

HART SPRINGS DIVING PROGRAM
(As approved by the Gilchrist County BOCC on October 18, 2004.)

I. General Rules

No diver training will be conducted within the Hart Springs Cave.

All Guest Divers must complete the approved Hart Springs Waiver and Release of Liability, and the Statement of Understanding/ Acknowledgment of Rules and Responsibilities.

All Guest Divers must be accompanied by an approved, Active Guide on all dives.

Dive teams shall be limited to two Guest Divers with one Active Guide; provided that there may be an additional diver if that diver is experienced with the cave system.

Guides shall have an emergency procedures and contacts list.

Guides shall assure that proper check-in/check-out procedures are adhered to and check necessary diver credentials. A Credentials Confirmation for the Guest Diver shall be completed by the Guide.

Guides shall have the right to deny access to individuals or terminate dive activities as needed; Guides shall have final judgment and discretion. Guest Divers also have the right to terminate any dive at any time.

All divers will enter and leave the cave together, with the exception of in-water decompression. The Guide will make sure that all Guest Divers have left the Black Lagoon site area after diving activities are complete.

The Park Manager/Ranger shall have authority over Guides; Exception shall be immediate safety issues within the cave.

No diver propulsion vehicles (DPV's) will be used except for cave maintenance by Guides.

Divers must check in to park during regular park hours to begin dive, or follow any other check-in procedures that may be established by Hart Springs Park Management.

Divers will display appropriate activity tag or device on vehicle during diving activities.

The Guides Committee shall maintain a system for the reporting of any incidents in which diver safety may have been compromised or that violate procedures, and all incidents shall be reviewed by the Advisory Committee Board and Guides Committee, with action taken as and when appropriate.

II. Access Qualifications

Active Guides. Active guides shall have and maintain the following credentials:

Cave Diver Rating ("Full" Cave) or higher.

Recognized cave diving experience award (100+ cave dives) or equivalent experience.

DAN insurance or equivalent.

Guides will list Hart Springs Park, Gilchrist BOCC, etc. on any leadership insurance that they may be carrying.

Active Guides must guide at least 6 times per year to maintain guide status, or reviewed by Guides Committee if less.

Guides will volunteer one day per year in support of the Guide Program or Hart Springs Park

Minimum of 6 dives into the system prior to becoming a Guide. Minimum of 2 dives into the downstream portion of the system.

Current CPR rating.

Review and approval of Guides Committee, with final OK by Advisory Board.

All Guides must complete the approved Hart Springs General Release and Waiver of Liability Agreement to be kept on file.

Guest Divers. Guest divers shall have the following minimum credentials:

Cave Diver Rating ("Full" Cave) or higher.

DAN insurance or equivalent.

Recognized cave diving experience award (100+ cave dives) or equivalent experience.

III. Guide Responsibilities and Access Process

A Guide is contacted by a potential Guest Diver. The Diver shall be referred to the Hart Springs Diving web page to review rules and policies. Verbal contact is established between Guest Diver and Guide.

The Guide shall check web page for cave availability. An appointment book shall be maintained on the web page to prevent too many teams from using the site at the same time.

Releases and forms to be downloaded as needed.

The Guide shall make a courtesy call to Hart Springs.

The Guide shall meet the diver(s) at an appropriate location at Hart Springs.

The Guide shall check and verify the Guest Diver's credentials including rating, DAN insurance or equivalent, and proof of experience. The Guide shall supervise the diver's completion of the waiver and other forms.

The Guide shall make sure that fees are paid, and shall turn in waivers/releases to staff or drop box.

The Guide may then conduct the dive. The Guide shall make sure gates (if used) are locked and secure, and report any unauthorized traffic or activities if observed. If more than one team is on site, the Guides will coordinate a safe entry and exit plan for all teams.

The Guide shall follow established checkout protocols upon completion of the dive.

Any problems, line damage, injuries, or other incidents shall be reported to the Guides Committee. Updates of cave conditions to be posted on the web site.

IV. Emergency Procedures

In the case of all emergencies, calls shall be made to 911.

In the case of diving emergencies, Divers Alert Network (DAN) shall be contacted. DAN shall be contacted immediately if there is any indication that a diver needs recompression. DAN will notify appropriate facility.

If injured party can be safely moved, meet rescue at main gate. If injured party cannot be safely moved, someone shall meet and direct rescue services to accident scene.

V. Fees

Guest Divers: \$20 per day. (\$18 + \$2 regular admission fee).

Guides and Support Divers: \$2 general admission or annual park pass.

For a Guide diving with another Guide, one regular admission fee (\$18 + \$2) and one general admission fee (\$2) will be collected.

VI. Cave Diving Guides Committee

The Guides Committee shall be composed of all active and approved Hart Springs Guides.

The Committee shall be chaired by the Head Guide who shall be approved by the Hart Springs Diving Advisory Board and who shall be a member of that Board.

The Guides Committee shall:

Be responsible for the training and approval of future guides. The Head Guide shall have final authority on guide selection and approval.

Evaluate, along with the Head Guide, the status of the current Guides on an annual basis and submit updated lists of approved Guides to the Advisory Board as needed.

Monitor to ensure that proper diving check-in/check-out procedures are being adhered to, and work with park staff to maintain workable operational procedures.

Be responsible for the education and updating of park management regarding diving procedures, and respond in a timely manner to any questions or concerns that park staff may have.

Maintain an emergency procedures and contacts list.

Maintain a reporting system for diver safety incidents and procedures violations, with all incidents to be reviewed by the Head Guide and Advisory Board, with action taken by them as and when appropriate.

Communicate with the Hart Springs Diving Advisory Board as is necessary.

Defer to the authority of the Hart Springs Park Manager. (The exception shall be immediate safety issues within the cave.)

Offer advice and assist the maintenance of the line system and safety signage with the cave.

Inform the Advisory Board of any adverse changes to the cave system, and report on general conditions as needed or when asked to report.

VII. FORMS

A. General Release and Waiver of Liability Agreement

B. Hart Springs Guest Diver Statement of Understanding, Acknowledgment of Rules and Regulations, and Guest Diver Credentials Confirmation By Guide