



# The Spring Board

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## The Wakulla River Heritage Carnival *By Jeff Hugo*



### The Raa Middle School Steel Band was a big hit!

The day did not start with a carnival feel. It was cold. It was overcast. It was not a Caribbean feel. But that would change.

Madeleine Carr, with the assistance of Barbara Wilson, had worked for months to plan and bring to fruition the Wakulla River Heritage Carnival as an educational event for the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park. The theme of the event celebrated the Wakulla River as the ancient gateway to the Caribbean.

For thousands of years, indigenous peoples such as the Apalachee traded with other cultures from the Mississippi River eastward and south to the Caribbean islands. They lived in well-organized towns like Aute near Wakulla Spring. Devasted by Europe-

an illnesses, from which they had no resistance, and scattered or killed by land-grabbing invaders, the Apalachee culture disappeared by the early 1700's.

But there were others who moved in to fill the void left by their passing. Creek Indians under pressure from encroaching white settlers began to filter into what was Spanish territory in North Florida. Freedom-seeking enslaved people often joined them in what is being acknowledged as the Southern Underground Railroad. They worked together to survive while continuing each's cultural traditions. So it was that communities such as Francis Town and Hyde Park developed along the Wakulla River.

## The Wakulla River heritage Carnival (Continued) By Jeff Hugo



**Dr. Willet Boyer interprets archaeological finds from the area.**

Where there are people, trade is important. At Port Apalachy, adjacent to the Spanish Fuerte San Marcos de Apalache, the Panton Leslie Company established a trading empire in 1784. An upriver trading post on the Wakulla River was only in business a short 12 years before William Augustus Bowles attacked and looted it. The second attempt to take over the lucrative trade was when he besieged the Spanish fort in 1800.

This probably played well for two Lower Creek Indian brothers, William and John Kennard. Recent archaeological finds support the existence of their trading post, established by 1796 just west of the present-day Lodge at Wakulla Springs. Their herds of cattle, horses and other goods provided much needed supplies not only to those living in the area but also to Andrew Jackson's forces at the outset of the First Seminole War (1816-19).

The diversity of the indigenous peoples, a varied spectrum of immigrants, and the distant cultures with which they traded was well-framed by the music of the day. The opening sounds echoed back to the heart-pounding rhythms of drum circles past and now present.

The Raa Middle School Steel Drum Band followed. The students brought the sunshine, energy and warmth of Caribbean trading partners to the festive tent erected near the lodge. The crowd

could not get enough of the group's music. They stayed for an encore presentation following lunch. The southern funk sound, with hints of reggae, by the Common "Taters" and Turn-Ups continued the festivities for the remainder of the event.

Just prior to lunch Dr. Madeleine Carr and Dr. Willet Boyer discussed some of the archaeological finds made in recent years at the park. Their energy and enthusiasm brought home how special Wakulla Spring has been through the ages. They were joined by Thomas Mitchell, representing the Hyde Park ancestors.

Everyone was blown away by the specially themed lunch buffet provided by the Lodge at Wakulla Springs. The fried plantains, jerk chicken and mojo-marinated pork roast were delectable. Many people commented that it was among the best buffets the lodge had ever served.

Many people took their food and sat in the lodge lobby. The ambiance of the glowing fireplace imbued warmth. It also enabled people to reconnect with old acquaintances or meet new friends.

The day certainly turned out to be a carnival. It even overcame a wintery February 1.



**"The opening sounds echoed back to the heart-pounding rhythms of drum circles past and now present."**

## Right Place/Right Time By Jackie Turner and Gretta J.



**Jackie Turner and Gretta hold the “sparks” of their relationship.**

Every now and then, we find ourselves in the right place at the right time. That was my experience on 2 September 2012, when I found myself the recipient of a brightly decorated manatee coloring sheet. The donor was a determined, young visitor. She told me her name was Gretta J. With the assistance of her parents, she gave me her address.

