

PALM TREE PRESS



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7th Year for Eagle Ray Dive Club

*What a great photo.
Why doesn't the CSO have one like this?*

The Eagle Ray Dive Club with approximately 45 members volunteered to do their annual reef clean up. This is the seventh year we have worked together to provide the park and our visitors a cleaner and safer reef. As you can see by the photo there were many crab traps chairs and other materials blown into the water or abandoned after last years Hurricanes. The removal of abandoned traps helps to stop the indiscriminate killing of reef fish and arthropods which get trapped inside of them and provides for a cleaner environment. We also use this as an educational tool to remind people along the coasts to put away things before storms arrive which can be blown or washed into the waters.

 Kay Peley is recuperating well and getting stronger every day!

 Park Ranger Sherril Mason will be leaving us at the end of October. We'll miss you.

 A new OPS Harry Carbonneau has joined the Park Staff. Welcome Harry!

 Mark your calendars, see CSO dates inside

 Submit your stories to the Palm Tree Press.

 Happy Halloween, don't forget to VOTE.

**APPLAUSE!
APPLAUSE!**



Yeah,
Eagle
Dive Club!!!

Message From The Park Manager



It is hard to believe that fall is here in South West Florida.

If you don't believe me just look out your window late in the evening or early in the morning and you will see the Harvest Moon rising and setting.

For me that signals it is time for the Supporters meetings again. I look forward to seeing everyone again and getting our plans together for the upcoming activities which you sponsor. You offer something a little different and special for the visitors that come to enjoy this natural setting of the park. I hope everyone had a good summer and, Welcome back!

*Robert M. Steiger
Park Manager*



President's Corner

Having spent most of the summer getting settled in our new house back in Michigan, it is now time to focus on a new season with the CSO membership and try to accomplish as much as we can in the next 5 or 6 months. We already had a successful exotic plant removal effort on National Public Lands Volunteer Day in September. A work in progress for January 20th, 2007 is our 9th Annual Art Show. That committee will be rolling out volunteer opportunities for our membership relative to making that another of many successes that we have had in the past. Our park manager has identified additional items that we can fund this season, including 10 stainless steel grills. These are a bit more costly than the standard grills, but last a lot longer, so our challenge is to provide the funding necessary to accomplish that goal. So, I am encouraging everyone to get involved in our fundraisers and lend a helping hand. Also, there are opportunities to do some "fun" things as a group. Suggestions range from an outing, a field trip, or some small event that would bring us together for educational and recreational activities. Bring your ideas to future meetings. One idea is to have a monthly "brown bagger" lunch in the park for anyone who would like to gather and share some time and get to know each other better, learn about new members, do a little brainstorming and so on. You never know what might blossom from planting a little seed of an idea and watching it grow with the help of a little input from your fellow members.

Welcome back everyone and let's have a fun and productive season supporting our beloved park. Hope everyone had a great summer and safe travels.

Lois Cantwell



September 10, 2006, earthquake

I was wondering how many of you felt the quake reported at a 6.0 out in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico? I was in my office at my chair and thought someone had hit the building hard enough to shake it but I realized that it kept shaking. Was I dreaming? Oh well back to work and I forgot about it until one of the Rangers came in and said he heard it on the radio.

On the evening news it put the epicenter 260 west of Clearwater and 300 something miles south of Pensacola. It is the biggest one I remember living in Florida for 54 years. Bob

What is LibraryThing?

Did you ever wonder what books are available in the park's professional library to consult for any questions you might have? Now you can log on to the Internet anytime to find out. is a free website that connects people based on the books they share. It already has over 85,000 users and 6 million books cataloged in the system.

We now have an account on that lists all 113 books currently owned by the park. You can peruse them by list of titles or by cover view (although most of our books are so old the covers do not show). You can also view them by the tags assigned to them, such as: plants, fishes, butterflies, etc. More importantly, you can interact with the database by adding tags and comments. You can rate your books and write reviews.

