assistance, it would take days to get everything done.

As a result, a plan was set in motion to get the needed cleaning done in three days with the help of volunteers. The Friends board thought it would be a great idea to ask the membership for their assistance.



On the unseasonably comfortable days of September 21, 22, and 23, they came. On the first day, the seats were removed to provide easy access for cleaning the boat's interior. The back and undersides of the seats needed to be pressure washed. Once completed, brown paint on the aluminum frames was painstakingly removed.



Simultaneously, the life vests, which had become overgrown with mildew thanks to the hot

humid summer, were brought back to a like-new luster with plenty of elbow grease.

The rotting blue 2X4 bumper guards surrounding the boat were removed and discarded. New pressure treated lumber was primed, painted and installed.

The exterior of the boat was pressure washed. Extensive pitting due to electrolysis was discovered. It would need to be a maintenance issue to be resolved at a future date. A powder coating of the exterior would also be required at some future date.

More scrubbing went on in the boat's interior. The decking was brought back to a bright finish. The blue ceiling and side panels were scrubbed clean. The engine compartment and hull were given a sound once over as well.

We can't thank the dedicated volunteers from the Friends enough for making the daunting effort a successful reality.

### TOP TO BOTTOM

**Jody Walthall and Kat Wilson discuss the replacement of the bumper boards.**

**Life vests are once again spotless.**

**Diane, Carol, and Brian painstakingly remove paint from the aluminum seat legs.**

**Jody paints the bumper boards.**

**Jack and Lori Richardson clean the interior.**

## A Swift Night Out By Jeff Hugo Photos by Nick Baldwin and Jeff Hugo



Over the course of the last decade, *A Swift Night Out* has seen its share of challenges. Usually the temperature is in the mid to upper 80's and the humidity can be classified as Florida Sauna. With showers and thunderstorms occurring throughout the day, Saturday, September 12 would not be much different.

A severe thunderstorm had rolled through at 4:30pm taking out an old pine snag across the street from the administration building. The snag fell a hair's breadth from a fire hydrant and blocked the park drive to the lodge. Park staff was quickly on it and had the road cleared in less than 30 minutes.

Unlike *Swift Night Out 2012* when no birds showed up due to incessant rain (they probably had the good sense to go to roost early), it looked like things would clear up for the program which began at 7:30pm.

There would be no cancellation as there was in 2017 due to Hurricane Irma. The show would go on, or at least we hoped.

This year's wrinkle was the need to make accommodations for physical distancing. Plan 'A' was to space people out in the lodge parking lot with the use of a sound system to amplify the event's speakers.

Electronics and water do not mix well. Plan 'B' was to hold the musical and informative sections of the program under amplification inside the lobby of the lodge.

Yes, there was music. Park Ranger Collin Johnson had written a special song for the event. It was about the chimney swifts coming to rest after a

long day of catching insects. He also sang a song about the elusive limpkin and another one about the wildlife on the river. It proved to be a great way to introduce the event.

In fact, quite a few of the people in attendance had come to enjoy a special dinner and stay option provided by the lodge. For \$44, a couple could enjoy a plated fried chicken or fried shrimp dinner. For an extra \$95 they could rest in the same building with the swifts and enjoy a hearty breakfast in the morning. No need to scurry home.

Following Collin's musical introduction, Park Biologist Patty Wilbur filled in the physically distanced participants with swift information. They could keep track of their facts in the journals provided.

Park Services Specialist Jeff Hugo briefly reviewed the swift data, helped everyone complete weather conditions, and prepared them for what to expect.

By 7:55 about 30 people were outside in the parking lot staring up at the first chimney swifts beginning to arrive. By 8:02pm the first swift descended into the lodge's fireplace chimney. It wasn't long and the circling mass began to enter the chimney in clumps of between five and ten birds. By 8:10pm the last bird had gone to roost.

Of the group counting the roosting birds, no one counted exactly the same number. The number of birds each team of two or three recorded was collected and averaged. The average for 2020 was 194.



## Friends Go Virtual By Jeff Hugo



Changing obstacles to opportunities has been a theme for both the park and its citizens support organization the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park over the past nine months.

With the initial park closure in March, park staff turned lemons into lemonade by completing both maintenance and resource management projects. As the park reopened to lower density activities in mid-May, park staff could once again conduct roving interpretation with a renewed emphasis on visitor and staff safety.

