

EXPLORING A VALUES-BASED APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF
HERITAGE: FLORIDA'S POSTWAR SPRINGS ATTRACTIONS

By

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As a travel destination, Florida provides visitors with sun, sand, and a wide array of attractions, water, and theme parks. The tourism and attraction business within the state has been flourishing since the 19th century when railroads, hotels, and the allure of the unknown brought travelers to Florida. When automobiles, airplanes, and air conditioning made the landscape accessible to more people and tolerable under the Florida sun in the postwar era, travelers once again began to frequent the Sunshine State. In the mid-twentieth century, Florida residents saw an opportunity to capitalize on the mythology and majesty associated with the landscape and history of their state and began to open small attractions. These attractions varied, with everything from exotic birds, extravagant gardens, sea sponges, and even western theme parks. Kitsch was often employed by many as a device to entice visitors. Today the tourism and attraction market is vastly different in Florida; beaches, Miami, and Walt Disney World along with other large theme parks vying for the top spot are among the top attractions but some vestiges of old Florida tourism remain.

The natural landscape brought visitors to Florida long before the 1950s but it was during that time that attractions saw a great influx in the number of visitors. Silver Springs in Silver Springs near Ocala, Weeki Wachee Springs in Weeki Wachee near Tampa and Brooksville, and Warm Mineral Spring in North Port are all Florida attractions built around a natural phenomenon that became popular tourist destinations after the Second World War. Each of these spring sites is still functioning as an attraction today, although not necessarily in the same fashion in which they started.

Through the years, these mid-century attractions have continued to operate by finding new ways to attract visitors through transformations, alterations, and even new attractions. This continual adaptation and response to shifting values has proven critical in their preservation and continued operation. Preservation designations awarded over the last sixty years include, Warm Mineral Springs' listing on the National Register of Historic Places and Silver Springs becoming a National Natural Landmark. The management frameworks used at Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee, and Warm Mineral Springs could offer lessons for other heritage sites given the increasing interest in values based approaches to management.

This thesis employs a multiple case study analysis to examine the continued operation and maintenance of Florida postwar spring attractions, while answering the question what are the values that inform effective strategies for management for Florida spring attractions. Analysis for the case study examines factors common to the management, operation, and continued use of each spring attraction; including ownership and management, programming, marketing, cost, access, as well as

amenities. The values used include historical, cultural, social, aesthetic, use (market), nonuse (nonmarket), and natural values.

Understanding the values that inform effective strategies for the management and continued operation of Florida spring attractions comes from a full understanding of the site's history and current state. The values associated with the sites are also related to societal views and opinions on travel, tourism and entertainment. Knowing what values inform effective strategies for management provides stakeholders and those in management positions with an opportunity to provide services and entertainment more in line with the values determined to have higher significance and hopefully increase visitation numbers.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The natural and the constructed have long been at odds within the Florida landscape. Florida over time has marketed various aspects of the natural landscape to attract visitors. In the past roadside attractions throughout the Florida landscape tended to be centered on existing natural beauty. Spring attractions began to gain attention at the end of the nineteenth century and by the mid-twentieth century were premiere destinations along with beaches, alligator farms, and gardens highlighting the striking flora grown in the Sunshine State. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the property values and cultural values associated with natural sites have not remained consistent, nor has the tourism industry as a whole.

Roadside attractions are often an overlooked area within Florida tourism. Today Florida tourism as a whole is centered on the beaches that line the coasts and mega theme parks situated within the central portion of the state. The beaches and coast drew visitors to Florida long before the theme park was introduced. The beaches represent one natural aspect that visitors came to enjoy. Other aspects include the climate, the plants, and wildlife, the forested areas available for camping, as well as the springs that are largely located in the northern and central portions of the state. At the beginning of the tourism industry as we know it today, resorts and fancy hotels were the main draw and were only available to wealthy. However, roadside attractions were the main draw for the everyday American in the postwar period. During the mid-twentieth century, the natural aspects of the Florida landscape, amid the property, population, economic, and land booms managed to maintain their significance within the landscape as a whole. Attractions were constructed and designed around the landscape and within

close proximity of new highways. Over time the change in sociocultural beliefs and property values have greatly taken away the significance associated with the natural Florida landscape. Florida spring attractions are one group within the tourism industry that is affected by this shifting and changing of values as a result. Several Florida spring attractions established around the midcentury and even before have fallen into disrepair, closed due to low visitor numbers, and even a decline of the natural health of the site.

When going on a vacation to a theme park or even to an attraction, one can assume that most people do not consider what their destination means to the community, the city, and tourism as a whole. The act of travel today takes place so frequently and by a majority of Americans that very few are denied the experience of a family trip where everyone loads up in the minivan or station wagon or flies to a destination. School trips, birthday parties, and even weddings take place at popular attractions and travel destinations today. Travel and vacations have become a part of the American dream.¹ As such, the tourism industry is often looking to build bigger, better, faster, brighter, higher, and more technologically advanced attractions. In today's market new is always a selling point but one must also consider the attractions and destinations that one's parents and possibly even grandparents went to.

Florida especially should recognize the values associated with past attractions still in operation today and marvel at their sustained business. As described in *Florida Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities, & other Offbeat Stuff*, "When people think of Florida they think of Mickey Mouse and orange juice. Most of Florida's more than sixteen million residents live within 15 miles of the coast and seldom venture into

the interior of the state, a place of numberless lakes, oak and pine forests, gin-clear springs and fragrant orange groves stretching from horizon to horizon.”²

Attractions and tourism has been a mainstay in Florida since the late nineteenth century. In the early days of Florida attractions, the clientele was the very wealthy. Travel was made possible largely through the efforts of two men who saw the opportunities that Florida offered. Henry Flagler and Henry Plant came from the north with their families and money and each endeavored to develop Florida through railroad systems and resort accommodations. “Before the railroad steamboats controlled the density of much of Florida. If you did not live along the coast or along a navigable river, you were living in isolation.”³ The common perception at the time was that Florida was a mosquito infested swamp and as such could not be easily traveled. In the late nineteenth century, both men took up the railroad business with Henry Flagler taking over the east coast of Florida while Henry Plant established his along the west side of Florida. “These two captains of industry would bring commerce and luxury to a state unknown to many Americans. Through their exploration of the state, Florida’s fledgling agrarian economy encountered northern industrial growth, creating an exchange of ideas culture and capital.”⁴ Both Flagler and Plant built several hotels on their respective coasts and effectively managed to garner interest in travel to and through Florida that would continue presently.

The once pastime for of the wealthy has since become a diversion for the middle class. The shift in attitude towards vacations came in the mid-twentieth century with the end of World War II. The return of service men and women came at a time when a great shift was taking place in America. Cities, businesses, and roads were transforming to fit

the needs of a changing society. This change was especially apparent in the Sunshine State. Midcentury was a time of great expansion and growth for Florida. The growing number of automobile ownership, better roads, television, the increased use of air conditioning, the construction of suburbs, and an influx of major corporations to the State made Florida a more appealing place for both visitors and residents. Veterans, snowbirds, families, and retirees flocked to Florida, increasing both the need for new development, accommodations and infrastructure.

Tourism in 1950 was in its infancy compared to the industry today but there were attractions dotted throughout the Florida landscape, some dating back to the late 1800s. Early Florida attractions including Silver Springs, resort hotels, and other nature based attractions managed to maintain their businesses from a time when travel was done by rail and reserved for the well to do, to a time when it became more accessible to more Americans. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, economic and social developments in the United States made Florida attractions travel destinations. This shift within the tourism world from wanting to draw a crowd to effectively drawing in multitudes of tourists signifies not only a shift in the public perception of Florida but also a change in the overall business and service values associated with attractions. As described by Tim Hollis in *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism and Advertising*, “once tourists began flocking to Florida in greater and greater numbers, roadside attractions were there to meet them.”⁵

Aside from the climate, Florida was a distinct travel destination because the landscape was unlike what most Americans had experienced. Attractions in Florida were exotic in comparison to the urban landscape of the north or the arid sparse

landscape of the west and often based on the majesty of the natural landscape that was largely undisturbed. Locals capitalized on beaches, oranges, alligators, exotic plants, springs, and even sponges to lure in tourists. In the mid-twentieth century, attractions became magnets for middle class American families. Gardens intended for private use were turned into lush and extravagant spaces. Local swimming holes became public attractions where productions took place and admission was charged⁶. Whether they were promoting alligators, exotic birds, or the Fountain of Youth midcentury Florida attractions set a precedent for what would become the states greatest industry.

Spring attractions in particular were both profitable and progressive in the mid-twentieth century. Most Florida springs are generally located in the northern and north central portions of the state. Florida springs are all interconnected and supported by an aquifer that spans several states and as far north as South Carolina.⁷ That aquifer is the Floridan aquifer. “The Floridan aquifer system is one of the most productive aquifers in the world. This aquifer system underlies an area of about 100,000 square miles in southern Alabama, southeastern Georgia, southern South Carolina, and all of Florida.”⁸ Springs result when ground water flows through natural openings in the ground and can vary in discharge volume as well as where within the aquifer the water is coming from.⁹ Florida springs have functioned as tourist destinations, local swimming holes, water sources, and places for scuba diving explorations as well as sites once inhabited by Native Americans. Through archaeological evidence, scientists have determined that Native Americans once visited several spring sites within Florida. For spring attractions, the health of the spring and the surrounding ecosystem is of great importance in terms of business and profit but also in terms of the well-being of the surrounding community

and environment. When spring waters are clogged with pollution, debris, and garbage surrounding environments and people can suffer depending on if the water is distributed for consumption within a community as well as where the spring water flows, whether that is back through the aquifer or to other bodies of water.

The role of springs in Florida tourism and attractions begins with Silver Springs an “unrivaled leader in Florida Tourism”¹⁰ since the late nineteenth century. As an attraction, Silver Springs really set a precedent with the introduction of renowned glass bottom boats to the site in the 1870s. Throughout the early twentieth century other spring sites began to set up attractions and become destinations rather than just local swimming holes. The art of underwater shows and the striking natural landscape surrounding springs would soon become the main draw for Florida spring attractions. The 1950s were a time for growth and great popularity for spring attractions, not only did they draw in travelers from all over the country but they drew the attention of Hollywood as well. Several films were shot on location at Florida spring attractions in the mid-twentieth century, which only added to the public interest in Florida.

The travel and tourism industry in Florida today is almost unrecognizable from its humble beginnings. Florida tourism is now largely focused in central Florida and Miami. Most visitors now fly into the State rather than drive. In 1971, Disney World opened and the tourism industry has continued to be centered in the Orlando and Kissimmee area; the turnpike and the interstate at the time of their completion through the present were also factors in the shift within the overall tourism industry because they altered the way visitors saw, accessed and traveled through Florida. Beaches, expensive resorts, and

other major theme parks do draw tourists throughout the state but none draws in visitors like Disney World.

The Orlando area has been trying to address this issue for years, because when tourists travel there they go to visit Disney World and more often than not do not spend any time downtown, one reason is the lack of entertainment options for tourists in the downtown area. The business of tourism became more competitive in the last forty years, attractions and theme parks changed in order to keep up with the market. Theme parks became immense sites filled with almost every amenity imaginable and multiple attractions all centered around movies, a brand, animals, or entertainment. A Florida attraction is no longer a place one can simply stumble upon on a leisurely drive. They are now theme and amusement parks that require reservations for hotels, rental cars, airline tickets, as well as hundreds of dollars to experience all the park has to offer. The attractions of the mid-twentieth century that managed to stave off closure and disaster are now thought to be outdated, kitschy, or your grandparent's theme parks.

Florida spring attractions specifically are affected by this change in the tourism market. Most spring attractions grew and became tourist destinations in the 1950s. The facilities of those that have managed to stay in operation are in need of upgrades and repairs. Fifty years is the benchmark when most sites are evaluated as potentially "significant" and worthy of local, state, or national landmark designation.¹¹ Around the fifty-year mark, is usually when a building is either deemed worthy either of saving and preserving for future generations or demolishing because it is no longer up to date or code compliant and is an affront to the overall aesthetic of the immediate area.

In addition to aging structures, Florida spring attractions also face waning visitor numbers and environmental concerns for their natural sites. The management and conservation of natural sites that happen to have built or architectural significance is sometimes problematic because one or more of the stakeholders' values may not line up with all of the issues. This can result in the desire to protect the natural environment at the expense of the architecture or the preservation of the architecture with little or no regard to the environmental issues affecting the site. The continued operation of Florida spring attractions may not seem like an issue of great importance to most; however, one must consider what those sites mean to Florida tourism and the role they played in development of their local communities. The values associated with spring attractions at the height of their popularity compared to those of today express shifts in society, culture, as well as economics.

The importance of Florida spring sites has become an important issue for various interest groups. In 2000, Governor Jeb Bush started The Florida Springs Initiative, which sought to research and monitor the state's springs.¹² (The initiative was cut under current Governor Rick Scott.) The initiative began as a way to assess the condition of Florida's springs after the condition of the water and factors negatively affecting the sites, such as septic tanks, runoff, litter, pollution, contamination, erosion, and a decrease in plant life around the springs became a concern for locals as well as individuals within government positions. Negative factors are not plaguing all Florida springs but when one is affected, others are as well because many springs and waterways within the state feed the Floridan aquifer, which supplies a great deal of water to the state,¹³ and are therefore connected. Owners and managers of spring

attractions are ever conscious of this fact and because they are largely dependent on the waters remaining pristine and crystal clear. In the years following 1950 several spring sites have gained state and even national recognition as sites of great significance for natural, archaeological, and built reasons.

The purpose of this thesis is to assess the values that inform effective management strategies associated with Florida spring attractions in both the 1950s and in the present in relation to the criteria determined based on the operation and maintenance of the site. For the purpose of nostalgia and tourism various aspects of Florida spring attraction history has been documented over time however, some areas have been overlooked or simply remain incomplete due to insufficient sources. The preservation efforts and maintenance at spring sites are examples of areas of study often over looked when documenting these sites. There are books and publications detailing the history of spring attractions as well as the kitschy aspects of Florida tourism but there is a lack of information on what to do with sites that are aging and no longer considered relevant in the theme and amusement park world.

