

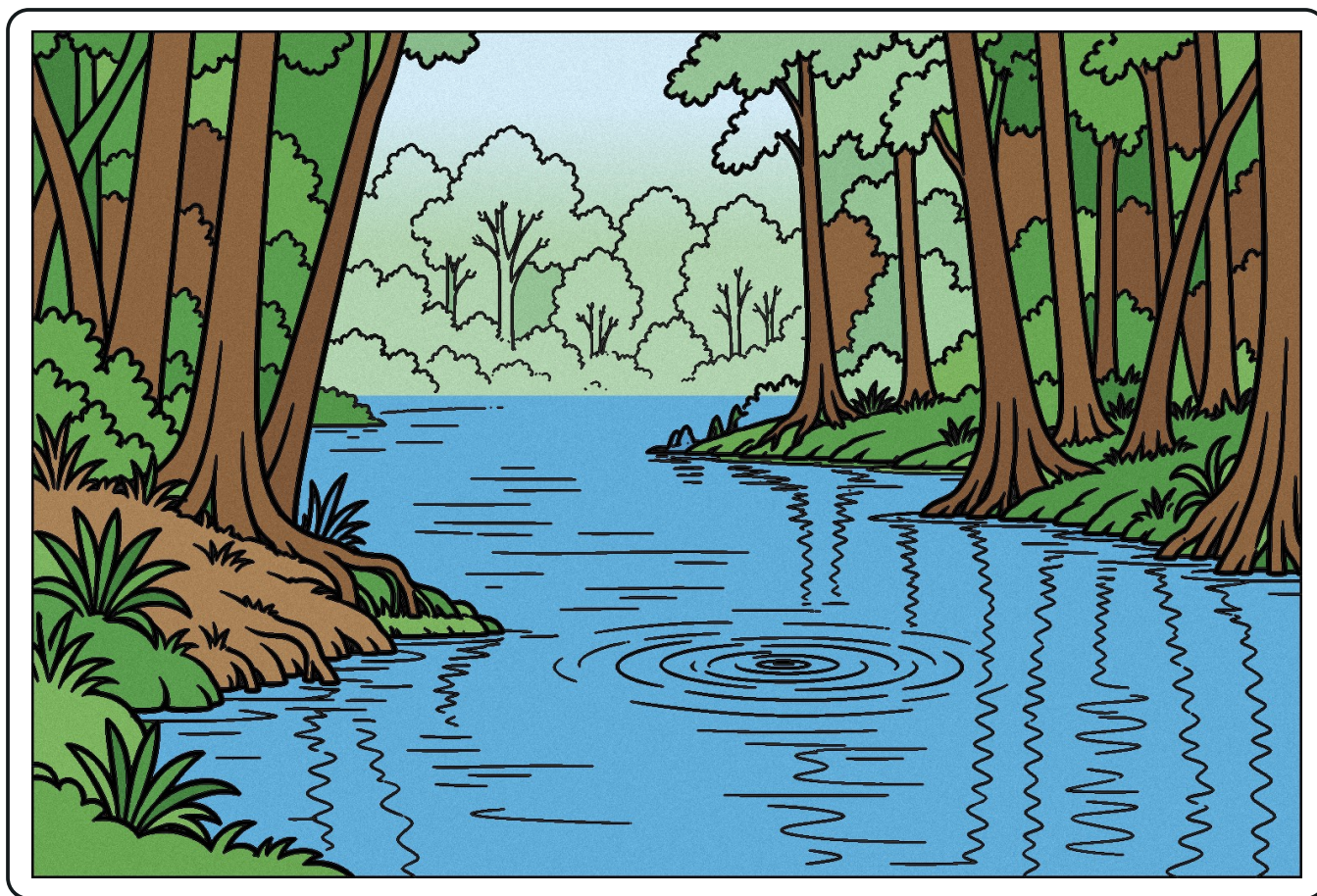


POD DIVER LODGE
HIGH SPRINGS, FLORIDA

A FREE PRINTABLE GUIDE + COLORING BOOK

THE CAVES NEAR THE LODGE

Ginnie Springs, Peacock Springs and Little River, the great cave systems within an hour of Pod Diver Lodge. Plus nearby springs and five pages to color.