The best feature is the tag called **Pssst!** which will recommend new books to buy according to what we already have. You can also use the **Search** tab to not only search our books by title, author, tag or keyword, but you can also search what others have for your tags to guide new purchases. Finally, under the **Joy** tab, you can export our list of books to an Excel database to take with you on a shopping expedition to Borders. Then, when the park or the CSO purchases new books for the collection, Carolyn or any one of us will be able to add them to the online database.

Go ahead try it! Go to www.librarything.com and use **delnor** as the username and **wiggins** as the password. We need new books!

Alicia Astorga
Webmaster & Retired Librarian



EVERGLADES: Released pet pythons slither into South Fla.

Partial story from: Eric Bontrager, Land Letter reporter (10/05/06)

They can grow more than 20 feet long and weigh more than 400 pounds, feeding on almost any living creature in the temperate climates in which they thrive. The Burmese python is considered threatened in its native Southeast Asia, but thanks to careless pet owners, the hulking python has found a new home, the Florida Everglades.

Since the mid-1990s, wildlife officials in South Florida have observed a growing number of Burmese pythons in the grasses and waters of the Everglades, the result of former owners releasing the animals when they grow too large to be cared for. In the Everglades, the python can find limitless amounts of food and almost no natural predators. As a result, its population has grown, presenting a serious threat to the Everglades' already fragile ecosystem. Skip Snow, a wildlife biologist at **Everglades National Park**, said most people were skeptical about the extent of the "python epidemic" until December 2002, when a large python and an alligator were found in the midst of a battle that lasted about 24 hours before ending in a draw. "That raised a lot of eyebrows," he said.

Because the python is considered an invasive species, the park removes them whenever they are spotted and, if they are found alive, euthanizes them. In 2005, 95 pythons were found in the park. This year, through Oct. 1, that number is 122 so far.

Snow said while it is difficult to ascertain how many pythons are in the Everglades, the number could easily be more than a thousand, posing a significant threat to the wetland's wildlife. "If there are a lot of pythons out there, there are a lot of animals being eaten," said Snow.

The python threatens species' survival not only by directly preying on them, but also by eating their food sources and taking over their habitat. Pythons generally consume small birds and mammals, which they subdue via constriction. But larger pythons require appropriate prey and have been found to consume larger animals including bobcats and muskrats.

To encourage more accountability for python owners, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recently proposed regulations to have Burmese pythons and reticulated pythons -- the largest species of python living today -- classified as "reptiles of concern" that would have to be permanently implanted with small microchips. The proposed regulations are still being vetted in public hearings and workshops.

But the toughest challenge is giving python owners an acceptable option when their pythons become too big for them to care for. Animal welfare groups like the Humane Society advocate placing the large reptiles in appropriate facilities, but there are only so many facilities in South Florida that can accept a python once it reaches a certain size, and many of these are full. Hoping to help alleviate the problem, the state recently offered an Amnesty Day, where pet owners could bring their pets to be euthanized by the state, but many pet owners are not willing to consider that option either.

"Most people I've talked to say they would let them go, not understanding the ecological effect, rather than have them euthanized," said Thayer.

*Photo from Everglades National Park, October 2005
Hopefully they will never make it to our Park.*



Fort Wiggins



About Matt and Tom

They are our “Volunteer Campground hosts” Since we don’t have an actual campground they live in Fort Wiggins. They applied for the positions in the spring via the internet and are now working at their park duties. Acting as Volunteer Rangers they work 30 hours a week (PLUS). They work the front gate and in the office. They do “early field clean up” everyday, fix and repair things, help with the recycling, and anything else that needs doing. They are both originally from California. Stop by and meet and greet them!

