



# Palmfree Press



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## Dear Fellow CSO Member!

Well the heat is on .... yep it is warming up and hopefully this will signal the start of the rainy season. Your Park, the gem on the gulf, Delnor Wiggins Pass State Park needs rain and needs it soon. However I am confident that while this is the worst drought in 60 years some how those beautiful mangroves will make it. I believe they know how to survive.

While traffic in South West Florida is almost tolerable, the traffic at the beach is Dr. Jekyll followed by Mr. Hyde. On Mothers Day the crowds at the beach were immense .... the next day was unattended. However the trash and cleanup was immense.

While some of you are North ... there is still a small but dedicated cadre of CSO volunteers who are cleaning, picking up and assuring our visitors that the Delnor Wiggins experience is one of the best in Florida ... just the way we all want it. We look forward to seeing you again soon, be safe and enjoy the summer.

Check the Web site over the course of the summer, ..... Alicia will work with us all and we will keep you posted .... SEE YOU IN THE FALL!

Dick Liden, President

## Message from past President

These last 3 years have passed rather quickly and now we enter another era of leadership. We have evolved over these past few years by implementing the guidelines that the FPS and DEP set forth as a model for all CSO's to follow. Change was already in the wind when I became president and I was simply the instrument of that change. Nothing is accomplished in a volunteer organization by just one person. It takes a concerted effort and I want to say **thanks** to all of you who have worked toward bringing us to the level of productivity that we have reached. We are doing a good job of identifying and understanding the needs of the park, incorporating those needs into our budget and raising the funds to support these needs. The FPS considers this the primary function of a CSO. Thanks to those who serve on the committees and work at our events, we are doing well and have provided numerous amenities to our beloved park. I encourage all of you to show your support to our new president by getting out to regular meetings, participating in committees, signing up to work the events, coming in on work days, recruiting new members and promoting social interaction among the membership. Last, but not least, **thank you** to the park staff for your support and for helping me understand the inner workings of the park system, the administrative effort required to run a state park, and answering the million questions that I asked. By gaining insight into how you do your jobs and what the rangers' jobs entail, I was able to apply that knowledge to the tasks before us as board members. A truly valuable experience.

Lois Cantwell

## Park Manager's Message

If you missed the Volunteer Appreciation Gala at Gamble Plantation on March 14, 2008 you missed a good time and a good meal. It was a very interesting day with tours of the Mansion, the Payne house, The Civil War enactors, the period story tellers and musicians, the wild life demonstration from Myaka State Park and the great meal and tours that were given. Harley's Barbeque was fine and I had the shredded pork sandwich which was great. After eating they handed out awards and folks from our CSO were nominated for some. Volunteer team of Joe Gagnier and Dick Liden were given certificates for their work on replacing railing at our Bath houses. Jo Ann Link, Aliene Liden, and Lois Cantwell received our award nomination for CSO event of the 2007 year which was our Wildland and Wildlife Art Festival. I wish you all could have come and if you didn't maybe you can plan to for next year. Most of all I want to thank to all of you for the great Volunteer help which we could not do with out.

Robert M. Steiger



## New Board Members Sworn In

The February Meeting was also the swearing in ceremony for our new board members. Left to right, Ranger Robert Steiger, President Dick Liden, Director Phil Nye, Secretary Diane Schwartz, Director Kay Peley, Membership Leader Joan Erb, Treasurer Olga Williams and Vice President Joe Gagnier. Missing from photo is Director Fred Eckert pictured at left.



Below we welcome our new President Dick Liden. We bid adieu to Lois Cantwell as our Past President. What a fantastic job Lois has done for us!





## “Definitely not a Gopher Tortoise”

By: Mark Nicoletti, Assistant Park Manager

While driving through the park on an extremely busy Sunday, I came across a golden colored tortoise and my first thought was, “What in the world....?” At the time I wasn’t able to stop and check it out as the park was getting ready to close its gates due to full capacity. A few hours later, after doing traffic control and a beach patrol, I was able to go back to the area I originally saw the tortoise. To my surprise “he” was still alongside the road calmly grazing through the grass and weeds. Not knowing what it was, I called a Ranger to check it out. He said he had never seen anything like it before either. After making sure the tortoise was not of the snapping variety, I put it in a container and then took it home with me that night after work. The next day, PSS Carolyn Shaw informed me it was an African Burrowing or Spurred Tortoise, *Geochelone sulcata*. After closer inspection it was found that he was actually a she. As this is an African native it was most likely someone’s pet that got too big and they let it go in the closest natural area. The African *sulcata* is the third largest tortoise in the world reaching 24-30 inches and weighing in at 80-110 pounds. They can also live up to 100 years. Delnor-Wiggins Pass gets visitors from around the world, but I believe this is the first African shelled visitor the park has seen. “Rufus”, as my son named “her”, will soon be with one her own kind as Isabella, another African *sulcata* in Naples has been looking for a roommate.

