

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DIVISION OF RECREATION AND PARKS
OFFICE OF PARK PLANNING**



**MANATEE SPRINGS
STATE PARK**

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
AND COMMENTS**

Baxley, Demi

From: Terry Witt <tuu105@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2018 4:03 PM
To: FLStateParkPlanning
Subject: repaving spring run boat ramp

I don't object to repaving the boat ramp so long as it doesn't lead to a repeal of the ban on motorized boats in the spring run. That would be unfair to the manatees. I think allowing motorized boats in the spring run of Manatee Springs State Park would endanger manatees. I am hoping your proposal is only to repave the ramp and nothing more.

Thanks,
Terry A. Witt

Baxley, Demi

From: Gerard Cassidy <mrcassidy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 7, 2018 10:43 AM
To: FLStateParkPlanning
Subject: Manatee Springs Park plans

I think it would be very beneficial to the park, and to its main attraction the springs, to see a regular plan for the removal and control of the algae. It would be some much more pleasant!

Thanks

From: Jens Schwarte
To: [FLStateParkPlanning](#)
Subject: Manatee springs
Date: Monday, January 8, 2018 11:27:27 AM

Hello,

I am a long time visitor to Manatee springs. I read that the park facilities are under review soon.

I can say that the brown water snakes need to be removed from the spring. They were never there in the 80s / 90s and they are the reason I will not take my son there anymore.

You can renovate all you want, but those snakes are terrifying and aggressive toward swimmers who account for a large part of your parks patronage. I took a swim and one came towards me, I dove down to escape and the snake went under to follow.

I understand it's a park first and recreation second. However Raccoons are removed from campgrounds, and even the National park will even re-locate a bear or mountain lion.

Regards

Jens Schwarte

305-987-3641

From: Katie Tripp
To: [Alsentzer, Daniel](#); [FLStateParkPlanning](#)
Cc: [Katie Tripp](#)
Subject: Public Comment Re Manatee Springs State Park Advisory Group Draft Unit Management Plan- December 2017
Date: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 10:57:58 AM
Attachments: [PFS 1516-11 4th Quarter Report 7 15 16.pdf](#)
[SMC Manatee Springs Management Plan Comments January 2018.pdf](#)

Hello,

Attached, please find our comments, as well as a second document referenced in our letter.

Best,

Katie

Katie Tripp, Ph.D.
Director of Science and Conservation
Save the Manatee Club
500 N. Maitland Ave.
Maitland, FL 32751
Office: 407-539-0990
e-mail: ktripp@savethemanatee.org



Protect Florida Springs Tag Grants Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Quarterly Progress Report Form

- Please use as much space as necessary when completing this form. Form fields will expand.
- Reports are due by the 15th of the month after the end of a quarter. Deadlines are as follows:
 - 1st Quarter (July 1 – September 30) due October 15
 - 2nd Quarter (September 1 – December 31) due January 15
 - 3rd Quarter (January 1 – March 31) due April 15
 - 4th Quarter (April 1 – June 30) due July 15
- Submit completed reports by email to Bill.Bibby@MyFWC.com (preferred) or ground delivery to Bill Bibby, Foundation Grants Coordinator, 2590 Executive Center Circle, Suite 100, Tallahassee, FL 32301.
- **Naming Convention:** When submitting this form electronically, please rename the file to incorporate both the grant number and report number (i.e., PFS 1415-01_1st_quarter_report.docx).

Grant #: PFS 1415-11

Date: 7/1/16

Quarterly Report # (1,2,3, etc.): 4

Project Title: Blue Spring Adventurer Program

Report Submitted by: Anne Harvey Holbrook

Summary of project activity since last report:

Save the Manatee Club has concluded the Protect Florida Springs Grant funded Blue Spring Adventurer Program. Working with Blue Spring State Park staff and Starke Elementary faculty, SMC staff finalized the program plan and organized logistics for all students in third through fifth grade at Starke Elementary School to visit Volusia Blue Spring State Park. We completed and distributed a pre-visit program, which included an introduction to the park, alongside a narrated PowerPoint with short, engaging videos that preview the information students would learn and animals they would see on their visit, and we organized and distributed the junior ranger packets that will enable students to make free return visits to the Park with their families. At the Park, students participated in a "Dip n' Learn" program with St. Johns River Cruises, and toured the Park with a Florida naturalist. After their excursion, students were assessed to determine whether their knowledge and awareness of the Springs system had improved through the visit. Because the students did not have the opportunity to see manatees during their visit, SMC made sure that students have access to the manatv.org webcam so that they could view past footage of Blue Spring manatees and so that they may view manatees live at Blue Spring next season. This quarter we have been primarily engaged in following up with teachers to obtain the results of student assessments and with requests for program feedback. SMC has also been exploring potential sources of additional funding to continue the BSA program in future years, which would allow partnerships with other schools in the springshed.