Two weeks later, I sent her a “thank you” park postcard that featured a female manatee with her calf. Out of appreciation for receiving her work of art. I hung her manatee coloring sheet on my wall where it remained until the day she called.

During the phone call, Gretta confessed, “When I was about 5 years old, I had an Animal Planet coloring book that I really liked. I colored a picture of a manatee and my parents said that we were going to the springs. I decided that the

first park ranger I saw was the person I was going to give it to. We were walking past the ticket building, and lo and behold, I saw Jackie. My brain thought, Yep! That’s who gets the coloring sheet! So I ran over and gave it to her. She asked my parents for our address. I received

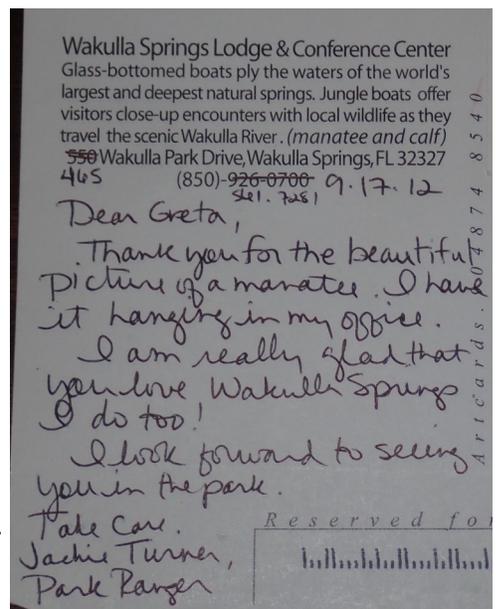
a postcard about a week later. At the time I couldn’t read very well, and I was so excited about getting mail.

I have probably looked at it at least 20 times in the past 8 years, but never noticed one thing. I was cleaning out my desk the other week, and I saw the postcard and noticed that it had a phone number on it. So me, being very curious, called the phone number.

It went to voice mail, but I realized she was most likely done for the day. I left a message but not my number. So I called the next day and she picked up. And I was shocked. I didn’t know what to say, because even though I go to the springs so often, I hadn’t seen her in a very long time. So I started talking and told her it was me, and she got SO excited. We talked for a while and then she told me that she wanted to meet up and talk. So a week later, I was sitting in her office, surprised by just what reaching out to people can do.”

Gretta and I had a great conversation! She loves traveling and running. She likes taking pictures, but NOT of people or especially selfies!. Her favorite subjects in school are math and science. She still likes manatees and dogs! In regard to Wakulla Springs State Park she said, “I love it here and my favorite activity is swimming”. A special memory has been seeing a manatee underwater from a distance. She knows they are protected. At the end of our meeting, I asked for her help writing an article for the park newsletter, and she agreed.

I am fortunate to have received Gretta’s sincere gift that day many years ago. I applaud her gumption to call me after so many years. She’s a delightful young person with an outgoing, curious spirit. I hope that our friendship will continue. On a summer day years ago, I was in the right place at the right time.



## The Recycling Ranger and Her Realm By Jackie Turner



**The “Recycling Ranger” is responsible for the required reporting of the park recycling rate.**

As the ranger who is in charge of recycling (it’s a glamorous job, but...), I am responsible for the required reporting of the **park recycling rate**. I use the amount of recyclables and trash collected to calculate this rate, which represents a percentage (**amount recycled materials [portion] divided by combined amount of recycling and trash [whole]**). In 2013, FLDEP was the first to comply with annual required state agency reporting. The park’s rate has varied from 10.10% to 19.34% ((In 2013, **13.83%**; In 2014, **13.71%**; In 2015, **15.31%**; In 2016-**13.06%**; In 2017-**19.34%**; In 2018-**10.10%**; In 2019-**16.67%**).