This thesis offers a multiple case study approach. The case study sites include Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee Springs, and Warm Mineral Springs. The study will explore the values associated with each site in 1950 and compare them with today. Criteria for the analysis will look at factors contributing to the operation and management of the sites. The values assessed come from Randall Mason's publication in through the Getty Conservation Institute, *Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices*. This thesis will look at both sociocultural and

economic values; however, the research and outcomes will mostly favor the sociocultural values.

A critical first step in any preservation effort is the assessment of values, also referred to as significance. Randall Mason in *Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices*, describes the understanding of values as “a useful way to understand the contexts and sociocultural aspects of heritage conservation.”¹⁴ In answering what are the values that inform effective strategies for management, this thesis looks at case study criteria and associates the criteria with a preservation value. Understanding the values associated with the criteria informs spring attraction stakeholders and management what values have been a priority or focus in the past and what has been overlooked at a site. The case study criteria allows for a comprehensive overview of the site and in applying values to the criteria, significance is then associated with elements of the site that may have been overlooked previously. Understanding the criteria and values associated with the three spring sites allows for future application at other spring sites.

1 Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008).

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3 Florida History Internet Center, "Florida of the Railroad Barons," <http://floridahistory.org/railroads.htm> (accessed January 2, 2013).

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- 13 Ringle, Ken. "Unlocking the Labyrinth of North Florida Springs," *National Geographic*. 195. no. 3 (1999): p. 40-59.
- 14 Randall Mason, The Getty Conservation Institute, "Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices," http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf (accessed September 26, 2012), p. 5.

CHAPTER 2 ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS AND VALUE BASED PRESERVATION

The tourism industry in Florida has seen many changes over the last century. Everything from the way one travels through the state, to who is traveling, as well as what types of attractions are destinations are being visited has changed and progressed, with the only constant being the beach as a destination. The marketing of Florida might employ some of the same advertisement tactics but the values and attractions portrayed within those advertisements are significantly different from what they were fifty years ago. The shift in the tourism market exposes a shift in people's cultural as well as social values. Understanding the values associated with Florida tourism and the resulting actions taken to preserve and maintain older Florida attractions is presently of great importance because there is an aging population of attractions that are suffering with from a decrease in visitor numbers as well as physically with the aging or deterioration of their structures.

Florida Tourism

Before the railroads, Florida was a frontier not likely traversed by those seeking leisure and relaxation. The railroads brought with them access as well as resorts and high society. The midcentury was a time of great change nationally. Vacations were a new concept for more Americans in the post war period, with more and more people finding that they had time for leisure and more recreational activities. Soldiers who were exposed to the climate and natural landscape during the war would often venture back to the Sunshine State with their families to live or for vacations. Property being relatively inexpensive and new business opportunities at the time also encouraged individuals to

move to Florida. Through the latter half of the twentieth century the population and number of annual visitors and tourists to Florida has only grown.

Twenty- first century Florida tourism is still about the beach and resorts but it is also very much about large theme and amusement parks that continue to grow and expand in both size and what they offer to the public.

The Shifting of the American Landscape and Roadside

The greater availability of the automobile during the mid-twentieth century greatly changed the overall landscape of America. The automobile provided individuals with personal freedom in their travels and the ability to go at speeds previously impossible. The automobile brought with it a need to further develop roadways, a shift in the built landscape, as well as tin can tourists, tourists in the 1920s and 1930s who would sleep in trailers or camps along the side of the road. The name tin can tourist is a reference to the debris and trash often left behind by these travelers.

In *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*, Chester Liebs discusses the changes that occurred within American cities when the automobile became the preferred means of transportation for most Americans. Main streets in America changed with greater availability of the automobile. The role commercialism plays in the lives of most Americans changed when the possibility of travel became reality. Businesses and attractions began to sprinkle the landscape, as did new roads. The way business was done also began to shift from a local approach to what we have today with chain stores and multiple locations of stores within a city. Diners, drive-in theaters, mini golf courses, motels, restaurants, supermarkets, auto showrooms, and buildings easily accessible by automobiles are the types of buildings and uses that became popular with the growth of automobile ownership. In a time when travel was

becoming available to more and more Americans, the landscape was drastically changed to accommodate the new needs of transportation.

Examining the built environment and how the automobile has changed the way people engage their surroundings is the focus of Lieb's book. The transformation of our built environment is not something that one necessarily understands readily while within the current landscape. The automobile brought with it new ways of viewing buildings, the landscape and signs. Examples of those view include the drive-thru restaurant, rest areas on interstates, billboards, and road signs, department stores as well as the drive in theater, which experienced great popularity in its beginning but have seen such rapid decline that very few still remain in existence and even fewer functioning. Personal transportation brought a new way of functioning within cities and towns. The architecture that facilitated the shift within cities was not always built to be permanent and is often viewed as insignificant due to the ubiquitous nature of roadside structures. What often stands out are the structures built with kitsch in mind. Such structures are regarded as significant to roadside culture as a whole or to local communities who embraced kitsch as a means to maintain relevance and business opportunities.

A more recent look at the roadside American landscape is *Remembering Roadside America: Preserving the Recent Past as Landscape and Place* by John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle. Much like Liebs, Jakle and Sculle examine the role the automobile played in the organizational and developmental changes within the American landscape as well as the role of commercial development and what can be done with roadside architecture in today's culture. "Only in America did roadside selling evolve so quickly and was the commercial strip fully accepted as a way of organizing

space.”¹ Roadside buildings however have not always been recognized as significant aspects of our shared heritage worth preserving. In the minds of some preservationists and communities, roadside structures do not hold the same values or significance as a 1920s home or historic theater. Roadside architecture is not specifically defined because within different communities what comprises the roadside could vary, however the consistent elements include drive-ins, motels, hotels, drive thru restaurants, diners, gas stations, and attractions that could include anything from miniature golf to museums.

The American roadside was built so that wayfinding was relatively simple. When arriving to a new city because there is a consistency in city development and building that allows for familiarity between most places.² Chain stores and restaurants also play into this familiarity. The preservation of roadside structures is as a result difficult. What cannot be characterized as familiar is often devalued because it is not consistent with the present preconceived notion of what the roadside should look like. Roadside America has suffered as a result with many structures being allowed to fall into disrepair or be demolished for new development. “Edward T. McMahon, formerly the executive director of Scenic America believes ‘it is one thing to save a structure; it is quite another to save a place. While we’ve been saving landmarks, we’ve been losing our landscape.’”³ Jakle and Sculle propose that we should consider the roadside by viewing the landscape as place and that in doing so the American roadside can be preserved in a way that is more inclusive to roadside architecture and resulting local and vernacular structures.

The End of the Road is look at the more traditional categorizations of roadside architecture and structures and their plight. The roadside building from the automobile era and the mid-twentieth century is somewhat endangered with in the world of building, construction, design, planning, and preservation, as “big growing cities usually destroy their commercial vernacular too quickly.”⁴ Largely a photo documentation work, *The End of the Road*, makes the point that traveling American roads and viewing but not stopping at attractions make trips exciting. It provides points of interest within the natural or barren landscape that generally surrounds major roads and highways. “Roadside architecture is about making people happy and serving their tastes rather than imposing values upon them.”⁵ The perception of the American landscape was greatly shaped by the automobile and the architecture and infrastructure that supports. “seemingly the most unnecessary stop you could ever make, and definitely the places you could never get you parents to stop at, are the roadside attractions that looked most exciting of all”⁶ the roadside attraction used the roadside as a means advertisement as well as business. Often “billboards were more important than the buildings themselves; the buildings were usually obscured by hedges or a tall fence blocking the quick lateral view of the highly touted treasures promised within.”⁷ Margolies argues that the era of the road is at an end. Roadside culture is no longer the commercial draw that it once was and at the time of publication the roadsides were already “lined with relics of that adventurous frontier, the remnants that are instant ruins.”⁸ With many towns that were once roadside hotspots being bypassed by interstates roadside business and attractions suffered. To save the American roadside Margolies called for a reassessment of historic preservation standards so that roadside architecture and

attractions could be properly assessed for values before their seemingly imminent destruction.

The assessment of the roadside generally coincides with the overall assessment of roadside attractions because attractions are seen as a subcategory of roadside architecture. Architectural style does play a role in determining the significance of a site. Style and aesthetics can be sticking points for preservationist and other professionals when considering if a site or structure is indeed worthy of preservation. Older roadside attractions were not usually designed in higher design styles; they fall into the vernacular categorization of design, with some even considered kitschy. The way values associated with the preservation of roadside structures and sites is at crucial point. Moving further into the twenty-first century more and more preservation and professionals in design and related fields have begun to express interest in saving the American roadside as well as in a reexamination of the evaluation process for determining significance in preservation focusing more on a values based approach.

Florida as an Eden

The early twentieth century brought a shift in the perception of Florida. The once mosquito infested swamp was marketed at that point in time as an idyllic Eden. The landscape was always depicted as lush and exotic, the climate was perfect, and the land was cheap. In *Edens, Underworlds, and Shrines: Florida's Small Tourist Attractions*, Margot Ammidown discusses the history and architecture of Florida attractions and tourism, starting around the time of the automobile era with the promotion of Florida mythology as a means to attract tourists. "In part a response to the popular mythic image of Florida, small roadside tourist attractions were frequently based on the native environment – the springs, the forests, the wildlife – and they were often

intertwined with a narrative extrapolated from Florida history. Small attractions naively attempted to create what the tourist or prospective resident surely must have felt lacking: a glimpse of the extraordinary.”⁹ Places like Parrot Jungle, Cypress Gardens, Marineland, and Gatorland were built in the early and mid-twentieth century to attract visitors to the Eden that is the Florida landscape. Looking at smaller attractions and mythology behind some Florida attractions, this article serves as a reminder of the time before Disney World and other large-scale attractions. Alligators, gardens, mermaids, and more were all part of the Florida mythology. In the beginning, the Florida tourism market was mostly small family attractions that locals were aware of and that grew through word of mouth and good signage in the peak of the billboard era. Silver Springs became a favorite among tourists early on, with Weeki Wachee following to become a tourist favorite as well.¹⁰ Attractions dedicated to alligators and old Florida lifestyle were also among the attractions that drew people from all over U.S. to the Sunshine State. Today a handful of Florida attractions are still owned and operated by the families that started them,¹¹ but the allure of the Disneyesque theme park is a daunting obstacle to overcome and many are finding that their visitor numbers are declining.

Kitsch and the Souvenir

Some Florida attractions in the early years of their success capitalized on the aspects of the Florida landscape in ways that resulted in numerous kitschy structures throughout the state. Early Florida kitsch can include anything from oranges to mermaids to Native Americans. The use of kitsch is now a tactic to draw vehicles off largely populated roadways to buy souvenirs rather than to entertain.

Beverly Gordon discusses the souvenir and how it is viewed by society in the *Journal of Popular Culture*. The souvenir is seen as “commercially produced, purchased

objects.”¹² For many Florida attractions, souvenirs are a part of the way they do business. The ubiquitous souvenir is that of the post card. The postcard has allowed friends and family members to experience the excitement and leisure of one’s vacation through a single image with a message on the back for years. The postcard for Florida attractions is no different, displaying all the majesty and wonder the landscape offers. Gordon in her article discusses types of souvenirs, why we purchase them and why we give them as gifts. In today’s society, the Florida souvenir acts as an advertisement for the wonder and mythological qualities of the Sunshine State.

In *Florida Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities, & other Offbeat Stuff*, David Grimes and Tom Becnel highlight the kitsch that dots the Florida landscape. The focus is the out of the ordinary, but the point is also made that Florida is more than just the tourism giant of the central Florida theme park. “When people think of Florida they think of Mickey Mouse and Orange Juice,”¹³ but there is so much more to the Florida tourism market. Beaches remain a major draw for tourists. For smaller Florida attractions, kitsch has become a means to maintain their business. Giant dinosaurs (Figure 2-1), alligators (Figure 2-2), castles, oranges (Figure 2-3) and wizards now act as attractions and tourist shops all throughout the state.

Tourism Boom

The 1920s saw a peak in the number of amusement parks in America with almost two thousand in operation mostly located in the northeast and Midwest but the depression and with World War II, looming the numbers dramatically fell below 250.¹⁴ The war brought with it rationing, technological advances, a shift in American workforce and business, as well as military bases. Florida, after the war maintained a great deal of those military bases and the military presence. “The GI Bill’s generous housing and

education entitlements affirmed and emboldened the American dream, making it possible for millions to realize the Florida dream. Between 1945 and 1965, fully one in five of all single-family homes was financed by the GI Bill.”¹⁵ The average American was not immune to the draw of Florida either. “Rich and poor, blacks and whites, all wanted a slice of the Florida dream, which happened to be the state’s greatest export. Dreams were seemingly immune from recession and pessimism. Nothing could deflate Florida optimism in the 1950s and 1960s.”¹⁶ With the influx of people, families began to set up restaurants, motels, and attractions along Florida roads to serve the motorists and visitors. New businesses and corporations set up shop as well. The growth of local businesses and small attractions that promoted the natural Florida landscape as well as the Florida dream gradually led the roadside to become an “alluring wonderland of oddities intent on calling attention to themselves.”¹⁷

The mid-twentieth century was a time of great growth for Florida. A thriving place for business as well as growing families following World War II, Florida was also marketed and perceived as an obvious choice for travel and leisure. “Once tourists began flocking to Florida in greater and greater numbers, roadside attractions were there to meet them.”¹⁸ “Florida tourism richly deserves its companion noun, industry. Not until the end of the 1950s did tourism produce \$1 billion in revenues. By the end of the century, tourism generated 663,000 jobs and \$50 billion in revenues, accounting for \$17 billion or 12 percent of the gross state product.”¹⁹ Today tourism is an industry that is a driving force for Florida. “In just half a century Florida’s tourist trade rocketed from 4.5 million visitors in 1950 to over 70 million in 2000.”²⁰ “As the Sunshine State’s No. 1 industry, tourism was responsible for welcoming 87.3 million visitors in 2011 who spent

67.2 billion, generating 23 percent of the state's sales tax revenue and employing more than 1 million Floridians."²¹ Florida beaches still play a major role in Florida tourism but in today's market Walt Disney World, its surrounding parks, and other large corporation owned theme parks are major players in the State's tourism industry.