# Put your cell phone # to good use.

### Pound 337

Floridians now have a new tool for protecting the state’s natural resources. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recently announced that most cell phone customers in Florida can dial #DEP to report environmental crimes, including illegal dumping of hazardous materials, construction debris, oil drums and biological waste.

### Join Our CSO Team

#### Citizens Support Organization

Receive our newsletter and 12 free beach passes just for signing up. Call the Park for more info or visit our website at [www.DelnorWiggins.org](http://www.DelnorWiggins.org). Membership categories include:  
 Individuals \$ 15.00  
 Family \$25.00  
 Corporate \$ 35.00  
 Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Field Trip to Myakka River State Park

April 2<sup>nd</sup> was a beautiful day for a drive up to the Myakka River State Park. A group of 16 CSO members car pooled from north Naples and vicinity to make the journey. We reached our destination with about 45 minutes to spare before the scheduled air boat ride. Just enough time to check out the amenities in the concession area and hit the rest rooms before boarding the “Myakka Maiden”. One of the world’s 2 largest airboats took us for a scenic cruise on Upper Myakka Lake. Our informative and humorous captain acquainted us with the area, telling stories about the wildlife and vegetation that we encountered. Limpkins, egrets and gators, oh my!

After docking back at the Myakka Outpost, we decided lunch was the next priority before participating in a birding adventure led by Phil Nye (our tour coordinator) and his trusty spotting scope. We started out by the weir and saw the limpkins, a harrier, plus a wood stork and heron sharing space in the mangroves. (And more gators floating along in the water). We then drove over to the Bird Walk. A few people had bird lists with them and took pleasure in checking off all that they had seen. A bald eagle “lunching” on the edge of the lake, a flock of skimmers settling behind a patch of high grass, as well as ducks, herons, and black necked stilts were putting on a show for us.

The last stop on our tour was the Canopy Walkway. Several of us felt compelled to climb up 25 feet above ground, walk across the 85-foot suspended boardwalk, and ascend the 74-foot high tower at the other end. This presented a spectacular view of the vast acreage of treetops, wetlands, and the prairie/hammock interface. You could see a vista that stretched for miles and look down on eagles, hawks, vultures and other birds in flight.

Alas, we didn’t have time to take the tram ride into the back country, but the 7 mile scenic drive through the park, and the day’s activities gave us a good flavor of what this beautiful park has to offer. There are also 39 miles of hiking, biking, and horse trails, camping facilities, log cabins, canoe and kayak rentals and more. Another day, perhaps.

To gain an understanding of the intricate workings of a natural ecosystem in progress, you have to experience it for yourself. Highly recommended!

## Family Discovery Day,

a yearly Del-Nor Wiggins CSO event, was held on February 16th in area three at Delnor Wiggins State Park. The purpose of Family Discovery Day is to bring children and parents together in a variety of hands-on activities that enhance their awareness of our natural environment and the importance of being good stewards of the environment.

This year children learned about bugs, snakes, turtles and alligators from exhibitors such as The Conservancy of SW Florida, Calusa Nature Center and the Junior Ranger Exhibit.

The volunteers from Lover’s Key State Park had hands-on exhibits where children learned about the environment and nature. The fishing clinic, which was started last year, continues to be a big success thanks to the Rangers and Park Volunteers. This year we added a bingo nature walk, a Geo Cashe Hunt and a table where children were able to make their own shell necklaces.

Other hands on activities included the shell hunt, the sand sculpture contest, and the ever popular painting of shells and palm boots.

Be certain to mark your calendars for our 6th annual Family Discovery Day event to be held on March 21, 2009. Anyone interested in helping with this event or being an exhibitor should contact Carolyn Shaw, Park Service Specialist at 239-597-6196.

### 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.



## The Early Fielder’s Creed

by Larry beer (pictured)

*Neither heat of the burning sun, nor red tide, nor attacks of hordes of no-see-ums stay these hearty volunteer from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.*

They get moving and ply their trade before the birds sing. The Early Fielders risk body and soul as they sail on unlighted EZ-GOs with loose steering and spongy brakes but sail they must. They use their faces to clear the cobwebs from pedestrian boardwalks. Bathrooms are checked for that unflushed toilet. Dumpsters are searched for those pesky raccoons. The Jungle is cleared of diapers and Bud Lites. The Desert is emptied of hot charcoal and rib bones. Endless tales of medical ailments and political buffoonery must be endured at the Liars Club. However, neither insect bites, nor grill burns, nor boredom, nor broken bones, nor scratches and tears of flesh from the dreaded Nickerbean shall slow them down. They gladly go where no man has gone before. It is for the beach rat, the sun worshipper, the man with pole and hook, the watcher of birds and finally the picnicker that we ply our trade in our uniforms of black. With a smile on our insect-repellent covered faces we are the few, the proud, the unpaid. We are the Early Fielders of Del-Nor Wiggins.

YOU GOTTA READ THIS



*Palm Tree Press*

“Helping the Park achieve it’s goals since 1987”

Supporters of Del-Nor Wiggins Park, Inc  
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