In 2010, the statewide recycling rate was 28% (just below mandated 30% goal). That same year, a new law mandated a statewide rate of **75% by 2020** with intermediate goals of **40% by 2012, 50% by 2014, 60% by 2016 and 70% by 2018**. According to FLDEP, the respective 40% and 50% goals were met by the target year. However, the 60% goal was not, and the rate was 49% in 2018. Given the current state of recycling markets, the statewide rate decline may continue in 2019 (currently being determined).

The park recycling rate is low when compared to the statewide rate. A large percentage of park waste is single use food and drink containers, which are

either not recyclable or not recycled. The Volunteer Recycling Team are working to increase public awareness to help motivate visitors to create less waste and increase recycling. This year, they will be implementing a roving interpretation program. Materials will promote USEPA Pack a Waste-Free Lunch concept. Their goal is to reduce the amount of waste and increase the recycling rate.

On top of the park’s low rate challenge, we have a regional recycling crisis largely created by the recent closures of overseas markets to low quality of American materials. This lack of demand has led to an increase in the cost of recycling resulting in many communities halting their recycling programs (Marpan recently told City of Tallahassee and Leon County that they will only provide recycling service for one more year). This dilemma provides an opportunity for change.

### **According to US EPA in 2017 the average person produced 4.51 lbs. per day of trash**

To reduce the amount of trash we create, we need to:

- 1) Buy reusable and refillable food and drink containers to replace single use items**
- 2) Buy products with less packaging and more recycled content**
- 3) Buy items with packaging that can be easily reused, recycled or home composted**
- 4) Properly clean recyclables to reduce contamination and increase quality and value of materials**
- 5) Create local markets for recyclables and food/compostable waste**

We need to rethink our longtime slogan **Reduce (!!!), Reuse (!), Recycle (!)**. We need the most emphasis on reduction, followed by attention to reuse, and finally recycling. When we reduce the amount of waste we create, select items easily reused or recycled, we will have a significant impact on the daily amount of our trash. We owe it to future generations to do our best today.

## 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 RECYCLED

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

**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**

## Service in Residence By Jackie Turner Photo by Jackie Turner



**Resident Volunteers (Left to right and) Cary LaBounty, Ken McClure, and Theresa Forrey are a few of the many dedicated people who have been giving their time and talents to Wakulla Springs State Park.**

Resident volunteers continue to provide invaluable assistance to the park. Currently serving are Ken McClure, Theresa Forrey, Cary and Mavis LaBounty. Per Florida Park Service policy, they can serve up to 4 months a year at a given park and are required to give 20 hours a week.

This is Ken's third year. He staffs the Ranger Station. With a background in sales, Ken thoroughly enjoys his assignment as the first face of the park. He enjoys welcoming visitors and often makes them smile. Ken works Friday through Sunday and provides needed weekend staffing assistance.

Theresa is in her second year. She staffs the Waterfront boat ticket office and keeps a watchful eye on the beach and boat area. She works 2-3 days a week and runs a tight ship. She is an explorer and has quickly learned the area, which greatly assists her efforts to provide excellent customer service.

This is Cary's second year and Mavis's first. Cary is serving as Early Field ranger Friday through Monday and, like Ken, provides needed weekend staffing assistance. He takes care of opening the park and is always willing to assist rangers and other staff. Mavis is helping with park brochures and other projects.

We are fortunate to have a really good group of resident volunteers who sincerely want to contribute to the well-being of the park. We greatly appreciate their efforts on our behalf. Thank you for a job well-done.



The Wakulla River reflects an azure –blue sky. Photo is courtesy of Robert Thompson.

# A Merry Christmas By Jeff Hugo



She made it a very special Christmas for park staff and resident volunteers. Resident Volunteer Pamela McDavid went all out decorating the conference room in the park's administration building in advance of the Staff Christmas Party on December 18.

With her own decorations and hours of her time she labored to bring the North Pole south. And she did. She also procured (with the help

of Santa himself) and cooked pork roast, turkey breast, potatoes, homemade bread and her signature seafood bisque. In addition, staff brought desserts and sides. No one went away hungry.