"Today Florida sells experiences."²² This is largely due to Disneyland in California, which through its success prompted investors "who saw dollar signs in the numbers of baby boomers"²³ to put money back into the business of amusement and entertainment. With the renewed interest in the prosperity of the amusement and attraction business, the decline experience prior to the war was now experiencing a sharp turn around. "Rising from four hundred in 1954 to a new peak of almost a thousand in 1963, the new attractions also generated stunning revenues."²⁴ The growth and development continued throughout the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, so much so that the smaller roadside attractions of the midcentury are now finding themselves with decreases in revenue and visitors. The polarization of midcentury attractions and today's has created an amusement super-world, with most of the state's major recreational parks now within a fifty-mile radius of Disney World.²⁵

Walt Disney World opened in 1971. It was designed in a way that would allow for future growth that was not possible at Disneyland and at its opening completely changed the Florida tourism world. Prior to its opening, smaller attractions were maintaining a prominent position within Florida tourism. Some attractions that began as small endeavors had since grown and expanded to include other small attractions at their sites. These attractions include Silver Springs, Cypress Gardens, as well as Weeki Wachee, all of which were bought by major corporations during periods of great

success. “The opening of Walt Disney World was the equivalent of a ten-point earthquake; the aftershock still reverberates today.”²⁶ “Disney world is the most-visited vacation destination on the planet; kids who went there in the 1970s are bringing their own kids today, perpetuating a brilliantly conceived cycle of acculturation. Every youngster who loves a Disney theme park – and almost all of them do – represents a potential lifetime consumer of all things Disney, from stuffed animals to sitcoms, from Broadway musicals to three-bedroom tract homes. With this strategy Disney will someday tap into the fortunes of every person on the planet, as it now does to every American whether we know it or not.”²⁷ The greater Orlando area is now so congested with corporation-owned mega parks that park visitors can spend weeks in Florida without actually seeing any of what Florida has to offer outside of the storybook and picturesque fantasyland designed for efficiency and profit.

Real Florida attractions are suffering in today’s tourism market. At one point, the Florida roadside attraction was safe from ultimate doom because the Florida tourist was driving to Florida, not through it and there was a greater interest in exploring the back roads and the cultural oddities one finds along older highways. ²⁸“Today American super highways have bypassed the circus atmosphere of the two-lane blacktop. Motorists hurtling by at undreamed-of speeds have only time for huge billboards and giant neon-lit signs bearing the single name of a well-known oil company, hotel franchise, or fast-food chain. ”²⁹ The declining interest in older Florida attractions highlights the shift in values associated with recreation, vacation, travel, and leisure. Florida spring attractions are caught in this battle of values and teetering on the fine line between recreation and environmental safety and wellbeing.

Spring Sites

The State of Florida is home to more than 700 freshwater springs.³⁰ There are over twenty-seven first magnitude springs, “Florida leads the world in 1st magnitude springs and quantity of flow.”³¹ A spring is a point where the aquifer surface meets the surface of the earth and ground water flows out of the ground.³² Most Florida springs are located in the northern and central portions of the state. The Floridan aquifer is the source for Florida springs. It underlies portions of Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and all of Florida. The Floridan is a multiple-use aquifer system, meaning it contains freshwater and saltwater³³

Florida springs were once a thriving business, with Silver Springs at the helm. Many springs began as popular swimming spots for locals that would eventually be bought and privatized into an attraction of some sort. The privatization of Florida springs for public use was at its peak in the mid-twentieth century. Spring attractions provided the weary northern and western travelers with a glimpse into the majesty that is the Florida landscape. “Silver Springs, Wakulla Springs, Rainbow Springs, Weeki Wachee Spring, and Homosassa Springs were considered Florida’s “Big Five” and received the most publicity via radio, television, motion pictures, brochures, post cards, and souvenirs”³⁴ In *Glass Bottom Boats and Mermaid Tails: Florida’s Tourist Springs*, Tim Hollis discusses the history of some Florida spring attractions in a narrative. The book focuses on five spring attractions, Rainbow Springs, Wakulla Springs, Weeki Wachee Springs, Silver Springs, and Homosassa Springs. Hollis discusses management, programming, and the heritage associated with the sites. Through his analysis, it becomes apparent that for many the assumed evolution for a spring attraction is for it to

eventually become a state park. While values are not addressed specifically, the work definitely examines sociocultural values associated with Florida spring attractions.

Over the next fifty years, Florida spring attractions would lose the attention of some visitors but would gain the attention of scientists, researchers, and environmentalists. In a somewhat recent National Geographic article entitled "Unlocking the Labyrinth of North Florida Springs," Ken Ringle discusses Florida springs as unique regional attractions that have brought visitors to the state since the late nineteenth century. The waterways, caverns, and caves that lie beneath the ground in Florida were largely undiscovered for a great deal of the twentieth century. Toward the end of the century, growing interest in springs allowed for greater research and investigation into the waterways that are linked to the aquifer. With a greater academic interest in the springs of Florida came recognition for archaeological finds, designations based on these finds, as well as designations due to the landscape and attractions that surround the springs.

Pollution and contamination are always a concern for springs, which serve Florida as a means of recreation and entertainment but also as a source for water. "While a small part of the flow from any given spring comes from far away, most originates as rainfall closer to home. Water is entering and leaving the Floridan aquifer all the time, sometimes bound for distant destinations, sometimes for the hydrologic equivalent of a trip to the nearest mall."³⁵ The Floridan aquifer supplies a great deal of the water for the state. The fifty plus inches of rain a year that the state receives is remarkably enough to recharge the aquifer, however, with that water scientists are also finding trash and pollutants which speaks to bigger health and environmental concerns.

“There’s so much water tunneling its way under north Florida that it’s hard to know with absolute certainty where any one drop comes from,”³⁶ making the protection of Florida springs all the more important. As of 2010, the State of Florida had purchased 17 springs to protect the sites and provide public access.³⁷ In the years following, that number has continued to grow with Weeki Wachee becoming a State Park and Silver Springs looking to become one by the end of 2013.

Values

Within the field of preservation, the significance of roadside attractions has not always appreciated as it is today. The general rule of thumb is that 50 years is the time at which a site, structure, or building can achieve significance and until recently many roadside attractions were simply too young. This of course was and continues to be somewhat problematic because as time and technology move on more and more roadside attractions are finding it harder and harder to maintain their businesses. Florida spring attractions are no different. Many have been bought by corporations or by the state in order to keep their doors open. “What to save and why is a difficult question. Because each site is the product of a specific time and outside economic, social, political, cultural, and aesthetic forces, architecture cannot be rated on a single scale of value.”³⁸

Significance in preservation is not always determined using the same criteria. In recent years, there has been a call for a more comprehensive approach to determining significance. Values have become the preferred means of evaluating significance but the integration of a values based approach has yet to be distinguished as a standard approach for preservation. In America, the National Register of Historic Places is a list of state and local properties deemed significant in accordance with criteria set forth by

the National Park Service and is maintained by the Secretary of Interior. The criteria for the National Register of Historic Places include:

“The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A.** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B.** That are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; or
- C.** That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D.** That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.”³⁹

In the application of the National Register criteria, preservationists are finding that sites are being lost or negatively impacted. These criteria do not always capture all the reasons stakeholders value a site. In *Managing Built Heritage: The Role of Cultural Significance* it is suggested that there can be no definitive prescribed list of values because one cannot know what values will arise, be presently relevant or irrelevant, nor can one assume that the values for one site will match with those of another.⁴⁰

“Values categories should be conceived of as being fluid and not mutually exclusive. The value of categories is in having a reference point, but they should be designed and intended to stimulate divergent thinking”⁴¹

The values associated with the preservation of Florida spring attraction sites are the focus of this thesis. Values in terms of preservation research and study can be both ambiguous and subjective.⁴² To focus and better define the values to be researched, values assigned by Randall Mason in *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage*, were

assigned as the basis for values for heritage management to be evaluated. Within the report, Mason separates the values under two larger categories, sociocultural values, and economic values and the values within each category will be applied within a multiple case study.

1 John A. Jakle, and Keith A. Sculle, *Remembering Roadside America: Preserving the Recent Past as Landscape and Place*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2011), pp. 95.

2 Ibid., p. 175.

3 Ibid.

4 John Margolies, *The End of the Road*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1981), pp. 11.

5 Ibid., p. 13.

6 Ibid., p. 20.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 22.

9 Margot Ammidown, "Edens, Underworlds, and Shrines: Florida's Small Tourist Attractions," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, 23 (1998): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1504171> (accessed September 9, 2012). p. 238-259

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Beverly Gordon, "The Souvenir: Messenger of the Extraordinary," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 20, no. 3 (1986): p. 135-146.

13 David Grimes, and Tom Becnel, *Florida Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities, & other Offbeat Stuff*, (Guilford, Connecticut: Morris Book Publishing, 2007). pp. vii.

14 Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), pp. 105.

15 Ibid., p. 153.

16 Ibid., p. 62

17 Hap Hatton, *Tropical Splendor: An Architectural History of Florida*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), pp. 181.

18 Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), pp. 8.

19 Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), pp. 115.

20 Ibid.

21 Visit Florida, "Florida Tourism Industry on Pace for Another Record Year," <http://media.visitflorida.org/news/news.php?id=245> (accessed January 12, 2013).

22 Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), pp. 122.

23 Ibid., p. 105.

24 Ibid.

25 Hap Hatton, *Tropical Splendor: An Architectural History of Florida*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), pp. 187.

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- 26 Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), pp. 105.
- 27 Carl Hiaasen, *Team Rodent: How Disney Devours the World*, (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1998), pp. 13.
- 28 Hap Hatton, *Tropical Splendor: An Architectural History of Florida*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), pp. 183.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Florida Department of Environmental Protection, "Florida Springs," <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/springs/faq.htm> (accessed January 12, 2013).
- 31 Joan Lundquist Scalpone, *Florida's Bubbling Springs*, (Punta Gorda: Mini Daytrip Books, 1989), pp. 4.
- 32 Florida Department of Environmental Protection, "Florida Springs," <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/springs/faq.html> (accessed January 6, 2013).
- 33 U.S. Geological Survey, "Floridan Aquifer System," http://pubs.usgs.gov/ha/ha730/ch_g/G-text6.html (accessed January 6, 2013).
- 34 Tim Hollis, *Glass Bottom Boats & Mermaid Tails*, (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2006), pp. 135.
- 35 Ken Ringle, "Unlocking the Labyrinth of North Florida Springs," *National Geographic*, 195, no. 3 (1999): p. 46.
- 36 Ibid., p. 49.
- 37 Florida Department of Environmental Protection, "Florida Spring State Parks," <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/springs/locations.htm> (accessed January 6, 2013).
- 38 Hap Hatton, *Tropical Splendor: An Architectural History of Florida*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), pp. 194.
- 39 "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" *National Register Bulletin*, http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm (accessed January 28, 2013).
- 40 Derek Worthing, and Stephen Bond, *Managing Built Heritage: The Role of Cultural Significance*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).
- 41 Ibid., p. 74.
- 42 Kerr, Alastair. "Vancouver Heritage Foundation," http://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/documents/Values-BasedApproach_HeritageConservation.pdf (accessed November 12, 2012).

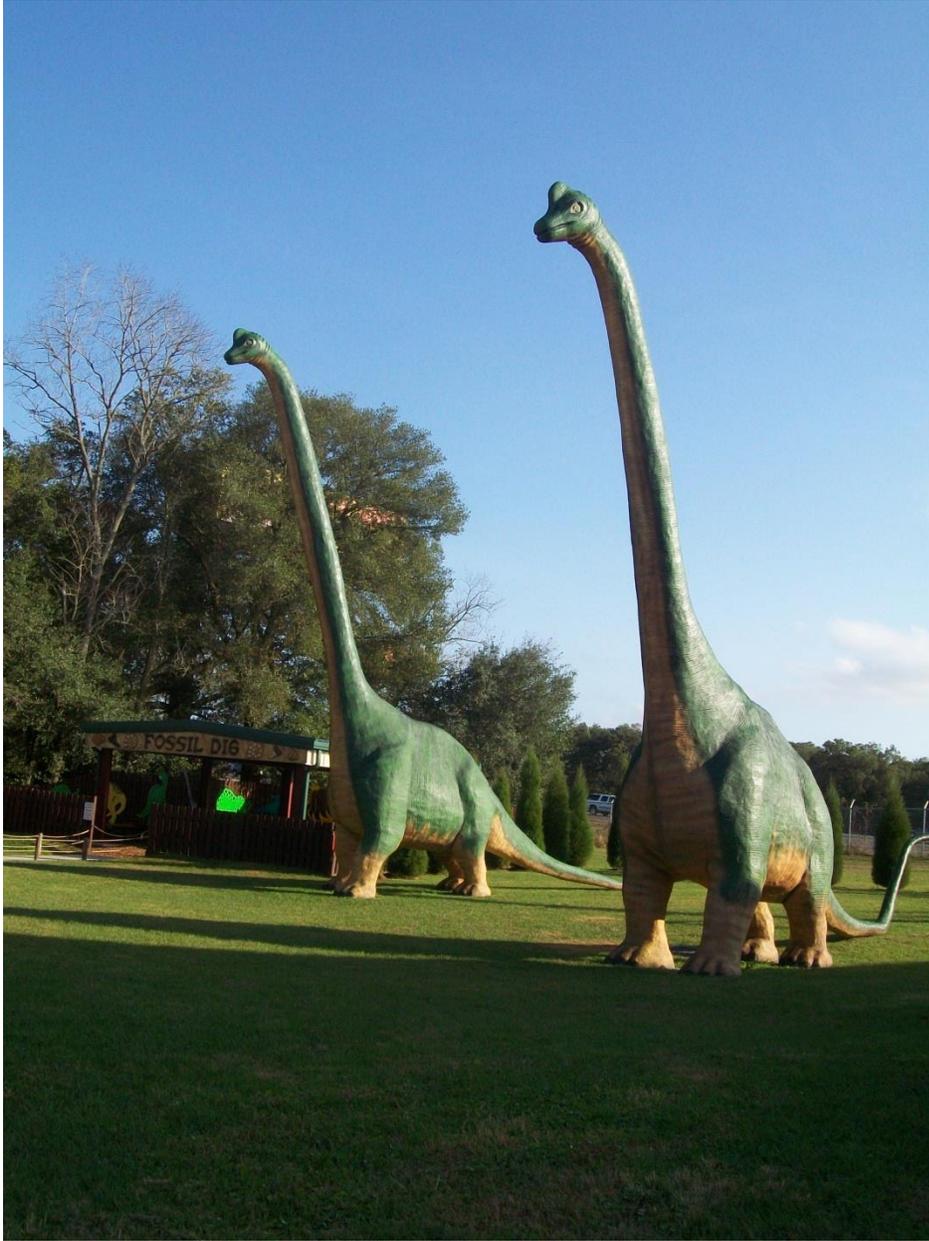


Figure 2-1. Dinosaur World in Plant City, Florida. Photo by author.



