

Lafayette Blue State Park

Planning Region: Suwannee River

County: Lafayette

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 4501

Overview

Lafayette Blue Springs is associated with an extensive aquatic cave network known as the Green Sink cave system that is well documented by the local diving community. Over 12,000 feet of cavern passageways have been surveyed. The park is home to one of Florida's first-magnitude springs with a spring run that merges with the famous Suwannee River.

Total Acreage: 714.63

Natural Communities	Acres
Limestone Outcrop	0.01
Mesic Hammock	287.63
Sandhill	17.88
Sinkhole	2.08
Upland Mixed Woodland	87.20
Upland Pine	23.51
Alluvial Forest	108.56
Basin Marsh	2.53
Bottomland Forest	5.81
Floodplain Swamp	19.42
Sinkhole Lake	0.15
Blackwater Stream	0.81
Spring-Run Stream	5.88
Terrestrial Cave	0.01
Aquatic Cave	unquantified

Altered Land Cover	Acres
Borrow Area	5.35
Clearing	10.01
Developed	15.76
Spoil Area	7.04
Successional Hardwood Forest	114.27

Acquisition: Lafayette Blue Springs State Park was initially acquired by the Trustees on February 8, 1977, through funding provided under LWCF/FRDAP. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on June 1, 2005, the Trustees leased (Lease Number 4501) the property to DRP under a 50-year lease. The current lease will expire on May 31, 2055.

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Resource Management Component Objectives

Hydrology

- Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs by monitoring surface water and groundwater and conducting dye trace studies.
- Restore the park's hydrological conditions and functions by restoring natural communities and natural hydrology at the borrow pit and monitoring and conducting experimental SAV plantings at both spring-run streams.
- Monitor visitor use impacts on the aquatic cave system by monitoring cave diving activities.
- Evaluate and mitigate the impacts of soil erosion through monitoring and implementing corrective measures where needed.

Natural Communities

- Maintain 220 acres within the optimum fire return interval.
- Conduct natural community improvement activities on 259 acres in zones 2A, 2B, 3A, 4A, and 4B by removing off-site hardwoods through increased fire frequency and chemical/mechanical methods. Planting longleaf pines as needed.

Imperiled Species

- Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals.
- Monitor and document 3 imperiled animal species in the park (gopher tortoise, eastern indigo snake, troglobitic arthropods).
- Monitor and document 1 imperiled plant species in the park (incised agrimony).

Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually treat 20 gross acres or 1 infested acres of invasive plant species in the park.
- Control 1 invasive animal species in the park (feral hogs).

Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 2 of 2 recorded cultural resources in the park (LF4-Blue Springs and LF101-Moseley Mill).
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded or potentially historic structures and archaeological resources (Bible Camp structures and "Gread Road from Tallahassee to St. Augustine").
- Bring 2 of 2 recorded cultural resources into good condition.

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Land Use Component Objectives

Conceptual Land Use Plan

Allen Mill Pond Trail

- Turn service road into a hiking trail.
- Install signage.

Support Area

- Upgrade electric.
- Replace staff residences.
- Reconfigure shop building.

Headspring Access Area

- Manage erosion around headspring by controlling visitor access.
- Replace boardwalk.

Campground

- Electrical Inspection and renovation.
- Remove outhouse.
- Remove Metzger house.

Optimum Boundary

Lafayette Blue Springs has many proposed additions to its optimum boundary. To the north of the park, additions would put portions of the Suwannee Riverbank and surrounding lands into conservation status. The addition of these parcels would increase wildlife habitat, act as recharge areas, and further protect the Suwannee River watershed from the damaging agriculture practices surrounding the park.

There is a Lafayette County boat ramp on the northern park boundary that is excluded from the optimum boundary because it is already in conservation status with an appropriate manager.

Moving further south about mid-way through the park, there are individual parcels located in a neighborhood along the Suwannee Riverbank that could be acquired to increase the overall boundary of the park. A home in this neighborhood could potentially be purchased for use as the manager's residence.

Moving southwest of the park boundary there is an almost 500-acre Florida Forever First Magnitude Springs parcel. This conservation land has a vast aquatic cave system that appears to be accessible from multiple sinkholes. By preserving land around the springs, this project will aid in the protection of springs, karst windows and the Floridan Aquifer from the effects of commercial, residential, and agricultural runoff; clearcutting and mining; and unsupervised recreation.

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Continuing further south along the Suwannee is a large collection of parcels that would buffer the park from surrounding phosphate mines and agriculture. The acquisition of these parcels would expand wildlife habitat and continue to put portions of the Suwannee Riverbank and surrounding land in conservation status