



Citizen Support Organization
Protecting And Improving North Florida
State Parks Since 2001.

*If you would like to contribute
to the quarterly newsletter,
please send submissions to:*

editor@northfloridaspringsalliance.org

NFSA WEBSITE

Follow what's happening with
current projects, get contact
information to help participate in
upcoming work days and mark
your calendar for our annual work-
shop on September 30th!

NorthFloridaSpringsAlliance.org

NFSA Parks:

- Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park
- Troy Spring State Park
- Madison Blue Spring State Park
- Lafayette Blue Springs State Park
- Suwannee River State Park

DONATE VOLUNTEER SUPPORT THE NFSA!

Be sure to check out our new
website for donation opportuni-
ties, volunteer opportunities
and to keep up with how we are
supporting your favorite Florida
state parks!

NorthFloridaSpringsAlliance.org

JOIN TODAY or Renew Your Membership

Please go to:

northfloridaspringsalliance.org/



Peacock I circa 1985 - before the
steps.

Photo by Pete Nawrocky



Alliance News

2nd Quarter 2017



Done! Many Thanks To Our Awesome Volunteers

The NFSA has rebuilt the changing rooms and steps at Peacock I
spring in Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park.

See page 6 for the full story.

President's Corner

By Mike Stine

The NFSA is continuing to do great work in support of our five parks. We recently wrapped up rebuilding the stairs and changing room at Peacock I and installing Handitreads at Orange Grove. The signs for the new interpretive trail at Lafayette Blue Springs State Park are almost ready to be fabricated, as are several signs for Madison Blue Spring State Park. The interpretive trail should be installed in late summer or early fall so be on the lookout for a call for help.

The NFSA is still in the planning stages for the rebuild of the deck and stairs at the Madison Blue headspring. This project will be at least as time consuming as the work at Martz or Peacock I and once again we will be in the need of volunteers. Our tentative plan is to get started after gnat season and begin work in late September or early October. Look for more information on our Facebook page, website, and other social media outlets as we get closer to the fall.

We will once again be holding our workshop/volunteer appreciation day/membership meeting, whatever you want to call this fun day, at Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park on Saturday, September 30. If you have ideas to help make this a great event, we would love to hear from you.

Lastly, I want to personally welcome Tracy Niesent to the Board of Directors, and thank her for her willingness to contribute her time and energy to this great organization. She is filling a vacant board seat until our next membership meeting at which time she will be up for election by the general membership.

Featured Columnists



Mike Stine
The Nature of Things

With degrees in Forestry and Genetics, Mike spent most of his career teaching forestry and wildlife classes at Louisiana State University and conducting research on longleaf pine and applications of genetics to resource management. The combination of a love of longleaf pine ecosystems and cave diving make living in North Florida a natural fit and Mike and his wife Bonnie to have been residents of Monticello, Florida since 2007.



Jerry Murphy
Geology Rocks

Jerry has always been interested in geology and grew up in water sports. After moving to Gainesville for graduate school, cave diving was a natural progression in his life. After all, as a Professional Geologist and a diver, cave diving combined the two greatest interests that he enjoyed. It was mandatory that he live close to the caves so he and his wife Beth left Gainesville and have lived outside High Springs since 1997.



Jacqui Sulek
Winging It

Jacqui has been with Audubon, Florida Audubon for 11 years. As Chapter Conservation Manager for Florida she coordinates the 45 Florida Audubon Chapters from the Panhandle to Key West. At the same time, Jacquie volunteers as the Conservation Chair of her local Audubon Chapter. Degreed in fine arts and landscape design, Jacquie is well traveled and has had a variety of careers including Park Ranger, Executive Chef, and Yacht Captain.



Kelly Jessop
Counting Critters

Kelly has a deep appreciation for the Florida parks' system and was a founding member of the Peacock Springs Committee, now the NFSA. As an avid cave diver, he came to appreciate the cave ecosystem and developed a method for doing fauna counts. His team has been collecting and analyzing data from numerous springs for 12 years. Cave exploration doesn't end with discovering passages, but starts with understanding these poorly understood ecosystems.



The NFSA is Growing!