Jackie Turner provided an ice-breaker game for everyone to enjoy. The group ate and then opened presents. Collin Johnson, Kat Wilson, and Maria Wilhelmly provided music around the campfire. It was a very special Christmas for park staff.



**LEFT: Park Christmas Tree**  
**RIGHT (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):**  
**The Christmas Fireplace**  
**Laser lights in the oak tree.**  
**Gathered together.**  
**Sing -Along by the fire.**

## Tour of Champions By Jeff Hugo



**ABOVE: Assistant Park Manager John Melton stares up at the National Champion American Basswood. RIGHT: Park Ranger Kat Wilson holds a leaf from the Chestnut Oak behind her.**

They may have been the two coldest mornings of 2020. But January 20 and 21 proved to be great days for park staff to get out and tour some of the Champion Trees in the park's sanctuary.

George Apthorp led the journeys through the forest on both mornings. George's familiarity with the forest began in 2003 when his wife, Sandy Cook, was the park manager.

Being retired, he began to explore the park forests both on the north and south sides of the river. He, with the occasional help of others over the years, recorded almost 1200 trees until the conclusion of the project in 2013.

At one time, there were over 13 trees which were found to be state champions (the largest of their species in the state) and a few of them were national champions (the largest of their species in the country). Unfortunately, the curse of being a champion tree very often means that you are at the end of your natural lifespan. Since George began the project in 2003 about five champions have been lost to disease, weather, or other natural causes.

With no leaves on the trees, the easiest way to tell them apart was by their bark. Staff was told to look for parallel lines, diamonds, and shaggy flaps. Most walked away familiar with three to five trees and some even more.

The event was well-timed for park staff. In two weeks, on March 18, the Legacy Property (Mr. Ball's original 2800 acre purchase) will be designated as part of the Old-Growth Forest Network.

Park visitors will be invited to attend the ceremony beginning at 11:30am. Dr. Joan Maloof, the Founder and Director of the Old-Growth Forest Network will be there to present a plaque to park officials.

In honor of the occasion, the Lodge at Wakulla Springs will offer a special lunch buffet featuring its signature fried gulf shrimp and Tuscan chicken.

Following lunch there will be a tour of the old growth forest in the park's sanctuary. Interested attendees should RSVP to Jeff Hugo at [jeffrey.hugo@floridadep.gov](mailto:jeffrey.hugo@floridadep.gov) or call 850-561-7286.



## The Ferrell Property: A Collaborative Effort By Amy Conyers Photos by Amy Conyers



**Above: Meeting House Sink on the newly acquired 717-acre Ferrell Property.**

**Lower Right: Cat-faced longleaf pine from the days of turpentine on the Ferrell Property.**

“Remember the moments of the past. Look forward to the promise of the future. Most of all, celebrate the present because it is precious.” I don’t know whose words they are, but they succinctly relay my thought process of late.

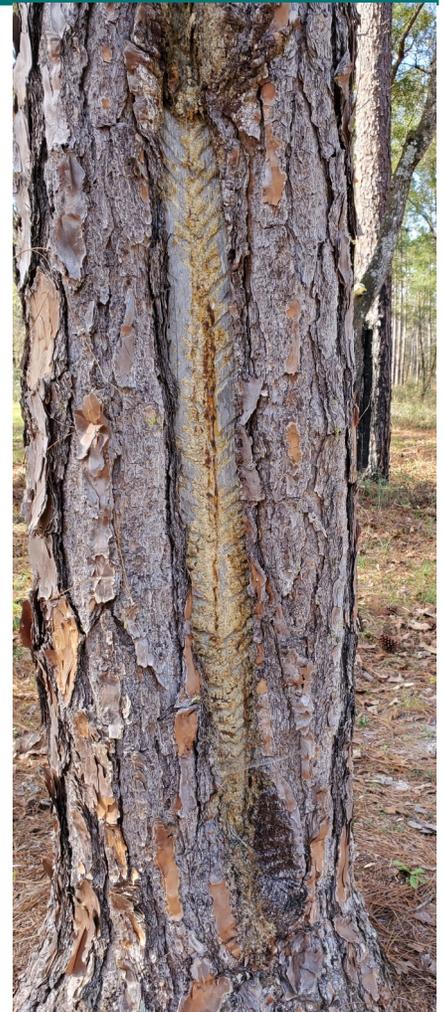
We have a tremendous history to celebrate in this park. As long as people have walked on land in what is now Florida, they have been walking on the grounds that we maintain daily.

