

Hello North Florida Springs Camper!

I am glad you will join me on this adventure trip to enjoy several springs and rivers in north central Florida!

Itinerary:

We will primarily base camp at Oleno State Park in their “youth, primitive” group camping site. This site will provide a secluded, private area where we will enjoy a campfire ring for devotions and meal prep, a small pavilion area, and private bathrooms with a shower. We will NOT have electricity or hot water.

The basic plan will be a balance of cooking over the fire and daily excursions to local area springs and rivers for swimming and snorkeling. A few weeks ago, we saw a manatee as we tubed down the Itchetuckney River! We will always focus on Christ and how we can grow in our relationship with Him. Campers should plan to spend a LOT of time in and near the water during the day, as well as an “in tents” experience sleeping at night. Personal air mattresses work great as sleeping pads.

We plan to return to Lake Aurora around 4 pm on Friday.

We all need a break from technology and our cell phones. Kids, more than anyone, need time away from screens! Please refer to our cell phone/ technology policy and help us maintain a distraction-free environment.

Bathing Suits: This topic can be sensitive but is necessary. We will be very active and do not want any “awkward moments.”

Modesty is a vital component of the Christian atmosphere we want to promote together.

For boys, the matter is pretty simple.....swimwear should be loose enough to allow freedom of movement and not be “form” fitted. The important key for boys is having a drawstring to be sure nothing comes off or rides low unexpectedly.

Things can be more complicated for girls, especially with the current fashion of “cheeky” styles. There is no “one-size-fits-all” rule that can be applied, and we certainly do not want campers to feel like they should be ashamed of their bodies or that they have to hide the fact that they are a female. Please avoid anything that requires strings, knots, or ties to stay in place. Lake Aurora standards call for a one-piece suit, although some can be less modest than two pieces. If you choose a

two-piece suit (which may make certain things easier in the woods), please plan to wear something over it (non-see-through).

A “rash-guard” often comes as part of a bathing suit. It is lightweight, protects from the sun, and avoids unintended “over-exposure.” Lightweight, simple running shorts can be an excellent addition to your swimsuit and ensure that dignity is maintained as we get on and off our tubes from the water’s surface, climb a tree to use as a jump platform, or just be active. When you select swimwear, please remember that you will be in it most of the day, and it should keep personal areas well covered no matter how intensely we work and play. It is always good to have more than one swimsuit or option.

Gear and Snacks:

Masks, fins, snorkels, goggles, partial wet suits, and waterproof cameras are all great ideas for this trip, along with plenty of towels and sunscreen.

If snacks are brought, they should be in a protective container (besides their wrapper/packaging) that seals like Tupperware or a bucket with a lid to avoid issues with insects or bears. Ticks are a possibility in the area where we will be staying.

Reliable water shoes, like Crocs, that you can walk in all day are very important. A small mesh bag can be great for small items as we float.

Light jacket: The evenings may be pretty cool, especially if we get a rainstorm.

Remember your sunscreen, bug spray, hat, water bottle, and a great attitude!

Packing:

Your clothing and gear do not need to be packed to go underwater, but it is always a good idea to pack outfits together in large ziplock bags for organization, to store personal belongings outside of the tents, and to maximize sleeping space inside.

See you soon!

In Christ,

Randy Garland, Life Expeditions Program Director