

## Magnolia Springs State Park History

Magnolia Springs State Park encompasses over 1,000 acres between Perkins and Millen, Georgia. The park is named after, and built around, the crystal-clear spring water that flows through the area.

During the Civil War, the area now encompassed by the park, was known as Camp Lawton. A stockade held Union soldiers captured as prisoners of war. The site was selected due to the abundant water supply. Between August and November 1864, Camp Lawton was planned, built, operated, and eventually abandoned. Despite its brief tenure, the prison held over 10,000 soldiers and was said to be the largest prison in the world at the time. The stockade was closed in November 1864, and its prisoners routed to other camps as General William T. Sherman's army closed in during his infamous "March to the Sea." In 2010, archaeology teams from nearby Georgia Southern University uncovered parts of the stockade wall and artifacts from prisoners. Several of these artifacts are interpreted at the Magnolia Springs History Center located inside the park. Presently, archaeologists and historians continue to study this historic property to uncover more details about the camp and its occupants.



*Brochure for Camp Lawton*

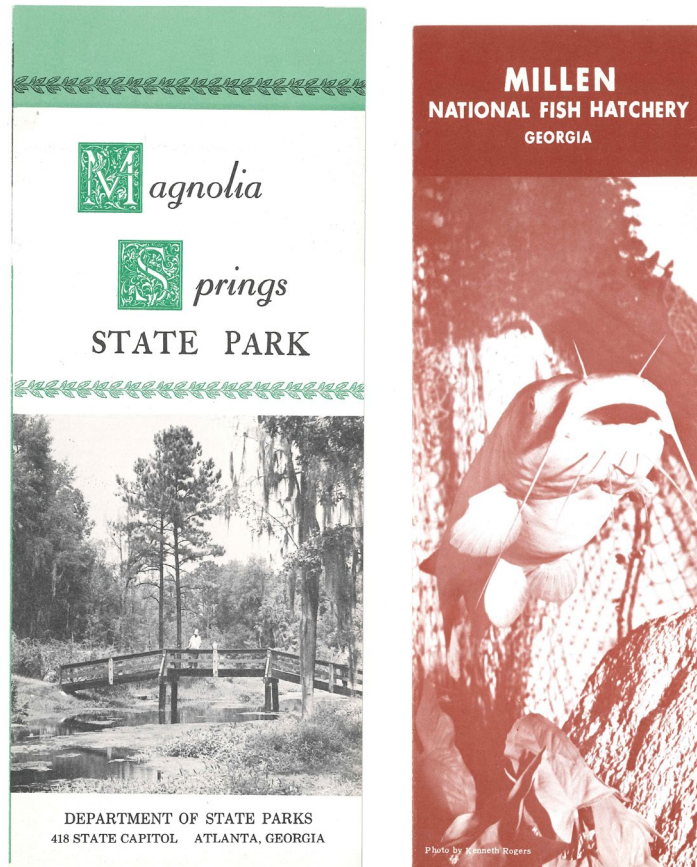


*Plan of Camp Lawton Prison, 1864*

After the Civil War, The springs became a popular recreation destination long before the park was established. This area was used for picnics, church gatherings, reunions, and swimming for local citizens. These same citizens pushed for the development of the area for years until the park was officially created in 1939. Like many early Georgia state parks, much of the infrastructure of Magnolia Springs was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, also known as the "CCC." The CCC was responsible

for damming the spring-fed stream to create a large swimming area for visitors, as well as building roads, a bathhouse, and other park buildings.

The land adjacent to Magnolia Springs State Park is the site of what was once the Millen National Fish Hatchery, later renamed the Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery. The fish hatchery used water from Magnolia Springs to supply 25 ponds that raised sport and endangered fish. The fish hatchery was also home to a popular aquarium where visitors could observe native and raised fish. The hatchery operated until 2010, when it was closed by the Federal Government.



*Vinatge Brochures for Magnolia Springs State Park and Millen Fish Hatchery*

Today Magnolia Springs State Park remains a popular destination in southeast Georgia. The unique sites of the beautiful crystal-clear springs draw in thousands of visitors a year. From being the site of a Civil War prison, to a popular recreation area, the waters at Magnolia Springs have been utilized and transformed for many years. Boardwalks around the water allow visitors to observe the deep clear pools and the copious amount of wildlife that live in the area including American alligators. Magnolia Springs offers fishing, boating, camping, cottage rentals, hiking, biking, and camping in a historically rich area of Georgia.