The Santa Fe River, home of Ginnie Springs. Color your own version on page 9.



PLATINUM DIVE DESTINATION

By Joe Cocozza · PADI MSDT & NAUI Instructor
Pod Diver TV · Current as of October 2026

WELCOME

WELCOME TO CAVE COUNTRY

North Florida sits on one of the largest freshwater cave systems on Earth. Divers travel from around the world to swim through the limestone tunnels that carry water from the aquifer to the Santa Fe and Suwannee rivers, and three of the most famous entrances are within an hour of the Lodge.

This guide introduces those three caves: what makes each one special, who can dive which parts, and the rules to know before you go. If you're not cave trained yet, you'll also find open water springs nearby.

Joe Cocozza

Pod Diver Lodge · Pod Diver TV



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

COLOR IT. LEARN IT. DIVE IT.

Coloring isn't just for kids. Military and technical trainers have long used color-coded drawings to learn equipment and layouts part by part. The five coloring pages at the back work the same way: each one asks you to find and color the gear, signs and features that matter on a real cave dive.

- **Kids:** color the divers, the river and the cave.
- **Divers:** use the prompts to learn the gear and the warning signs before your briefing.
- **After the dive:** keep it as a souvenir of your trip.

THE THREE ZONES OF EVERY SPRING



Open water

Direct access to the surface. Open water certification.



Cavern zone

Inside the entrance, but daylight is still visible. Cavern training.



Cave zone

Beyond the reach of daylight. Full cave training and equipment only.

Each site's posted rules and your certification decide where you may go. The tags on each site page use these colors.

THREE CAVES WITHIN AN HOUR



● Cave systems in this guide ● Open water springs nearby — Interstate — U.S. and state highways

Major roads only. Map data: Natural Earth. Use a map app for turn-by-turn directions; local county roads lead the last few miles to each site.

#	CAVE	DRIVE	OPEN WATER	CAVERN	CAVE
1	Ginnie Springs	~5 min	Basin, Ballroom, river	Ballroom, Devil's Ear & Eye	Devil's system
2	Peacock Springs	~1 hr	Orange Grove Sink	Peacock, Orange Grove	30,000+ ft
3	Little River Spring	~35 min	Basin (to ~25 ft)	Yes	Deep, high flow

Drive times are approximate from the Lodge. Open water springs nearby are on page 7.

1 GINNIE SPRINGS

THE DEVIL'S SPRING SYSTEM AND THE BALLROOM

High Springs, on the Santa Fe River · privately owned park · about 5 minutes from the Lodge

OPEN WATER

CAVERN

CAVE

Ginnie is the front door of North Florida cave diving. The springs usually run gin-clear, and the same park offers a shallow basin for snorkelers, a famous training cavern, and one of the most visited cave systems in the world.

THE GINNIE BASIN AND BALLROOM

- The basin is about 20 feet deep and suited to swimming, snorkeling and open water diving.
- The Ballroom is a cavern about 50 feet deep with a permanent guideline. A grate at the back keeps divers out of the cave beyond.
- Open water divers may carry lights in the Ballroom, and it is many divers' first overhead experience.

THE DEVIL'S SYSTEM

- Little Devil, Devil's Eye and Devil's Ear form a spring run about 300 feet long that pours roughly 40 million gallons a day into the Santa Fe River.
- Devil's Ear is the main entrance. Its strong outflow makes the entry a workout, and its cavern is for certified overhead divers.
- Beyond the cavern, the Ear and Eye connect to about 30,000 feet of passage, often big enough to drive a truck through, with rooms divers know by name: the Lips, the Keyhole, the Cornflakes and the Junction Room.
- Deeper sections such as the Right Line, Hill 400 and Mainland are for experienced, fully cave-certified divers.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Without cavern or cave training, no lights in the Devil's area.
- A buddy is required, and a dive flag and float are required in the river.
- Dive the Ear for the first time with someone who knows it.
- Water stays in the low 70s °F. The on-site shop posts the rules for each area.

