



JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jackson County transitions Jackson Blue Springs to “Swim at Your Own Risk.”

Jackson Blue Springs Recreational Area is a popular destination for both locals and tourists, with its natural beauty and recreational activities such as hiking, swimming, paddling, and picnicking. However, running and maintaining the park requires a significant amount of resources and funding, which can be challenging for the county. Over the past few years, the County has been fortunate enough to develop upgrades to the park, which has generated record numbers in visitation. As a result, the JCBOCC has been considering the use of a third-party entity to manage daily operations.

After discussion during past meetings, the Board directed staff to seek out RFP’s (Request For Proposal) for Concessionaire Services at Blue Springs. This decision was made with the aim of reducing staffing and overhead costs, while also improving the visitor experience. Outsourcing concessions services to a professional and experienced vendor, Jackson County hopes to reduce costs while also enhancing the visitor experience. With a concessionaire, visitors can expect a wider range of food and beverage options, the potential of longer operating seasons, and overall improved customer service. Furthermore, this decision will allow Jackson County to focus on other important tasks such as maintenance, conservation, and education, which are essential to the park’s long-term sustainability.

The County has since, sought out RFP’s and has received questions from interested parties about whether we will require Lifeguards, so that they can provide the best response. Subsequently, County Staff has met with risk management and the County’s Insurance Agency to determine the requirements of Lifeguards and learned that it has become more common throughout the state to forego Lifeguard staffing. Instead, the consultants recommended supplementing Lifeguards with adequate signage along with additional life-saving measures. In fact, throughout the State, most facilities comparable to JBS do not have Lifeguards on duty.

The Board ultimately voted to transition Jackson Blue Springs to Swim at Your Own Risk status. Signs will be placed throughout the facility, and staff will ensure notice is given to the public. A walkthrough will be completed with a risk management advisor and life-saving equipment will be placed throughout the park based on their recommendations.

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