We tell their stories when we describe how they interacted with Mastodons. We interpret the conflicts between explorers, settlers and natives. We continue to offer the boat tour experience that has been a part of Wakulla County life for generations. We lovingly repaint historic buildings. We preserve and share the stories, the artifacts, and even the vistas of the past as a part of our everyday responsibilities.

Our responsibilities are all a delicate balance though. Just as we must balance recreation with preservation; access with protection; experiences with safety; we must balance celebrating the past with looking towards the future. With a solid plan for the future and a commitment to honor the past, I believe that we can truly recognize and enjoy what we have right here and now.

We have a good opportunity to do just that with our latest land acquisition. In November, we closed on what has been known as the Ferrell Property. It is a 717-acre plot of land, 48 acres of which are wetland, located just 2 miles North of the main entrance to Wakulla Springs. The property is dotted with sinkholes, each with its own unique character and back story.

There are cypress filled lowlands,



## Ferrell Property (Continued) By Amy Conyers Photos by Amy Conyers



**Blue Sink is another beautiful karst feature of the Ferrell Property.**

pine-covered uplands, and direct connections to Wakulla Spring underground. The Ferrell Family has owned this plot and other land in the area since the 1800s. This particular plot has been farmed, hunted, fished, enjoyed, and cared for by generations. It hasn't been an easy process, but all involved should be proud of their efforts to preserve this land for many future generations.

It was truly a group effort. Negotiations started two decades ago. Progress ebbed and waned over time until the stars aligned, and the deal was signed.

The \$4.2 million required to purchase the property was more than a million dollars lower than the asking price. The owner was willing to compromise to ensure that the property became a part of

Wakulla Springs State Park. \$2.5 million was provided by the USDA Forest Service's Florida Legacy Program. The remaining funds were provided by the Florida Forever Program. Now that the papers are signed, the questions are being asked. What will we do with it?

First, we need a plan. In order to honor our commitment of preservation and balance that with allowing access for recreation, we will need to weigh our options. Along with an overdue update of the Unit Management Plan for the whole park, a plan will be made for the Ferrell Property.

Decisions of what facilities may be added or what recreational opportunities will be offered, and the management of the resources will be considered. The restoration of some recently farmed fields will need to be planned. Some areas which

have already been reclaimed from farm use and planted in native longleaf pines will need some thinning by fire or mechanical means.

A prescribed fire plan will be made, exotic plant inventories and treatment plans will be made. Maps are in the works and that will help us determine where additional fire breaks should be added.

Input will be gathered from the public, from researchers who have been granted access previously, family members who were raised on this land, and from leaders and planners from the state.

Together, we will make a plan for the future while celebrating the past. With a plan in place, we'll be able to enjoy all that our newest 717 acres has to offer.

## Getting It Done! By John Melton



**“New Park Ranger Phil Pouliot comes to us with a wealth of experience.”**

The River is alive with the sound of music! Just take a stroll down by the waterfront boat ticket visitors center. You may hear Ranger Collin Johnson on his guitar entertaining guests or working up a new song about our beautiful Wakulla Springs State Park. Collin has plenty of creative back up and lyrical support from Ranger Kat Wilson who is proficient on the African drum and Ranger Maria Wilhelmy on the Ukulele! Collin, Kat and Maria put on a show for us back in December at our annual Christmas party. They make quite the trio!

