

**Park Manager's Speech for the 34th Reenactment of the Battle of Olustee
& 75th Anniversary of Florida State Parks**

"Good Afternoon everyone"

"My Name is Ben Faure, Park Manager of Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park. On behalf of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's, Division of Recreation & Parks-It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 34th Annual Battle Reenactment and the 146th Anniversary of the Battle of Olustee."

"We would like to begin today's program with a very special celebration."

"During the entire year of 2010, Florida State Parks will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. Since its establishment in 1935, Florida State Parks have been created throughout the state of Florida in order to provide resource based recreation to the public while preserving, interpreting and restoring our natural and cultural resources such as Olustee Battlefield."

"In 1935 The Florida legislature officially created the Florida Park Service under the Division of Forestry. The first two historic memorials & 4 state parks were born."

"Let's step back in time 75 years to get a glimpse of our history. During this time, state parks were vast open spaces and included many areas not readily accessible by car. Park Rangers patrolled these wild and scenic lands on horseback protecting the resources and providing visitors with a rare and unique interpretation of Florida's diverse ecosystems and the wildlife it supports."

"As the years went by, the park service grew & grew and eventually became its own separate Division. But so did the population in the state of Florida. It became the single most popular tourist destination throughout the US. This resulted in a major population and development growth throughout the state."

"As this growth occurred, many of the states unique natural and cultural resources became threatened. In order to protect many of these rare treasures of the state, the Florida Park Service aggressively worked to purchase and protect these lands so they were preserved for future generations to enjoy."

"Today, the Florida Park Service proudly manages over 160 state parks which stretch from Perdido Key in the western Panhandle all the way to Key West which includes more than 700,000 acres of Florida's natural environment, 100 miles of beaches, eight National Historic Landmarks and 39 sites on the National Register of Historic Places. Florida State Parks has been recognized by the National Recreation and Park Association as the nation's first and only two-time Gold Medal winner for the nation's best park service."

“Just as we did back then, The Florida Park Service still holds true to its values and mission of preserving, interpreting and restoring our natural and cultural resources.”

“As we celebrate this historic occasion today, we are proud to recognize the members of the Florida Park Service Mounted Horse Patrol, the Ft. Clinch State Park Cannon Crew and all of the dedicated Florida Park Service employees who helped shape the rich history of the Florida Park Service.”

“Please join us and the Regiment Band of the 11th North Carolina Troops as we sing Happy 75th Birthday to the Florida Park Service.”

“Please be sure to stop by our 75th anniversary display at the Information Tent located at the park’s entrance to learn all about Florida State Parks or visit us online at floridastateparks.org.”

“So you might be wondering how Olustee Battlefield fits into the significance of all this?”

“The Olustee Battlefield Memorial was acquired by the State of Florida in 1909 after years of dedication by the Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy who raised funds to place a monument on the site. That Makes Olustee Battlefield the First ever site acquired by the State of Florida to become a Florida State Park! So while the Florida Park Service celebrates its 75th anniversary, let’s here a round of applause for the 100 year anniversary of the purchase of Olustee Battlefield!”

“The United Daughters of the Confederacy began their fund raising efforts in 1897 for Olustee. In 1899, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$2,500 and established a commission to oversee construction of the monument. The monument was completed in 1912 and dedicated on October 23rd of that same year.”

“The United Daughters of the Confederacy administered Olustee Battlefield Memorial until 1949, appropriating an annual sum for its upkeep.”

**“We are pleased to welcome Ms. Ann Brown
Representing the Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.”**

“Today, Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is cooperatively managed by the Florida Park Service and the U. S. Forest Service. We would like to thank Ivan Green, District Ranger of the Osceola National Forest and all the U. S. Forest Service personnel for their continuous support in making this event possible.”

“The Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization works with us year round on park related projects, this Annual Reenactment and the Civil War Expo in September of each year. We would like to thank President Gary Dickinson and all of the members of the Olustee Battlefield Citizen Support Organization for their continuous support. The Olustee Battlefield Citizen Support Organization depends on Volunteers and contributions to continuously support this park. We invite you to get involved today, so stop by their tent next to the Museum to find out how.”

“The Blue Grey Army of Florida, Based in Lake City provides all supplies for reenactors including firewood, hay and food. We would like to recognize and welcome Judge Tom Coleman, Commanding General of the Blue Grey Army for their tremendous contributions provided to this event annually.”

“We would also like to thank the following agencies and organizations for their support:”

**The AmeriCorps Members of Florida State Parks
Florida Dept of Environmental Protection’s Division of Law Enforcement
Florida Highway Patrol
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Baker County Sheriff’s Department
Baker County Emergency Medical Service
Baker Correctional Institute
Baker County Road Department
CSX Railroad
Columbia County
The City of Lake City
A special thank you to our pyrotechnicians, Clement Lindsey and his family,
Barbara, Annette and Ski.”**

“Last but certainly not least we would like to thank all of the reenactors, sutlers and their families who have given their time to make this event possible. These volunteers travel from across the country and provide their uniforms and equipment at their own expense.”

“Ladies and Gentleman, At this time it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Brian Polk of the Florida Park Service who will be narrating the 34th Annual Reenactment of the Battle of Olustee.”