Figure 2-2. Entrance at Gatorland. Photo by author.



Figure 2-3. Orange World. Photo by author.

CHAPTER 3 ASSESSING VALUES

Within the field of Historic Preservation, roadside attractions, like many postwar period cultural resources, have been gaining attention over the years. In addition, the tourism industry, the history conscious, and the roadside traveler have begun to take greater notice of what is happening to roadside architecture and attractions. Despite this growing interest, roadside and postwar cultural resources are threatened. In the time following its construction, roadside architecture has gone from being appreciated as a means to attract business to unfashionable and outdated. There are those who still see beauty, wonder, and even significance with roadside architecture and roadside attractions both functioning and abandoned, but often their opinion is disregarded because taste is subjective and the general opinion is usually not on the side of the roadside structure from an era when the automobile was more than a means to get from point a to point b.

What society views as significant to roadside heritage is as transitory as the average roadside attraction. For Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee Springs, and Warm Mineral Springs the age of the sites is no longer an issue for concern in terms of preservation, however there are sites whose age prevents them from being valued and their resulting loss is not only physical, but also cultural. An assessment of the values associated with a site should be conducted and applied to management practices and preservation efforts associated with that particular site.

Methodology

The method of inquiry used within this research is qualitative and the research design is a multiple case study. "Qualitative research is a means for exploring and

understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.”¹ “Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.”² The multiple case study includes Silver Springs Nature Theme Park in Silver Springs near Ocala, Weeki Wachee Spring in Weeki Wachee near Spring Hill, and Warm Mineral Springs in North Port; each is the site of a Florida attraction and each attraction was built around a spring. The criteria for selecting the sites also includes the period of significance for the site, which is generally the postwar period due to the rapid growth of the time. The attractions need to be built around a natural environment, specifically a spring. Continuous and continued use of the attraction as well as the location and relation to major roads are also factors considered in selecting the sites for this thesis. Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee, and Warm Mineral Springs were selected for comparison because while all are spring attractions they each have characteristics and issues that are specific to their site. These sites will also allow for a more comprehensive look at values associated with spring attractions, how spring attractions have been protected through time, and how the site use can change and evolve over time. For the case study analysis several aspects of management and operation of attraction sites will be examined including:

- Original Ownership
- Current Ownership
- Management
- Programing
- Marketing
- Visitation
- Operational Costs
- Admission Costs
- Access
- Amenities

Each case study criteria was chosen for its relation to the overall management of a spring attraction. The intention was to encompass as many factors affecting the management and operation of spring attractions as well as researchable aspects of each site within the selected criteria. The case study criteria look at each site in the context of 1950 and the present. Values are then associated with the case study criteria. For example, ownership and management can be associated with historical values as well as use value. Historical values because knowing who owned and managed the properties through the years allows you to draw conclusions about management and programming decisions. Ownership and management as well as costs, access, and amenities can be associated with the use (market) values as they all deal with profits.

Looking at values within preservation and how they are categorized then applying applicable values to each site, conclusions will be drawn as to which values inform effective strategies beneficial to the management and continued use of Florida spring attractions. Each site will be assessed in terms of the history of the site as well as the values associated with the site in the postwar era and the values associated with the sites today. The method is qualitative rather than quantitative because the research will explore each site at two points in time and will then use the information to understand the operation and management of Florida attractions within the landscape. The history of the sites and tourism in Florida will be addressed as well as management practices through time and the present. The use of a multiple case study as a research design is fitting for the research because the intention is to specifically examine and research

specific sites through time. The methodology will allow for the assessment of values associated with Florida postwar spring attractions with the case study criteria.

Value Systems

Values in general are subjective. Values much like one's own personal taste cannot be prescribed; individuals usually do not associate the same value types or amounts of value on the same things. When assessing significance through values it is important to recognize that values are always changing and evolving to meet the needs of the site and the community it serves. Preservation and conservation decisions often have to give "preference to some values to the detriment of others, and sometimes unconsciously so."³ In assessing the cultural landscape, it is important to note that there are no "value neutral sites,"⁴ meaning whether historic or not a site has values that can be used to determine significance. In examining values and their preservation applications the Burra Charter, Alastair Kerr's value-based approach considerations, and Randall Mason's chapter in the Getty publication on values of cultural heritage were used to gather a greater understanding of value systems and their role in preservation.

The Burra Charter

The Burra Charter "defines the basic principles and procedures to be followed when heritage places are undergoing conservation."⁵ The Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites or ICOMOS, first adopted the Burra Charter in 1979 and the final revised version is from 1999. The Charter can be applied to all types of places of cultural significance, with cultural significance meaning "aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, or spiritual value for past, present or future generations."⁶ Cultural significance as a result can change through time is embodied in the site, and sites can have many values associated with them at one time.⁷ Advocating for a "cautious

approach to change”⁸ the Burra Charter tasks conservation and management professionals to “do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained.”⁹“The aims of The Burra Charter are to ensure that people involved in the conservation of heritage places:

- Understand the places and its cultural significance, including its meaning to people, before making decisions about its future
- Involve communities associated with the place
- Care for the culturally significant fabric and other significant attributes, taking into account all aspects of significance
- Care for the place’s setting
- Provide security for the place
- Use available expertise
- Make records of the place and changes to it, and the reasons for decisions and actions
- Interpret and present the place in a manner appropriate for its significance”¹⁰

While their aims may seem like they would be commonsense to the conservation and preservation professional that is not always the case. The protection and management of a site can be hindered by lack of forethought, funding, and expertise during the initial stages. To ensure that people involved with conservation of heritage sites are prepared to assess a sites cultural significance the Charter provides Guidelines based on their definition of cultural significance. The four values put forth by the Burra Charter are Aesthetic Value, Historic Value, Scientific Value, and Social Value. Aesthetic Value includes aspects of sensory perception; Historic Value encompasses aesthetic, scientific, and society; Scientific Value is dependent upon the

data; and Social Value is the connection between place and culture. Cultural Value is also discussed within the Charter but is not listed as a Guideline to Cultural Significance. Cultural Value is described as referring to “beliefs important to a cultural group and broader than the values associated with cultural significance.”¹¹

The Burra Charter stresses that an understanding a sites cultural significance should be the first step towards conservation because “cultural significance should be preserved and the aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of a place.”¹² In understanding the cultural significance, one has to understand the policy and management of a site. The needs of the site, the owner’s needs, those of the visitors, restraints, use, and physical condition of the site should all be considered when developing policy for a site.¹³ “Change may be necessary to retain cultural significance but it is undesirable where it reduces cultural significance;”¹⁴ new uses should involve minimal changes to the significant fabric and use of the site and should “respect associations and meanings and where appropriate should provide for continuation of practices which contribute to cultural significance of the place.”¹⁵

The Charter also sets forth guidelines for conservation policy, stating a need to look towards the future of a site. In looking towards the future the conservation professional must take into consideration the current condition of the site and the condition of the fabric, which can include the physical structures, the natural elements of the site and any other elements that comprise the site. The policy development will also take into consideration the use of the site and the future needs including physical and financial needs.¹⁶ For the purpose of the Burra Charter values means “those beliefs which have significance for a cultural group”¹⁷ and need to understand and incorporate

those values when assessing a sites significance is greatly important. Significance within the cultural landscape is more than just the manmade or the physical, and the use of a values system to assess significance allows for a more comprehensive understanding of a site and the community engaging with it.

Values-Based Approach to Heritage Conservation

In *Considerations for a Values Based Approach to Heritage Conservation within Canada*, Alastair Kerr examines the traditional use of values within conservation and the assumptions that coincide with them. According to Kerr, “values and meanings do not just come from the facts; societies construct them from a variety of sources and these constructs can have the authority to shape the psyche of a community or a nation.”¹⁸ The protection and conservation of historic places because they have value or meaning is self-evident.¹⁹ What is not always apparent is that established values of significance for a site can change. A site can be preserved with the understanding that certain values are of great importance and then years later discover that some or a great number of those pre-established values need to be reevaluated to account for changes in sociocultural behaviors and beliefs. It is also possible that the values were established without a full understanding of a site and now need to include new information. An emphasis is placed on the material integrity when maintaining a site, which points out that while intangible values play a role in significance the physical site and structures are also of great importance.

In conservation and preservation, the issue of preference when using a values approach is always a concern. With all historic places having some values and values being fluid in terms of which are applicable and how they are considered it is necessary when assessing significance to look at broad value categories and then to consider how

those values work at ones specific site and what if any values are needed in addition.

“The statement of significance is composed of three parts: a description of the place, an articulation of its values, and a list of its character defining elements.”²⁰ Place can be the whole site, the buildings or structures, a single building or structure, the landscape, elements within the landscape, a district, or even an archaeological site.²¹ Values can be but are not limited to historical, aesthetic, scientific, social, cultural, or spiritual.²²

“Character-defining elements define how the values are embedded in the place and cannot be separated from it; they are broadly defined as the materials, forms, locations, spatial configurations, uses, and cultural associations and meanings which comprise the place.”²³ The six values given as well as the character defining elements are what Kerr points to as “core values and key character-defining elements.”²⁴ In conservation and preservation, the establishment of core values and the key character-defining elements for the assessment of all sites means that while some sites may require the addition of other more specific values to their sites, they still take into account the core values and a commonality emerges in the assessments of sites.

As social constructions values associated with a site can and will change, however in terms of assessment it is unlikely that all values associated with a site will change over time. For example, it is entirely possible that aesthetic values of a site could change as time progresses, however one must examine whether it is the significance of the aesthetics of the structure that have changed or if it is the social idea of taste that has changed in terms of the structures overall aesthetic. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada is prepared for such changing tastes in that it “will not alter the decisions of past Boards no matter how out of date they are with current

sentiments, because the past still has its rights to its values.”²⁵ While somewhat extreme, in that not all previous conservation and preservation decisions are or were the right decisions for a site, the fact remains that the past values associated with a site were at one point assessed and determined to be of significance and a dismissal of those decisions is a dismissal of a piece of the sites heritage. “The history of a site should not be manipulated to enhance the dominant values of certain groups over those of others.”²⁶

Assessing Values

The assessment of values for preservation is challenging. “For purposes of planning and management, value assessment presents a threefold challenge: identifying all the values of the heritage in question; describing them; and integrating and ranking the different, sometimes conflicting values, so that they can inform the resolution of different, often conflicting stakeholder interests.”²⁷ Stakeholders are the individuals who are directly or indirectly related to the operation, maintenance, and use of a site. Value neutral sites may not exist but that does not mean that the values of a site will be immediately apparent to preservationists, conservationists, or even some stakeholder groups. Just as some values may be left out of an assessment because those evaluating the site overlook them, some values can be given greater importance in the overall assessment because of their perceived superiority within the makeup of the site as a whole.

According to Randall Mason, “the conservation field, at present, is not very proficient at gauging all the values of heritage.”²⁸ This is evident in the Burra Charter as well as the Kerr article. “The study of values is a useful way of understanding the contexts and sociocultural aspects of heritage conservation.”²⁹ The assessment of a

site's values leads to the determination of significance. Looking at values rather than just predetermined significance criteria is more comprehensive way of evaluating a site because values rather than significance criteria allow for some interpretation by preservationists and conservationists. With significance criteria, it seems that the evaluation process turns into research and assessments that are then used to check boxes on a form as to the significance of the site. "Traditional modes of assessing 'significance' rely heavily on historical, art historical, and archaeological notions held by professionals, and they are applied basically through unidisciplinary means."³⁰ While with a value based assessment one would eventually be checking boxes determining significance, but one would hopefully also understand more about the site, its relationship to the community, and its role within the cultural landscape as a whole.

The values put forth by Mason are a provisional typology of values most often associated with conservation and preservation issues. The typology is separated into two groupings, that of sociocultural values and economic values. The sociocultural values are historical, cultural/symbolic, social, spiritual/religious, and aesthetic. The economic values include use (market) and nonuse (nonmarket) which includes the sub-values existence, option, and bequest.³¹ The seven values Mason discusses are the foundation for the values used in the assessment of Florida spring attractions. As with the Burra Charter and the values put forth in Kerr's article, the values presented by Mason "establish some grounds for comparison among many types of heritage projects and deriving best-practices guidance applicable to many different situations."³² In assessing the spring attractions historical, cultural, social, aesthetic, use, nonuse, and natural values will be considered. Natural value is an addition to the Mason typology

based on the sites being assessed and what can be considered significant to the spring sites. Natural values will look at the ecology of the site, the site health, as well as the factors that affect the natural growth of the site.

No values assessment methods can be complete, there is always going to be an issue of inadequate data, lack of information or explanation in something, and as values are not fixed they too can change and evolve in ways that makes an initial assessment inadequate or lacking. That being said, a value-based assessment is still quite beneficial in assessing elements of significance for a site because values approaches provide more opportunities for inquiry and investigation into a site and the community it serves.

1 John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009), pp. 4.

2 Ibid., p. 13.

3 Kerr, Alastair. "Vancouver Heritage Foundation," http://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/documents/Values-BasedApproach_HeritageConservation.pdf (accessed November 12, 2012), p. 1.

4 Ibid.

5 State Heritage Office, "The Burra Charter," <http://stateheritage.wa.gov.au/conservation-and-development/guide-to-conservation-maintenance/burra-charter> (accessed January 13, 2013).

6 The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, "The Burra Charter," http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA_CHARTER.pdf (accessed January 13, 2013), p. 1.

7 State Heritage Office, "The Burra Charter," Last modified 2013. <http://stateheritage.wa.gov.au/conservation-and-development/guide-to-conservation-maintenance/burra-charter> (accessed January 13, 2013).

8 The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, "The Burra Charter," http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA_CHARTER.pdf (accessed January 13, 2013), p. 1.

9 Ibid.

10 State Heritage Office, "The Burra Charter," <http://stateheritage.wa.gov.au/conservation-and-development/guide-to-conservation-maintenance/burra-charter> (accessed January 13, 2013).

