

Scherer Delight Newsletter

Oscar Scherer State Park



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Summer 2009 - Volume 15, Issue 3

From the President:



It's that time of year: temps are cooling a little which means we've survived summer once again, and now we look forward to the return of our seasonal friends and campers. This doesn't mean that the summer has been quiet! The Friends have been involved in several substantial projects and you'll notice the changes next time you are in the park. A new sidewalk plus bike parking pads have been constructed at the Nature Center; we've installed an underground drainage system to carry the water away from the building; a new shed has been put up at the Nature Center creating some badly needed storage area; and later in this newsletter we'll bring you up to date on the Lake Osprey improvements.

We have a full agenda of programs planned for the coming season, and some of them will be a little different. On Saturday, November 14th, from 1:00-5:00 p.m., we've scheduled a **Family Music Fest** with lots of activities, the emphasis being on family fun. Some of the best local bluegrass and folk singers and groups will be participating. (This will be a scaled-down version of the Sarasota Folk Festival to be held later in the season.) Then on Saturday, December 5th we'll have our first **Recycling and Fun** event—think giant garage sale! Rent a plot of ground and bring your “treasures” to sell.

Many of your favorite events will be returning: Aerobics, Pancake Breakfasts, Guided Bird Walks, Old Tyme Music with Carl and Betty, Ice Cream Socials, the All Trails Hike, and the Scrub Jay Race with a huge twist to it—**we're adding a 10K race as well as having the 5K!** And of course we will be called upon to support the Indian Art Festival and the Sarasota Folk Festival. Earth Day will bring the season to an end in April.

And don't forget our annual meeting and Christmas party will take place on Monday, **December 14th**. Plan to come and join your fellow members for a fun-filled evening of food and camaraderie. As usual, we will hold the election of officers for next year. See you there!

If you know someone who'd like to join our team, let us know – there's always something important that needs to be done. Feel free to call me at **941-685-7454**.

Russ Delaney

From the Park Manager:



Fall is one of my favorite times of year. The Park has cycled through another season and it's so invigorating to experience the refreshing breezes, the seasonal migrations, and the cooler temperatures.

Now is a time of change for the plants, the animals, and for us, and the staff is gearing up for the busy winter season. Interpretive programs are dusted off, updated, and practiced to ensure a quality performance on Saturday nights at the Campfire Circle. Rangers **Angela Holleran**, and **Matt Hodge** and volunteer **JT Eldreth** are currently attending the Basic Interpretive Workshops to fine-tune their skills as interpreting nature provides protection through education—a valuable service to our park, our visitors, and our mission.

Another important part of our mission is resource management, and we have had great success over the past few months. **Carie Pigeon**, our AmeriCorps miracle worker, has been diligently treating and pulling exotics, and working with volunteer groups to control exotics in certain areas of the park. She has also worked alongside Ranger **Diana Stinson** organizing numerous cleanups and exotic removal parties over the past year. Moreover, who can forget her opening performance for the Sarasota Folk Festival back in March! Carrie will be leaving at the end of November so be sure to say *thanks* for all she has done for Oscar Scherer State Park. **Thank you, Carie!**

Ranger Stinson's resource management contributions will continue as she will be the park's next Burn Boss. Diana has been working with **Tony Clements**, our Assistant Manager, to prepare the prescription for her first burn. This will double the number of our burn bosses and help relieve Tony a bit. As we have mentioned so many times, fire is our main management tool to preserve Oscar Scherer State Park and we are lucky to have such a good team handling the process.

Our first fiscal quarter is nearing an end, and we will be getting ready for the snowbird invasion. Once the season is here, we will be trying to keep up with the visitors, doing prescribed burns and, thanks to the Friends, holding some major events. These fundraisers are important for many reasons: they attract people to the park which enables us to share our environmental messages, and they help the CSO support and improve the park. I thank all the Friends for your efforts and contributions.

John Roche

Trail Angels. . .

Three of the trails in the park have been adopted by the following members of the Friends for regular maintenance.

