



**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
DIVISION OF RECREATION AND PARKS**

## **OFFICE OF PARK PLANNING**



# **RUTH B. KIRBY GILCHRIST BLUE SPRINGS STATE PARK**

**10.23-24.2019 Public Meetings  
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## Degagne, Demi

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**From:** Degagne, Demi  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 8:13 AM  
**To:** Murray, Sine  
**Subject:** Public Comment Received FW: Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park

-----Original Message-----

From: Jim M <eeek@comcast.net>  
Sent: Tuesday, October 22, 2019 6:22 PM  
To: FLStateParkPlanning <FLStateParkPlanning@dep.state.fl.us>  
Subject: Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park

My question is around the New 30-Site Family Campground. I've read the Advisory Group Draft Unit Management Plan and I don't see this addressed.

Currently, a "dump station" isn't at Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park- RV users needing that need to drive to O'Leno State Park. Will the new plans call for a dump station or sewer hook ups at the camp ground sites?

Jim Messer

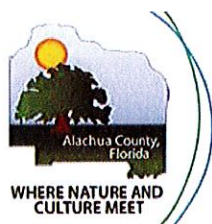
## Degagne, Demi

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**From:** Stacie Greco <sgreco@AlachuaCounty.US>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 7, 2019 3:47 PM  
**To:** FLStateParkPlanning  
**Cc:** Greg Owen; Chris Bird  
**Subject:** Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs Park  
**Attachments:** Blue Springs Public Comment Management Plan 2019.pdf

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft management plan for Blue Springs Park. Attached are comments from the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department.

Thank you



### Stacie Greco

Water Resources Program Manager  
Environmental Protection Department  
408 W University Ave, Ste 106, Gainesville, FL 32601  
352.264.6829 (office)  
<https://clicktime.symantec.com/3Hkd4ExHFRGWV32cqHwzcGA7Vc?u=www.AlachuaCountyWater.org>



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**Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks**

**Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park  
Public Hearings  
October 23 and 24, 2019**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting is to receive public input on proposed improvements and facilities at Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park.

**Background**

Gilchrist Blue Springs is Florida's 175<sup>th</sup> State Park. This 402-acre addition to the Florida Park Service contains six natural springs and includes over one mile of frontage along the Santa Fe River. This park namesake spring, known as Gilchrist Blue, is a large second magnitude spring that discharges an average of 44 million gallons of water per day through a spectacular spring run about one-quarter mile to the Santa Fe River.

**Improvements**

The following developments/improvements are proposed for the management plan:

- Redesign and redevelopment of the main day use area, including a new bathhouse, picnic pavilions and improved parking.
- Hiking trail development
- New canoe/kayak launch
- New boardwalk
- New 30-Site Family Campground
- New park entrance drive and ranger station
- New support facilities including a shop and staff residences

**Public Input**

Thank you for taking the time to share your comments with us. Please provide any comments you have on the back of this page no later than **November 7, 2019**. You may also provide your comments by calling (850) 245-3051, sending an email with the park name in the subject line to [FL\\_StateParkPlanning@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:FL_StateParkPlanning@dep.state.fl.us), or by regular mail at the address below.

Office of Park Planning  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation & Parks  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 525  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

**PLEASE COMPLETE COMMENT FORM ON REVERSE**

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks

COMMENT FORM

Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Spring State Park

The Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (EPD)  
is supportive of the protective measures outlined in the 2019 draft  
Unit Management Plan for Ruth Kirby Blue Springs State Park.  
Staff supports the adaptive management approach and is interested  
in continuing to assist with regional stakeholder engagement and  
monitoring, as funding and staffing allows.

Alachua County is also concerned about increasing nutrients and  
reduced flow in the Santa Fe Basin and springs, as discussed in the  
draft plan. Aquiring additional acreage, along with adhering to and  
improving regional BMAPs and MELs is essential to improving  
conditions in the Santa Fe Basin. FDEP staff review of pertinent  
permits (ERP, CUPs, etc) and land use changes in the region would  
be benefical to protecting the future of Blue Springs State Park.