Another Day in Paradise

by Tom Gorrell & Matt Smith



As newcomers to Southwest Florida, we were honored to have been chosen to occupy “Fort Wiggins” as volunteers. We left Sacramento on May 13 and have traveled over 7500 miles, taking the northern route to explore such magnificent places as Crater Lake, the Olympic Peninsula, Yellowstone, Glacier Park, the Black Hills, Niagara Falls, the White and Green mountains of NH and VT, Cape Cod, the Blue Ridge Mountains and other visual delights along the way to Florida.

We motored down Florida’s east coast to the Keys, staying at both Bahia Honda SP and Long Key SP. Both parks offered sweeping water vistas, although Long Key uniquely offered RV spaces facing the Atlantic. At high tide we were only ten steps from the seaweed covered water’s edge. Our attempt to rescue an injured sea turtle failed, but at least the Turtle Rescue Unit arrived and tried their best. The valiant fully clothed ranger on duty stayed submerged with the hard shelled creature comforting it until help arrived.

After ten days in the Florida Keys we headed northwest for our three month stay at Delnor Wiggins Pass SP. We both were impressed with the cleanliness and obvious wealth of Naples as we drove for the first time on the Tamiami trail. Instead of the honky-tonk atmosphere we found at Myrtle Beach SC with its roadside array of monster signs, we viewed upscale shopping centers and restaurants along neat palm tree lined streets. In downtown Naples it’s difficult to distinguish a parking garage from a luxury condominium.

After settling into our RV space at Fort Wiggins, we soon came to the conclusion that we at last had arrived in Paradise. Because of attentive park management and the great effort of dedicated rangers and volunteers, the pristine look of our park retains its natural beauty for all to enjoy. The cleanliness level continues to impress us, especially considering its urban location and large number of visitors.

The only negative about this area and perhaps most of Florida are the two H’s: Heat and Humidity. Writing this missive in mid October, we are very glad that most of that is behind us, but we can fully understand why so many snow birds head back north in the summer.

Not wanting to end on a negative tone, we want to reiterate our great love of this little stretch of real estate known as Delnor Wiggins Pass State Park. Because of wise foresight many years ago, before the high rise developments and endless strip malls, our little piece of paradise will remain forever in its natural state.

As we aim our motor home to new locales in January we will never forget our wonderful experiences and the dedicated people who make this park what it is today and for the future. As for today, it’s just another day in Paradise.

The accompanying photos submitted by Matt and Tom. They captured the Eagle photo at the park as well.

Upcoming Art Show

NINTH ANNUAL

Wildlife & Wildlands

That's right you read it correctly. It says NINTH ANNUAL! How time flies and how the years zip by. As a CSO member you may already know that Fall means "Get ready for the Art Show!". Not counting our aluminum recycling program the ART SHOW is the major fundraiser for our park. Our money is made by a percentage of the artists sales, baked goods, and raffle. The event again will be held on the 3rd Saturday of January. That's January 20, 2007.

The Art Show Committee has already been hard at work reserving the artists and making necessary contacts for press releases to ensure that the word gets out to the public about our fine art show. Carolyn has actually been contacted by an artist from Colorado who has heard about our Wildlife and Wildlands Art Show.

If you have never attended one of our shows I will explain a bit about it. The artists juried by us are asked to only include art that depicts Native Florida. Native Florida meaning the way the land looked before stucco and flip-flops. The juried artists will all have beautiful compositions of wildlife and wildlands.

As you know, the weather in January is also beautiful resulting in a pondering crowd who take in all the fine art in the beautiful setting of Delnor Wiggins.

Your CSO will hosts 2 Welcome Tables at the entrances to Area 3 where we'll offer a friendly face and information about ourselves and the event.

Ice Cream on loan from the Royal Scoop will be available as well as delectibles from "The Beach Bakery". So if you like to bake, this is the table for you. The rangers will offer their knowledge of Native Florida. The CSO will host a raffle. Last year we raised many \$\$\$s from this "table" alone.

A new addition this year will be "Future Artists". This area will be for children to paint or draw on native objects such as shells, rocks or leaves.