Summary of project activity anticipated in the coming quarter:

n/a - This is the final project report.

Summary of project goals/deliverables (please list in measurable terms):

The Blue Spring Adventurers Program has brought approximately 200 children (grades 3-5), who attend school within the Volusia School District and Blue Spring springshed to Blue Spring State Park during this past school year. At the Park, we have provided an educational and memorable day of study and adventure that has hopefully enhanced each child's knowledge of the springs system. The Program lessons were designed to be

aligned to state standards, and bus transport and substitute teacher costs were funded through the grant, facilitating school participation and overcoming the practical obstacles that often prevent field study. SMC and Blue Spring State Park have provided science-based environmental education in the students' local, natural environment- a classroom without walls. Their days were filled with field experiences, science and conservation concepts, teamwork, cooperative learning, critical thinking, inquiry, opportunity, exercise, and fun. The students were educated about threats to the spring and springshed, and were introduced to the concept of stewardship and taught how they and their families can help protect the region's natural resources. The program has reached children of various ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds and provided equal opportunities for all to learn and explore. Children who participated in the BSA program and completed the Junior Ranger workbook materials were provided with free day passes to return to any Florida State Park with their families, to share their newfound knowledge and excitement for this natural environment and engage another generation in conservation. In this way, the impact of the program has been magnified. We believe the students have experienced a powerful day that will stay them, encouraging them to learn, care, get outside, be inspired and aware, and get involved.

Teachers were also given a series of activities to be completed back at school to help foster additional learning and reflection. These activities were designed to facilitate interdisciplinary learning as students have the opportunity to apply, reinforce, enrich, and integrate their field experiences with their school curriculum. More importantly, these activities were designed to help the children engage and remember what they experienced and achieved during their day as Blue Spring Adventurers.

Through careful planning and economy, Save the Manatee Club ended this grant period \$3,394.10 under budget.

Significant Issues (*i.e., is the project on schedule, are there unanticipated results, extension required, etc.*):

Unfortunately, because water temperatures had been unseasonably warm, no manatees were present in the spring run on the days that students visited the park in either November or March. However, the primary goal of the program was to introduce students to the springs ecosystem, to inspire outdoor learning, and to educate students about the need to protect Florida's water and natural resources, and in this goal the program has been successful. We provided teachers with access to SMC's manatv.org live webcam to share with their students, and we hope to potentially arrange a livecam learning experience or other opportunity for Starke Elementary students to discover manatees in the future.

We have also have continued to have some difficulty in obtaining the results of the post-visit assessments. Despite our best efforts, we received very limited feedback and were unable to obtain the results of the post-assessment scores. We recognize that Starke Elementary School is a Title I school that faces many challenges, so perhaps these difficulties were foreseeable. If SMC is able to continue BSA with outside funding in the future, or if we receive future Florida Springs Protection Grant funds to create a statewide Springs Adventurer Program, as we hope to do one day, then we would make it more clear that participation in the program is contingent upon submitting both the pre- and post-assessment results and evaluations.

Lastly, SMC had plans to expand our program statewide, and were disappointed not to receive next year's grant that would have enabled us to do so. However, we will continue to update our resources and seek out occasions to collaborate with Florida State Parks in other efforts to support opportunities for lower socioeconomic students and families to explore and learn about Florida's springs and natural environment.

Expenditures/invoices accompanying this report (please attach):

Vendor	Item/Description	Cost
1. Anne Harvey	15 hours of work	\$300.00
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
TOTAL		\$300
Is this your final expenditure? (please check one)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Expenditures/invoices anticipated in the coming quarter:

Vendor	Item/Description	Cost
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
TOTAL		
Will this be your final expenditure? (please check one)		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of project in “layman’s terms.”
Please briefly describe the project goals, objectives and results to date. This may be used for public relations/outreach materials or public presentations to an audience who may not be experts in your field.