2 PEACOCK SPRINGS

WES SKILES PEACOCK SPRINGS STATE PARK

Near Live Oak · Florida State Parks · about 1 hour from the Lodge

OPEN WATER: ORANGE GROVE ONLY

CAVERN

CAVE

Named for the late cave explorer and filmmaker Wes Skiles, Peacock is one of the longest mapped underwater cave systems in the United States, and a state park where cave divers have trained for decades.

WHAT'S DOWN THERE

- More than 30,000 feet of documented, water-filled limestone passages and rooms.
- Olsen Sink, where daylight streams in through a karst window.
- Named features including the Breakdown Room, about 20 feet below ground and littered with fallen ceiling rock, the Peanut Restriction, and the Crypt.
- Two dive entrances: Peacock Springs and Orange Grove Sink.

WHO CAN DIVE

- Cavern and cave diving are for certified teams, at Peacock Springs and Orange Grove Sink.
- Open water divers may dive only at Orange Grove Sink, and without lights.
- Students sign in under an instructor; instructors need a commercial dive permit.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Sign in and show proof of certification before entering the water.
- Dive in teams of at least two. No solo diving.
- Enter and exit only at Peacock Springs or Orange Grove Sink.
- No scooters or DPVs. Finish one hour before sundown.

3 LITTLE RIVER SPRING

A DEEP, HIGH-FLOW CAVE ON THE SUWANNEE

O'Brien, about 6 miles north of Branford · Suwannee County park · about 35 minutes from the Lodge

OPEN WATER: BASIN

CAVERN

CAVE

A quiet county park on the Suwannee River hides one of the most dramatic cave dives in the area: a short cavern that drops steeply into a deep, fast-flowing tunnel.

THE SPRING

- A head pool up to about 25 feet deep, less than 100 yards from the Suwannee River.
- Good for swimming, snorkeling and shallow open water dives. Water stays about 72 °F.

THE CAVERN AND CAVE

- The cavern begins in about 15 feet of water and slopes quickly to around 65 feet.
- Past the cavern, the cave drops through a chimney to roughly 100 feet into a tall, single-file passage.
- Flow increases sharply where the passage narrows. A silty side route, the Mud Tunnel, cuts the flow but has low clearance.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Cavern and cave sections are for divers trained to that level only.
- Plan your gas for working against strong flow on the way in.
- It's a popular local swimming hole. Secure valuables and watch your gear.
- Call ahead after heavy rain; river levels change conditions.

OPEN WATER SPRINGS NEARBY

Four more sites within about an hour where open water divers can explore.

TROY SPRING STATE PARK

Branford · ~40 min

- A 70-foot spring the park calls ideal for open water diving and training.
- The ribs and keel of the steamboat Madison, scuttled in 1863, still lie on the bottom.
- Open water only, no lights, no solo diving. Finish an hour before sunset.

MANATEE SPRINGS STATE PARK

Chiefland · ~1 hr

- Open water diving in the main spring and Catfish Hotel; cavern at Catfish Hotel only.
- First come, first served: register at least 3 hours before sundown.
- Manatees shelter here in cooler months. Stay 50 feet away.

DEVIL'S DEN

Williston · ~45 min

- A spring inside a dry cave, lit through a hole in the ceiling, to about 54 feet.
- Remains of Ice Age animals and humans about 13,000 years old were found here.
- Open water certification is enough. Reservations required.

BLUE GROTTO

Williston · ~45 min

- An open water level to 40 feet, an upper cavern with Peace Rock, and an underwater air bell.
- On-site pool, classroom and fills make it a popular training site.
- Check current requirements for the cavern and lower chamber.

RESPECT THE OVERHEAD

These caves are beautiful and unforgiving. Most cave diving deaths involve divers who weren't trained for the cave, including experienced open water divers and instructors. Every rule below exists because someone was hurt without it.