The next exciting Art Show Committee meeting will be soon. All input is welcome as we are still in the planning stages. So, get your thinking caps on and come on down! Jan. 20 2007 that's just 12 weeks away.

The patrons stroll along the 2005 art show. The tents are set right on the sand among the pines and scrub making it ever so pleasant.



Some of the artists actively paint while the show is in progress. This is fascinating to watch.

We always need extra help during an event. Here are some volunteer possibilities:

Help with parking detail, Put up Area Event signs and no parking signs, Help the artists set up their tents, Welcome the attendees at the CSO table, Work with the children, Bake or sell Baked goods, Sell raffle tickets, Work the front gate, Sell ice cream (not just eat it).





New Recycling Program at the Park

CSO Volunteer **Larry Beer** has set us up with a recycling program called TerraCycle. Now we can utilize our plastic bottles as well as our aluminum cans.

TerraCycle manufactures affordable, potent, organic products that are not only made from waste, but are also packaged entirely in waste! TerraCycle Plant Food is made by feeding premium organic waste to millions of worms. The worm poop is then liquified into a powerful organic plant food and bottled directly in used soda bottles.

For every bottle that is collected, TerraCycle will donate \$0.05 to the Park or save 10 square feet of the rainforest through The Nature Conservancy. They provide four boxes with prepaid UPS labels and all we have to do is mail them back full of 20 oz. soda bottles with the labels removed. After they're cleaned, your bottles are used to package TerraCycle Plant Food. To date, they have been able to rescue over 1,216,086 bottles.



Now that season is here we ought to be able to fill the boxes quickly. The TerraCycle products can be bought locally at Home Depot and Walmart.

REMEMBER THESE DATES

November 13, January 8

Regular Membership Meeting:
Held at the Park Conference Room,
(2nd Monday of each month).

December 11

Picnic Meeting, Christmas Party,
Volunteer Recognition Awards
This is a covered dish picnic with
a main dish of "Fried Turkey".
We bring the fixin's.

November 15:

America Recycles Day
This is an annual national awareness
event to promote the social,
environmental, and economic benefits
of buying recycled and recycling.
We encourage patrons to bring their
bottles and cans to the park recycle
center.

November 30, December 28.

Work Days: Dedicated Work Days are
held once per month at 8:00 am on
the last Thursday of the month all
year round. Typical work assignments
include such tasks as trash pick-up,
raking picnic areas, sorting cans/bot-
tles for recycling, exotic plant removal,
nursery activities, butterfly/native plant
gardening, or other tasks identified by
our park staff.

November ?? (TBA):

Exotic Plant Removal Work Day



Bye Bye to Vanderbilt Inn

October 17 as I was leaving the park, I decided to pull over at the Vanderbilt Inn's parking area and take a look around at the teardown "progress". The guy in the crane saw my camera and told me to stick around about 5 minutes for the big show. The very last of the buildings we all knew and loved went down in a big poof. Here are a couple of photos I took at the memorable moment.

S0 Sad....another landmark and beloved Tiki Bar bite the dust. Sharon Eddy

Naples Zoo New Benefits for Collier Residents

Free Admission Each Month! On the first Saturday of every month, 12 times a year, Collier County residents entering Naples Zoo by 11 a.m. will receive free zoo admission. No coupon required, just proof of residency for all adults.

New Family Memberships at Half Price! A new family zoo membership category is being added. For just \$49.95, up to two adults and their dependent children living in the same household up to age 21 can enjoy visiting the zoo whenever they like at no charge and receive members only benefits. This is a 50% savings for Collier County residents. **They also have a grandparents membership at half price.**

"SomethingGood"

by Ranger Nick

Sometimes you get caught up in the day-to-day responsibilities and take for granted the beauty and wonder that goes on all around you. Everyday brings something new and exciting. Some days the color of the water contrasting with the sky is intoxicating and just add a few really white puffy clouds and it can send you over the top. How about the quiet of the park in the morning and the stillness of the water, only to be broken by a dolphin and her young swimming along the beach. The beach, there's so much to say about it, the blank canvas to a young artist who makes sandcastles and tunnels, or writes their name in the sand under a sand sculpture of a turtle or alligator. These are just some of the things you see here at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park.

