



WELCOME TO SILVER GLEN SPRINGS!

Welcome to Silver Glen Springs—a unique and special natural place. Many people know Silver Glen Springs for its recreation opportunities; however, Silver Glen holds irreplaceable ecological and heritage values as well.

Along with recreation, part of the Forest Service’s multiple-use mission is to protect water quality, which provides healthy, functioning aquatic ecosystems, clean water, and habitat for endangered species. We are also tasked with the management and protection of cultural, geological, and scenic sites and to interpret their value to the public.

While Silver Glen Springs brings us natural beauty, diverse wildlife, and historic significance, we also have to recognize the negative impacts threatening this spring. Overcrowding by boats and people, residency issues, scarred and trampled native grasses, invasion of exotic hydrilla, lack of manatees, trash and sewage dumped into the spring run have damaged Silver Glen’s fragile ecosystem.

The information in this handout is intended to give you a greater appreciation for Silver Glen Springs, focus on issues threatening the future of the spring, and provide helpful information to make your visit more enjoyable and safe.

Before taking any needed actions, we are reviewing past reports and findings, updating monitoring efforts, and staying in contact with other state and federal agencies as we consider the best way to provide for recreational use while protecting and managing the spring for its natural and cultural resources.

If you have any questions, please call me at 352-669-3153.

Sincerely,

John Richard Lint

John Richard Lint
District Ranger

A HISTORIC NATURAL HYDROLOGICAL GEM

People have been attracted to the mysterious, crystal blue waters flowing from Silver Glen Springs and its run for at least 6-8,000 years. Prior to the 20th century, immense middens of freshwater snail shell dominated the area around the springs. Although much was removed in the early 20th century for roadbed construction, remnants still remain.

The pristine beauty of this area was the inspiration for the opening chapter of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’ 1938 classic, *The Yearling*.

Silver Glen Springs is a first magnitude spring that maintains a year round water temperature of 72 degrees Fahrenheit. The spring discharges about 65 million gallons of water per day that comes from two large vents. The spring and run encompass about 22 acres of water. The springhead is 200 feet in diameter and the spring run flows 3,300 feet into Lake George, the second largest lake in Florida.

The water flowing from the spring has been one of the best in ecological quality from among Florida’s 600 springs. The water coming from the vents is high quality but the quality changes as the water flows into the spring run. Already designated as critical habitat for the manatee, the spring and run have the potential to serve as a major manatee refuge. However, manatee use has been limited due to a high degree of human activity and damage to aquatic vegetation.

With unique aesthetic, archaeological, and biological values, Silver Glen is very vulnerable to damage. It needs all our protection and care.



Photo by Pandion Systems, Inc (2003)

THREATS TO SILVER GLEN SPRINGS

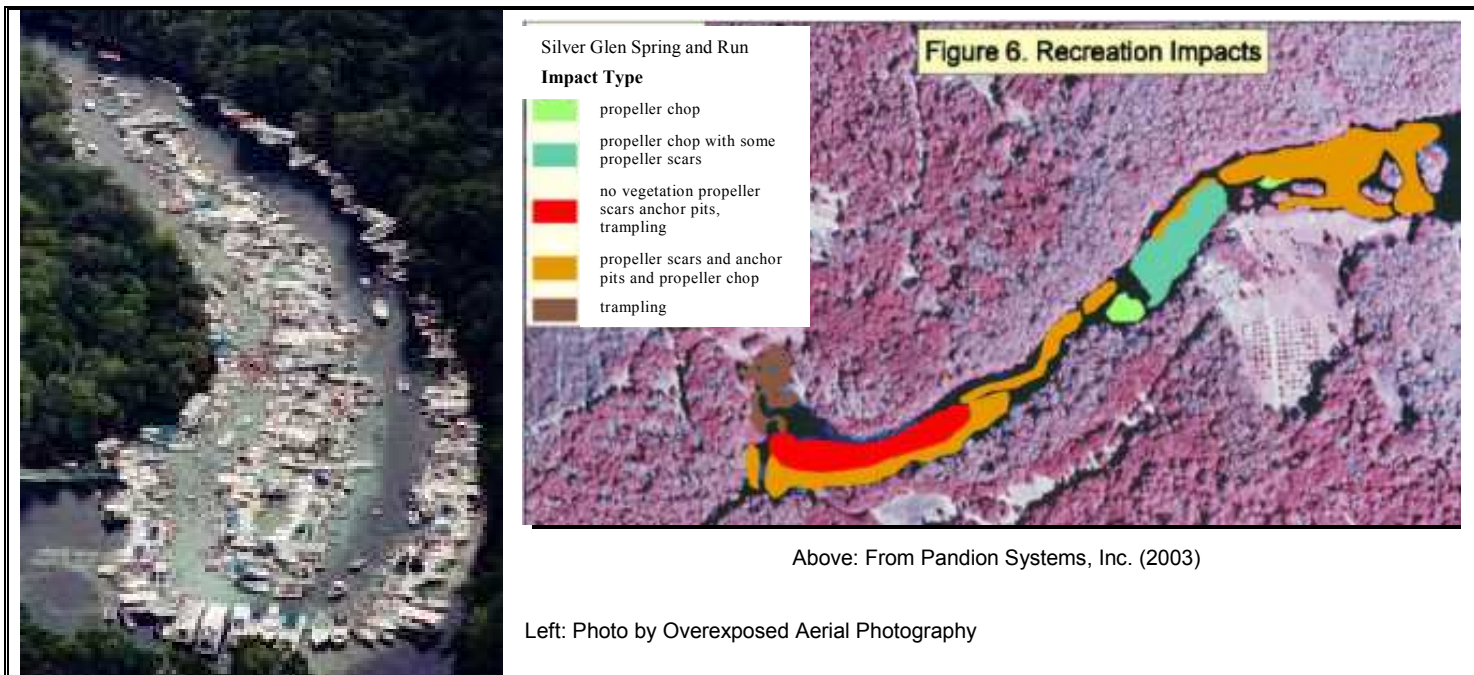
In 2003, Florida Department of Environment Protection (DEP) contracted Pandion Systems, Inc. for a Carrying Capacity Study of Silver Glen Spring and Run (DEP Contract Number SL 982, June 13, 2003). That report concludes that “Silver Glen Spring is a unique recreation area that holds great ecological and recreation value. Although the spring has endured many changes from human use over time, it has never appeared as threatened as it does now... If the pattern of increased use continues without any management intervention, Silver Glen is in serious peril” (Page 83).