11 The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, "The Burra Charter," http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA_CHARTER.pdf (accessed January 13, 2013), p. 5.

12 Ibid., p. 3.

13 Ibid., p. 4.

14 Ibid., p. 6.

15 Ibid., p. 4.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p. 20.

18 Kerr, Alastair. "Vancouver Heritage Foundation," http://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/documents/Values-BasedApproach_HeritageConservation.pdf (accessed November 12, 2012), p. 5.

19 Ibid., p. 1.

20 Ibid., p. 2.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 5.

26 Ibid.

27 Randall Mason, The Getty Conservation Institute, "Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices," http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf (accessed September 26, 2012), p. 5.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p. 10.

32 Ibid.

CHAPTER 4 THREE FLORIDA SPRING ATTRACTIONS

The role of the Florida spring attraction in the tourism world has changed since its popularity and growth in the midcentury. Many spring attractions no longer function in the same capacity, and the few remaining that do seem to suffer from low visitor numbers and subsequent financial difficulties. Many previously, privately owned spring attractions are now the property of the state. The shift in visitor numbers, ownership, and general name recognition as well as popularity came with shifts in sociocultural and economic values. The midcentury was a time of great growth as well as expansion while today the economic climate has been somewhat bleak. Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee, and Warm Mineral Springs have each had their difficulties due to these changes and resulting change in tourism. The continued operation and use of these sites is dependent upon the values associated with them as well as how those values are applied to the current and future management and preservation efforts of these heritage attractions.

This chapter examines the history and present condition of three of the more well known of the Florida spring attractions with the goal of identifying the values associated with each. The identification and articulation of these values associated with the spring sites is a critical first step in ensuring their conservation and long-term survival.

Silver Springs

Located off U.S. Highway 301 as well as State Road 40 in Marion County east of Ocala, Silver Springs is known as Nature's Theme Park. The main attractor for the site is the spring pool, which is 205 feet in diameter and the source of the Silver River.¹ The spring pool has seven major spring formations.² Silver Spring is a first magnitude spring

with the largest known flow of water in the world.³ The spring emits roughly “532 million gallons daily.”⁴ The river formed by the springs is part of Silver River, a Florida State Park.⁵ The park is also home to many exotic animals, a concert series, and exhibits depicting Florida history.

History

Silver Springs is possibly the oldest Florida Spring attraction. Since the mid-nineteenth century, people have traveled from across the country to visit Silver Springs. For almost two hundred years, glass bottom boats have been a draw for visitors to Silver Springs (Figure 4-1). The precise date for the introduction of the boats is not known, but literature on the attraction, agrees that it was around the late 1870s and early 1880s. Before the glass bottom boats, underwater views of the spring were limited to holding glass and clear bottle through the water’s surface.⁶ The 1880s was also a time of development for the attraction with a hotel being constructed at the site. As states by Gary Monroe in *Silver Springs: The Underwater Photography of Bruce Mozart*, “When the twentieth century dawned, it was Florida’s most famous place; by the end of the century, it had become a second-tier tourist attraction.”⁷

In 1924, Carl Ray and W.M. Davidson bought the property and created an attraction resembling what is present today.⁸ In the mid-twentieth century, Silver Springs spent a large amount of its income on advertising.⁹ With the onset of World War II, Silver Springs, like all other attractions saw a dramatic decrease in numbers due to rationing and general wartime mentality, which at the time meant leisure and vacations were placed on hold.¹⁰ After the war, Silver Springs' visitor numbers grew rapidly in a very short amount of time. “Silver Spring’s more-than-gigantic reputation was partly due to the success of its marketing program, but conversely, the marketing program was a

hit because of Silver Spring's immediate name recognition."¹¹ The marketing and name recognition were aided by the appearance of Silver Springs in Hollywood. Silver Springs has been the setting in more than 30 motion pictures¹² since the early and mid-twentieth century. Name recognition also came through the military with the soldiers being sent to Florida during the war, who would send home postcards and then after the war return to visit with their families.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the number of visitors to Silver Springs would reach its peak and then begin a steady decline. By the 1960s, Silver Springs had expanded to include several smaller attractions around the site such as Six Gun Territory, a western themed attraction. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) and the Paramount movie-theater chain purchased the site in 1962.¹³ In 1971, Silver Springs became a National Natural Landmark.¹⁴ The site was sold by ABC in 1984 and purchased by Florida Leisure Attractions who then sold it to the state in 1993 but continued to operate the park.

Today Silver Springs is a 350-acre multi-theme park where glass bottom boats are still the main attraction.¹⁵ The attraction now offers visitors with botanical gardens, wildlife exhibits and shows, river cruises, rides, concerts, Florida history, as well as the glass bottom boats. Silver Springs sails the world's largest fleet of glass bottom boats¹⁶ (Figure 4-2). Both the boats for the spring pool and the river cruise boats (Figure 4-3) have glass bottoms, although on river cruise there is much less to be seen through the glass because of the murky quality of the river water. Florida history is presented at the site with a museum, outdoor exhibits for the river cruise depicting the various points in

Florida history, as well as in the glass bottom boats themselves, which are named in honor of the Indian leaders who fought in Florida to protect their rights to their land.

1950 Silver Springs

Silver Springs is not a midcentury spring attraction in the traditional sense, being that it did not open to the public in the postwar era but had long been a Florida destination. Silver Springs for the purposes of this thesis is considered a midcentury Florida spring attraction because that is the period when visitation to the site grew the greatest. By 1950, the number of guests reached more than 800,000 a year ¹⁷ and by the middle of the decade, the site was annually attracting a million visitors. ¹⁸

Ownership and Management

After purchasing the property in 1924, Carl Ray and W.M. Davidson owned Silver Springs until 1962 when they sold the attraction to ABC. By 1950, Ray and Davidson allowed other smaller attractions had become a part of Silver Springs, expanding the programming and interest in the attraction. The management focused on the underwater experience as the focus of the attraction but allowed other programming as a way to generate profits. The natural value of the site was largely associated with the economic value because in 1950 Silver Springs did not have healing waters, exotic animals, or mermaids like other attractions; people came to Silver Springs to see the springs.

Programming

Silver Springs has a long history that starts with Native Americans and includes Spanish Colonists. The historical values associated with the site in 1950 included what was known of the Native Americans who once occupied the area and their dealings with the Spanish as well as the recorded information about the origins of Silver Springs as

an attraction. The programming reflected this in 1950 with the addition of a Seminole Indian Village. Other programming at the time included the jungle cruise, the Reptile Institute, and Paradise Park. The Reptile Institute was added to Silver Springs in the 1930s.¹⁹ Paradise Park opened as a branch attraction in 1949 and promoted in brochures as “Silver Springs for Colored People.”²⁰ Each of the added attractions represents a use value because at the time all of the different attractions held fees. The Reptile Institute also represented educational value and the Seminole Indian Village historical value. Paradise Park represents both social and cultural values.

Marketing

Marketing and advertising in the first half of the twentieth century were quite extensive for Silver Springs. In 1950, name recognition was especially beneficial for Silver Springs. Souvenirs, billboards, and bumper stickers were all utilized to spread the news of Nature’s Theme Park. Billboards were posted along major roadways throughout the U.S. According to Tim Hollis in *Glass Bottom Boats & Mermaid Tales*, “the amount of its advertising in the late 1940s and early 1950s would be inconceivable to a tourist attraction of comparable size today. Silver Springs' brochures were printed in quantities of seven million at one time; its postcards were not only in English, but also in German, Portuguese, and Spanish.”²¹ Silver Springs' role in films also brought the site into the consciousness of the nation through its picturesque setting and portrayed Florida as the idyllic Eden that it was being touted as within the tourism market at the time.

Cost, Access, and Amenities

Silver Springs was marketed as a family vacation destination and as such motels, diners, and other places that cater to tourists sprang up in the area surrounding the attraction. One could get to Silver Springs by taking U.S. 441. “They knew the hard

part was getting people to actually come to Silver Springs, because it was more remote than it is now.”²² When Ray and Davidson bought the site and created the official Silver Springs attraction the admission was free.²³ A fee was charged for the glass bottom boat rides. ²⁴“Shops and displays were established to complement the serene beauty of the springs and to entice people to spend their money.”²⁵

Silver Springs Values Today

Today Silver Springs is struggling financially because of low attendance numbers and deterioration of the natural environment. For example, pollutants are increasingly compromising the visibility of the water. ²⁶ In January 2013, current Florida State Governor Rick Scott and his Cabinet approved a plan to allow Silver Springs to become a State Park. ²⁷ As part of the deal, the current operator Palace Entertainment will be let out of its lease and will pay \$4 million, which will be used to help clean up pollution and restore the property to a more natural state. ²⁸

Ownership and Management

The State has owned Silver Springs since the early 1990s but has allowed various companies to acquire management leases to run the attraction.²⁹ Palace Entertainment currently manages the attraction. Before the end of 2013, Silver Springs will become a part of Silver River State Park. Concessionaires will be contracted out to run the various businesses and services offered within the attraction.³⁰ In becoming a state park, changes will come in both programming and marketing of the attraction. In taking control of Silver Springs, the state is ensuring that the natural aspects of the site will be protected. The natural values of the springs today look at the health of the springs and the effect humans are having on the overall site. The water clarity is changing and statewide there is general concern about the conservation of springs.³¹

Pollution is also a concern because trash and debris make its way into springs and that has an effect on the water quality as does what is found in water runoff that is also making its way into Florida springs.

Programming

Programming currently includes river cruises, wildlife exhibits, botanical gardens, a few shops and dining locations, the lighthouse ride, a carousel, kids ahoy playland (Figure 4-4), animal shows, world of bears (Figure 4-5), the concert series, and the glass bottom boats in the spring pool. There is also educational programming, which includes the museum as well as field trips targeting various audiences and age groups. The animal shows are also considered educational programming. The state wants to retain the glass bottom boat tours, the concert series, and the water park section of Silver Springs called *Wild Waters*,³² which was added in the late 1970s.³³ “The state park would close other parts of the attraction, including the petting zoo, jeep safari, the kids ahoy playground, and the lost river voyage. Buildings and structures for those attractions would be dismantled and Ross Allen Island, the site of the animal exhibits, would be redeveloped.”³⁴ As a public park, Silver Springs will soon offer more in terms of recreational activities including hiking and biking as well as canoeing and kayaking.³⁵

Marketing

Today Silver Springs is advertised in commercials, newspapers, on the radio, and on billboards. Marketed as Nature’s Theme Park, the natural aspects of the attraction are still very much the main draw. The concert series is used as a means to get people to the park and has proved to be quite successful. In marketing the site, how Silver Springs fits into the tourism world must be considered. For many Silver Springs is looked at with a sense of nostalgia. It is considered a *Real* or *Old Florida* tourist

attraction while places like Disney World and larger theme parks are viewed as simulated and prescribed attractions. As a state park one can assume that the methods and the way in which the attraction is advertised will change, if only a little, because the overall management and operation values will change.

Cost, Access, and Amenities

It currently cost approximately \$35 for an adult admission to Silver Springs and that is not including the \$8 parking fee. Admission for children is over \$25. The attraction does offer an all access concert season pass, which comes with various benefits as well as a Florida resident discount, which is not valid on concert day. The operation and maintenance costs are linked to the price of admission, as is the number of visitors needed to generate profits. As a state park, one can expect that the overall cost of admission will decrease. Today one can get to Silver Springs by taking Interstate 75, Interstate 95, U.S. 441, or State Road 40. Amenities near the attraction include motels, inns, restaurants, as well as gas stations.

Weeki Wachee

Weeki Wachee, the City of Mermaids, is located near Springhill off U.S. 19 and State Road 50. It is about forty minutes from Tampa and 12 miles³⁶ from Brooksville Florida. The City of Weeki Wachee has less than ten residents total and the mayor is a former mermaid of the spring attraction.³⁷ Locals to the area knew Weeki Wachee as Weekiwachee Spring long before it became a tourism destination. “It was a favorite local swimming hole and picnic ground but little else.”³⁸

Weeki Wachee is a first magnitude spring just like Silver Springs although the daily flow is quite a bit less at about 113 million gallons a day.³⁹ The Weeki Wachee Springs State Park also includes a second magnitude spring, which along with “several

smaller springs outside of the park combine to form the 7-mile-long Weeki Wachee River.”⁴⁰ Weeki Wachee in the late 1940s was owned by the City of St. Petersburg and was purchased for its potential as a future water source.⁴¹ “The large spring pool is about 250 feet long by 150 feet wide and is 60 feet deep”⁴² The name Weeki Wachee means little spring or winding river and was given to the spring by the Seminole Indians⁴³. The water flows at a temperature of about 74 or 75 degrees and “16 to 20 feet below the surface, where the mermaids swim, the current runs a strong five miles an hour.”⁴⁴

History

At the time of its opening, the Weeki Wachee underwater theater had portholes for people to view the shows. “Audience members had to slide up to the very surface of the glass in order to peer into the water landscape and watch the performances while Newton Perry stood behind them and narrated the proceedings in much the same way the newsreel announcers had done a decade earlier.”⁴⁵ This arrangement would not have worked for the number of guests they would soon come to accommodate, however, in the beginning with little else in the surrounding area twenty people was a large audience.⁴⁶ Early shows were mostly considered underwater theater and had ballet infused within the shows.⁴⁷ The shows at Weeki Wachee were above and beyond the previous work done by Perry because of the inclusion of strategically placed air hoses throughout the underwater performing area. “By eliminating the necessity for the swimmers to have to return to the water’s surface for a breath of fresh air, the shows were able to stretch the stars’ time underwater to unheard-of lengths.”⁴⁸

Weeki Wachee also gained the acknowledgment of the film industry and was the setting of a few films including *Mr. Peabody and the Mermaid*, released in 1948; the

underwater sequences for the film were shot at the spring.⁴⁹ This film also brought mermaids to Weeki Wachee (Figure 4-6). Although only utilized for photo opportunities for the film, the mermaids were slowly incorporated into the shows and eventually became the main attraction at the spring attraction. “By the early 1950s, the attraction was beginning to settle into its future path. One of the biggest changes came when the name was split into two words around 1951.”⁵⁰ Over the next few years, the attraction would continue to grow, requiring the expansion of the underwater theater that Perry built and eventually a completely new theater.

