

Outdoor Times



MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION
IT STARTS IN PARKS

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Visitor Safety Our Number One Goal

In the event of virtually any life-threatening situation, a nearby Parks staffer is able to assist. Each year, the Parks and Recreation Department hosts a CPR / First Aid and Bloodborne Pathogens course for staff.

"It is important that our staff are receiving the highest quality information and training available to prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the workplace," stated Commissioner Barbara Fitos.

During the course of the day, staff are taught how bloodborne pathogens are spread, how to prevent exposures and what to do if exposed to infectious materials.

Before they leave, they are able to recognize and care for breathing and cardiac

emergencies, as well as administer basic first aid.



"It is money well spent," noted Parks and Recreation Director, Lee Niblock. "If our staff can sustain life until the paramedics arrive, it is

worth the expense of this annual one-day training session."

Keep Marion Beautiful Board Members Needed

Keep Marion Beautiful (KMB) is in need of Board Members. KMB is a 501(c)3 organization looking for active participants to protect the natural beauty of

Marion County. Everyone needs to be involved in our community. Maybe this opportunity is what you have been waiting for.

Please contact Dennis Yonce at 427-6759 if you or someone you know are interested.

Second Annual Summer Recreation Program Planned

Marion County Parks and Recreation will offer recreation fun this summer at a number of elementary schools County-wide for children entering first through sixth grades.

A program for youth entering the seventh through ninth grades will be offered at several middle schools as well.

The program will include games, crafts, sports activi-



ties, theme days and outdoor recreation field-trips for the middle school aged youth. Breakfast and lunch is also included.

The program will be held Monday's through Thursday's from 7:30 am—2:30 pm, beginning June 16 through July 24th.

A \$15 registration fee per child will cover the six week program. Registration began on March 31.

To register, or for more information, please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 352-671-8560.

Outdoor Times is a monthly newsletter provided as a public service to park visitors and guests.

Any questions related to this publication may be directed to Gina Peebles, Administrative Manager, in writing at Marion County Parks & Recreation, 111 SE 25 Ave, Ocala, FL 34471, by telephone at 352-671-8560 or via e-mail at gina.peebles@marioncountyfl.org

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Outdoor Times

Egg-citing Recreation

It was an egg-citing time at three County Parks with the first annual Brown Bag Bunny Brunch held on March 18-20. Over 300 children and family members attended the pre-school age event at Liberty Community Park, Baseline Road Trailhead and Wrigley Fields.

The children had a wonderful time designing their own

Easter bag craft, complete with Easter grass, then hopping off with Mr. Bunny in search of elusive Easter Eggs.

Following the egg hunt, the Children's Staff from the Library, provided a bunny story and poems for the youngsters. The morning concluded with lunch.

"It was a fun time for all participants.

This soon to be annual event provided families with small children an opportunity to enjoy their local park," noted Commissioner Stan McClain.



Marion County's Legislative Priorities

Marion County Day was held at the Capitol in Tallahassee on April 2 and 3. Chairman Stone, and Commissioners Fitos and McClain shared the County's legislative priorities with our Legislative Delegation.

This year, springs protection is Marion County's number one legislative priority. It is important that the County, in partnership with the State of Florida, continue to be good stewards of the water resources entrusted to us by the citizens of our County and State.

Marion County has been developing a springs protection

ordinance and has committed time and resources on studies, reports, task forces and other initiatives including springs protection zones. However, Marion County cannot tackle this issue alone. Effective and meaningful legislation to

clean up the springs has yet to be passed. Chairman Stone asked our State elected officials to take a leadership role in the establishment of springs protection legislation. This legislation will serve as a model for our neighboring Counties who face these same issues.

The County's second legislative priority is future Florida Department of Transportation funding for transportation

Price Index and to support current law which funds the County Incentive Grant Program from revenues generated by eliminating the seven percent service charge on local option fuel taxes are being requested. Funding by the State for the Sharpes Ferry Bridge replacement is essential as it serves as a designated evacuation route for east coast residents during a hurricane event.

Finally, the County submitted a number of Community Budget Issue Requests including financial support for the North Central Florida Agriculture and Civic Center, full funding for the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, full funding for Affordable and

Workforce Housing, full funding for replacement construction of the Sharpes Ferry Bridge on 314 and to provide research dollars for Citrus Greening and Citrus Canker.



