

# Ichetucknee Springs open to tubers once again

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Ichetucknee Springs in 2019. Photo by Jim Tatum.

The following notice appeared in the Lake City Reporter, May 18, 202. No link was provided.

*Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.  
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– A river is like a life: once taken,  
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

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# Ichetucknee Springs open to tubers once again

By CARL MCKINNEY

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The stir-crazy masses have something to rejoice about. Ichetucknee Springs State Park is open for day use. Some limitations are in place, but visitors are otherwise free to float, paddle and hike to their heart's content.

The south entrance off U.S. Highway 27 reopened effective Wednesday, according to Florida State Parks. The north entrance remains closed.

Guests are allowed to bring inner tubes, canoes and kayaks. Hiking trails are also open. Visitors are expected to keep six feet apart from one another and limit groups to 10 or fewer people. The park's concessionaire, Paddling Adventures, announced on Facebook that it would be open today. "Come to Ichetucknee Springs State Park SOUTH Entrance. Tubes Rentals, Tram and food from the General Store Grill will be available," the vendor wrote.

"The South Entrance is open 8 a.m. until Sunset. The North Entrance remains closed. We are making accommodations to help ensure your safe visit, but we need your help. Please practice social distancing while enjoying the park, and face masks are encouraged! Remember, we're in this together!"

Officially, the summer tubing season for the Ichetucknee River runs from the Saturday before Memorial Day to the weekend after Labor Day. The rest of the year, the shallow and sensitive

parts of the river are given a chance to recover from the heavy summer traffic, according to Florida State Parks. During the off-season, the park limits tubers to launching from the midpoint dock or Dampier's Landing.

The midpoint dock is off a trail behind the concession building. From the midpoint launch, it's about an hour's float to Dampier's Landing or two hours to the final take-out point.

During the summer season, the park opens up the north canoe launch to tubers. It's not clear how the pandemic will affect tubing season as the state begins to reopen. Staff at Ichetucknee Springs directed questions to the Florida Department of

Environmental Protection, which oversees state parks. A spokesperson from the agency attempted to provide an answer but was unable to follow up before press time.