By Sandy Robinson

We have seen some nice growth in membership over the last year. In addition to growing the ranks of our volunteer force, member dues from these memberships are vital to the parks that we support. Full coffers mean more interpretive trails, boardwalks, steps, educational signs, park clean ups, park maintenance, ECO-Day, our annual members' workshop and more!

Individual memberships are \$15; family memberships are \$30; and company memberships are \$50. For the cost of lunch for two, supper for one, or a nitrox fill, you can buy an annual membership, which includes a quarterly newsletter and free admission to our annual workshop and members' Appreciation Day.

And by the way, we hope to see you at the annual workshop being held on Saturday, September 30th, at the Orange Grove Pavilion in Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park.

We appreciate your support!

NFSA Swag

Be sure to pick up a copy of our coffee table book of photography, *A Watery Wilderness*, or grab one of our great tee shirts for the gifts that keep on giving!



WSPSSP, A Watery Wilderness



Duckweed Tee S-XXL



Grim Reaper Tee S-XXL



Peacock Map S-XXL

Shop online at our NFSA store: www.northfloridaspringsalliance.org/shop.html



**2017
North Florida
Springs Alliance
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Adam Hughes
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Jim Womble
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Sandy Robinson
Director At Large
Membership

Kelly Jessop
Director At Large
Fauna Count Committee

Tracy Niesent
Director At Large

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SHOW YOUR PRIDE!
Wear your support for
the NFSA by purchasing
one of our tees at our
ONLINE STORE:

northfloridaspringsalliance.org

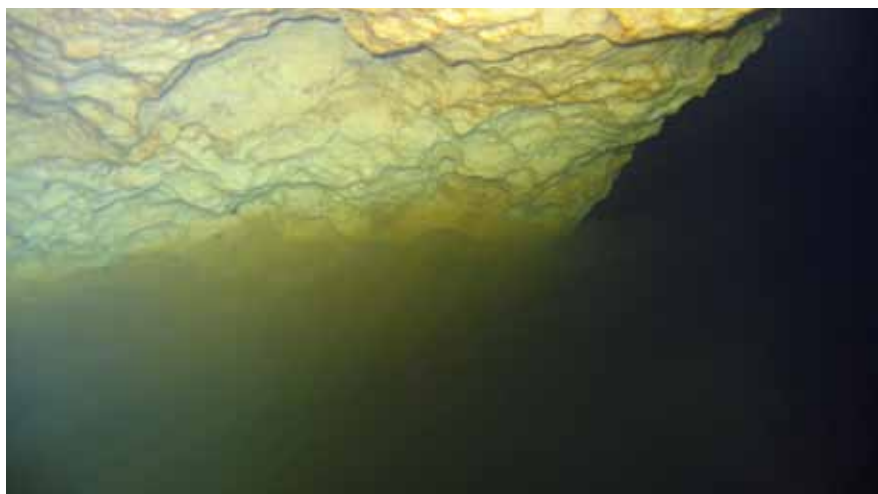
In Situ Site Assessment Compared to Fauna Count
By Kelly Jessop

We are passing the 13th year conducting fauna counts. The methodology to perform these counts is a system we developed for collecting data over defined distances and replicated multiple times, allowing us to see trends. Sometimes we will do a site assessment, which means swimming a certain area with no defined distance, and noting the fauna and water quality. Madison Blue is a high flow cave system, which is not conducive to seeing stygobites on the main conduit passage, because of the stronger current. In this case we picked multiple low flow passages and made notations of the species seen as well as the water quality at that point in time.

Purchase of the hydrolabs was made possible with grants from the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Protect Florida Springs TAG Grants FY 2012-2013 and FY 2014-2015 and a donation from the NSSCDS. Nestlé Waters North America continues to support our Fauna Count program with donations covering maintenance and supplies.