With deliberations on how to best and most safely conduct the river boat tours continuing through the summer, the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park came up with an ambitious plan to continue connecting visitors to the park's story. From September through December the Friends planned and executed six virtual programs on a wide variety of topics and venues.

In September the series began with a Zoom presentation featuring Jim Stevenson. Jim

spent a lifetime working to safeguard and maintain the park system's natural resources. He also diligently strove to empower and encourage the park system to tell its story through effective interpretation to all with whom it would come in contact. Even in retirement, Jim continues to spread the word regarding the stresses being placed upon Florida's phenomenal springs.

His September presentation on the Wakulla Springshed is and will continue to be available for anyone to enjoy by visiting <https://wakullasprings.org/virtual-visits>.

In mid-September, the musical group *Hot Tamale* used the backdrop of the Wakulla River to "Sing for the Springs". The wonderful performance by local artists Craig Reeder and Adrian Fogelin is available to enjoy at [www.wakullasprings.org](http://www.wakullasprings.org).

FSU Professor Emeritus Bob Deyle's presentation regarding wildlife trends on the Wakulla River is also available on the Friend's website. The Spooky Springs episode puts viewers in touch with Mr. Ball's wife along

with the Specter of Wakulla Springs. It's a fun way to glimpse some of the stranger experiences of lodge guests.

Casey McKinlay, cave diver, leads followers on an underworld exploration of the Wakulla Springs Cave System. It's a rare opportunity to visit where few have gone.

If you want to know about America's alligators tune in on December 10. Author Doug Alderson will titillate viewers with both the facts and rich fiction surrounding "America's Alligators". If you miss the live presentation on December 10, you can always visit the website and enjoy it on a later date.

Having a bad day? Need a few minutes to regroup? Then join the Wakulla River Adventure July 2020. The unique video footage along with former park ranger Robert Thompson's phenomenal photos will take you to a better place.

Kids can virtually enjoy Wakulla Springs as well. They can download printable scavenger hunts and journals and take a walk in the woods, ride the river, or visit a rarely seen part of the park—the cypress dome. The printable items can also be brought to the park on a real-life visit for an enhanced experience.

There are so many opportunities with more to come. Sometimes it takes obstacles to bring out the best in us.

**Beach Bash 2020** By Jeff Hugo Photos by Barbara Wilson and Jeff Hugo



It certainly looked like a Beach Bash this year. There were beach umbrellas set up on the beach. Eight foot banquet tables had two small parties of 3 or less on opposite ends. The tables were spaced at least six feet from one another. Tiki torches signaled the festivities.

Park Ranger Bruce Graybeal serenaded the crowd with his easy-listening standards along with one of his own creation. Park Ranger Colin Johnson followed with his songs about the river and its creatures. Even the vultures came to listen in.

The lodge provided food in decorated to-go boxes. Marianne Luber adorned the boxes with nature-related themes.

Madeleine Carr, the event's coordinator, spoke briefly to the guests about the Friends 26-year history of park support along with encouraging everyone to enjoy virtual opportunities provided by the Friend's website.

It was gratifying to see the capacity crowd of forty plus people enjoying a beautiful evening at Wakulla Springs.



**(Clockwise) "It certainly looked like a Beach Bash this year."**

**The black vultures showed up as if on cue for Park Ranger Colin Johnson's song about them.**

**Linda Hall's *River Creatures* were present to brighten the festivities.**

**A crowd of 40+ people enjoyed the physically distanced event.**

**Do you know these people?**

**Park Ranger Bruce Graybeal serenaded the crowd.**



## Helping to Keep Wakulla County Beautiful By Jackie Turner Photos by Jackie Turner



**“Four Friends members and two park resident volunteers cleaned up the Friends adopted section of Wakulla Springs Rd and removed 180 lbs. of litter.”**

International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) is the largest one-day volunteer event dedicated to cleaning up our rivers and oceans and is held on the 3rd Saturday in September. ICC is sponsored by Ocean Conservancy, whose staff started the annual event in 1986 with a beach cleanup. On 19

Sat 2020, Keep Wakulla County Beautiful (KWCB) coordinated volunteer teams throughout the county including at Wakulla Springs State Park (WSSP).

KWCB reported having 309 volunteers, who removed 5.2 tons of litter! At WSSP, four Friends members and two park resident volunteers cleaned up the Friends adopted section of Wakulla Springs Rd and removed 180 lbs. For WHS NJROTC, 10 cadets and 2 faculty advisors and their wives cleaned up the Friends adopted section of Shadeville Rd and removed 250 lbs.