- **Open water certification does not cover caverns or caves.** Get cavern training before entering any overhead environment, and full cave training before going beyond daylight.
- **When you see a warning sign or grate, stop.** The warning sign in the coloring pages marks the point where untrained divers must turn around.
- **Follow each site's posted rules.** Several parks bar open water divers from carrying lights, require buddies and end diving an hour before sunset.
- **Rain changes everything.** River levels, flow and visibility shift with rainfall, and sites can close in high water. Call ahead.
- **Fly a dive flag** in rivers and wherever there's boat traffic.
- **Leave it as you found it.** Don't disturb fossils, artifacts, plants or animals.

This guide is a planning aid, not a substitute for training or a site's official rules. Conditions, fees and requirements change, so confirm with each site before you go.

READY FOR THE NEXT LEVEL?

TRAIN WITH JOE AT THE LODGE

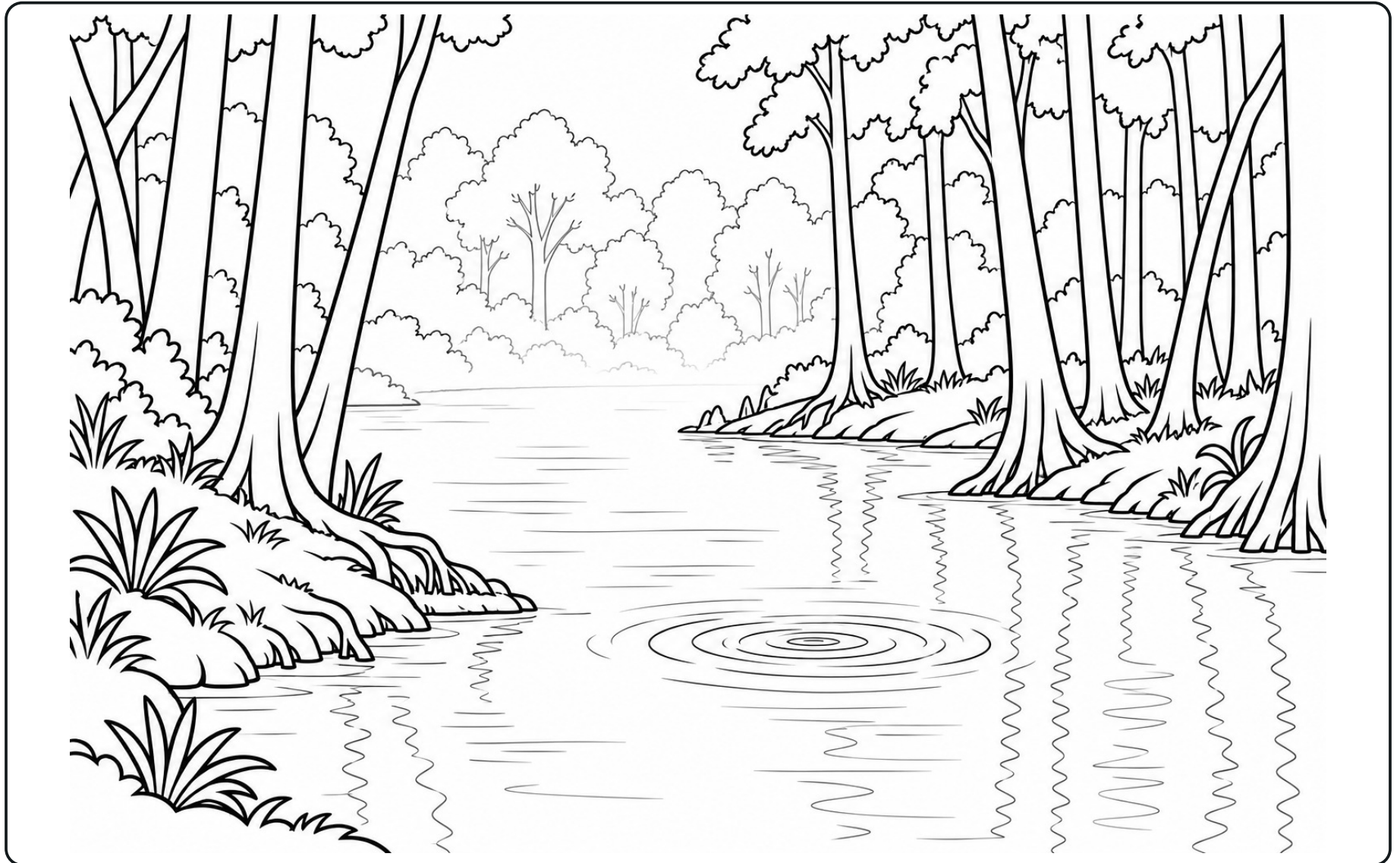
PADI MSDT and NAUI instructor; Advanced Trimix, Advanced Cave and CCR diver; 3,000+ dives.