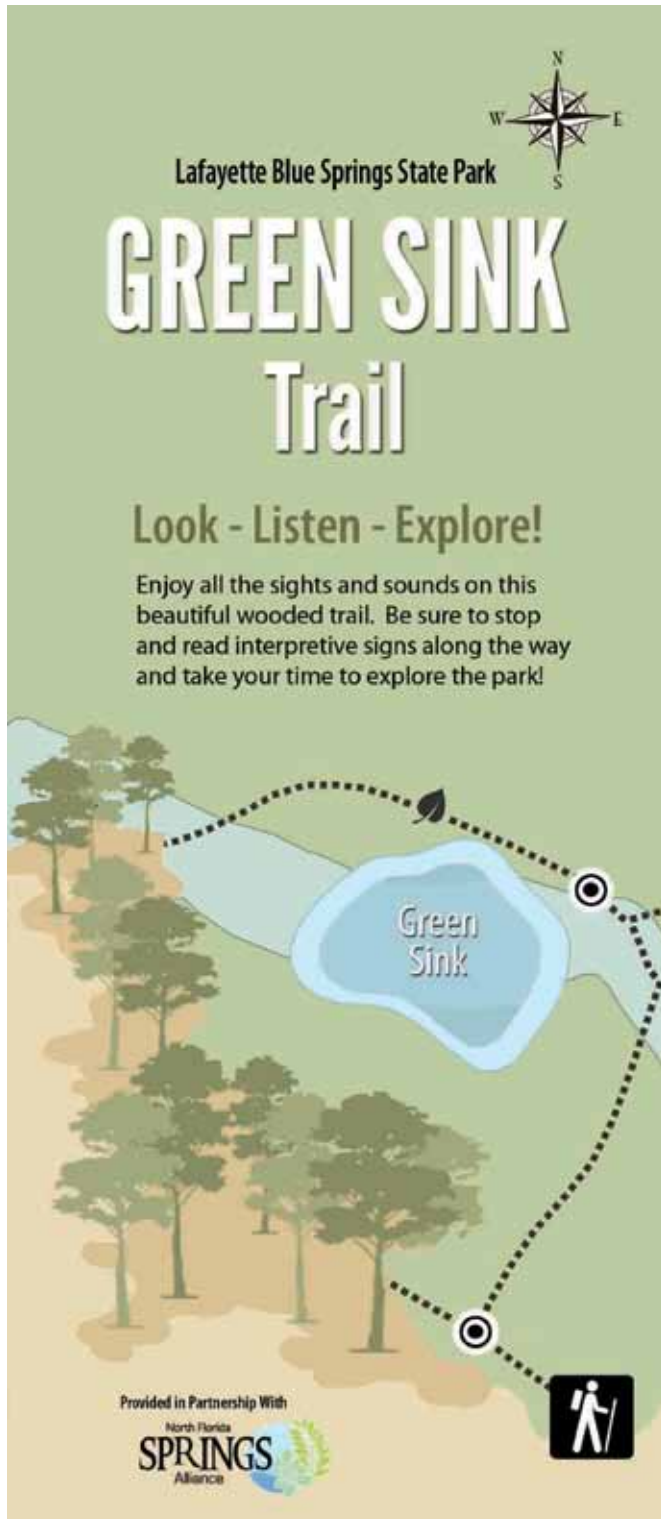
4/29/2017	Event	Location	Temp.		DO		Cond		Fauna			Counts		
Time EST	Time (min)		°F	pH	mg/L	% Sat	µS/cm	amphi/iso	crayfish	catfish	sunfish			
3:11:19 PM	1	Martz sink tunnel	69.29	7.48	1.13	12.53	267.9	1	3	0	0			
3:25:19 PM	15	Monkey Room	69.52	7.49	1.37	15.2	268.2	0	2	0	0			
3:32:19 PM	22	Century tunnel	69.79	7.48	1.72	19.13	269.1	0	1	0	0			
3:54:19 PM	34	Godzilla Room	69.51	7.49	1.41	15.59	268	1	0	0	0			
4:10:19 PM	50	First 200ft of Crossunder tunnel	68.88	7.47	0.62	6.864	271	1	0	0	0			
							Total	3	6	0	0			
								amphi/iso	crayfish	catfish	sunfish			

Looking at the data, it is interesting to note the water quality of the Crossunder tunnel, which is slightly colder and less dissolved oxygen.



Accumulation of bacteria suspended in the water observed during a site assessment dive at Lafayette Blue Springs State Park. Photo by Kelly Jessop.

Lafayette Blue Springs State Park INTERPRETIVE TRAIL



The North Florida Springs Alliance has been working with Park Manager Amy Conyers, staff at District 2 and New Moon Promotions, LLC to develop a new interpretive trail at Lafayette Blue Springs State Park. After months of cooperative efforts, the project is nearing completion!

