

Heritage Festival to return to Rock Springs Run State Reserve in 2025

Plans to build new library to showcase history of East Lake County

SORRENTO, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, March 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following the success of their annual Heritage Festival, the East Lake Historical Society has decided that it will again hold next year's event at Rock Springs Run State Reserve.

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*Maureen Miller, President,
East Lake Historical Society*

“This year's event was a resounding success in our new venue, and we had a record attendance,” said Maureen Miller, president of the East Lake Historical Society. “Next year's Spring event will be bigger and better, and we hope to truly make it an event for all the family. All proceeds will go towards funding a new museum showcasing the rich

history of East Lake County” she said.

The 2025 Heritage Festival will include exhibitors with displays from local organizations and crafters, children's activities, reenactors, historical memorabilia, as well as tram rides, food, and music. There are also plans for a vintage car display and an ‘Ethel Village’.

At this year's festival, the Historic Ethel Trail was officially opened. It is a 1.5-mile wheelchair accessible loop that goes through what was once a sprawling post-Civil War township that had virtually disappeared by the 1920s.

Ethel had a station, store, post office, cemetery, and one-room school and twelve interpretive panels along the trail describe the history of Ethel and what life was like back then. “Almost nothing was known about Ethel until two headstones were found by accident in a remote pasture,” said Philpott, President of the Wekiva Wilderness Trust, the volunteer nonprofit group that supports the work of the Wekiva River Basin State Parks which includes Rock Springs. “That discovery led to a 10-year research project that has unearthed a treasure trove of information about Ethel which flourished between 1870 and 1920, and the 3,000-acre pre-Civil War Delk Plantation, the largest in central Florida, around present-day Kelly Park,” he said.

At next year's festival we hope to recreate the ‘Ethel Village’ – an area where people can see how folks lived back then, what they wore, their arts and crafts, and a display of agricultural tools and

household goods. There are plans to reconstruct two homestead cabins, based on a photograph of a one-room cabin built at Ethel in 1888. One will be a small museum and the other will be furnished – sparsely – as it would have been around that time. School groups are also being encouraged to visit to learn more about their local history.

The East Lake Historical Society is a non-profit organization located in Sorrento, dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich history of the East Lake community. Since its establishment in 2008 the society has worked tirelessly to collect, document, and exhibit the history of the area through various events and programs.

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