We are moving on quickly into the new year here at Wakulla Springs. Ranger Jeff Hicks has been working on new lifeguard stands for the safety and security of our seasonal lifeguards. Maintenance Specialist Cecil

Lewis has been diligently working on getting our park shop area spiffed up as well as taking care of day to day maintenance issues with our fleet of 40 to 50-year-old classic River Tour boats.

Ranger Charlie Baisden along with volunteers from the Wakulla Garden Club have spent many hours keeping our butterfly garden at the bathhouse clean and neat as well as planting native plants in several different day use areas of the park including the new Muhly grass planted at the park entrance.

Ranger Steven Urling has been appointed as our park safety officer and will be responsible for quarterly safety reports.

As for me, I’ve been working on day to day administrative duties as well as boat tours and ranger lead bike tours to the Hidden Spring. Just a few weeks ago I was able to take part in a small prescribed burn at the Meadow down river with Park Biologist Patty Wilber, Ranger Kat and other Rangers from nearby parks. Recently, I attended several days of administrative training for the Professional Park Manager Leadership Certification (PPMLC) at Topsail State Park. It was a lot of information to take in. I am a better Assistant Park Manager because of it! Thank you District 1!

Along the roadways and trails, the Carolina Cherry Laurel

Trees are all a flower; as well as the Walter’s Viburnum, Yellow Jessamine and Red Bud. That is a sign that warmer weather is just a month or so off. The swim area is going to get busier as more folks seek to cool off as the temperatures rise.

In addition to warmer weather, we have a few new things and park improvements to look forward to. We are getting a shiny, brand-new John Deere zero-turn mower with a larger, 64-inch deck! We will soon be replacing all the decking boards on the elevated board walk at the trail



**New Park Ranger Kearstin Hess is helping to improve the playground by spreading new mulch.**

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## A Dramatic Photo Journey on the Wakulla River

Featuring the photography of Robert Thompson

Wakulla Springs is fortunate that former Park Ranger Robert Thompson makes time to return to the park to capture the day-to-day wildlife drama which takes place here. During the course of a few river boat tours in the month of February, Bob took the following photos. They are just a sampling of poignant moments frozen in time thanks to Bob's skill and a measure of good fortune.



A Great Blue Heron swallowing a gar.



A Limpkin searching for an apple snail or mussel.



White Ibises dancing.

**Wakulla Drama Captured** By Charlie Baisden

**A turkey vulture in all its splendor.**



**A pied-billed grebe devours a crayfish.**



**An anhinga with a wide yawn.**



**A baby alligator gently stirs the water's surface.**



## Resource Management News and Notes By Patty Wilbur



**Park Ranger Kat Wilson experiences some burn training during the prescribed fire in the park's 'meadow'.**

Spring is a beautiful season at Wakulla Springs, but a big part of me is always sad to see its arrival. Winter is such a fantastic time to really get out in the woods and catch up on big projects, with less fear of poison ivy and ticks. It always goes too quickly to get everything done.

In December, I spent a lot of time clearing our roads and trails. Everything in the sanctuary and on the north side of the river needed to be accessible so that volunteers from the Audubon Society could conduct the annual Christmas Bird Count just before the holiday. Jackie Turner and I enjoyed participating again, especially as we were joined by park ranger Eryca Childres. She likes her work at Maclay Gardens now but was happy to visit her old

stomping grounds at Wakulla Springs.

Later in the month, park volunteer Les Campbell and I completed some long-needed clearing and trimming of the Bob Rose Trail. It's a wilder trail, bisecting the usual loop at River Sinks, and taking hikers past several karst features from Clearcut Sink to Trench Sink. Over time, it had gotten shaggy and overgrown, but is looking much better for getting a haircut. Les reported meeting another hiker on it recently. I'm happy to see visitors exploring it again.

