

History & Nature

Although there is not a lot written about the history of Ponce de Leon Springs, European settlers and the Indians before them used this spring as a source of drinking water and recreation.

The harvesting of timber and turpentine were the major industries in and around the area that is now Ponce de Leon Springs State Park. The majestic longleaf pines were ideal for building homes, businesses and the railroad that traversed the panhandle of Florida. The spring was owned by the Smithgall family in the mid-1920s. They added many amenities to the property including a restroom with showers, eatery and a skating rink. The Smithgalls also added a wooden retaining wall around the spring to prevent erosion.

The 406-acre park consists of many diverse habitats. Upland pine forest, floodplain forest and wet flatwoods are three of the nine distinct habitats found at the park. Because of the variety, a wide array of plants and animals can be found, including carnivorous pitcher plants, mountain laurel, orange azalea, deer, fox, gopher tortoises, alligators, bats and numerous other flora and fauna.

Approximately 14 million gallons of pure water emerges daily from the Ponce de Leon Spring. Spring water emanates from the aquifer deep underground keeping the water at a cool 68 degrees year round. An aquifer is a layer of underground rock or sand that stores water. The residents of Florida use over 2.5 billion gallons of water from the aquifer daily. To learn more about these natural wonders and how you can protect them, visit www.floridasprings.org



Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Ponce de Leon Springs State Park

2860 Ponce de Leon Springs Road
Ponce de Leon, Florida 32455
(850) 836-4281

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Hours of operation are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required. Additional user fees may apply.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are not allowed in the swimming area. Pets must be well behaved and kept on a 6-foot, hand held leash at all times.
- Fishing is not permitted in the designated swimming areas but is allowed in other areas of the park. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Alcoholic beverages, fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station or call (850) 638-6130.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

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Ponce de Leon Springs State Park

Florida's Fountain of Youth



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National Gold Medal Winner

Florida State Parks - "America's First Two-Time Winner"



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