The trailhead can be found just off the paved road near the restrooms. As visitors step onto the trail they will find themselves under a canopy of oaks, hickories and river birch. The trail itself is just under a half mile in length. It circles Green Sink - the trail's namesake - Snake Sink and Egg Sink.

Every visit to the trail will be different. The water levels in these sinks rise and fall with the river. A host of native trees and plants flower at differing times throughout the year and light that makes its way through the treetops changes in hue and density with the changing of the seasons. Signs placed along the trail, as well as near the headspring and spring overlook, tell the story of the unique geological features found in the park, notable plants and animals that thrive in the bottomland and how flooding can be nature's greatest asset.

The signs are headed to the fabricator in July and we will be looking for volunteers to help install them later this year. If you're interested in helping bring this project to completion, watch our Facebook page and website for announcements of work days and please contact Mike Stine at 850-728-0098.

Improvements at WSPSSP Construction is DONE!

By Mike Stine

If you had been diving at Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park much over the past year or two you might have noticed the stairs at Peacock I were in need of repair. This really became evident after the carpeting was removed and the condition of the underlying structure was exposed. The stair treads clearly needed replacing, and several stringers had failed. What came as a surprise was that the bases of several support posts had rotted away and were no longer in contact with the rock. This is why the stairs had become spongy and the old carpeting was probably playing a structural role.



Steps rebuilt; Handitreads added and an additional ladder installed.

After meetings with park staff and the construction specialist for the Division of Recreation and Parks, what initially was going to be a minor repair project quickly expanded in scope. It was agreed that the stairs from the deck to the water would be rebuilt in the same foot print as the old stairs. We were able to add a second ladder and combine the lower two steps into a platform to reduce the risk of tanks rolling off into the water and create better footing in front of the ladders. We were not allowed to extend the steps into the water past the rock due to concern about creating an overhead zone which could be hazardous for swimmers. We finished up with the installation of Handitreads to improve traction on the stairs and ladders. While we were working in the park we also rebuilt the changing room at Peacock I and installed Handitreads at Orange Grove.

All of this was possible due the contributions of the many members and supporters of the NFSA. A total of 34 volunteer workers, over 16 days of construction, contributed a combined 113 days of labor to make this happen. During the project the NFSA received numerous financial contributions, and an endless supply of Deco Cookies© from Dive Outpost and coffee from Cave Excursions.

Volunteer workers included: Steve Boyer, Mike Stine, RB Havens, Mark Rogers, Sandy Robinson, Bonnie Stine, Darry Steinhauser, Mark Schroder, Jeff Hawes, Rick Robinson, Chuck Nelson, Bob Reifinger, Alicia Reifinger, Lee Waggener, Carol Hayes, Pearse Hayes, Jermaine Daniels, Tom Sawicki, Alex Buett, Tim Brown, Ryan Parkevich, Rob Stanley, Brendan Zurweller, Scott Butsch, Wayne Petterson, Meredith Tanguay, Brice McMinn, Sidney Ruetz, Al Clements, Crawford Arrington, Beth Havens, Jerry Murphy, Jeff Reeves, and Paul Heinerth.

This project was made possible by financial contributions from: the NFSA membership, Florida Park Service, James Clark, Jean Nelson, Tony Simpson, Forrest Wilson, Mark Konedo, Brenton Booth, Steven Crane, Safety Divers LLC, Sandy Chapman, Glen Klag, Lee Ann Waggener, Barbara Dwyer, Dive Outpost, Meredith Tanguay, Rick Crawford, Michel Therrin and Michael Morgan.

NFSA Attends NSS-CDS Annual Workshop

By Sandy Robinson

The North Florida Springs Alliance tabled our booth at the National Speleological Society-Cave Dive Section's International Cave Diving Conference in Lake City, Florida, on June 3rd. The conference had about 250 attendees, making it a great chance to share our mission with a large and diverse group of people. NFSA president Mike Stine was given the opportunity to address the group and update them on our recent accomplishments. Thanks to Mike and Bonnie Stine and Kelly Jessop for manning the booth.



