

*A Healthier Silver Springs: Local People Take Action
Adopt A Park Project by Pioneer Garden Club of Ocala - Florida*



The Silver Springs attraction (roughly 266 acres) was transmitted to the Florida State Park system in October 2013, and combined with the Silver River State Park. The merging of these two properties resulted in the "Silver Springs State Park". The natural functioning landscapes of the attraction's 266 acres had been changed over the years to include formal gardens. The Pioneer Garden Club with the assistance of Park Staff has formed a partnership for the future management of the gardens.

A *Plan of Action* crystallized in January 2014 for the revitalization of 4 Key Landscaped Areas and on April 1, 2014 the **Silver Springs State Park Formal Garden Landscape Project** was officially begun. The primary goal of this project is: *A Healthier Future for Silver Springs*. Landscape architect, Mike Pape has offered his professional services pro-bono to conceptualize landscapes for the gardens that would improve the health of the springs. The guiding principles for the gardens are listed below:

**Un-do landscape features that have no cultural, historical, nor horticultural appropriateness,
Increase the use of native plants,
Non-native Florida-Friendly species would be utilized secondarily to native plants,
Reduce watering & fertilization with Florida Friendly techniques of mulching and appropriate plant selection
Reduce maintenance and reliance on human-intensive management such as pruning,
Provide environmental interpretation and education opportunities for the community.**

The Pioneer Garden Club Silver Springs Committee is responsible for engaging its members to accomplish the project goals.

Project Goals for 2014/2015 are:

1. Formalize the partnership with the Silver Springs State Park thru a Letter of Agreement
2. Establish a Recurring Monthly Workday Program with the Park Staff
3. Engage others in the community to assist with the workday programs
4. Participate with at least one event at the park to provide gardening, landscape design & environmental education related to the 4 adopted gardens.

Silver Springs State Park