The Blue Spring Adventurers Program brought approximately two hundred 3rd to 5th grade students from schools within the Blue Springs springshed to Blue Spring State Park in Volusia County. A portion of the grant was allocated to transportation costs, as these are often the one of the most significant obstacles to facilitating field trips. The program featured hands-on activities to foster student connections with the spring and its aquatic inhabitants. Students were given the opportunity to go out in the field on a boat where they participated in a “Dip N’ Learn” program to explore the ecology of the St. Johns River. Students will receive free pass to return to Blue Spring State Park with their families, to share their newfound knowledge and passion, and help reinforce their role as stewards of the spring.



Save the Manatee® Club

The Voice for Manatees Since 1981

January 17, 2018

Submitted via electronic mail to Daniel.Alsentzer@dep.state.fl.us, FL_StateParkPlanning@dep.state.fl.us

Re: Manatee Springs State Park Advisory Group Draft Unit Management Plan- December 2017

Dear Mr. Alsentzer,

We have reviewed the Subject Draft and wanted to thank you for including stewardship of manatees among your many goals. We appreciate the measures you have taken to help manatees rest undisturbed within the park and to educate your visitors about how to properly observe manatees both inside and outside your boundaries. We wholeheartedly support your plan to work with the USFWS and FWC to look at the need for additional protective measures, including seasonal restrictions. Springs that offer sanctuary protections are preferred by manatees, as seen in the St. Johns River springs system, as well as that in Citrus County's Kings Bay.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to share some resources with you that may prove helpful in your efforts to educate park visitors and others in your community about the importance of our springs. I've included several links below. I've also attached as a separate file, a copy of a quarterly grant report for a program we ran at Volusia Blue Spring, which you may be interested in replicating at your Park. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance to you as you implement this updated plan.

Most sincerely,

Katie Tripp, Ph.D.
Director of Science and Conservation

Resources:

Online Modules- Springs Conservation in the Classroom and Beyond:

<https://www.savethemanatee.org/manatees/education-materials/educator-resources/springs-conservation-in-the-classroom-and-beyond/>

Blue Spring Academy (could serve as a model for a similar set of classes at Manatee Springs):

<http://bluespringalliance.org/academy/>

Resources for On-Water Recreation:

<https://www.savethemanatee.org/about/get-resources/>

From: John Moran
To: [FLStateParkPlanning](#); [Abrizenski, Mark](#)
Subject: On the future of Manatee Springs
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2018 9:59:12 AM

Dear Park Planners,

Thank you for attention to Manatee Springs.

I ask that you take a light touch, and not degrade the visitor experience with excess concrete and amenities that overwhelm the resource.

As for lighting, PLEASE keep the wattage low, the color temperature warm, and the light downward directed. Less is more. Let us enjoy the splendor of the night sky.

When it comes to our parks, please keep it wild. First do no harm.

Thank you for your consideration.

For the love of Florida,

John Moran
Gainesville

From: Lesley Gamble
To: [FLStateParkPlanning](#); [Abrizenski, Mark](#)
Cc: [Lesley Gamble](#)
Subject: Manatee Springs Park management plan
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2018 11:11:46 AM

Dear Park Planners,

We are big fans of Manatee Springs and Florida's Parks! Given that the park is located in some of the last remaining dark sky areas in Florida, we strongly encourage you to apply for Manatee Springs State Park to be recognized as an International Dark Sky Park.

Our family loves and deeply appreciates the beauty of the night sky. This is the only park where we, and the diversity of life that lives there, can truly enjoy it. Please protect it.

Thank you,
Lesley Gamble

Watershed address: Gainesville Duckpond > Sweetwater Branch > Paynes Prairie > Alachua Sink > Floridan Aquifer > Springs of the Upper Santa Fe River > Santa Fe River > Suwannee River > Gulf of Mexico

From: Diana Umpierre
To: [FLStateParkPlanning](#); [Abrizenski, Mark](#); [Alsentzer, Daniel](#)
Subject: Comments for Manatee Springs State Park Unit Mngt Plan
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2018 10:30:49 PM

January 23, 2018

Mark Abrizenski
Park Manager
Manatee Springs State Park

Daniel Alsentzer
Park Planner
Division of Recreation & Parks

Manatee Springs State Park
Advisory Group Members

SUBJ: Comments for update of Manatee Springs State Park 10-yr Unit Management Plan

On behalf of the International Dark-Sky Association FL Chapter, I submit the following comments for your consideration as you work to update the park's 10-yr unit management plan.