The Wakulla Springs section leads to the Shadeville section that crosses the river (Upper Bridge). Both are in the immediate watershed of the Wakulla River. Removing the litter along these roads helps to protect the forest wildlife in park and the aquatic wildlife in Wakulla River. And for a moment the area was beautiful...

## Continued Restoration at Cherokee Sink By Jackie Turner Photos by Jackie Turner

Started in 1994, National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the largest one-day volunteer service dedicated to giving back to our public lands and is held on the 4th Saturday in September. On 26 Sept 2020, volunteers were giving back to Wakulla Springs State Park. Four Friends members and 2 park resident volunteers continued restoration efforts at Cherokee Sink.

Volunteers planted Smilax vines that were obtained from another area of the park (funny Smilax are not listed in plant catalogs). The prickly plants were placed on the southern edge of the sink in a user-created access point with a large area of exposed soil. Planting was followed by brushing with tree branches. The Smilax vines were then woven into brush with the hope that their continued growth through the branches will form a significant barrier along the water's edge.



**On National Public Lands Day, volunteers built fences and trimmed vegetation at Cherokee Sink.**

## Continued Restoration at Cherokee Sink By Jackie Turner Photos by Jackie Turner

Since 2015, Friends members and others have been spending NPLD at Cherokee Sink to assist with restoration work. Their efforts have included planting trees and Smilax on the banks of the sinkhole, brushing in user-created access trails and installing fencing to block entry to those user-created water entry points. In addition, they helped protect wildlife by cleaning up an old dump site and planted blueberry bushes to provide food for bumble bees and other pollinators. Their NPLD volunteer service has helped to reduce erosion into the sink, improved the trail around the sink, helped protect wildlife and feed insects. Well done!

### Insect Intrigue: Bug Sex By Jackie Turner

In the tradition of the game *Two Truths and a Lie*, our park entomologist has a brain twister for you. Two of the following statements are always true. One is sometimes false. Can you discern the truths from the occasional lie? See the last page for the answer.

*The male Australian black widow performs "post-copulatory suicide." After mating he rolls into his mate's fangs.*

*Bed Bugs mate by means of traumatic insemination. The male penetrates the female's abdominal wall.*

*During mating, a female mantid bites off the head of the male. After mating, she then consumes his body.*



**"In gentle hands resting, the swift now reposed."**

### Fly Up the Chimney By Jeff Hugo

'Twas October the fourteenth when all through the lodge  
Nothing was stirring, no unnecessary hodge-podge;  
The staff was arriving and starting their tasks,  
In hopes to serve guests and all of their asks.  
A swift bird was nestled all snug on a ledge,  
While visions of insect snacks danced its mind's edge.  
The park biologist and her assistants discussed the day's work when crisis resounded  
courtesy the lodge clerk.  
"A bird or a bat? What could it be? Where is the biologist? Can she set it free?"  
People in green to the lobby soon came. But where is the biologist? What is her name?  
Into the lodge lobby Patty soon came decked out with equipment to help all the same.  
Away to the ceiling the bird flew in a flash,  
Patty's net was ready, but the swift made a dash.  
Patty followed in haste; the crowd cheered her on; up the ladder she went, but the swift was soon gone.  
One final try she did make, the bird did not flinch. All the while wondering, "Who is this green grinch?"  
In gentle hands resting, the swift now reposed, hoping for freedom to be exposed.  
"Hands open! No confinement, I think I can leave!  
I flap wings! I rise up! I twitter and heave.  
I have learned my lesson and this statement is true,  
Fly UP the chimney and not DOWN the flue."

**Service in Residence** By Jackie Turner; Photo by Jackie Turner and Jeff Hugo



**Clockwise from upper left: Terri Malloy, Tracy and Aaron Brown, Ken McClure, Bob and Dee Green.**

This year has been unusual year for resident volunteers. Theresa Forrey, Cary LaBounty and Tracy and Aaron Brown were on site when the park shut down. They decided to stay in place at beautiful Wakulla Springs State Park.

Initially, they were allowed to assist park rangers, who had turned their focus on park maintenance and repairs. After further consideration, the Florida Park Service decided that it would be best for resident volunteers not to work for the re-

mainder of the closure. It was a challenge for them not to volunteer, as they truly enjoyed working with park rangers to help the park.

