

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/13/2024 6:00:00 AM

First name: Robbie

Last name: Purdom

Organization: Stone County Historical Society

Title:

Comments: The Stone County Historical Society recognizes the importance of Blanchard Springs Caverns as a major asset to the people of Stone County both economically and culturally. We appreciate the opportunity to serve alongside you in an advisory capacity in any way in which we can help. Members of the Society have already shown their interest in this project through meetings with local Forest Service personnel and subsequent interviews where they expressed views of the past, the present, and the future of the Blanchard Springs Caverns Project and its contributions to the people of the area. Many of those interviewed had ancestors who settled the land, built their homes, their community, and raised their children before being buried there. They built dams and mills before the structures that still partially stand to ground the corn they raised there into meal and to bale their cotton while using the very waters that flow from the Spring that continues to be visited by locals and tourists every year. The Stone County Historical Society has documented much of the history of the area that became Blanchard Springs within its publications which were provided to the Forest Service. There remain records at the Stone County Museum available to any who wants to research. The Stone County Historical Society supports the project of improvements, updating, and restoring in efforts to keep the Blanchard Springs Caverns open and available to the many tourists and locals who continue to come and share its natural beauty and get a better appreciation of its cultural heritage.

Thank you.

Robbie Purdom, Board Member Stone County Historical Society