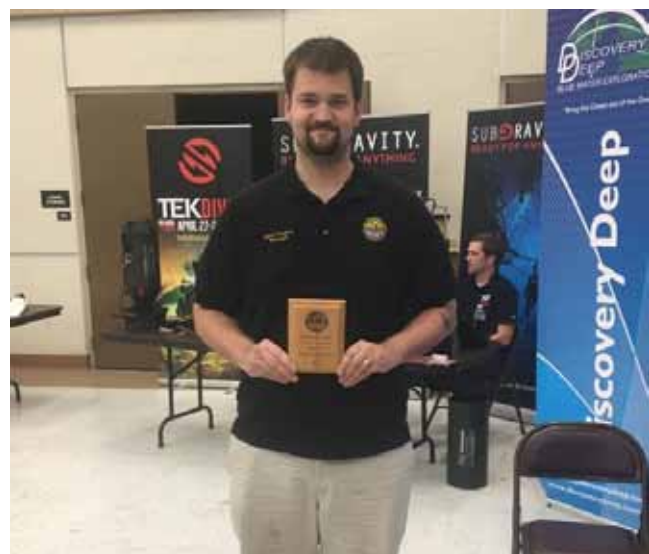
Mike and Bonnie Stine manning the NFSA booth.

The NFSA donated some door prizes including a tee shirt, a one-year membership, and a copy of our book, *A Watery Wilderness*. Congratulations to Bianca Lupsha, Ron Crist and Derek Dunlop for being the lucky winners. Many door prizes, volunteer hours, and refreshments were donated by a number of NFSA supporters and members including Cave Excursions, Dive Outpost, Cave Adventures, Cave Country Dive Shop, Extreme Exposure, Underwater Light Dude, Dive Rite, Amigos, Nestle Waters NA, Michael Angelo Gagliardi, Barbara Dwyer, Tracy Neisent, and Renee Power. I know the NS-SCDS is as appreciative of your support as we are proud to see such great volunteerism by our members.



Mike shares a little about the NFSA with attendees

Three NFSA members were recognized for their achievements in the cave diving community included Steve Boyer, who received the 2017 Volunteer Award; Kelly Jessop, who received the 2017 Conservation Award; and Adam Hughes, who received the 2017 Exploration Award.



NFSA BOD member Adam Hughes receives award.

It was a great Saturday. Thanks NSS-CDS!

NFSA at Madison County DOWN HOME DAYS

The NFSA attended the Down Home Days Festival & Celebration in Madison, Florida on April 15. This annual event is sponsored by the Madison County Chamber of Commerce and is a chance for the community to attend a series of events and visit with a variety of vendors. It was an opportunity for Bonnie Stine and Sandy Robinson to discuss the NFSA and its recent accomplishments with attendees and included airtime on the local radio station. Many people in the area are most appreciative of the work the NFSA has performed at Madison Blue Springs State Park. Additionally, we sold memberships, T-shirts, and copies of *A Watery Wilderness*.

We also had a chance to visit with one of our corporate supporters, Nestlé Waters, NA. Corporate sponsors and grants enable us to do so much more!



Bonnie Stine answers questions at the booth at Down Home Days in Madison, Florida.
Photo by Sandy Robinson.



SAVE THE DATE!

The 2017 NFSA Annual Meeting and Workshop is scheduled for **Saturday, September 30, 2017** in conjunction with National Public Lands Day.



By Mike Stine

PawPaws in the Park

Some of my favorite plants to show off while leading nature walks are the various species of pawpaws. In addition to being important food sources for wildlife, they are a delight to the senses. A very distinctive feature of pawpaws is the aroma of green peppers from the leaves. In late summer, if lucky, you might find ripe fruit, which are large berries with the taste of bananas and strawberries. Foxes, opossums, raccoons, and wild turkeys eat the fruit, and zebra swallowtail butterfly caterpillars consume the leaves.

There are 8 species of pawpaws found in the SE US, two of which you can find in upland areas of WSPSSP. Small-fruited pawpaw (*Asimina parviflora*) is quite common along the interpretive trail and can be identified by its fuzzy reddish-brown twigs, and oblong pointed leaves. Long-leaf pawpaw (*A. longifolia*) have, as their name would imply, long narrow leaves.



Long-leaf pawpaws flowering in WSPSSP near the end of April.