

Silver Springs State Park's First Wheelchair Accessible Glass Bottom Boat Successfully Completes Sea Trials

It is expected to enter regular service in the next few weeks

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The first wheelchair-accessible glass bottom boat to join the Silver Springs State Park's fleet has successfully completed its sea trials, the Florida State Parks Foundation announced today.

"The 37-foot vessel was built at the St. Johns Ship Building shipyard near Palatka and received Coast Guard clearance last week," said Foundation CEO Julia Gill Woodward. It is expected to enter regular service in the next few weeks.



New wheelchair-accessible glass bottom boat

The Florida State Parks Foundation commissioned Lay, Pitman, & Associates Naval Architects, to design the boat, which includes a flat deck and ample aisles providing easy and convenient access for wheelchairs. It is also equipped with an induction loop system that assists passengers using hearing aids to listen to the captain's narration.

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Gil Ziffer

“We are committed to making nature and our award-winning state parks accessible to all,” said Foundation President Gil Ziffer. “This new wheelchair-accessible boat

will allow everyone to enjoy the famous glass bottom boat tours at Silver Springs,” he said.

In keeping with the tradition of naming the glass bottom boats at Silver Springs after Seminole tribal chiefs, the new boat will be named Chief Potackee after the only female chief of the tribe.

In addition to the Foundation, a consortium of public and private partners has helped fund the boat, including the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida, the Felburn Foundation, the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund, the Florida Park Service, Friends of Silver Springs State Park and Cape Leisure.

The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy.

The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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