The decline in Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in the Blue Springs  
run and Naked Springs is a concern, and EPD staff agrees that  
limiting recreation in these areas is a necessary first step.

EPD Staff encourages the siting of new developments within  
the park (access road, etc) to occur in areas that have already  
been impacted or degraded. Additionally, staff agrees that  
erosion and sedimentation at the spring is a concern that  
needs to be addressed.

**Degagne, Demi**

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**From:** Ernie <enywein@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 7, 2019 5:06 PM  
**To:** FLStateParkPlanning  
**Cc:** Ernie Winn  
**Subject:** Comment Form of Ernie Winn to Gilchrist Blue Spring SP UMP  
**Attachments:** Coment Form of Ernie Winn to Gilchrist Blue Spring UMP.PDF

Greetings:

Please process my attached comment form.

Thank you very much,

Ernie Winn  
Bradenton, FL  
941-320-0178  
enywein@yahoo.com



Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks

**COMMENT FORM of Ernie Winn, November 7, 2019**

**Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Spring State Park**

I've reviewed the Advisory Group Draft Unit Management Plan for this Park and would like to congratulate all those who had a part in crafting this excellent, well-written management plan!

I see lots of positive changes ahead for this Park and fully support this Plan. I do have one caution about the use of concessionaires that I'll add near the end of my comments.

This Draft UMP has been a very pleasant and informative read. I first visited Gilchrist Blue Spring in the early 1970's and have returned several times in recent years. I found the discussion of the Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) [pages 27, 28 and 43] very helpful in identifying the aquatic plants I used to see in the spring runs and what remains. I knew some of them but this filled in the gaps very well. I visited on a weekend in May 2017 and was heartbroken when I saw the damage being done by countless numbers of people wading up and down Naked Springs run and Blue Springs run. I was glad to hear soon after that the State was in the process of acquiring the property.

Although I've enjoyed snorkeling the spring runs in the past, I agree that the springs and their runs are being "loved to death" and are at a tipping point and in dire need of protection and restoration. I'm glad to know that Naked Springs and its' run have recently been closed off and Blue Spring run will be closed to swimming, wading and tubing.

I was excited to read about the plans for moving everything back from the Blue Spring bowl and implementing erosion control measures there. I like the idea of putting the new boardwalk further back in the floodplain swamp away from Blue Spring run. I was pleased to read about the plans for restoration of the sandhill community.

I ask that you please be careful if contracting with a concessionaire "to sell merchandise and food and to rent recreational equipment for use in the park...to provide specialized services, such as interpretive tours or overnight services..." [page 8 under Purpose and Scope of the Plan]. I've witnessed what Cape Leisure Corp. has done at Ichetucknee Springs SP. When the contract was awarded to Cape Leisure, there was an agreement that they would not rent tubes in the park and thereby unfairly compete with the local tube vendors, but after they found it unprofitable to only rent kayaks and canoes, they purchased one of the tube vendors and got their contract amended to allow them to break that agreement and rent tubes near the headspring. Apparently, Cape Leisure is now the only vendor allowed to use the South take-out spot to serve paddlers between April and September. If true, that's reducing public use of a state park to the monetary benefit of a contracted concessionaire and also locking out local vendors that provide shuttle service to paddlers.

This year, Cape Leisure erected a huge food trailer in the picnic area adjacent to Ichetucknee headspring. Not only is it an eyesore in the middle of what was once a nice open area, it is noisy with the AC running all day and it stinks when they are cooking. I was on one of Cape Leisure's "moonlight" paddles down the Ichetucknee River. I thought it was intrusive to the sleeping ibis and other wildlife and was sorry to be part of it. They planned it on a full moon night and tried to do it without flashlights. However, there was no light on the river until the moon got higher, which was around the time we were at the end. Every snag in the river was hit by a canoe, at least once.