- **Ken and Frances Folkers** have taken over maintenance of the Green Trail,
- **Kathy and Paul Kosovich** will be responsible for the Finley Trail, and
- **Thom Erickson** will take care of the South Creek Nature Trail.

What does this mean? It means that these Friends work on their own schedules. They cut back growth, clean out the occasional trash, report downed trees, mow if necessary, and generally keep the trail in a high state of repair for visitors to enjoy.

You too can “own” a trail! We have others that need tender loving care and the best part is that you can work when it suits you. Call **Russ at 941-685-7454**; he can get you started or give you more details.

. . . and Speaking of Trails

We are already gearing up for the 4th Annual All Trails Hike on Saturday, January 9th. This has become the premier hiking event in our area. With the wonderful support of our volunteers, participants can hike all eleven miles of the trails of the park, or shorter versions depending on their desire and/or ability. Regardless of the distance chosen, hikers will find members of the Friends throughout the park providing the hikers with water, fruit, and other refreshments. Lunch will be provided to all. Cost is only \$10 and hikers can begin whenever they wish after the park opens.



The three children's programs every Saturday have been a big hit. Led by volunteer **JT Eldreth** and his faithful assistants, children have the opportunity to be **Nature Detectives** and discover different aspects of nature in the park.

They also have an opportunity to learn two other skills – **Paper Making** and **Fish Painting** – all while

having a ton of fun. The Friends underwrite the cost of these programs although donations are solicited from the participants to cover some of the costs. These programs are open to children of Saturday visitors to the park as well as campers.

The Good Neighbor Approach: Oscar Scherer State Park in Sarasota County

As with many other managed environmental areas, Oscar Scherer State Park has faced development pressures from surrounding properties that affect the sustainability of the park itself. A comprehensive plan amendment for an increased density development on a parcel adjacent to the park served as a catalyst for a partnership between the local government, the developer, and area citizens. The resulting local Blackburn Point Sector Plan was adopted by Sarasota County through an ordinance.

The plan provides guidance on how new development can be designed to be habitat- and wildlife-friendly. One of the most critical elements is the “Notice of Proximity” which is recorded in the deeds and rental agreements on all properties within the Sector Plan boundaries. It puts all property owners on notice that the park is within close proximity and that there are certain practices such as prescribed fire, pesticide usage, heavy machinery usage, and removal of exotic plants and animals that take place in the park. The notice states that these property owners or renters shall be deemed to have knowledge of and have consented to these resource management practices. The state's Division of Forestry routinely requires such notice for properties bordering its lands.

Further, the plan emphasizes that many other aspects too numerous to list here deal with materials and colors used for construction, use of native vegetation buffer zones, storm water ponds, and many other environmentally conscious concerns.

Oscar Scherer State Park (outlined below), like many managed environmental areas, is feeling the impact from neighboring developments.



Lake Osprey Development

Many of you are aware that we are actively attempting to revitalize the Lake Osprey area. This involves several related projects: creating a littoral shelf for small fish and wading birds by “bumping out” about half of the lake shoreline; building a fishing pier into the lake; creating some boardwalk areas; and reenergizing the beach area.



Obviously, this will be an expensive mission. To help us meet our goals, we have entered into a Partnership in the Park (PIP) with the state in which they will provide 40% of the funding once we raise the initial 60%. To reach our goal, we are attempting to obtain grant money that will supplement funds that have been generously donated by Lee Wetherington Homes.

The Friends also plan to create an Access-For-All trail around Lake Osprey that will look much like the Lester Finley Trail. Its surface will be of natural material, it will be lined with recycled landscaping timbers, and it will tie into the existing sidewalk in the beach area. The trail is currently undergoing an engineering study required by the state to ensure that we are complying with Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and wildlife impact aspects. Your board approved the \$10,000 purchase of the recycled landscaping timbers and we are now awaiting approval of our plans. The state has promised to expedite this study and we hope to be “turning dirt” shortly.

