

The hardest part for Iche dippers? Exiting into 30-degree air

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Fort White's local Iche Nippy Dip Day has made two newspapers this year, in addition to your OSfR newsletter. One, in the nearby [Lake City Reporter](#), and the other is the [Gainesville Sun](#). The Sun's coverage is as follows.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-

The hardest part for Iche dippers? Exiting into 30-degree air

By [Cindy Swirko](#)

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Saturday's dip was the Ichetucknee State Park's version of polar plunges, which are held in icy lakes and rivers in northern states. The spring's water is a constant 72 degrees, so the most uncomfortable part of the Iche dip was not getting in, but instead getting out into the 30-degree air.

Yes, watching Sunday's planned SpaceX launch for which their daughter is mission manager will be exciting but really, can it top the Iche Nippy Dip for Brenda and Nelson Sumner?

The San Antonio, Texas, couple made a detour en route to Cape Canaveral to visit a relative in Fort White, learned about the chilly dip and decided to take the jump Saturday morning.

"We went walking yesterday and saw the sign. We said, 'Oooh, we have to do it.' We've never done one," Brenda Sumner said, adding it was her first time in a spring. "I love it. We are crazy about it. We had so much fun doing it."

Added her husband, "We're going to do it next year too."

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instead getting out into the 30-degree air.

Shivering dippers lined the spring's side trying hard to get cold fingers to pull on clothing, most with big smiles and plenty of chatter to others about the experience.

David Peterson was shivering so much he had a bit of a hard time conveying that he is 8 years old.

"It's fre-fre-freezing," David said. "I can't feel my feet. Mommy, take me to the fire."

David's dad, Joseph Peterson, said the family lives in Fort White and regularly chills in the spring and river in the summer. This was their first time joining in the nippy dip, but he said he will do it again.

The campfire was a popular spot to warm up and to enjoy a post-dip coffee or hot chocolate and doughnuts.



Earl and son Wayne
Kinard

Earl Kinnard is the father of the Iche Nippy Dip. A neighbor of the spring, Kinnard took his first winter swim when he was 15 and has been doing it for 70 years.

Park Manager Bob Sunderholm said word spread about Kinnard's

annual event and more people joined in. The park created the official Iche Nippy Dip Day four years ago.

The Friends of Ichetucknee Springs State Park accepted donations. Also featured was a campfire and primitive fire demonstration, blood drive and chili cookoff.

Sunday night's scheduled SpaceX mission is a mystery. The Sumners said their daughter, Brandi Sippel, cannot tell them anything about it. But they plan to tell her about their Iche dip.

"We like to do fun things," Brenda Sumner said. "I'm surprised at how well we tolerated it."