Training with an on-site pool, five minutes from Ginnie Springs.

poddiverlodge.com

GINNIE SPRINGS AND THE SANTA FE RIVER

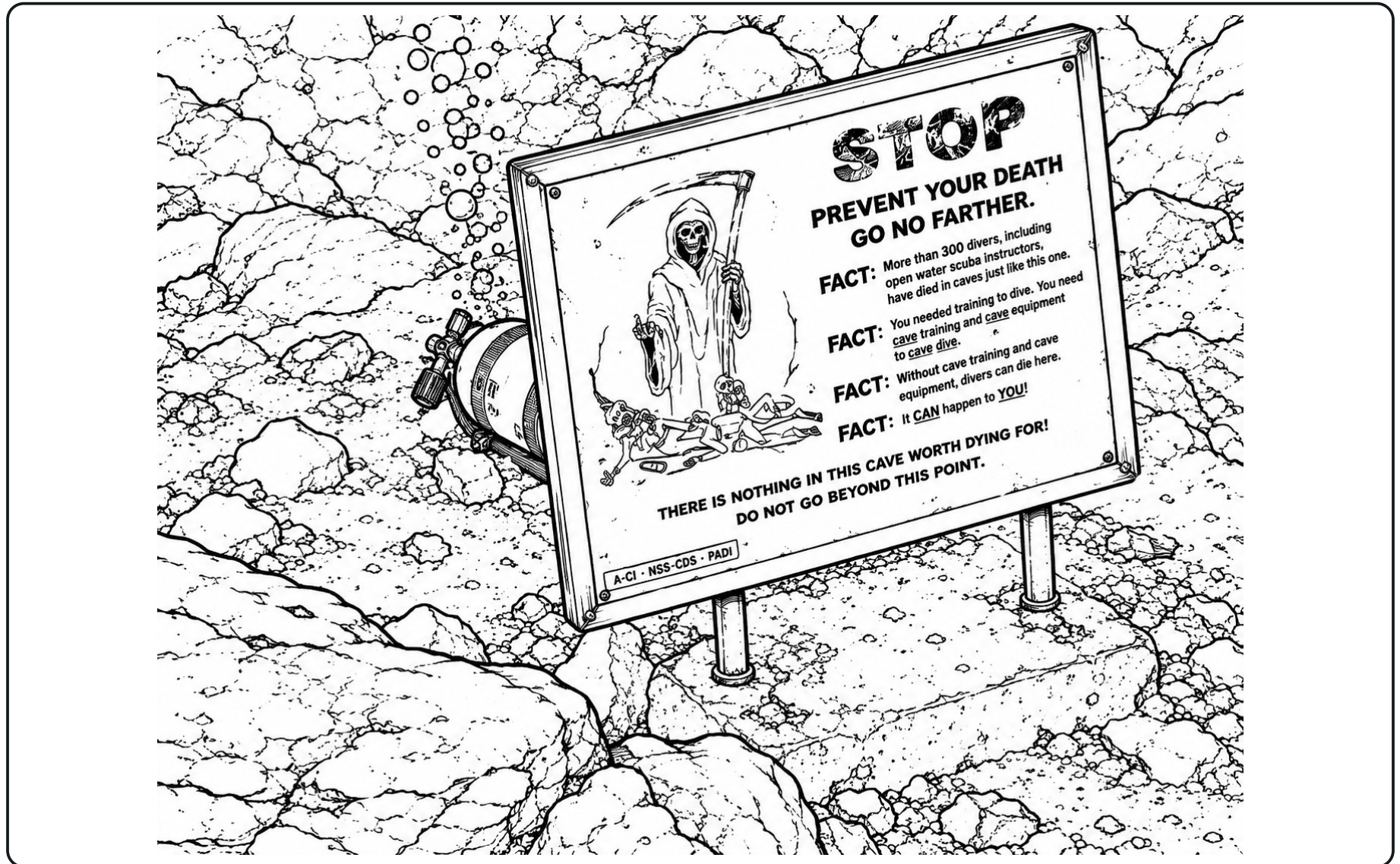
Color the river, the cypress trunks, the leaves and the ripples. Compare yours with the cover when you're done.



