

Scherer Delight Newsletter

Oscar Scherer State Park



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From the President:



Looking ahead to 2008, I see great opportunities for the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc. and ALL volunteers to once again make a real difference in keeping our park a **#1 destination for outdoor recreation.**

Some of the projects we will be working on are a tree house in partnership with the Tree Foundation, a fishing pier at Lake Osprey, an accessible trail around the lake, beach enhancement, a pole barn in the maintenance area, and of course all the usual things we do to keep the park looking its best. Then there always are new ideas put forth by new and present volunteers.

Speaking of which, we are always happy to share our satisfying experiences with newcomers. Interested in joining us? Give me a call, and make a difference. Put your talents to good use and enjoy working at your own pace and schedule with many new and interesting friends. (By the way, it's great exercise too.)

I'm looking forward to working on the board with some new faces as well with those who served so well last year. I'm also looking forward to continuing to work with the great bunch of volunteers who do so much on Monday and Wednesday mornings, and with those from the campground who contribute their talents and labors of love for the environment while camping at the park, as well as all the others who contribute by volunteering their time and talent in different ways. Without them, our trails and facilities would not be the showcase they are.

Event-wise we will repeat the yearly ones such as the All Trails Hike, the Scrub Jay 5K, Earth Day, and Fishing Has No Boundaries, just to name a few. Hopefully, some of you who have not been active in your park will become so, and contribute new ideas on how we can enhance opportunities for the people of this area to enjoy ... *the Real Florida.*

Bob Sendrey

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From the Park Manager:



This coming year will bring one of the most challenging periods in the park's history. Oscar Scherer State Park, the park service, the state, and each and every citizen will face dramatic changes in their respective economies. Only through the support of our dedicated employees, both district and park, and the many different contributions of the Friends' time and resources can we succeed in meeting our responsibilities to the park and its visitors. Thank you for a great year in 2007 – you have all made my job as manager of Oscar Scherer State Park so rewarding – and hello 2008!

We will continue with an AmeriCorps team again this year. Assistant Manager **Tony Clements** has been conducting interviews and will be recommending applicants to start in early January. Last year's team, **Donnie and Lynn**, did a great job removing over 30,000 exotic plants as well as helping in other parks, conducting numerous programs, and recruiting volunteers for special events like National Public Lands Day. Did you know they also went and helped around the state when the tornadoes struck central Florida back in February? I think that having so much for them to do and good people to do it with made a big difference. What a great program AmeriCorps is. We are lucky to have been re-selected for their service.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about some upcoming events. Don't forget to mark your calendars for the **District 4 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic on March 15** at Gamble Plantation. That's only one of the many wonderful opportunities to come out, visit with "Friends," and participate in something fun.

There are so many ways that volunteers have contributed to your park: like all the great people who spend time talking with visitors in the Nature Center, or planting and maintaining the trees in the picnic area, or continuing the efforts with firewood, or helping at the Ranger Station, and so much more!

Please keep Oscar Scherer State Park in your future for fun, adventure, and service. I wish all of you the best year yet – may all of your resolutions come true. Now, let's get this year rolling!

John Roche

BIRD POINTS

by Mark Leggett

On Birds and Birding in Oscar Scherer State Park

#4 OSPREY



A distinctive fish hawk, the Osprey can be seen flying over Oscar Scherer's lakes (check out the aptly named Lake Osprey), hovering, and then plunging feet first into the water to snatch a meal. After making its kill, the bird rises out of the water carrying the fish head forward in its strong talons to decrease wind resistance.

Dark brown above, white below and sporting a white head, the Osprey can be mistaken for a Bald Eagle. In flying, the Osprey's wings are bent back at the wrist. Males are smaller than females.

Ospreys are found near water, either fresh or salt, where large numbers of fish are present. Their diet is almost entirely fish, but when fish are scarce they delve into a variety of other possibilities. Not to worry!

You've seen them on their nests—huge, bulky piles of sticks. Often they are on the top of a large tree, a utility pole or a platform built for them. Nests are typically open to the sky. Birds may use the same nest for years, resulting in a mass of sticks.

Usually three eggs are laid, and there is only one brood a year. The female shelters the young from the sun and rain; the male goes fishing for the family.

Seen over much of North America, the Osprey is a permanent resident of southern Florida. DDT and other pesticides took a heavy toll on the bird, but it has made a strong comeback.

Sources used include Kaufman, Lives of North American Birds, Field Guides to the Birds of North America, and Alsop, Birds of Florida.

Mark Leggett is on the board of the Sarasota Audubon Society, and is a member of the Friends of Oscar Scherer. He leads bird trips at Oscar Scherer State Park every Thursday, January through April, departing from the Nature Center at 8:00 AM. He can be reached at bluegrosbeak2@yahoo.com

2nd Annual All Trails Hike.

Right around the corner is the 2nd Annual All Trails Hike of Oscar Scherer. Last year's inaugural event was considered by many to be the most successful event in the park. More than 300 hikers took part and over half of them chose to hike the entire 12 mile route. Don't miss this one! **Saturday, January 12th**. There is a flyer in this newsletter. Get all the details and invite a friend. You won't be disappointed!



Annual Meeting. The annual meeting, election and holiday party for the Friends of Oscar Scherer was held on December 10th at the Nature Center, and what an event it was!