Without active management, Silver Glen Springs suffer from:

- Damage to aquatic plants, primarily eel grass, from anchor scars, propellers, trampling, and people actually raking the grass up for a clear spot to stand
- Degraded water quality: human wastes (gray water and sewage), gas and oil, detergents and solvents dumped directly into the spring water
- Invasive exotic Hydrilla infestation
- Bank impacts including erosion and sediment runoff
- Overcrowding by boats and people
- Stay lengths and season-long/year long residency issues



Photo by Pandion Systems, Inc (2003)



SOME KEY RULES & REGULATIONS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU COME TO THE SPRINGS

STATE OF FLORIDA REQUIREMENTS

Under Florida Statutes Title 24 Chapters 327 and 328, Boaters must meet and follow registration requirements, vessel speed restrictions, personal watercraft regulations, navigation markers, equipment and lighting requirements.

General

- It is unlawful to operate a vessel in a reckless manner, boat under the influence, interfere with navigation, and moor to markers or buoys.
- Alcohol is prohibited on Silver Glen Springs Run and in the Silver Glen Recreation Area (Marion & Lake Co. Ordinances).
- Landowner permission is required to enter or be on private land.

Sewage, Wastewater, & Sanitation

In addition to ecological concerns, there are health and human safety hazards resulting from vessels discharging raw sewage and wastewater into the water. All waste from Type III marine sanitation devices shall be disposed in an approved sewage pump-out facility. All waste from portable toilets shall be disposed in an approved waste reception facility.

Manatee Protection

- Manatees are protected by state and federal law. Silver Glen is Federally designated as Critical Habitat for manatees. It is illegal to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal, including manatees. Anything that disrupts a manatee's normal behavior is a violation of law, punishable under federal law up to a \$50,000 fine, one-year imprisonment, or both.
- Boaters must observe all manatee protection zone requirements. Boaters who accidentally strike a manatee are urged to report the strike to the FWC and may not be subject to prosecution, provided they were operating in accordance with any applicable vessel speed restrictions at the time of the strike.

FOREST SERVICE PROHIBITIONS

- Failing to dispose of all garbage, including any paper, can, bottle, sewage, waste water or material, or rubbish either by removal from the site or area, or by depositing it into receptacles or at places provided for such purposes.
- Placing in or near a stream, lake, or other water any substance which does or may pollute a stream, lake, or other water.
- Damaging or removing any natural feature or other property such as stream banks, vegetation, soils, signs, etc.
- Damaging or removing any prehistoric, historic, or archaeological resource, structure, site, artifact, or property.
- Disorderly Conduct. Causing public inconvenience, annoyance, or alarm by making unreasonably loud noise.
- Operating or using any device which produces noise, such as a radio, television, musical instrument, motor or engine in such a manner and at such a time so as to unreasonably disturb any person in or near a campsite, developed recreation site, or over an adjacent body of water without a permit,
- Operating or using a public address system, whether fixed, portable or vehicle mounted, in or near a campsite or developed recreation site or over an adjacent body of water without a special-use authorization.
- Taking possession of, occupy, or otherwise using National Forest System lands for residential purposes.
- Dogs must be on a on a leash or otherwise confined.
- Not paying the fee to enter Silver Glen Springs Recreation Area.
- Vessels entering the buoy line.

Violation of the above FS prohibitions shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$5000 or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both pursuant to title 16 U.S.C., section 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571, and 3581.