



# Dive Land Park

*Spend some time underwater at the attraction formerly known as the Blue Hole*

SCUBA DIVING IN NORTH Alabama? You bet! No need to go to the tropics. If you've always wondered what it's like to breathe underwater, you don't need to go any further than Glencoe. Longtime residents of the area may know it as the Blue Hole, but it's now Dive Land Park, a safe, clear-water park offering excellent quarry diving just a short drive from metro areas in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

I visited the park on a hot summer day to participate in the IDEA Discover Scuba Experience, a quick and easy introduction to what it takes to explore the underwater world. Here's a recap of my day:

I arrive at Dive Land Park and am met by the owner, John Valdes, who will lead me through my experience. After some brief introductions, he fits me for a buoyancy compensator, some booties, fins, mask and snorkel. Since the water is a warm 85 degrees, and we won't be going too deep, a wetsuit won't be necessary.

We gather up all of our gear and head over to the quarry. Changing



rooms are available, and I get into my bathing suit and meet John on the dock. Here he will determine how much weight to put in my weight belt. We enter the water, and I exhale and go under while he makes the necessary adjustments. The goal is to achieve zero gravity, where you can just hang in the water in a state of weightlessness.

Next, we go over some basics, including common scuba hand signals, so we're able to communicate underwater. Suddenly there's a huge splash about 50 feet away. I look quizzically at John, who replies with a smile and a shrug.

"No worries," he says, "probably just a catfish." Hmmm ... OK, and off we go.

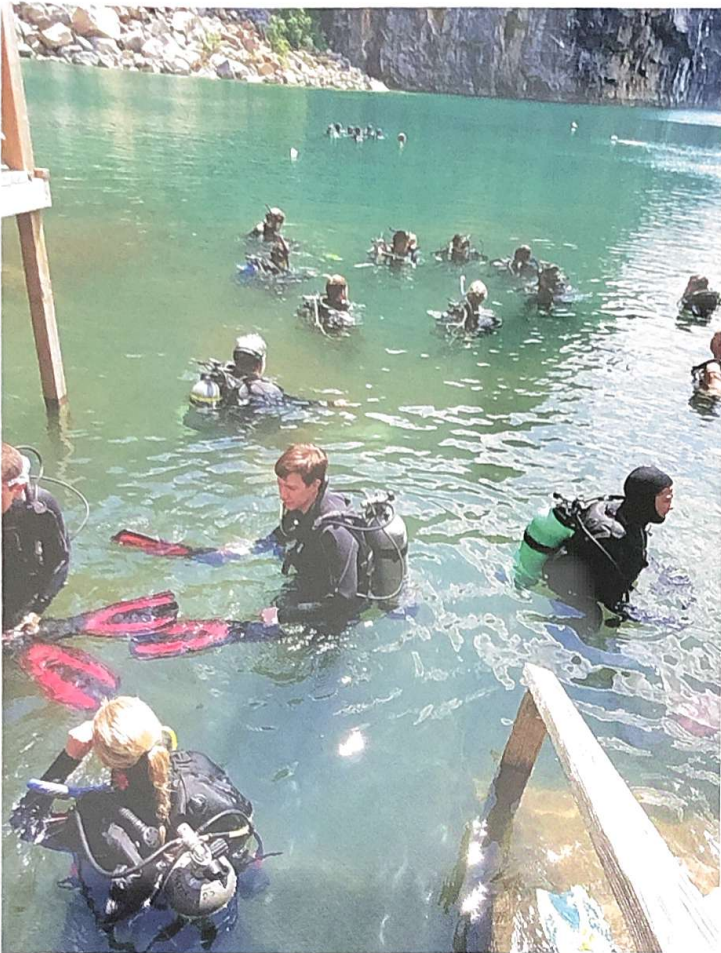
We follow a yellow rope — well, John follows a yellow rope and I follow him. The water is warm, blue and clear. Visibility typically ranges between 20 and 70 feet at the park. The rocky bottom begins to fall away slowly, and I have to remind myself to slow my breathing and relax. Once I do, I fall head over heels in love with the weightless, peaceful feeling of breathing underwater. Making our >>>

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY TAMI BROOKS

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GADSDEN *Style*





The IDEA Discover Scuba Experience is a quick and easy introduction to exploring the underwater world. Dive Land Park is open to all certified divers and snorkelers the first weekend in April through the last weekend in October.



way past fish beds, we come upon a submerged boat surrounded by fish.

Eventually, we find ourselves on an underwater platform, where I pose for some pictures before we continue this fascinating underwater tour.

We glide through the water a little longer, then head back to the dock. I'm shocked to learn we have been out for more than 20 minutes. Time stands still underwater. It felt like we'd been out 5 minutes at the most.

I enjoyed my IDEA Scuba Discover Experience at Dive Land Park immensely. Interested in trying scuba? Give Dive Land Park a call. They also offer the IDEA Open Water Scuba Certification course that is recognized worldwide.

Contact Dive Land Park at 256-492-4455 or email [divelandpark@yahoo.com](mailto:divelandpark@yahoo.com)

## ABOUT DIVE LAND PARK

Dive Land Park is open to all certified divers and snorkelers the first weekend in April through the last weekend in October. It is located in North Central Alabama between Anniston and Gadsden on U.S. Highway 431.

Dive Land Park is a safe, clear-water environment offering excellent quarry diving for newly

certified divers as well as the more advanced. With visibility ranging from 20 to 70 feet, and depths up to 150 feet, there is something for everybody.

Night dives are scheduled the third Saturday of the month beginning in May and continuing through October. Live music and entertainment will be featured for those who do not dive as well as divers who just want to chill out after their dives. Primitive camping is available for those who wish to stay the night.

## Entry Fees:

Scuba entry, \$25 a day  
Snorkeling entry, \$10 a day  
Bubble watchers, \$5 a day

*Tami Brooks is the owner of Brooks Consulting Services, LLC and publisher of The Field Trip Field Guide. She completed a 52-week, 52-hike project in 2016 and writes the blog Tami's Trippin'. When she's not busy with work, you can find her on the trail, in the kayak, or on the deck planning her next adventure. Visit [Tamis-Trippin.com](http://Tamis-Trippin.com) to read more and be sure to sign up for post notifications and newsletter while you're there. You can also follow Tami's Trippin' on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. f*

