

For Immediate Release
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UNIQUE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP FACILITATES SPECTACULAR RENOVATION OF RIBAUTL CLUB

Fort George Island, FL --- A unique public partnership between the National Park Service, Florida Parks Service and city of Jacksonville has created a spectacular renovation of the historic Ribault Club located within the Fort George Island Cultural State Park.

The Ribault Club, which sits on 100 acres of pristine, waterfront parkland is just 14 miles south of Amelia Island and 17 miles east of I-95 within the Fort George Island Cultural State Park which is part of the Talbot Island State Parks system. That group of islands is also part of the National Park Service's Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve. All three entities co-manage the area.

The preserve has a plethora of history, outdoor activities and beautiful vistas. Additionally, the Ribault Club is available for rental for special events and each rental contributes to the continued preservation of the historic building.

"The National Park Service, Florida Parks Service and city of Jacksonville have all pulled together to create a magnificent historically accurate renovation of the Ribault Club," said Leana Gallagher, facility manager. "The Ribault Club has been restored to its Roaring Twenties splendor and now can be used by anyone seeking a unique touch for their special event."

Bob Joseph, Park Manager for the Fort George Island Cultural State Park, said that it was easy for all three groups to get together.

"Our philosophies were very similar," he said. "We believe in efficient use of the resources and in development of appreciation of those resources."

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The Florida Parks Service started the reclamation and renovation process by seeking a grant to assess renovation possibilities for the Ribault Club, the only wood structure of its size in northeast Florida. When the renovation costs were calculated, Joseph realized that they would need other sources of funding. In 1998, the three groups executed a co-management agreement and work began.

Joseph marvels at the history of the area stating that it is one of the few areas within the park system where visitors can see 5,000 years of life of the inhabitants. It is all part of the eco-heritage tourism that is available within the area.

Eventually the three groups hope to offer boat tours of the Ribault Club, Kingsley Plantation, Sisters Creek, Ft. Caroline and Mayport. There are also discussions about a possible tram system between Kingsley Plantation which is on the National Park Service side of Ft. George Island and the Ribault Club. Plans also call for a bike trail from Hanna Park in Atlantic Beach over the Mayport Ferry through Little Talbot and Big Talbot Island and ending on Amelia Island.

To learn more about the Ribault Club visit www.theribaultclub.com or call 904-251-1050. For information about Fort George Island log onto www.floridastateparks.org/fortgeorgeisland. The Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve information can be found at www.nps.gov/timu/.