A good amount of my time was spent in the tractor disk-ing firebreaks down to miner-

al soil to prepare for the upcoming burn season. In early January, I burned the park's brush pile. I've done this several times before, but this one was a bit special. I'd attended class last year to become a Certified Pile Burner. After some more prep work, and an inspection by the Florida Forest Service, this burn was the last step to receive my certification. With Natural Bridge State Park's Park Service Specialist Mark Stevenson providing backup, the pile burn went off without a hitch. This additional certification extends the time of day in which I'm legally allowed to burn piles. That's very useful here, where the brush pile can grow very big very quickly.

We also burned the meadow along the river this January. Ranger Collin Johnson said he got a kick out of interpreting it to the passengers on his river boat tour. I had help from several of the St. Mark's area park staff, and John Melton and Kat Wilson enjoyed participating as burn trainees. Since it's a fairly quick and easy burn to do, we were able to spend time going over how to take fire weather readings. A couple rangers from the St. Mark's parks got to train as crew bosses. Thankfully it was a dry day, and the meadow burned nicely this year.

We are progressing toward our timber thinning and longleaf

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## Resource Management News and Notes (Cont'd) By Patty Wilbur;



**Assistant Park Manager John Melton is treating an invasive plant (nandina) on the Ferrell Property.**

pine restoration at River Sinks. Foresters from F4 Tech have marked a handful of stands to demonstrate how we'd like the trees to be harvested. It will be going to bid soon and cutting will start as we move into spring.

Like many members of our park family, I've been anxious to get out on our new Ferrell tract so that I can get to know it better. John Melton and I explored it for a day, getting to know its roads, and treating a few exotic plants. We even found another large sinkhole that neither of us had seen yet! I returned a couple weeks later with Geographic Information Technician Ryan Mulvey from Tallahassee. He's helping us map the road network and sinkholes. At this point, we've measured 12.5 miles of interior roads on the property. I'll be happy to have a map so I can keep it all straight.

Going forward, we'll need to delineate habitat types on this new parcel and figure out how we want to divide it into management zones. Then we'll decide if we need to add any additional firebreaks, and work to put those in. We'll also need to post the property boundaries. It will be a lot of work, but it's rewarding to take care of such a beautiful piece of Wakulla County.

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## Getting It Done! (Continued) By John Melton

head of our nature trail across from the Lodge.

The playground is getting a makeover. New mulch and new swings are coming soon! Also, look for new audio systems on the tour boats.

We have added two new Rangers to our awesome team here at Wakulla Springs! Help us welcome Phil Pouliot, our new FTE Ranger and Kearstin Hess our new OPS Ranger.

Phil comes to us with a wealth of experience. Phil has volunteered with the National Park Service where he took part in research on Condors in California and served as a Water Taxi Captain. You may already recognize Phil as the volunteer painter who has recently been working on the Administration Building painting project.

Kearstin Hess has a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Sciences and is working on her master's degree. She worked for FWC on the Gopher Turtles program. Kearstin is a recent graduate of AmeriCorps's "Project Ant" program where she helped with trail maintenance and invasive control in District One parks.

I am happy to have Phil and Kearstin as part of the Wakulla Springs Team! Welcome Aboard! Getting it done in District One! Go Team Wakulla Springs!



Wakulla Springs State Park  
465 Wakulla Park Drive  
Wakulla Springs, FL  
32327-0390

Phone: 850-926-0700

## Upcoming Events!

Saturday, March 7  
10:30am-1:30pm  
**Bike Ride to Hidden Spring**

Saturday, March 14  
5:00pm-8:00pm  
**Dinner Cruise**

Wednesday, March 18  
11:30am-2:00pm  
**Old Growth Forest Dedication**

Saturday, March 21  
9:00am-12:00 noon  
**Friends Road Clean Up**

Thursday, March 26  
6:00pm-7:00pm  
**Mystery in the Swamp**

Saturday, March 28  
9:00am-10:30am  
**Morning Nature Walk**

Saturday, April 4  
10:00am-3:00pm  
**Antique Car & Bike Show**

Thursday, April 9  
6:00pm-7:00pm  
**Going Native**

Saturday, April 18  
9:00am-10:30am  
**Morning Nature Walk**

## The Annual Event

By Jeff Hugo; Photo by Barbara Wilson



### Casey McKinlay offered stellar insights into the Woodville Karst Plains Project's "office underground".

The Friends Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 23 started out with a "standing room only" crowd in the Dogwood Pavilion. Casey McKinlay offered stellar views of the Woodville Karst Plains Project's (WKPP) "office underground" (Wakulla Springs Cave System) along with plenty of insights into the work of WKPP.