>> The draft management plan says nothing about the night sky resource, which is so valuable at this particular state park. In fact, the words "night sky", "nocturnal" cannot be found anywhere in this plan. I highly recommend this be corrected so that park managers and planners not only acknowledge this important resource but look for ways to protect it. Include information in the unit management plan that recognizes the night sky/ nocturnal environment as an important natural resource that's enjoyed my people that visit the park and vital to the well-being of the diverse wildlife that makes this park its home.

>> **On the section on Resource Management, add a natural resource section for the night sky (or nightscape), and an associated management section.** You can use the info at NPS links below to describe the resource and its value to park users and wildlife.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/night skies/resources.htm>

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/night skies/wilderness.htm>

>> Given that this park is located in some of the last remaining dark areas in FL, **I strongly encourage the park to apply to be recognized as an International Dark Sky Park, joining Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park which was the first FL state park to earn this designation. Manatee Spring SP is actually DARKER than Kissimmee, which is all the more reason for this park to get this designation** and ensure this resource is protected and celebrated by Floridians.

<http://www.darksky.org/kissimmee-prairie-preserve-state-park-named-floridas-first-dark-sky-place/>

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/activities/kissimmee-prairie-star-gazing-1>

Info about this designation: <http://www.darksky.org/idsp/parks/>

>> **If any improvements are planned that may add artificial lighting to the park, make**

sure that the park puts a plan in place that follows the guidelines of FWC and other relevant guidance that helps protect the night sky/ nightscape resource. The list of proposed improvements mentioned in the draft plan does not include mention of any outdoor lighting. However, if there is potential for this, please make sure that it does not degrade the nocturnal environment and night sky. In a state park such as yours this is critical. Areas of concern are concession bldgs, restrooms, walkways, boardwalks and park manager's residence. Below are excellent references:

<http://myfwc.com/conservation/you-protect/lighting/>

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nightskies/practices.htm>

http://www.darksky.org/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/Sample-LMP_62.pdf

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305720851_Artificial_night_lighting_and_protected_lands_ecological_effects_and_management_approaches

>> **Add "stargazing" as an activity that is enjoyed at the park.** Add it to your park's website. Inform park visitors of the lovely night skies they can enjoy during their visits. Update your park brochure to describe the amazing night skies they can experience and resources at the park and nearby to do stargazing, and possibly add points in the park map that are good for stargazing (less tree canopy, away from permanent lights and heavy vehicular traffic).

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/park/Manatee-Springs>

>> **Lastly, be proud of your night skies and protect them with the same fervor as clean water and air.** Manatee Springs SP is near an area enjoyed by many astronomy enthusiasts: Chiefland Astronomy Village. In fact, this year in February, the famous annual Winter Star Party, that brings almost a thousand night sky lovers from around the world, will be held in Chiefland instead of the FL Keys, just a few miles south of the state park.

<http://www.scas.org/Home/winterStarParty>

Thank you very much for your consideration of these points. We look forward to supporting your efforts to protect your springs, your biodiversity, your nightscape for all of us to enjoy ;)

Diana Umpierre, AICP, GISP, Vice President
International Dark-Sky Association
[IDA Florida Chapter](#), Chair
[Night Sky Conservancy](#), Founder
NightSkyConservancy@gmail.com
[\(954\) 829-7632](tel:(954)829-7632)

www.darksky.org

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Join IDA](#)

From: Whitey Markle
To: [FLStateParkPlanning](#); [Abrizenski, Mark](#); [Alsentzer, Daniel](#)
Subject: Manatee SP 10 yr. plan
Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 8:53:43 AM

Daniel:

A couple of comments for the record:

1. It is important to maintain authority in the area surrounding the Manatee SP regarding land use planning. Obviously, intensive agricultural operations dominate the activity, and the preservation of the Park's natural resources will be directly effected by such operations(nutrient loading).
2. The SIerra Club asks for "Dark Sky" classification in the Manatee SP as the park is located in an ideal place for star-gazing.

Thank you.

Whitey Markle, Chair

Suwannee/St. Johns SIerra Club Group.