The new theater came with the purchase of the spring attraction by the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in 1959 (Figure 4-7). The new theater sits around 16 feet underwater and provides panoramic views of the performance area, which is the Weeki Wachee River headspring source⁵¹ (Figure 4-8). The actual seating capacity is somewhat debated within the literature but the consensus is that the current theater can accommodate four hundred guests plus or minus one hundred. “With a brand new theater and ABC-Paramount pumping money into its new acquisition, the underwater shows took on a new, snazzy form that was far removed from Newt Perry’s simple eating, drinking, and tightrope walking. Now featuring casts of thirty or more female athletes, the performances blossomed into lavish productions more akin to Broadway shows.”⁵²

By the 1980s, the novelty of the underwater theater and the mermaid show was beginning to wane. In 1984, ABC sold both Weeki Wachee and Silver Springs. The Interstate and Walt Disney World were two substantial changes influencing the sale and impacting the spring attractions. Over time, Weeki Wachee has grown into a 200-acre

family entertainment theme park and under the ownership of ABC, incorporated Buccaneer Bay (Figure 4-9), a six-acre water park and the only natural spring water park in Florida,⁵³ during the ABC ownership period. For a time Buccaneer Bay was the only profitable aspect of the park⁵⁴ because it allowed for repeat business from local residents. In 2003 the “Weeki Wachee Springs Company donated the unwanted and unwashed attraction to the City of Weeki Wachee.⁵⁵ Through the City, Weeki Wachee no longer had to use profits to pay shareholders and a campaign was started to save the site. In 2010, the spring attraction became a state park and has since seen an increase in visitor numbers and a decrease in ticket pricing. Today “mermaids – and now mermen – surrounded by a native cast, perform their routines behind three layers of safety glass separating them from their audience.”⁵⁶

1950 Weekiwachee

Weeki Wachee is a true midcentury Florida spring attraction. Starting operation in 1947 and gaining in both name recognition and popularity in the flowing decades, it was considered one of the big Florida spring attractions at the time. Known as Weekiwachee until 1951, the spring attraction greatly benefited vacation and leisure made possible by postwar prosperity and the rise of the car culture. The underwater theater was the main attraction for the site at the time.

Ownership and Management

Newton Perry is a legend in the Florida Spring attraction world. In the early to mid-twentieth century, Perry was well known as an expert swimmer but also for his work in underwater performances. He was a former “U.S. Navy man who trained SEALs to swim underwater in World War II.”⁵⁷ Perry worked at Wakulla Springs as well as at Silver Springs. After World War II Perry purchased Weekiwachee Spring and the following

year in 1947 opened the attraction for business. Prior to the attraction, the site was owned by the City of St. Petersburg and being held as a potential source for drinking water.⁵⁸ Had St. Petersburg not allowed Perry use of the land Florida tourism history would be missing one of the most recognizable names in spring attractions. Perry built an underwater theater at the spring about 15 feet below the surface; it was the first of its kind.⁵⁹

Programming

The underwater theater was the attraction in 1950. It was the first theater of its kind and therefore significant within the world of attractions. Performances at the time included demonstrations of eating and drinking underwater as well as ballet routines. The performances were unlike what was being presented at other Florida spring attractions because of the air hoses and breathing techniques developed by Perry.

Marketing

Car culture and family vacations were especially beneficial to the marketing of Weeki Wachee in 1950. In the beginning, Weeki Wachee was promoted as the mountain underwater because the mermaids had not yet been incorporated into the show and the view from within the underwater theater and performance area seemed to have a backdrop of a mountain.⁶⁰ *Mr. Peabody and the Mermaid* spawned the incorporation of the mermaid into the fabric of Weeki Wachee. "Even as Weekiwachee was beginning to be known as the home of girls who were half fish, the cumbersome fish tails were used primarily for publicity photos. The underwater shows remained basically as they had always been, although the male performers were gradually scaled back over the next few years and eventually eliminated."⁶¹ The separation of the name

was beneficial to the attraction in terms of marketing because as two words the name was now more easily pronounced which helped with name recognition.⁶²

Cost, Access, and Amenities

U.S. 19 was the road utilized to get to Weeki Wachee in 1950. “The Mermaid Motel opened across U.S. 19 from the entrance sometime during the 1950s”⁶³ as did other businesses trying to capitalize on the influx of people to the area.

Weeki Wachee Today

Today Weeki Wachee is a state park and receiving greater numbers of visitors than in the recent past. The 400 seat current theater is situated within the large pool of a spring, and is quite possibly the only of its kind. The possibility that a theater of this kind could be built again is now unlikely when looking at the overall concern for the conservation of Florida springs and considering there are probably laws and regulations that would make replicating it difficult. When the underwater shows began to feature mermaids large numbers of women traveled to audition to perform at Weeki Wachee. Today the mermaid shows are now a part of the local heritage.

Natural values for the site include the increased focus on the health of the spring as well as the wildlife and landscape that surround it. The river ride at the park provides one with a glimpse at the wildlife and landscape surrounding the park, including manatees which frequent the waters of the park at certain times of the year and trees which are significant due to age or the scarcity in today’s landscape. The health of the spring is a natural value because of its connection to the aquifer but also because the water management district owns the land and is tasked with the maintenance and concern for the overall quality of the spring water.

Ownership and Management

Weeki Wachee became a state park in 2010. The property was operated by Florida Leisure prior to that and is owned by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. After being sold by ABC the visitation numbers continued to decline for the attraction and several attempts were made to bring interest back to Weeki Wachee including a campaign with the slogan “Save Our Tails.”⁶⁴ As a state park, Weeki Wachee is seeing a renewed interest in the attraction. The management of the attraction saw few changes in the transition into a state park. The changes that did occur occurred mostly in programming and marketing. In managing the site, the state is also more involved in the natural aspects of the site.

Programming

Now that the site is a state park, education plays a slightly greater role in the programming and the site serves as an educational field trip for students. Buccaneer Bay continues to be a year-round draw for Weeki Wachee. The underwater theater now much larger than the theater of 1950 is still the home of the Weeki Wachee mermaid. A river cruise and animal shows as well as recreational activities like hiking trails, picnicking, kayaking and canoeing are also part of the programming now offered at Weeki Wachee.

Marketing

No longer advertised as an underwater mountain, Weeki Wachee has remained the home of the Florida mermaid. As a state park, the attractions at the park being advertised differ slightly from those advertised before becoming a park. No longer will you find brightly colored brochures filled with images of mermaids performing or posed by the fountain out front with other travel brochures at other attractions and visitors

centers. Today, along with other more traditional means of marketing like newspapers and billboards, advertisement for Weeki Wachee Springs State Park can be found online on social media sites. The mermaids, however, remain the main selling point but now the recreational activities added to the attraction have also become selling points.

Cost, Access, and Amenities

U.S. 19 is still used for automobile access to Weeki Wachee. The introduction of the interstate system to the Florida landscape negatively affected all Florida roadside attractions and Weeki Wachee was no exception. The interstate drew potential visitors away from the site and after 1971 diverted them straight into the Orlando area and Walt Disney World. Through the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first the roads surrounding Weeki Wachee were expanded and many of the local businesses that sprang up to support the spring attraction gave way to chain stores and restaurants. The Mermaid Motel later became a Holiday Inn.⁶⁵ Today the cost of an adult admission ticket is \$13 and that includes access to Buccaneer Bay.

Warm Mineral Springs

Warm Mineral Springs is located in the City of North Port, which is in Sarasota County and is located off U.S. 41 south of Sarasota. Warm Mineral Springs is one of a few springs in Florida that claims to be the location Ponce De Leon was in search of, the famed Fountain of Youth (Figure 4-10 and Figure 4-11). As a Florida spring attraction, Warm Mineral Springs is interesting because the attraction is the water itself, which has a significantly higher mineral content than other spring sites. While the water is a factor in attracting visitors at other spring sites, the official attractions are usually human made structures or inventions, like glass bottom boats or underwater theaters.

According to Doug Stamm in *The Springs of Florida*, “Warm Mineral Springs is the southernmost and rarest form of spring in Florida.”⁶⁶ It is the only true warm spring in the state open to the public.⁶⁷ The waters of the spring are 87°F year around and nine million gallons of water flow daily.⁶⁸ As the southernmost spring, taking into consideration the water temperature and mineral content, it is understood that the source for Warm Mineral Spring is “far deeper in the aquifer than any northern spring.”⁶⁹ The daily flow creates a two and a half acre lake more than 250 feet deep.⁷⁰ A phenomenon is associated with the visibility at the site; in the daytime, the water is often cloudy but overnight the spring can have clarity from almost 200 feet below.⁷¹ Another distinguishing characteristic of the water at Warm Mineral Springs is the slight sulfurous smell.

History

Native American hunters once frequented the Warm Mineral Springs area and the spring has been the site of archaeological studies as well. “The famous diver, Bill Royal, discovered (on a 43 ft. ledge) human remains carbon dated over 10,000 years old”⁷² in 1959. Additional bones and tools have been found 150 feet below the surface in a debris cone.⁷³ As a spring attraction, the spring offers “relaxation and putative care. Bathers mill around the shallow edges of the spring, moving in a clockwise direction because the spring water tends to swirl slowly clockwise, and people move with the flow.”⁷⁴

A spa opened on the site in 1946 but information on ownership at the time of purchase could not be located. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places with the historic significance listed as “information potential and the period of significance as Prehistoric.”⁷⁵ The archaeological work done at the site in the mid-

twentieth century is what prompted the nomination to the Register. Warm Mineral Springs was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. It has been about twenty years since there was any archaeological work done at the site. Warm Mineral Springs has continued to operate as a spa through its history and “people come from all over the world to bathe in the warm waters of the spring, which many claim has “properties to heal and restore vigor.”⁷⁶

“For most people in Sarasota County, the springs have never been more than another Old Florida roadside attraction.”⁷⁷ However, in 2009, the spa business on the site failed and the property was repossessed by the Naples based Cypress Lending. In 2010, the City of North Port and Sarasota County purchased the site for \$5.5 million and made it a publically held property.⁷⁸ When Cypress Lending sold the property to North Port and Sarasota County an agreement was made so that Cypress Lending could continue to run the facility until June of 2013 and keep all of the revenue.⁷⁹ The problem is that the City and the County have yet to come to a decision as to what to do with the site and the best way to move forward. In addition to their problems the health of the spring is now a concern because “Warm Mineral Springs is not quite as warm as usual this winter, its mineral-laden waters as much as four degrees cooler than the usual 87 degrees.”⁸⁰

1950 Warm Mineral Springs

Warm Mineral Springs in 1950 was an established Florida attraction. The attraction opened as a spa in the late 1940s and was a site used for the Quadricentennial Festival where Florida Celebrated 400 years of history in 1959 and 1960.⁸¹

Ownership and Management

The ownership of the site in 1950 is unknown. All that is known about the management at the time is that the attraction opened as a spa and they allowed the site to be used for the Quadricentennial Festival.

Programming

Warm Mineral Springs has always functioned as a spa. The programming was built around the healing powers of the mineral rich water. In 1950, the programming mostly included swimming and bathing in the water. One could also pay 25 cents to smear mud from the banks of the spring hole on your body.⁸² Throughout the decade, archaeological dives were also conducted at Warm Mineral Springs.

Marketing

Signs were placed along the roadsides to advertise the site. The phenomenon of the waters at Warm Mineral Springs were used as advertisement and used to draw in visitors.⁸³ Reputation and word of mouth were largely relied upon for marketing.

Cost, Access, and Amenities

The exact cost of admission in 1950 is also unknown. All that is known of cost from that time is that it only cost 25 cents to cover oneself in mud from the banks of the spring pool. One could access the spring from U.S. 41. Just as with other Florida attractions, businesses and accommodations soon began to open in the surrounding areas. The Warm Mineral Springs motel was built in 1958 according to the Sarasota County Property Appraiser.⁸⁴ It was designed by Victor Lundy,⁸⁵ an architect associated with the Sarasota School of Architecture.

Warm Mineral Springs Today

Warm Mineral Springs is not as well known to most without a prior connection to the area or attraction. It is now a resort and health spa, with more than half of its visitors arriving from other countries, which are mainly Eastern European.⁸⁶ After years of ownership and management issues the future operations of the site is still somewhat in question.

The overall health of the spring and the surrounding area are natural values for the site and there is concern for these values. Warm Mineral Springs was not its normal 87 degrees in December of 2012 and it has been predicted that the flow at Warm Mineral Springs will decrease 20 percent by 2020.⁸⁷ The healing quality of the water is also a natural value because it is a result of the mineral levels. Many frequent Warm Mineral Springs for “cures for muscular problems, arthritis, and rheumatism, many bathers profess finding relief in this water that has five times the mineral content of all other famous spas around the world.”⁸⁸

Ownership and Management

After the spa business at the time failed in 2009, Cypress Lending repossessed the property.⁸⁹ In 2010, North Port and Sarasota County bought the property. As agreed upon at the time of purchase, the city and the county allow Cypress Lending to continue to run the attraction. The city and the county have yet to come to a final decision on how to move forward with the site. “The county wants an eco-tourism destination, with a spruced-up spa and other amenities – possibly a hotel.”⁹⁰ North Port however does not agree with the options set forth by the county and wants a more sympathetic plan.⁹¹

Programming

Since 1950, Warm Mineral Springs has always functioned as a spa. It has also functioned as the site of archaeological research and dives. The work of Bill Royal at the site is well-documented and used as incentive to allowing archaeological work to begin again at the site. Today at the spring attraction one can take a yoga class, participate in a drum circle, enjoy lunch in the café, or go for a dip in the spring. Special local events and activities are also held at the site at different times. The additional programming provides visitors with more options for recreation but the main attractor for the site continues to be the spring pool and the nutrient rich water (Figure 4-12).

Marketing

When North Port and Sarasota County purchased Warm Mineral Springs, they spent “\$500,000 for a robust marketing campaign and a few upgrades such as new tile in the locker rooms.”⁹² For the most part Warm Mineral Springs has managed to maintain a steady business throughout the years with very little advertising because of their strong international tourist base.

Cost, Access, and Amenities

North Port and Sarasota County spent \$5.5 million purchasing the site. Under Cypress Lending, one can purchase an annual pass to Warm Mineral Springs for \$1,500.00.⁹³ A day pass for an adult is \$20, but they do offer slightly reduced prices for Sarasota County Residents day passes. One can access the site by taking Interstate 75 or U.S. 41. Currently the spring attraction is surrounded by housing but the Warm Mineral Springs Motel is still in operation and serving spring tourists (Figure 4-13 and Figure 4-14).