Ginnie's clear springs flow into the Santa Fe River, which is often stained dark by tannins.

STOP: THE WARNING SIGN

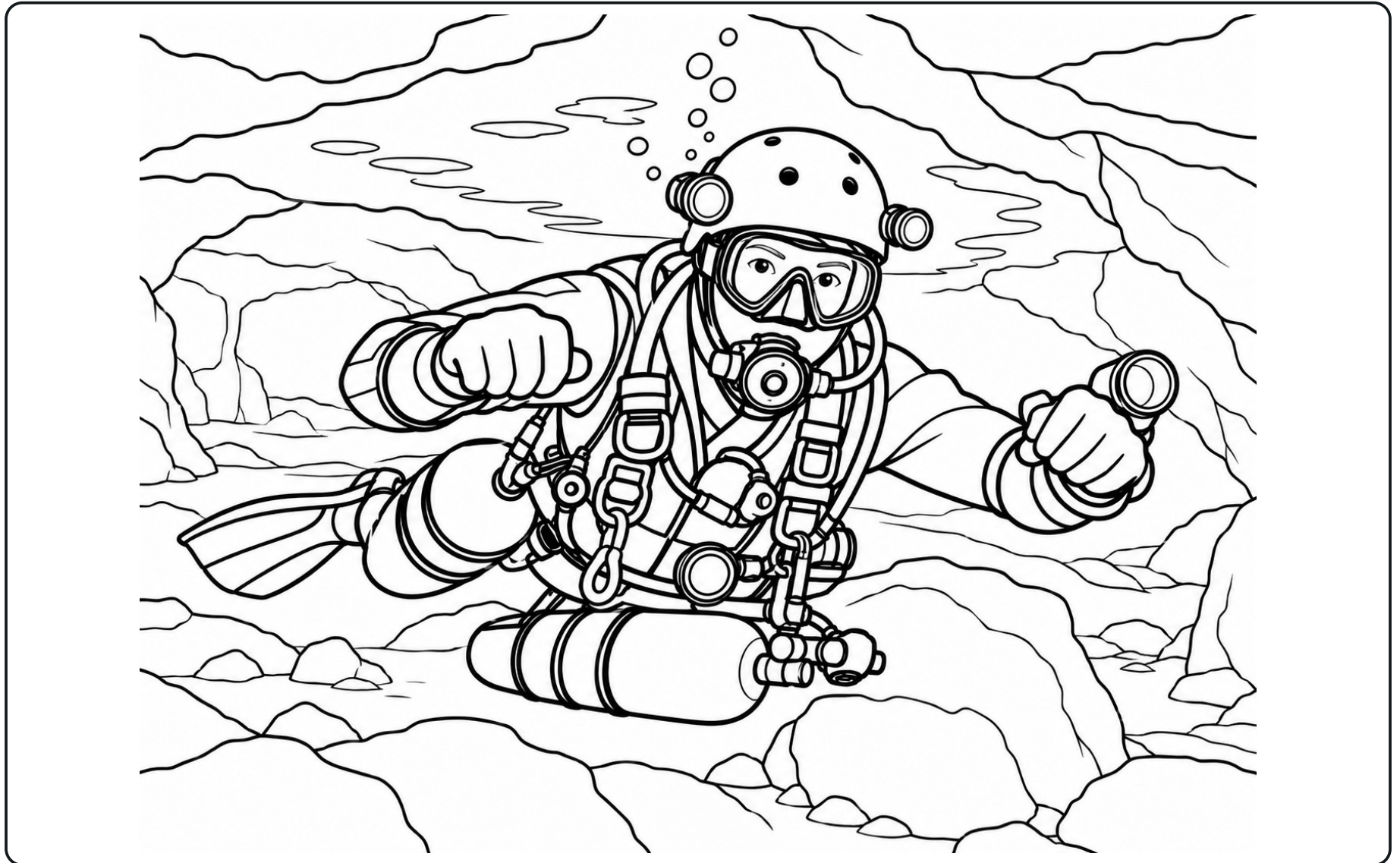
A sign like this stands at the edge of caves across North Florida. Find the Reaper, the stage tank and the bubbles. Then color the sign bright so you'll never miss it.