Pictured left to right: Chip Wildy, David Holmes, Charlie Stone, Stan McClain, Gina Peebles, Rep. Kurt Kelly, Dennis Baxley, Pat Howard, Barbara Fitos and Lee Niblock

projects to provide the needed roadway capacity for Marion County. Legislation giving counties the authority to index our local option gas taxes to annual changes in the Consumer

Take a Treasure Hunt in Your Local Park

Did you know that you can have a treasure hunt in many of your local parks? The name of the game is Geocaching, which is a treasure hunt using a GPS.

The basic idea is for someone to hide a clear container with trinkets, generally on public property. GPS owners can then look up coordinates on geocaching.com to start the fun. Once you find a cache, it is tradition to sign and date the log in the container and take one trinket in exchange for another.

"A number of caches can be found in many Marion County owned / operated parks," stated Park Operations Manager, Don Hawkins.

However, to place a cache on County property, one must complete a permit, available by contacting the Parks and Recreation Department, requesting permission to place a cache in a specific area. Items placed in the caches cannot include food, alcohol, drugs, weapons, explosives, dangerous or adult items.

Also, it is customary that the caches be monitored monthly by the applicant to ensure they are in good condition. Permits are valid for one year from the date of issuance.



Gary Carr pictured with his Carney Island Zoo of caches

Get Moving, Stay Young

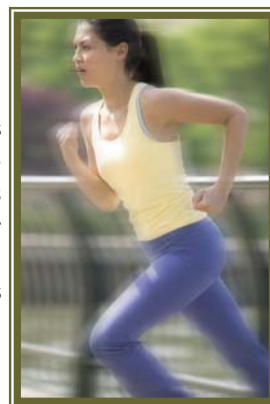
Parks & Recreation—March 2008

We all know that exercise can help prevent heart disease, diabetes and cancer, but a new study shows that exercise can make you biologically younger.

According to the study in a recent issue of the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, people

who exercised moderately were technically four to six years younger than people who didn't exercise. Heavy exercisers were found to be a full nine years younger. Age was determined by the length of telomeres, a part of cell DNA.

The study was conducted among 2,401 twins. Even among twins with different exercise habits, the results showed a significant reduction in the perceived age of siblings who exercised heavily.



Grants & Good Stuff

Over the past few years, the Board of County Commissioners, through the Parks and Recreation Department, has been the recipient of more than \$4 million in State and Federal grants, benefiting all areas of the County.

The Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) has provided \$525,000 for facility improvements at Carney Island, Wrigley Fields and KP Hole. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has pro-

vided \$33,000 for the purchase of the Orange Lake Overlook property. The Florida Department of Transportation, through their Transportation Enhancement Program has provided \$90,000 for a bicycle safety education program and \$3,373,744 for a paved trail (i.e. sidewalks) in Silver Springs Shores. The Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) provided \$62,188 for the Carney Island boat ramps and shoreline restoration project at KP Hole.

"We hope to continue this trend of success," stated Parks and Recreation Department Director, Dr. Lee Niblock. "The Board [of County Commissioners] has been supportive of our grant writing efforts...it is an exciting challenge to find a compatible grant for the projects listed in our five-year Capital Improvements Projects schedule," added Niblock.





Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
April 3	Marion County Day	Tallahassee	8 a.m.—5 p.m.
April 5	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	12 noon—1 p.m.
	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.m.
	Youth Flag Football Begins	Wrigley Fields	
April 16	Parks & Rec Advisory Council	Parks Administration	3 p.m.—5 p.m.
June 14	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
June 16	Summer Recreation Program	Various Elementary Schools	8 a.m.—2 p.m.
September 13	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
November 22	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)



The Marion County Parks and Recreation Department has been selected to represent the 2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

Each local government in the State of Florida is required, by Statute, to annually publish a complete set of financial statements prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The CAFR meets this

requirement and is also recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

The Finance Department submits the CAFR annually to the GFOA in order to qualify for the nationally recognized Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. Finance has received this award for the past consecutive 22 years.

“We decided to feature Parks for the FY 06-07

CAFR because of the major enhancements made to the system and the obvious commitment the Board of County Commissioners have shown towards improving and enhancing our Parks system,” stated John Garri, Finance Director.

“We felt it important to highlight these accomplishments as one of the positive aspects of how our County uses public funds for the enhancement of our citizens’ quality of life” added Garri.