Summary

Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee Springs, and Warm Mineral Springs all play a role in the history of Florida spring tourism and each has a set of values deemed significant to the site by the community, tourists, historians, as well as preservationists. In looking at the case study criteria for each site including the ownership, management, programming, marketing, costs, access, and amenities one can begin to understand and make judgments about the values associated with sites and how those values are ranked by various stakeholder groups.

Each of the three sites has historical values associated with the Native American populations that occupied and made use of the springs and surrounding areas. Historical values can also be associated with each sites association with tourism during the midcentury. All three spring sites also have natural values, associated with the springs, the water quality and clarity, the plant life as well as the surrounding wildlife. Access to the sites is associated with the changes in cultural values that came with the interstate. With all three sites, access after the interstate is an issue. Not because these attractions were now harder to get to but because the interstate took the Florida tourist off the State and U.S. highways and away from the businesses built to attract them to Florida in the first place. The means of transportation in the late twentieth century and twenty-first century also plays a role in access, in that rather than driving many visitors now fly to Florida.

The change in both Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee into state parks is also indicative of cultural changes and a shift in how one views midcentury Florida spring attractions in today's tourism industry. The addition of the Weeki Wachee mermaid into the lore associated with the Florida landscape of the past is a nonuse value, as are the

legacies associated with Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee. A nonuse value associated with Warm Mineral Springs would be the research conducted there in the past and the educational opportunities it provides for present and future archaeologists. Silver Springs' listing as a National Natural Landscape and Warm Mineral Springs' listing on the National Register of Historic Places are nonuse values for their listing but are use values because listings such as these can often result in an influx of tourists looking to visit a site of cultural significance.

In looking at site values one can begin to point out which values are of greater importance at various times. For Silver Springs, for example marketing and use values have always been more important than aesthetic values because the main attraction for the site has always been the spring pool. For Weeki Wachee, cultural and social values seem to take precedence over the use values. Throughout most of Weeki Wachee's history, the mermaids have been the selling point for the attraction and retaining cultural significance seems to have been more important than the profits they were earning; profits were of importance to Weeki Wachee but they were not valued over their cultural value. Warm Mineral Springs, as a spring attraction seems to value its use values above all else. The spring attraction has placed economic gains over sociocultural values and this becomes evident when looking at what services and amenities are no longer permitted at the site.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Warm Mineral Springs was the site of several archaeological projects but the site has not allowed one for the last twenty years. Another example would be the option to picnic at the site; presently visitors to the site are not allowed to bring in their own provisions because the spa would rather

guests spent money at the café on the premises. While placing one value over another is not the end of the world, it can be problematic if the values are not reviewed over time and reassessed for sociocultural and economic shifts.

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Figure 4-1. Welcome sign at Silver Springs. Photo by author.



Figure 4-2. Glass Bottom Boat in spring pool at Silver Springs. Photo by author



Figure 4-3. River Cruise boat at Silver Springs. Photo by author.



Figure 4-4. Kids Ahoy Playland at Silver Springs. Photo by author.

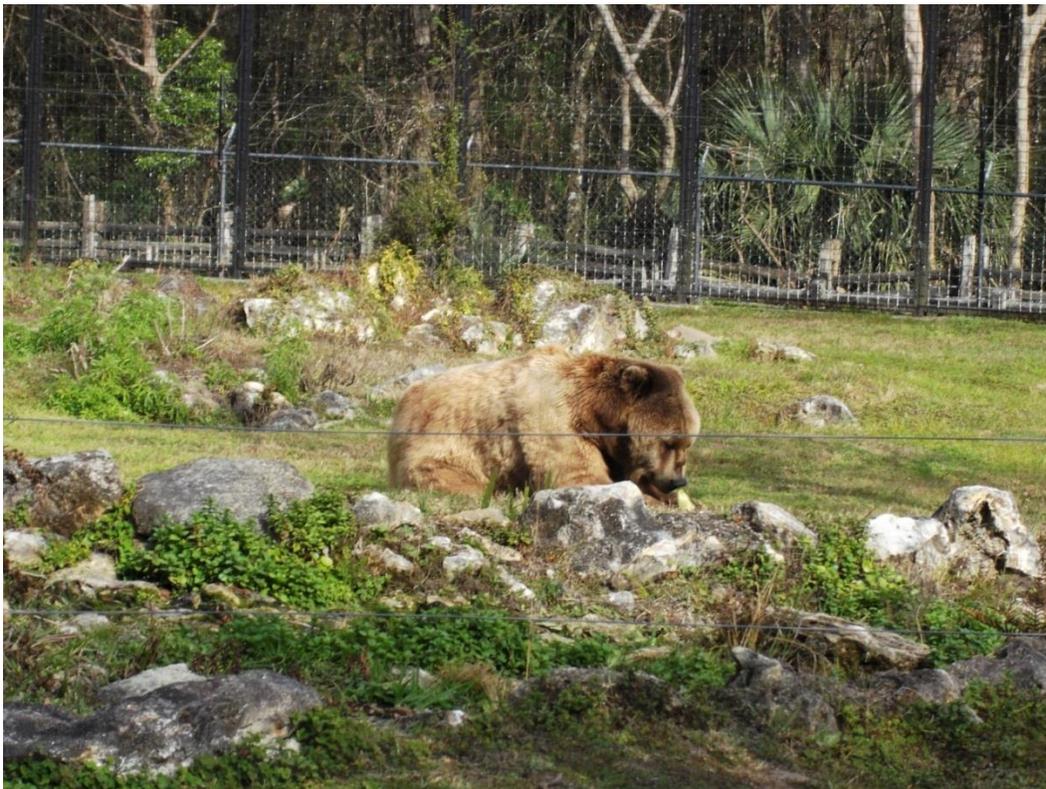


Figure 4-5. World of Bears at Silver Springs. Photo by author.



Figure 4-6. Little Mermaid performance at Weeki Wachee State Park. Photo by author.



Figure 4-7. Sign at Mermaid Theater entrance at Weeki Wachee State Park. Photo by author.



Figure 4-8. Underwater theater at Weeki Wachee State Park. Photo by author.



Figure 4-9. Buccaneer Bay at Weeki Wachee State Park. Photo by author.

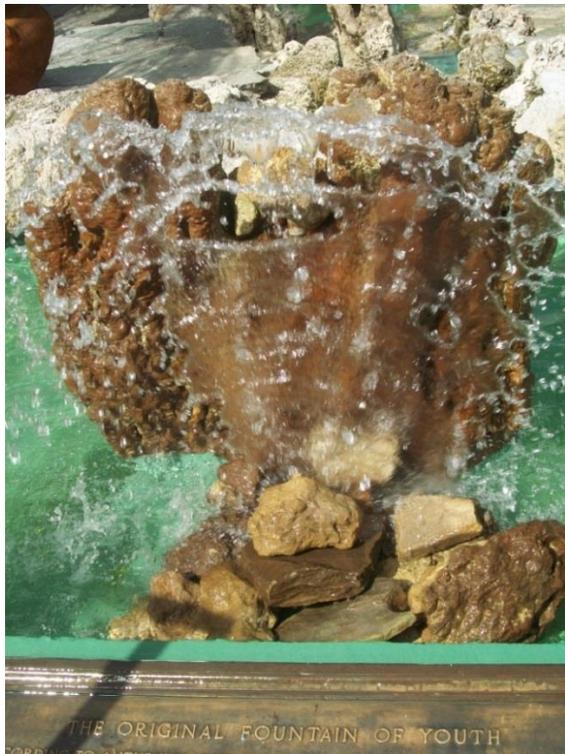


Figure 4-10. Fountain of Youth at Warm Mineral Springs. Photo by author.



Figure 4-11. Fountain of Youth plaque at Warm Mineral Springs. Photo by author.



Figure 4-12. Warm Mineral Springs. Photo by author.



Figure 4-13. Warm Mineral Springs Motel in North Port, Florida. Photo by author.



Figure 4-14. Warm Mineral Springs Motel. Photo by author.

CHAPTER 5 OUTCOMES

Florida spring attractions have drawn visitors to the Sunshine State since the mid-nineteenth century. Spring attractions have played host to western sideshows, Hollywood films, alligator farms, conjectural Native American villages, archaeologists, mermaids, fountains of youth, and spas. The Florida spring attraction is one of the attraction types that helped spur the tourism industry in the State. In the mid-twentieth century, there were the “Big Five,” which included Silver Springs, Wakulla Springs, Rainbow Springs, Weeki Wachee Springs, and Homosassa Springs.¹ The Big Five were the spring sites that were the most visible in terms of advertising, the film industry, post cards, souvenirs, brochures, visitor numbers, radio, and television.² The construction of the interstate in the late twentieth century not only cut through the Florida landscape but cut through the profits of many Florida spring attractions as well. Those that managed to maintain their businesses were then inundated with Walt Disney World and the major amusement parks that popped up because of its success in the Orlando area.

Remaining spring attractions are now faced with the after effects of the shift within the Florida tourism market. The shift refers to the change in tourist expectations and what types of sites are now favorable overall. To the general public or the unconcerned citizen and those too young to remember the days when Florida spring attractions were major tourist draws, the shift from midcentury tourism into the twenty-first century tourism industry might seem seamless. In some ways, it was quite seamless; the interstate came in and made the state navigable in ways that had not been possible by automobile. At the same time, preparations to bring a Disney theme

park to the state were underway. Walt Disney World was going to bring jobs, money, and big business tourism to the state and might have been located in the Ocala area had it not been for the interstate system that was at the time making its way through and around Orlando. After Walt Disney World, a slew of other amusement parks began to populate the Orlando area including Universal Studios and Sea World. The growth from smaller local attractions to larger corporate theme parks seems like a natural progression for tourism, but what one must consider is what happens to the smaller attractions. Tourism is no longer a business but an industry for the State of Florida and in the transition; many attractions lost and had to close their doors. Within the Florida landscape, there are quite a few abandoned attractions that have yet to be demolished or paved over. Florida spring attractions seem to be the exception to the rule. In other cases attractions can simply close and lock the gates and let that be it but with spring attractions the effect on the spring and the surrounding area must always be considered. In the past when spring attractions have closed they have either become state parks or been purchased by new parties. "The state has successfully managed transitions from private to public ownership at Weeki Wachee and Rainbow Springs"³ and will undertake the transition with Silver Springs before the end of the year.

In terms of values, over the past sixty or so years, Florida spring attractions have seem significant changes within some categories while only slight changes in others. Growth in population, land development, technological improvements, and the way we as Americans live today has all played a role in the change in values. For spring attractions, changes in values are immediately apparent in what is available at sites in terms of entertainment and activities. Silver Springs' main attraction has always been

and continues to be the glass bottom boats but through the years, other rides and shows have been added to maintain enthusiasm for the site. The same was done with Weeki Wachee Springs who added Buccaneer Bay to their site to sustain business. Warm Mineral Springs is unique in that the attraction has always been the water. As an attraction, it has always functioned as a spa. The only thing that seems to change for Warm Mineral Springs is the spa services and the cost of admission.

Sociocultural Values

The sociocultural values examined seem to have slight differences between Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee Springs, and Warm Mineral Springs. The sociocultural values being “values attached to an object, building, or place because it holds meaning for people or social groups due to its age, beauty, artistry, or association with a significant person or event or otherwise contributes to processes of cultural affiliation.”⁴ The sociocultural values for this thesis are the historic values, cultural values, social values, aesthetic values, and natural values. For the most part the values of Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee were more closely related than with Warm Mineral Springs because of the similarities in their overall use.

The historic values for each site included Native Americans and their role or use of the sites. The historic values for Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee also included the growth of Florida and the increased use of the automobile as a means of personal transportation. Education is a historic value for Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee as well. The Florida Park Service has both a mission statement and vision, which indicate interpretation and education as objectives to each site. The vision states its intention is to provide future generations with “quality and appropriate resource-based recreational opportunities, interpretation and education that help visitors connect to ‘The Real

Florida’.”⁵ With one already a state park and the other soon to become one education becomes more important to their programming. Education is not a historic value for Warm Mineral Springs in the same way it is at the other sites. In the time between 1950 and today education was a historic value because of the archaeological work done at the site but the archaeological work has since ceased although there are intentions to resume it. Cultural values for the sites seemed to relate to the growth of the tourism industry, car culture, and the nostalgia now associated with midcentury tourist attractions. Social values changed for spring attractions because cultural values changed. Springs, in the cases of Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee, are no longer local swimming and bathing sites where families come together for special events or friends meet every Saturday. Warm Mineral Springs is once again unique in that it managed to maintain its social connectivity among the guests that frequent the site.

Aesthetic values for all sites are concerned with the overall appearance of the site as a whole. This includes the plant life as well as the structures on the site. The buildings at Warm Mineral Springs have aesthetic value because of the style in which they are built while Weeki Wachee is of aesthetic value because of the underwater theater and its continued use as well as for the fountain and statue at the entranceway.

The natural values for all three sites revolve around their springs. Silver Springs and Warm Mineral Springs are both dealing with conservation of the sites. The issues have manifested in different ways with the clarity of the water being affected at Silver Springs while the water temperature and continued flow is a concern at Warm Mineral Springs. The health of the springs is a statewide issue that receives somewhat sporadic support depending upon the current state administration. An initiative to protect and

study springs within the state that was put in place under Governor Jeb Bush has been cut under the current Governor Rick Scott. Along with spring health, natural values also include the plant and animal life surrounding the springs.

Economic Values

The economic values seem to remain somewhat constant because the end goal is generally the same and that is for the most part to remain in business. The economic values are use (market) values and nonuse (nonmarket) values. The use (market) values include everything associated with monetary value.

The brochures, marketing, and advertisements for Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee all served as use values. Warm Mineral Springs has managed to maintain a steady flow of visitors without very much advertisement through the years. Use values also include the costs of operating and managing each attraction. Nostalgia also functions as a use value in that visitors who have not been to a site for many years sometimes return to relive the fun and excitement once experienced. Marketing of nostalgia in brochures and on billboards can play a role in bringing visitors back to attractions as well. In terms of repeat users, programming like the concert series and Wild Waters at Silver Springs and Buccaneer Bay at Weeki Wachee Springs play a big role in terms of economic values. The concert series and water parks added to the sites are large attractors for visitors in general, but they are also effective in bringing in locals and Florida residents year round. Additionally, the year round business helps local businesses and services catering to the attraction visitors maintain their business. Branding for these three Florida spring attractions affects their use value.