These signs are placed by cave diving training organizations. Read every one you pass.

INTO THE CAVE

Find and color the cave diver's helmet lights, the primary light in hand, the regulator and the tank clipped at the side.



Cave divers carry at least three lights: a primary and two backups.

FILMING THE CAVE

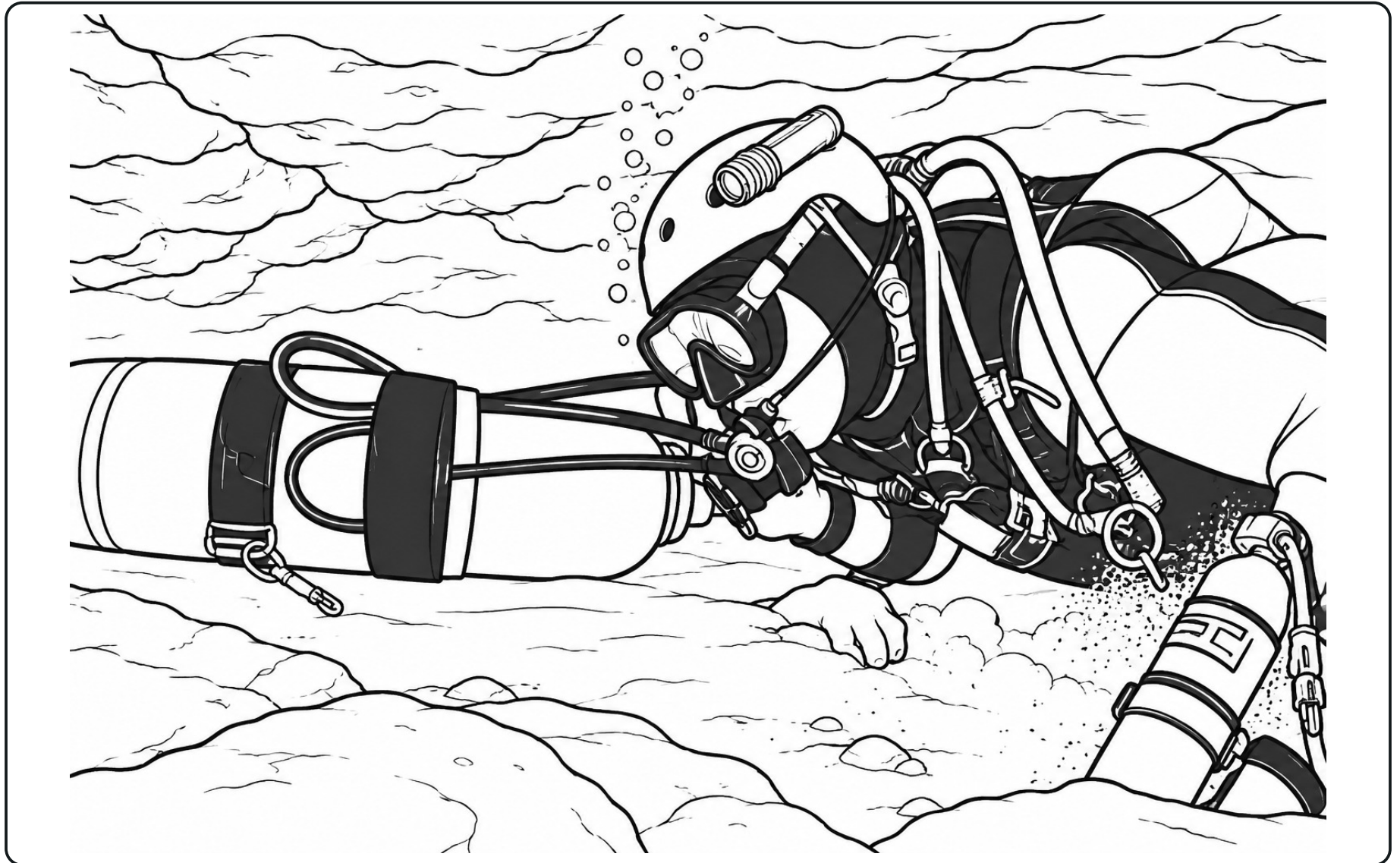
This diver is shooting video. Find the camera, the lights and the bubbles rising to the ceiling.