Almost 100 of our members and family turned out to help elect a new board for 2008, celebrate the holidays with an incredible array of food and drinks, and marvel at the transformation the Lake Osprey Picnic area has gone through. District Manager **Velinda Subic**, CSO Coordinator **Carol Imbriani**, Park Manager **John Roche**, and Sarasota County Commissioner **Jon Thaxton** all joined President **Bob Sendrey** in thanking the gifted and willing members and volunteers who make up our membership for all of their efforts and dedication to improving Oscar Scherer State Park. A common theme in their remarks centered on the amount of hard work accomplished by our volunteers who take great pleasure in the contribution they make through volunteerism.

New Board Elected for 2008. Some changes were made to the Board of Directors for 2008 as a result of the election at the annual meeting on December 10th. Joining the board are **Helen Janssen**, **Val Temple**, **George Ulrich**, **Jim Breidster**, and **Sherry Hanson**. They will team with **Bob Sendrey**, **George Karnedy**, **Russ Delaney**, **Fran Palmeri**, **Sue Downing**, **Bruce Snyder**, **Nancy Bloomquist** and **John Mongelli**.

The four officer positions will be determined by the board members at the January 2008 board meeting.

Laurel Schiller departed the board but still will be heavily involved in park activities. During her six years on the board, four of them as President, many positive strides were taken to further the goals of the park through the interests of the Friends.

We are also grateful for the service of **Gene Keene**, who has completed his two year term on the board. Gene and his wife **Marlene** volunteered in every event while in the park, and Gene served as the "voice" of the campground hosts and volunteers. We look forward to continuing to see them in the park.

Jamie Theobald and **Ken Tolley** have also completed their two years as board members but will remain active in the park. Jamie will take over the merchandising aspect of the Friends. Ken, who was recently honored as one of the Florida state volunteers over the age of 80, continues as an active member of the Monday/Wednesday workgroup and participates in all the activities of the park.

Scrub Jay Way

by Jon Thaxton

With the breeding season just around the corner, I thought this would be a perfect time to review the sequence of events that ultimately will lead to a new crop of Florida scrub jays at Oscar Scherer State Park in 2008.

The Florida scrub jay nesting season begins in late February when new pair bonds are formed and old pair bonds are renewed. This is easily observed in the field; keep an ear open and you will hear a noticeable increase in territory defense calls from all jays in the park. The strategy is to grab as much land as your family can defend; the larger your family the more territory you can defend and the better your chances are of a successful breeding season. Early morning is the best time to observe these territorial "wars".

By mid-March most of the pair bonds are established and nest construction begins. Regardless of the number of helpers in the family, only the breeding pair participates in nest construction. Meanwhile, helpers spend their time defending their territory and watching for predators.

The first eggs are laid shortly after nest construction is complete, which takes about two weeks. Virtually every nest at Oscar Scherer has either three or four eggs (clutch size). Only the female breeder incubates the eggs and she is fed exclusively by her mate. The helpers are still tending to other duties. The incubation period is about eighteen days. All the eggs hatch about the same time, so no nestling has an unfair advantage over his or her siblings.

For the first few days, the nestlings are fed by the breeding pair. However, after about four or five days, the "helpers", especially the older males, begin to bring food to the nestlings. This in turn frees up some of the time for the breeding pair to resume other family duties, such as predator detection and territory defense, but there never is a break.

This is an extremely demanding time for the breeders, which often leaves them vulnerable. As a result, the breeding season has a higher mortality rate for breeders than at any other time of the year.

Most nestlings stay in the nest about seventeen to twenty days and on the average about two survive to leave (fledge) the nest.

Although this marks the end of the formal nesting cycle, the young fledglings cannot fly for weeks after leaving the nest and remain entirely dependent upon the family unit for their survival. Under ideal conditions, one of the original four nestlings will be around next year to assume responsibility as a helper, and the process begins again.

The Scherer Delight newsletter may be distributed or reprinted for non-profit use. Why not give this issue to a friend?

Coming Events

There are lots of events going on at the park. Here are some that might interest you.

Tuesdays 8-10 AM:

Coffee and donuts at the Nature Center

Wednesdays 8:30 AM:

Guided canoe ride on South Creek

Thursdays 8-10AM:

Guided bird walk starts at the Nature Center

Thursdays 8-10AM:

Pancake Breakfast at the Nature Center. (Blueberry pancakes, sausage, juice, and coffee \$4.)

Mon/Wed/Fri 8:30AM

Aerobics at the Nature Center

January 12th - All Trails Hike

January 25-27th - Native American Folk Festival

February 16th - Scrub Jay 5K

Scrub Jay 5K – Saturday, February 16 is the date for the 8th annual Scrub Jay 5K at the park. This is the biggest fund raiser for the Friends thanks to Lee Wetherington who underwrites the major costs of the race thereby allowing all the entry fees to stay with the Friends. The Friends, in turn, use the money for major projects within the park. This event has grown into one of the largest 5K races in Sarasota and attracts not only the elite runners in the area but a large contingent of youth runners. We allow all runners under the age of 16 to run free, and yet reward them just like any other runner with a tee shirt, age group awards, and the free food that is available to all runners! A lot of casual runners and walkers participate, so circle this day on your calendar.



May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions.

~Joey Adams



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.

<p>Use this form to join The Friends of Oscar Scherer and/or adopt a scrub jay.</p> <p>Name(s) _____</p> <p>Street _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p>Send form with check to: Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc. 1843 South Tamiami Trail Osprey, Florida 34229</p> <p>Annual Dues</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Youth \$10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Household \$25</p> <p>____ Number in household</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Business Friend \$100</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor \$500</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other donation \$ _____</p> <p>Scrub Jay Adoption(s) @ \$25</p>
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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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