The use of nostalgia as a marketing tool has been somewhat effective in bringing visitors back to these sites however; it has not produced a change in the continued

decline of guest numbers. For example, the techniques employed by Silver Springs in 1950 are no longer as successful in bringing in visitors. With Silver Springs becoming a state park one can assume that rebranding will occur. The rebranding of spring attraction sites seems to be an option that has been overlooked throughout their decline in use. However, as in the case with Weeki Wachee becoming a state park, in today's market new ownership seems to indicate that branding and marketing will be reevaluated and focused on the needs of the site today.

Nonuse (nonmarket) values are the “economic values that are not traded in or captured by markets and are therefore difficult to express in terms of price.”⁶ The nonuse market values for the sites has to do with site legacy, design notoriety, the continued use of the sites, as well as their roles in the lore once associated with the Florida landscape. Nostalgia also functions as a nonuse value for Florida spring attractions. For many visitors these three attractions remind them of their childhood family vacations when the whole family would pile into the car and drive to Florida. The state taking on sites like Weeki Wachee Springs and Silver Springs also plays into the nonuse values. Each site has cultural and heritage significance for the state and the local communities however both Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee were essentially bailed out by the state when they were unable to increase visitor numbers and produce enough profits to maintain their attractions. In becoming state parks, these attractions are now the responsibility of the state in terms of the funding and management as well as their overall ecology.

Summary

Both sociocultural and economic values transformed the Florida spring attraction over the years. The development of the highway and interstate systems along with air

travel has changed the way people travel and see the world. Technological advances and new ideas about the overall travel experience have led to the progression and evolution of the theme park. Theme parks centered on natural attractions are no longer major destinations. In order for a theme park to be able to compete in today's market it needs the support of a major corporation and a brand that is easily recognizable as well as synonymous with fun, consistency, and exceptional entertainment. As seen with Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee Springs the state is the only entity large enough and willing to compete with the major corporations running the theme parks in central Florida. In using values to assess spring attractions the state as well as North Port and Sarasota County can determine significance in more detail and effective management strategies to be implemented in the future.

1 Tim Hollis, *Glass Bottom Boats & Mermaid Tails*, (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2006), pp. 135.

2 Ibid., p. 135.

3 Palombo, Jessica. "If Silver Springs Becomes A State Park, This Is What It Could Look Like," WFSU. <http://news.wfsu.org/post/if-silver-springs-becomes-state-park-what-it-could-look> (accessed January 28, 2013).

4 Mason, Randall. The Getty Conservation Institute, "Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices," http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf (accessed November 8, 2012) p. 11.

5 Florida Department of Environmental Protection, "About the Florida Park Service." Accessed March 10, 2013. <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/aboutus.htm>.

6 Mason, Randall. The Getty Conservation Institute, "Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices," http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf (accessed November 8, 2012) p. 13.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

In looking towards the future of Silver Springs and Weeki Wachee Springs, continued use of the sites seems guaranteed as long as the state can afford to maintain the sites. It is highly probable that the state acquired the sites because of their relation to the springs and concern with spring health; however, their maintaining the sites attractions, like the mermaid show at Weeki Wachee suggests that the state is aware of the cultural heritage of spring sites and seeks to protect it. For Warm Mineral Springs, the future is dependent upon which values the City and the County choose to focus on in their attempt to save the site. The attraction is on the National Register of Historic Places and does have a steady client base but the operation and maintenance costs, spring health and the age of the architecture could work against saving this site as a public attraction.

The decision to make what could be described as the Florida's oldest and most well know spring attraction a state park came in January of 2013. The business of Florida spring attractions has been on a steady decline over the past twenty-five to thirty years. Florida tourism is no longer centered on the features provided by the landscape, it is now big business and not even old Florida attractions are immune. This was made apparent with the several attempts over the last decade to try to save Cypress Gardens, which resulted in the site becoming an adventure park and eventually having to close its doors. Cypress Gardens is now LEGOLAND. Silver Springs becoming a state park marks the end of an era. The myth and the lore behind the Florida landscape no longer seems to have the same appeal to travelers and families on vacation. The spring attractions of the twentieth century now seem to be met with apathy or disappointment.

Florida spring attractions have always been site specific; each had its own headliner and they all displayed Florida in a different light. Of the larger and well-known spring attractions, Silver Springs is the last to be acquired by the state. The transition of Weeki Wachee into a state park has brought interest back to the site. Florida seems to be committed to keeping Weeki Wachee as a spring attraction by keeping the mermaid show. Warm Mineral Springs is not state owned but county and city owned and the future of this site is not all that clear at this point in the partnership. The overall goal in the purchase seems to be to make a profit. There is concern for the health of the spring, but that seems to stem from the realization that the site's most significant feature could be lost.

For Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee Springs, and Warm Mineral Springs the preservation of each site has come about in different ways. For each of the three has historic value through archaeological finds although Warm Mineral Springs is the only one to be preserved as a result. Each spring site is unique and has elements that differentiate it from the others within the state. Yet, of the three sites, only Silver Springs is a National Natural Landmark. Weeki Wachee is a state park and like many other spring attractions. Changing spring attractions from privately owned venues to state property has worked in favor of most spring sites. In the case of Weeki Wachee, becoming a state park has been beneficial because it kept the attraction open, it allows for greater protection of the springs, and in maintaining the mermaid show the state is effectively preserving the sites cultural heritage.

In looking at a value based approach for evaluating spring attraction sites it becomes apparent that while each of these sites has some form of preservation at work

there are gaps in what is valued and deemed worthy of protection. For Warm Mineral Springs, the site is on the National Register but for archaeological reasons. The midcentury architecture, other physical attributes, and amenities of the site are completely overlooked, as are the cultural and social values associated with the site. The listing also fails to recognize the use of the site during Florida's Quadracentennial Festival. Silver Springs is a National Natural Landmark but that only recognizes the springs. The fact that it is one of the state's oldest and most recognizable spring attractions is not looked at as being of significance at all nor is the effect it had on Florida tourism as a whole. Turning Silver Springs into a state park will allow for the protection of the cultural heritage of the site but that is not the reason it is becoming a state park. Silver Springs is transitioning into a state park because it is losing business and the health of the spring is in danger. Weeki Wachee seems to be the exception. When the state stepped in to save Weeki Wachee, it effectively saved the mermaids from extinction. The attraction was only maintaining its operation through Buccaneer Bay, the water park that was added before ABC sold the site. In becoming, a state park Weeki Wachee has been able to maintain its attraction while adding features more traditional for state parks such as trails and Florida focused animal shows. In using a value based approach to determine significance, sites such as Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee, and Warm Mineral Springs would be preserved based on a more comprehensive understanding of the site as a whole rather than just one particular element that does not express the full significance of a site.

Limitations

This thesis study looked at the three sites and the values associated to them in order to examine merits of a value-based approach to significance. Each site was

evaluated for values at the mid-twentieth century and today. For further study and an increased understanding of the shift in values that occurred in the world of Florida tourism adding another year to the study would be beneficial. This is because the changes brought on by Walt Disney World and other, larger theme parks being built in Florida greatly affected these sites and the values associated with spring sites in the late 1970s and early 1980s are different from what they are today. Today spring sites are looked at with nostalgia for a simpler time that was not the case in the latter half of the twentieth century. Another limitation that could lead to further study is that this thesis makes assumptions based on research. Further study could incorporate interviews with representatives at all three sites and those in government to gain a fuller understanding of what values they associate with their sites and how those values are applied to the continued operation and maintenance of the sites. Further studies might also look at the size of the attraction in relation to the values associated with it. As well as how state parks are managing the cultural heritage resources of midcentury Florida spring attractions.

Future Preservation

For future preservation efforts toward Florida spring attractions one can take the examples of these three sites and recognize that in trying to maintain and keep them open for business some areas of significance were given higher priority than others. In doing so, a disservice was done to the sites as a whole. The importance of spring attractions to Florida tourism has been mostly overlooked, so has the cultural shift that allowed these sites to gain such popularity in the mid-twentieth century. For spring attractions not currently protected as a state park or by other preservation programs the

use of a value based approach for determining significance would be a beneficial means to protecting their site.

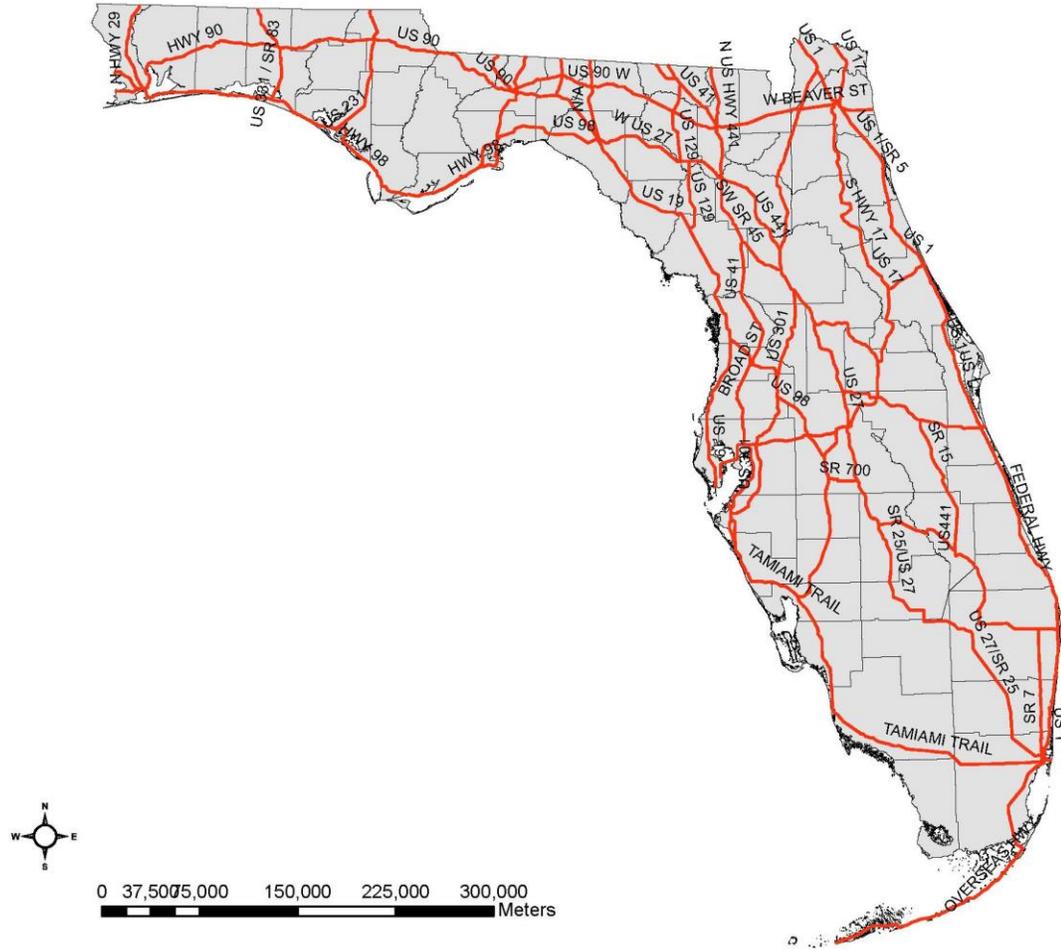
The purpose of this thesis is to assess the values that inform effective management strategies associated with Florida spring attractions in both the 1950s and in the present in relation to the criteria determined based on the operation and maintenance of the site. In determining which values inform effective strategies for management, an understanding of these three spring sites history and operation has been established. In the future with the use of this understanding other spring sites can evaluate what values are associated with their sites as well as which they want to emphasize and develop a management plan.

APPENDIX A
MATRIX OF THREE SPRING ATTRACTIONS

	Silver Springs		Weeki Wachee Spring		Warm Mineral Springs	
	1950	2012	1950	2012	1950	2012
Location	Silver Springs, Florida East of Ocala Marion County		Weeki Wachee Near Spring Hill Hernando County		North Port Sarasota County	
Ownership	Carl Ray and W. M. Davidson	Owned by the state but leased by private operator	Newton Perry	State (State Park)		Sarasota County and the City of North Port
Marketing	Glass Bottom Boats	Natures theme park Glass Bottom Boats	Mountain under water	City of live mermaids One of Florida's oldest and most unique roadside attractions	Healing Waters Fountain of Youth	Healing Waters Fountain of Youth Spa
Programming	Glass Bottom Boats Reptile Institute Seminole Indian Village Jungle Cruise Paradise Park	Glass Bottom Boats Wild Waters (Water Park) Wildlife Shows Amusement Park Rides Concert Series	Mermaids Underwater Theater (18 seats)	Mermaids Underwater Theater (400 seats) River Cruises Water Slides Animal Shows Scuba Diving Swimming Snorkeling Restaurant Banquet Hall	Swimming, Soaking and Wading Archaeological Dives Cyclorama	Spa Services Exercise Classes Swimming Soaking and Wading

				Picnic Area Canoeing Kayaking		
Amenities		Motels Denny's Gas Stations RV park	Mermaid Motel			Warm Mineral Springs Motel
Access	U.S. 441	I-75 or I-95 U.S. Highway 301 State Road 40 in Ocala U.S. 441	U.S. 19	U.S. Highway 19 at the intersection of State Road 50	U.S 41	I-75 U.S. 41
Visitation	800,000	217,035				80,000-100,000 annually
Admission Cost	Fees were charged to ride class bottom boats	\$34.99 General/ Senior \$26.99 Children(age 3-10)		\$13 per adult \$8 per child, ages 6-12	25 cents to smear mud from the banks on oneself	\$20 for adults \$8 for children under 12
Spring	Largest and first magnitude springs in Florida with an average discharge of 550 million gallons per day.		Weeki Wachee Spring – first magnitude spring with an average discharge of 112 million gallons a day Second magnitude spring Several smaller springs outside the park Combine to form the Weeki Wachee River		9 million gallons of warm water flow into the springs each day from a 3000-foot deep aquifer The water is a constant 87 degrees year round Only warm water mineral spring in Florida and the largest warm water mineral spring in the world	

APPENDIX B
1950 MAJOR ROADS MAP



Major Roads in 1950 still in existence today. Map by author.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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