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# The Head Spring

## Friends of Blue Spring State Park Newsletter

October 2023

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### Meet a CSO member – Kellie Muddiman

Kellie was born and raised on a dairy farm outside of Buffalo, New York. After living in South Carolina for many years, she and her husband Chris moved to Orange City, Florida, where she works as a Cardiac Specialist at Fish Memorial Hospital.

Shortly after arriving in Florida, Kellie and Chris discovered the Friends of Blue Spring's weekly Bingo nights at the Riverwalk Pizzeria and Brew Pub. Chris won a handmade manatee, and they were hooked! Since then Kellie has volunteered to sew manatees as prizes for the CSO.

Kellie enjoys riding her bicycle, crafting, gardening, relaxing in the pool, fishing from her kayak with her husband, and spending time with their not so little dogs. As a person with many talents, Kellie also dabbles with welding. She can be found most of the time outside or in her sewing room creating special items like this beautiful manatee quilt (watch our [website](#) & [Facebook](#) to find out how you can have a chance to win this quilt!). Kellie also finds time in her busy schedule to help with bingo or volunteer at the park.



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### DO YOU WANT TO SUPPORT BLUE SPRING STATE PARK?

Join us for a Special Evening during our [Annual Meeting!](#)

**OCTOBER 14, 2023 5:00-7:00PM**  
**SANDRA STETSON AQUATIC CENTER**  
**2636 ALHAMBRA AVE**  
**DELAND, FL 32720**



[WWW.FRIENDSOFBUESPRINGSTATEPARK.ORG](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFBUESPRINGSTATEPARK.ORG)

Find out how the Friends support the Park through education, volunteering, fundraising, and special events like the Manatee Festival, Firefly Lights at Night, Bingo and more!

Come enjoy a short presentation & slideshow, meet Board Members, Volunteers and Park Rangers, and enjoy a selection of soft drinks, food and desserts.

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Come to our new HALLOWEEN event!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US**  
LaurenBlueSpringCSO@gmail.com  
Connor.Wagner@FloridaDEP.gov

Friends of Blue Spring State Park  
Orange City, FL

**A FUN FILLED SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR KIDS!**  
**FREE WITH PARK ENTRY**

**BLUE SPRING STATE PARK TRUNK OR TREAT**

Any small business or family wanting to participate set-up from 3-3:30PM

Best TRUNK Contest

Bring canned goods receive a raffle ticket to win giveaway

Costume Contest

**CANDY • GAMES  
FOOD • PRIZES • & MORE**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2023  
4:00PM - 6:00PM**

**2100 WEST FRENCH AVENUE  
ORANGE CITY, FLORIDA 32763  
Lower Parking Lot**

IF YOU'D LIKE TO BECOME A CORPORATE SPONSOR, PLEASE CONTACT  
KAREN KELLERMAN KarenBlueSpringCSO@gmail.com

Interested in becoming a Corporate Sponsor? Contact [Karen Kellerman](#)  
For more info about the event, contact [Lauren](#) or [Connor](#)

# Please Don't Feed the Animals

by Cora Berchem and Missy Gibbs

(squirrel, mallard, and alligator photos by Rich Hatton; manatee photo by Cora Berchem)



## Why shouldn't you feed wildlife?

- All of the animals in the park have plenty of their natural food available to them, so they do not need human food.
- Manatees in Blue Spring have plenty of things to eat out in the river, so they should not be fed as it habituates them to people and puts them in harms way when they learn to approach people, docks and boats awaiting a handout.
- Human food is not good for animals; it doesn't contain all the same nutrients as their natural diet and is high in fat & salt. Human food can make animals sick or malnourished.
- Many people have fond childhood memories of feeding bread to ducks, but did you know that most bread has very low nutritional value, so it fills ducks up, keeping them from eating more nutritious food? They can feel ill and actually starve on a bread diet.

- Have you ever been harassed by squirrels while trying to eat your lunch? Have the squirrels tried to steal your food? They are doing this because they have learned to associate humans with food, and they won't stop that behavior until people stop feeding them.
- How many of you have seen people feeding chicken carcasses to alligators from boats? Everyone thinks that is a lot of fun, but the alligators learn to see humans as a source of food, and they are much more likely to attack.
- Even though many people enjoy getting close to wildlife, we don't want animals to lose their natural fear of people. Not only can those animals become pests (squirrels or raccoons), but they can become aggressive and bite. Aggressive animals often have to be euthanized to protect people from diseases, injury, or even death.



## Blue Spring State Park Junior Ranger Friends



Snapper Snick the Alligator loves swimming in the nice cool water of the spring run, and the warmer water of the river. He looks pretty fierce in this picture, but alligators are usually afraid of people. Like all Junior Rangers, Snapper Snick follows the rules and wants everyone to read the signs in the park that remind us all of the best way to co-exist with wildlife. If you see an alligator in the lower part of the spring run, admire it from a distance. If you see one in the part of the spring run where people are swimming, let people know they should get out of the water, and then notify a ranger.

## Upcoming Events

October 6th: 10-11a.m. SpringWalk. Meet at the Manatee Outpost in the Lower Parking Lot

October 25th: Junior Ranger Program "Friendly Flames" 4-5:00 p.m. in the Lower Parking Lot

The Friends of Blue Spring sponsor Bingo Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m. at the Riverwalk Pizzeria and Brew Pub in Orange City. Come join the fun and maybe you will win a stuffed manatee or another fun prize!

Would you like to help out at Bingo? We are always looking for volunteers to sell bingo cards and call numbers. Please click [here](#) to sign up to help.



## Critter Corner

by Rich Hatton (photo also by Rich Hatton)

This month's featured critter is the Barred Owl (*Strix varia*), so named for the horizontal and vertical stripes on its chest and belly resembling the bars in a jail. These owls have yellow beaks, no tufts on the head and distinctive dark brown eyes. Barred Owls are one of the larger species of owls; they are 16 - 20" tall, with a wing span just shy of four feet.

Barred Owls live in wooded wetlands and floodplains where small rodents, amphibians, reptiles, and birds are plentiful. They nest in hollow trees or nests abandoned by red shouldered hawks, crows, and squirrels. Nesting season starts in March and the female will lay two to three eggs which will hatch in 28 to 33 days. The new hatchlings are covered in a fine white down. Young Barred Owls leave the nest in 35 to 40 days, however they will stay with their parents for up to 4 months.



Barred Owls are very vocal and can be heard throughout the day, although evening is when they are most commonly heard. Their call has been described as sounding like they are saying "who cooks for you? who cooks for you?". You may also have heard their more bizarre hoots, cackles, & gurgles when they are interacting with each other. Visit the [Cornell Bird Lab](http://www.cornellbirdlab.org) to hear the wide variety of their calls and learn more about this fun owl.

Look for an article about the history of Blue Spring State Park in our December newsletter!

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