Lights matter even more on camera: there's no daylight in the cave zone.

A LOW PASSAGE

The diver wears sidemount tanks to fit through tight spaces. Color the tanks, the hoses and the silt kicking up from the floor.



Good buoyancy keeps silt down and visibility clear for everyone behind you.



STAY WITH US

POD DIVER LODGE



PLATINUM DIVE DESTINATION

Diver lodging in High Springs, Florida, five minutes from Ginnie Springs. Gear-drying area, fire pit, grill and an on-site training pool. For cave divers, by cave divers.

poddiverlodge.com

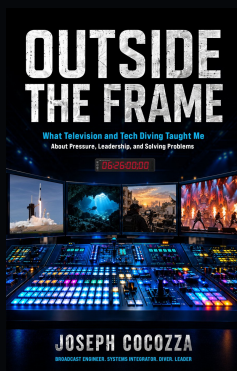


WATCH

POD DIVER TV

Interviews with diving's experts, expeditions and broadcast underwater video from Joe Cocozza. New episodes on YouTube.

youtube.com/@poddiver



READ

PODDIVER PRESS

Outside the Frame by Joe Cocozza, in print January 2, 2027. Dive-site coloring books for divers and kids are on the way.

poddiverpress.com

SOURCES

WHERE THIS INFORMATION COMES FROM

Extreme Exposure: Ginnie Springs and the Devil's system

extreme-exposure.com/ginnie-springs

Scuba Diving magazine: Diving Florida's Ginnie Springs

scubadiving.com/diving-floridas-ginnie-springs

Florida State Parks: Cave diving at Wes Skiles Peacock Springs

floridastateparks.org/learn/cave-diving-peacock-springs

Extreme Exposure: Little River

extreme-exposure.com/little-river

Suwannee River Water Management District: Little River Spring

map.mysuwanneeriver.com/district-springs/little-river-spring-10

Florida State Parks: Troy Spring State Park

floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/troy-spring-state-park

Florida State Parks: Manatee Springs State Park

floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/manatee-springs-state-park

Florida Guidebook: Devil's Den Spring

florida-guidebook.com/devils-den-spring

NAUI: Diving the Blue Grotto

nauai.org

Compiled October 2026. Rules, fees and hours change; check each site before your visit.