When the park reopened in May, Theresa needed to head home to Tennessee. Cary, Tracy and Aaron returned to service and together covered the EF position every day, which allowed rangers to work elsewhere in the park.

Cary also helped rangers track the number of visitors on the beach and maintain the reserva-

tion list once capacity was reached, a park safety measure to allow all visitors to social distance. We had Cary and his wife, Mavis, until mid-June. They left to go to their next site, a paid position in Georgia managing an outdoor recreational facility.

Tracy and Aaron were always attending to any needed maintenance or lawn care. Tracy and Aaron continued their service until the end of August.

August brought Bob and Dee Green back to the park, who are serving as EF and always find ways to contribute. In addition, they supervised the Friends Road Cleanup for Coastal Cleanup and helped with National Public Lands Day at Cherokee Sink.

November brought Ken McClure, and first-time volunteer, Terri Malloy. They are serving in the Ranger Station, welcoming visitors as the first face of the park. Bob and Dee will be leaving in early December and Ken and Terri at the end of February.

New volunteers, Elizabeth and Larry Millwood, will start in January serving as EF. Pamela McDavid will return in January and will be helping with the online volunteer system.

## Service in Residence By Jackie Turner; Photo by Jackie Turner and Jeff Hugo

We have had and continue to have resident volunteers, who make a difference. They supplement park staffing needs, which allows park rangers to focus their attention elsewhere. In addition to their regular duties (opening and closing the park, collecting entrance fees, giving boat tours and keeping facilities clean) park rangers also need to repair recreational access structures (boardwalks, swimming platforms, and boats), maintain and repair park buildings, and assist with resource management (prescribed burn program, wildlife surveys, invasive plant control, and trail maintenance). Taking care of the daily needs of a park is a group effort. At Wakulla Springs State Park, it is accomplished with a great park ranger team and generous support of volunteers in residence.

## In Memoriam—Cary LaBounty By Jackie Turner



**Cary LaBounty is lending a helping hand installing a park sign.**

We have lost a member of the Wakulla Springs family. Resident Volunteer, Cary LaBounty, passed away on October 14, 2020. Cary was a kind and generous man, and we were fortunate to have him as part of our family.

Cary covered Early Field (EF) position and helped open the park for his 20-hour weekly commitment to the park.

In addition to his regular duties, he was always willing to lend a hand to a ranger in need. We will miss having him in the park next spring.

Our hearts go out to his wife of 50 years, Mavis, and his children and grandchildren.

A tree will be planted in his honor on the picnic grounds, as part of a park effort to ensure beautiful trees around the lodge for years to come. Cary will be a part of that future.

**“You are what you do,  
not what you say  
you’ll do.”**  
**Carl Gustav Jung**

## Resource Management News and Notes By Patty Wilbur ; Photos by Patty Wilbur



**Check out the giant air potato root that AmeriCorps member Josh Rowe dug up!**

The summer has passed, and autumn is finally here! It's my favorite time of year at Wakulla Springs. The heat and humidity release their hold on us, and the mosquitoes and ticks give us a much-needed break. It's a fantastic time

to do field work, or just get out and explore the woods. But there was much to be done even before the weather cooled off. I spent a great deal of time in the field in late summer/early fall. It's a wonderful time to seek out and treat exotic invasive plants, as you want to hit them before they go dormant for the winter.

It's a big job, so we need to start well before the weather cools in order to treat as much as possible. Park volunteers Pete and Pam Scalco did some great work treating Chinese Tallow and other pests on the Ferrell Tract. I was also grateful to have the help of Park Services Specialist Chris Wilson of Maclay Gardens State Park. He and AmeriCorps members Josh Chan and Josh Rowe helped me for three days in October. We tackled

Chinese wisteria, Chinese privet, Japanese climbing fern, and air potato in some of our most problematic infestation areas.

I also spent plenty of time establishing photo points on our River Sinks and Turner Sinks parcels. It was important to document how they looked this summer, as we have begun a timber thinning and restoration project in these areas this fall.

We had hoped to begin this process over a year ago, but Hurricane Michael delayed it. This spring we put the project out to bid. Unfortunately, this happened right as the lockdown began, so it had to wait a bit longer. This will be a multi-year resource restoration project, so it's exciting to finally move forward!