My point is that a concessionaire needs to make a profit and, based on what I've seen with Cape Leisure, tends to take over a park in order to do so. Please do not allow Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Spring State Park to be concessionized!

I wish much success to everyone involved in the protection and restoration of Gilchrist Blue under this amazing plan!

Thank you very much,



Ernie Winn  
Bradenton, Florida



Florida State Parks's Post

strong stance on the... and please have a separate entrance for campers.

2w · Like · Reply



Linda Pendergraft Newton

We'd love to see improvements in the campgrounds. Roads in there are really bad and most sites are too small even for rigs under 30 ft

1w · Like · Reply



Paul Kemp

It would be great to see a new diving platform built. I spent a lot of my childhood jumping off the old one!

2w · Like · Reply



Michele Farmer

We love it. Please add more electric campsites.

1w · Like · Reply



Scott Svec

I'm still honestly super pissed off that you didn't add in some sort of diving platform after removing the original :-(

1w · Like · Reply

You can comment as a top fan

Get badge

Write a comment...





Florida State Parks's Post



Tip Fan

Cindee Teegardin Lodge  
Campground and bathhouse improvements needed. Great piece of old Florida.

16 · Like · Reply



Karen Bosco Vendetti

I love Blue Springs! Love the manatees and the peaceful feeling I get when watching them!!

16 · Like · Reply



Ann Lane

Same time and date of High springs commission meeting addressing nestle!

16 · Like · Reply



Jim Messerfish

Step 1. Fix the horrible entrance road.

16 · Like · Reply



Deb Niedermeyer Seitz

Quit letting people walk down the waterway from the springs to the river. That would be a start.

16 · Like · Reply

You can comment as a tip fan

Get Badge

Write a comment...

3

3

2

Florida State Parks's Post

them!!!

1x Like Reply

Ann Lane

Same time and date of high springs commission meeting addressing nestle!

1x Like Reply

Jim Messerfish

Step 1. Fix the horrible entrance road.

1x Like Reply

Deb Niedermayer Seitz

Quit letting people walk down the waterway from the springs to the river. That would be a start.

1x Like Reply

Ann Lane

Why? That walkway is great

1x Like Reply

Write a reply

Most Relevant is selected, so some comments may have been filtered out

You can comment as a top fan

Get Badge

Write a comment...

Home

3


1

2

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Florida State Parks's Post

...

 Donna Jacobs


Oooo... What is the name of the flower in the middle?... I've seen them growing on trails and have been wondering. 🌻

2w · Like · Reply

 Carlynn Freitag


Donna Jacobs spider lily 🕷️

2w · Like · Reply


 Donna Jacobs

Carlynn Freitag omg! I just realized how perfect that is! The little girl who's been asking what they are on our bike rides... Her name is Lily! She is going to be so thrilled!

2w · Like · Reply



Write a reply...



 Cindie Teegardin Lodge







Please create a friends group for this outstanding park! I've camped there twice but am not close by to attend meeting. Improvements to campground and bathhouse would be great!

You can comment as a top fan


Get badge

Write a comment...





Florida State Parks's Post




**Tom Hest**  
The current "county park" environment is "passé". We were disappointed last year when we arrived. Move the campground away from the "swimming hole" and provide a separate entrance for campers.

2w

Like

Reply



**Linda Pendergraff Newton**  
We'd love to see improvements in the campgrounds. Roads in there are really bad and most sites are too small even for rigs under 30 ft.

1w

Like

Reply



**Paul Kemp**  
It would be great to see a new diving platform built. I spent a lot of my childhood jumping off the old one!

2w

Like

Reply




**Michele Farmer**  
We love it. Please add more electric campsites.

1w

Like

Reply



**Scott Saxe**

You can comment as a top fan

Get Badge

Write a comment...