So as far as any good things that happen here at Wiggins, well that's all up to the person visiting the park. Whether they are a first time visitor in awe of the natural beauty or the regular visitor who has his or her favorite fishing spot, IT'S ALL GOOD! Watching the pelicans glide over the water effortlessly or the sun setting into the water, everyday is different. High tide, low tide, mornings and afternoons, everyone has their own special time to visit the park. My favorite thing I see in the park has to be the smiles on the visitors faces whether it's on kids burying their Dad in the sand or seeing a dolphin for the first time to a family celebrating a special moment at the park.

Well it's back to work for me now. Let me see, am I going to meet some visitors from England or Germany today? or from some other far away place that I've never been to. One thing they all have in common, they are here visiting us, the park they enjoy so much, week after week, year after year.

Florida State Park Ranger, Nick Zandstra Jr.

P.S. After being a park ranger for two years, I still come to work everyday feeling like it's my first!

SomethingGood Part II

Well, as a follow-up to **SomethingGood**, I'm still a ranger here at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park. My 3 year anniversary is towards the end of August and you know I still come to work everyday but it's not like it's my first day anymore. It's way better than that and you know why? Well, I'm going to tell you why. First, now I know quite a few of our regular visitors, when they come in and what's their favorite part of the park. That's important to me and when they come in it's always a good thing. I feel I make them feel like they have a place to go where they're a welcome addition to the natural beauty of the park. I believe they care more about the park because I care more about the park.

It's something we share.

Making something bad into something good. I want to talk about RED TIDE (BAD). I was able to identify some of the many fish that washed up. Those I couldn't identify I was compelled to learn about: their names, what they ate, deep water or reef. I mean I saw everything: Sting Rays, Sharks, Snapper, Snook, Seatrout and sheepshead and that's just the sss'ss. Now I don't want you to think I'm glorifying RED TIDE but I used it as an "Educational Event". Just as if there is a road kill of a snake or armadillo or any of the wonderful animals, mammals or birds around us. It gives us a chance to see, identify and wonder how they lived, what they ate and where they were going.

After the RED TIDE the bait fish come back, then the dolphins, the birds...the people. RED TIDE, it's just a memory or is it a nightmare, it's just what you make it. I know I wouldn't have been able to see all of those fish without it. What's the next "Educational Event"? I don't know, but I'll see it tomorrow, GUARANTEED!!

One more thing, I was able to observe a Pod of Manatees last week, they were only 25 feet off shore and there were 9 of them. In my 3 years of working here it was my FIRST TIME seeing them in MY PARK!! Well, if you want to see more, come to YOUR PARK!!

A VERY HAPPY Florida State Park Ranger ----- Nick Zandstra Jr



Ranger Nick, a man who loves his job, and he can cook too! Those Chicken wings on the grill sure look like "SomethingGood"!

Join and receive our newsletter to keep updated on the Park even when you're not here. Also get 12 free beach passes!

Name _____

Contact person, if Corporation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Out of State information: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

I reside in Florida from _____ to _____

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www.DelnorWiggins.org

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CSO

MISSION AND GOALS

To Promote Environmental Awareness, use and enjoyment of the Park.

To assist Park Staff with resource management, facility maintenance, recycling and visitor services.

To improve the resources and facilities through fund raising events and volunteer activities.

To learn more about the Park's ecosystem, inhabitants and functions.

Join Us Today!

**New members always welcome.
Membership meetings held each month, call for more information!**

Membership Categories

Individual	\$ 15.00
Family	\$ 25.00
Corporate	\$ 35.00
Donation	\$ _____

"Helping the Park Achieve its goals since 1987"



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