The River Sinks and Turner



**This is the beginning of the restoration project at River Sinks. This cleared patch will be replanted in longleaf pine and wiregrass.**

## Resource Management News and Notes By Patty Wilbur ; Photos by Patty Wilbur



### **Park Ranger Steven Urling and I spotted this old box turtle while clearing storm debris on the Hammock Loop Trail.**

Sinks parcels are areas of planted loblolly pine that were formerly St. Joe Timber Company Land. While the forest here has done a good job of protecting many sinkholes feeding Wakulla Spring, it lacks habitat diversity.

Over time the trees in these areas have become crowded, making them susceptible to pests like southern pine beetles. A few small patches had already succumbed to beetle attacks. The shady loblolly forest is also difficult to burn at any time other than winter. The lack of intense fire has led to thick shrub growth in the understory.

The restoration project will consist of timber thinning on approximately 703 acres. On 187 additional acres, the loblolly pines will be clear cut, the stumps will be removed, and the site will be

raked and leveled. This is necessary for the reintroduction of native longleaf pines and wiregrass in these areas. This will begin a transition to a more diverse and natural forest and will improve wildlife habitat for species such as deer, turkey, quail, gopher tortoise and Southeastern fox squirrel. Areas around the sinks will be buffered to protect them from harm during this process.

The timber crew has begun working in the southeastern quadrant of River Sinks. To protect the public from injury while the heavy equipment is in operation, our hiking trail at River Sinks is temporarily closed. It will reopen when the crew moves their equipment into another area. Eventually, visitors at River Sinks will be able to enjoy a prettier hike, with more wildflowers and greater chances to spot wildlife.

We've got another project happening this fall. Contractors from Redhills Landworks are currently on the Ferrell Tract. They are widening and mowing our fire lines and disking them in places. They will also be installing new fire lines in a few areas. All this effort will aid in maintaining access throughout the property. It will also help ensure that our fire lines will hold when we begin conducting prescribed burns there.

We've also begun to mow the roads and trim the trails in the main area of the park recently. A big thanks goes to Ranger Phil Pouliot for mowing our roads and trails on the north side of the river! It makes for a much nicer hike up there. I mowed the roads in the sanctuary last week, and plan to disk them soon.

I'm anxious to get them ready for what I hope will be an active burn season. We're looking to burn nine zones this year, though there are additional areas on the Ferrell tract and in the park proper that we'd like to burn as well.

There's always more that can be done!



Photo by Bob Thompson

Wakulla Springs State Park  
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### Upcoming Events!

The safety of our visitors, staff, and volunteers is a top priority at Wakulla Springs State Park.

As part of ongoing statewide efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, some park procedures and activities have been modified or suspended.

Visitors will find measures in place to reduce density to promote everyone's safety.

Currently, River Boat Tours are by reservation only. Reservations can be made online at [TheLodgeatWakullaSprings.com](http://TheLodgeatWakullaSprings.com) or by calling 850-421-2000.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (850) 561-7276.

### Joe's Tree by Jeff Hugo Photo by John Melton



Jackie Turner stands next to Joe's Tree.

It was early August when Wakulla Springs lost a "Lifetime" Friend. Joe Glisson was also the husband to his beloved wife Jackie Turner. He lost his life to his long-term struggle with health challenges. He put up quite a fight.

No one knows that better than Jackie. She was his partner, not only in his health struggles, but in the many battles they fought together to safeguard the environment.

Joe was a formidable warrior for the environment. He possessed intelligence, wisdom, and persistence. He also had Jackie as his muse. His opponents were often undone by their failure to recognize his skills as they underestimat-

ed his strength. He was among the petitioners in 2006 to request denial of the City of Tallahassee's permit to continue the operation of its Southeastern Spray field. His efforts led to major facility upgrades to reduce nitrogen output, which in turn reduced the nitrogen level at Wakulla Spring.

On September 11, park staff planted "Joe's Tree" near the walkway leading to the Water-front Visitor's Center. It is a red oak. Like Joe, it is a formidable tree. It should persist for many, many years.

It has no plaque. I don't know that it needs one. I don't know that Joe would want one. Those who contributed to his memorial and those who knew and loved him will know Joe's Tree. It's the strong one with the muse — sometimes in person but most often in spirit. Isn't that how muses do their best work?

This statement is sometimes False: During mating, a female man-tid bites off the head of the male. After mating, she then consumes his body.