The crowd for the meeting was one of the largest ever. There were approximately 80 plus members in attendance.

Following his presentation, heavy hors d'oeuvres followed on the Terrace of the Lodge. Desserts were provided by the Friends membership. It was a sweet tooth's paradise.

The General Membership meeting began at 1:30. Friends President Don Lanham welcomed everyone. The Treasurer's reports followed. Board members were elected. They included renewing members Cal Jamison, Renee Murray, Steve Gauding, Scott Davis, Dara Wilson, and Sue Damon. New member Melanie Lewis was also elected.

Amy Conyers followed with a 'State of the Park' address. She highlighted the many park accomplishments made possible by the Friends and all of their volunteer assistance. She also mentioned many lodge improvements, park staff changes and a brief introduction of the Ferrell Property.

Awards were presented to a few members who had gone the 'extra mile' in service. Special thanks were offered to Jim Stevenson for his tireless efforts to bring the park's hydrology and its attending concerns to public awareness.

Cal Jamison received the President's Award for his karst research and community service on behalf of the park. Former President Barbara Wilson presented Madeleine Carr a Lifetime Service Award for her grant-writing, event-planning, and tireless support of the park.

The meeting was over by 2:30 and 32 people gleefully enjoyed a river boat tour from 3:30-4:30. The other 40 plus members remaining, journeyed to the Ferrell Property for a tour led by Springs Ambassador Cal Jamison. A fine ending to an eventful day.



Photo by Bob Thompson

Wakulla Springs State Park  
 465 Wakulla Park Drive  
 Wakulla Springs, FL  
 32327-0390

## Upcoming Events!

Saturday, April 18  
 5:00pm-8:00pm  
**Dinner Cruise**

Thursday, April 23  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
**A Timeless Glimpse**

Saturday, May 9  
 9:00am-10:30am  
**Morning Nature Walk**

Saturday, May 9  
 8:00 am **Family Fun Run; 8:30am 5K Run**

Thursday, May 14  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
**Mystery in the Swamp**

Saturday, May 16  
 5:30pm-8:00pm  
**Dinner Cruise**

Thursday, May 28  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
**Going Native**

Saturday, June 6  
 9:00am-12:00noon  
**Friends Road Clean-Up**

Thursday, June 11  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
**A Timeless Glimpse**

Saturday, June 20  
 5:00pm-8:00pm  
**Dinner Cruise**

Thursday, June 25  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
**Mystery in the Swamp**



### DARK, DARK WATER

There were no glass-bottom boat days in 2019. From 1987 to 1995 the glass bottom boats ran 42.5% of the time. From 1996 to 2005 the glass bottom boats ran 26.6% of the time. From 2010 through 2019 the glass bottom boats ran 2.4% of the time.

YEAR	DAYS BOATS RAN	PERCENT DAYS CLEAR
1987	73	20%
1988	213	58%
1989	133	36%
1990	248	68%
1991	124	34%
1992	189	52%
1993	273	75%
1994	83	23%
1995	62	17%
1996	134	37%
1997	78	21%
1998	101	28%
1999	96	26%
2000	229	63%
2001	144	39%
2002	64	18%
2003	74	20%
2004	42	12%
2005	10	3%
2006	46	13%
2007	54	15%
2008	10	3%
2009	12	3%
2010	0	0%
2011	64	18%
2012	9	2%
2013	7	2%
2014	0	0%
2015	0	0%
2016	5	1%
2017	5	1%
2018	0	0%
2019	0	0%