Family Music Fest. *The Friends have teamed up with the Sarasota Folk Society to bring you four hours of foot-stomping fun music for the entire family on Saturday afternoon November 14th from 1:00-5:00. Entry will be a small fee. Music will be nonstop all afternoon and there will be several activities primarily for the children. Oscar's Grill will be open as well. Don't miss this opportunity to listen to some top notch acts and have some great family fun.*



Recycling and Fun.

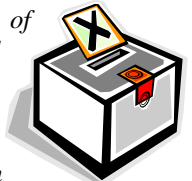
On December 5th, the entire area around the Nature Center will become an opportunity for the community to convert one person's gently used items into another's prized treasures. The Friends will rent a space, provide a table, and turn people loose to find that “can't do without” item. All that and free entry to the park! Wow!! **Call Helen Janssen at 941-918-8081 for more details and to reserve a space.**



The Annual Meeting for the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc will be held on Monday December 14th at the Nature Center in Oscar Scherer State Park. This will be combined with the annual holiday party. Beverages and light refreshments will be available after

5:00 PM with dinner and the meeting beginning at 6:00 PM. The election of officers for 2010 will take place at this meeting. Plan to join us for this festive occasion and do your holiday shopping as well. Our gift shop will be open!

Election of Directors for 2010. *The election of directors for 2010 will take place at the annual meeting on Monday December 14th. Those elected will select the four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) during the January 2010 meeting. Officers can serve a maximum of two years in any one position; directors can serve for an unlimited time. If you are interested in being considered for a board position, please contact Bob Sendrey at 941-426-7306.*



Nature Center Volunteers. Did you know there are about **65 three-and-a-half-hour shifts needed each month** to keep the Nature Center open seven hours a day, seven days a week year round? And we have done that without interruption for three years! It's rewarding for everyone as the Nature Center has become the focal point for visitors to head for to find out what is happening in the park. It's easy to master the basic procedures for opening and closing and once you learn the answers to the three key questions you are on your way! Those questions are: (1) where are the bathrooms? (2) where do I go to see a Scrub Jay? and (3) how do I get to the Legacy Trail? The rest is easy! *We really do need your help.*

Coming Up

Saturday, November 14th **Family Music Fest**
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 5th **Recycling and Fun**
All Day

Monday, December 14th **Annual Meeting
and Holiday Party**

Saturday, January 9th **4th Annual All Trails Hike**
8:00 a.m.



Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc.
 1843 S. Tamiami Trail
 Osprey, Florida 34229

Great people having fun doing good things for the environment and Florida at Oscar Scherer State Park. To learn about volunteer opportunities at the park, join us at one of our monthly meetings with no commitment. Meetings are held at 6:00 pm on the second Monday of each month in the Nature Center. If you'd like more information, call the park at (941) 483-5956.

Use this form to join The Friends of Oscar Scherer and/or adopt a scrub jay.

Send form with check to:
 Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc.
 1843 South Tamiami Trail
 Osprey, Florida 34229

Name(s) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Annual Dues

- Youth \$10
 - Individual \$20
 - Household \$25
 ___ Number in household
 - Business Friend \$100
 - Corporate Sponsor \$500
 - Other donation \$ _____
- Scrub Jay Adoption(s) @ \$25

A copy of the official registration (SC-00263) and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state. We are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code, so your dues and donations may be deductible. Percent of each contribution retained by any professional solicitor: Zero. Percent of each contribution retained by our organization: 100.

Scherer Delight is published quarterly by the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc., 1843 S. Tamiami Trail, Osprey, Florida 34229, to provide its members and the public with information about Oscar Scherer State Park in Osprey, Florida and the importance of its natural environment in Southwest Florida. Content is by Friends' members and park staff, unless otherwise specified.

Florida State Parks are in various stages of accessibility and are working to improve access to services and facilities. Should you require assistance, please contact the individual park office as soon as possible. Sometimes as many as ten working days may be necessary to schedule a particular accommodation. Service animals for visitors with disabilities are welcome in all areas of state parks.

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