
PALM TREE PRESS

A Quarterly Publication of The Supporters of Del-Nor Wiggins Park, Inc.

ISSUE 28

Message From The Park Manager

On May 4, 2005, I met with Collier County Commissioner Halas, Lt. George Welch, Marla Ramsey, Public Services Administrator and Leo Ochs, Deputy County Manager. The issue was traffic on Bluebill Avenue outside of the State Park. Commissioner Halas made his opening statement on how we have worked together in the past to solve the traffic problem and how he feels the State Park should fund a Collier County Deputy for traffic control. My response on behalf of the Park and the Division was that we feel that roadways, infrastructure and traffic control outside of the State Park are the responsibility of the local authorities and in this case, Collier County. I then reminded him the County gets an indirect economic benefit of over \$14 million dollars as a result of the visitors that come to visit Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park. We had approximately 559,000 visitors last year. That also helped in the creation of about 283 jobs to help provide other services people use when they visit parks. I also mentioned we had 19 million visitors to Florida State Parks last year and that we are the number 2 visitor draw to Florida behind the Theme Parks. It is amazing the parks do so much more than just provide a place to recreate and relax. I believe that they are going to try to fund a contract deputy, (one that is off duty) to direct traffic on busy days. I supplied the Commissioner and Lt. Welch with a list of those days.

The meeting then turned to beach access and I reminded everyone that we have a carrying capacity which allows the maximum number of visitors to enjoy a quality recreational experience while at the same time helping to protect and preserve the natural resources here. Did I mention that is our charge? I am sure that as supporters of the park you are quite aware that **we have a charge under Florida Statutes to protect and preserve areas of the original domain of Florida for future generations.**

I understand that Collier County is under heavy pressure to provide beach access. However, there are many miles of beaches in this county and we only control one and one quarter miles. We cannot be the solution to this County's problems. They must look at other avenues to get people to the beaches besides us. They should consider the purchase of properties that are available and still undeveloped of which there are very few, and look into the utilization of current beach accesses. Perhaps even invest in the future by buying back property that was developed along the coast. Property is not as cheap as it used to be, but cheaper than it will be in the future. The population is not going to diminish and will only grow, so it is important we stay the course and protect what is here for the future.

Robert M. Steiger
Park Manager

President's Corner

Sitting on a bench at the park on a warm, sultry May afternoon, watching the tall sea oats waving their nearly-golden fronds in the gentle gulf breezes—Seeing an egret foraging for a mid-day snack along the water's edge—Watching the magnificent frigate birds soaring over the gulf and an osprey diving toward the water for its intended prey—A few pelicans are drifting lazily with the current, waiting for an opportunity to partake of nature's bounty. The sunlight sparkles on the water.

It makes a person so thankful that we have all of these wondrous gifts of nature all wrapped up in a special jewel box known to us as Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park. As volunteers we are truly blessed with the opportunities we have to help preserve and maintain our park and educate our visitors about the environment. These are just some of the reasons why we have events like "Art in Our Park" and "Family Discovery Day" to provide funds for facility support and resource management and promote aluminum can recycling.

Why we have our work days and holiday cleanups, remove exotic growth and

promote native plants.

We provide literature that reminds visitors about leaving the beach as clean as they found it, not to disturb the wildlife and obey the shelling rules.

Each task, no matter how large or small is important. We can be proud of the 2,466 volunteer hours we recorded in 2004—a 23% increase over the previous year. Therefore, a heartfelt *Thank you* goes out to everyone who plays a role in accomplishing our mission and goals.

As we suspend our meeting for a few months, I hope everyone has a great summer. Enjoy your time with your loved ones, be safe, be well and we will assemble on **September 12th** to begin a new season with a covered dish picnic at 12:30 p.m. at the Pavilion.

Remember our summer and post holiday Work Day dates are as follows: 5/31, 6/23, 7/5, 7/28, 8/25 and 9/6.

Also make sure you turn in your hours at the end of each month.

See you all in the fall.

Lois Cantwell, President

Hurricane

Helpers

The park goes through extensive preparation for the summer storms. We welcome volunteers to help batten down the hatches, especially the very first storm. If you love the wind, this is the place to be. Please wear heavy shoes or boots. We usually start a week before so if you have some time, please give Bob or Chad a call at 597-6196!

The Palm Tree Press is published quarterly by:

The Supporters of Del-Nor Wiggins Park, Inc.

Phone: (239)-597-6196

Contributions are Welcome

Take Note—June is the official start of Hurricane Season. Because of the problems experienced last year, people are doing additional pruning, especially on large trees. Have needed pruning done as soon as possible, by professionals, so you know it's done right.

Green Thumbs Up!

The restoration efforts after last year's hurricane season were astounding. Through a combination of projects from the C.S.O. members, volunteers and the 4th graders from Naples Park Elementary, approximately 300 plants and trees were planted in the park. The sea grapes were donated by Eleazar Echeverria from his nursery. Eleazar is a park regular who has been very generous with his knowledge of plant reproduction and plants.

The new butterfly area is located south of bathhouse #5 along the path to parking lot #4. The plants are young now but as they mature, we expect to find patches of color and activity. A future project for the members is conducting a butterfly count to establish a sightings list for the park.

Park Service Specialist Carolyn Shaw

Butterfly Q&A

What is the origin of the word "butterfly"?

No one really knows the origin of this word. It is possible that it arose from the butter-yellow color of common European butterflies called sulphurs.

Where do butterflies spend the night?

At night, or during inclement weather, most butterflies perch on the underside of a leaf, crawl deep between blades of grass or into a crevice in rocks, or find some other shelter and sleep.

Where do butterflies lay their eggs?

Most butterflies lay their eggs on plants that will be eaten by the caterpillar when it hatches. Some species lay their eggs on the tops of leaf, some on the bottom, some at the leaf axils, some on flowers, and some on stalks. Which species do which is not known in all cases. Watch butterflies carefully and you could make a real contribution to our knowledge.

We have some sad news to report — Bernard (Bill) Williams passed away while touring Spain with his wife Olga and granddaughter. Bill was an active C.S.O. member as is Olga and devoted countless hours to the park. John Brennan, a former Vice President of the C.S.O. passed away in Lakeland, Florida. Our deepest sympathies are with the families on their loss.

Do butterflies have a sense of smell?

Yes, they have chemoreceptors at the ends of their antennae and on the bottoms of their “feet!”

What is wrong with releasing butterflies at weddings and other events?

This well-meaning but misguided practice spreads diseases to natural populations, inappropriately mixes genetically distinct populations of the same species, may disrupt migratory behavior of native butterflies, confuses scientific studies of butterfly migrations and usually results in the untimely death of the butterflies released.

Do butterfly boxes work?

Unfortunately, no. While so-called butterfly boxes can be attractive, and do little harm, studies have shown that butterflies do not use them in any way.

How long does a butterfly live?

An adult butterfly probably has an average life-span of approximately one month. The smallest butterflies may live only a week, while the Monarchs, Mourning Cloaks and Tropical Heliconians, can live up to nine months.

(Source: North American Butterfly Association)

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