

Outdoor Times



MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION
IT STARTS IN PARKS

Volume 7, Issue 1

May 2008

Park Pass Offers Year Round Family Fun

The Marion County Parks and Recreation Department sells annual and semi-annual park passes to Marion County residents.

Park passes are valid for day use at:

- Carney Island
- Hampton Beach
- Hope Boat Ramp
- Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat
- Gores Landing
- Moss Bluff North & South
- Ray Wayside Park (Ocala Boat Basin)

Your pass is valid for your vehicle, your boat and up to eight people. For each additional person, there is an extra charge. Passes are transferable between vehicles but may only be used by one vehicle at a time. Passes must be hung on the rear view mirror of your vehicle or clearly displayed through the vehicle windshield at all times while utilizing any of the parks.

KP Hole Park offers individual and family passes to Marion County residents, sold exclusively at the park.

To purchase your park pass today, please complete and mail the Park Pass Application on-line at http://www.marioncountyfl.org/PR612/PR_Forms/PR_ParkPassApplicationFill.pdf, complete the application found on our Parks brochure or you can contact the Administrative Office at 671-8560.



Read on the Green

The second annual *Read on the Green* will be held at Liberty Community Park on Saturday, May 3 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Planned activities include face painting by *Ocala Clown Express*, children's crafts and games, appearances by local authors and musical entertainment.

The *South Marion Citizen*, who has co-sponsored the



event together with the Friends of the Freedom Public Library, is offering a coloring contest. The contest is open to children ages

2-4, 5-7 and 8-10. The winners will receive four tickets to Cypress Gardens and a Book Pack. Entries will be accepted at the event.

Publix Supermarkets and Pizza Hut have generously agreed to donate delectable treats for attendees to sample.

We hope to see you there!

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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Black Bear Scenic By-Way

SR 40 and SR 19 were designated as a *Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway* by the Florida Scenic Highways Program's Scenic Highways Advisory Committee (SHAC). This designation was a cooperative effort between Marion, Lake, Putnam and Volusia County governments, state and federal government agencies, business and land owners and local citizens on the corridor. The Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway is the 21st scenic highway to be designated in the State.

The Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway extends approximately 60 miles along SR 40 from Silver Springs in Marion County east through the Ocala National Forest to I-95 at the City of Ormond Beach in Volusia County. The designation also includes portions of SR 19 North from Putnam County to

South SR 19 in Lake County.

The Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Corridor Management Entity's (CME) action plan is eligible for State funding. Plans include the development of the CME bylaws and incorporation as a 501(c)3 organization, installation of wildlife crossings, construction of informational kiosks and interpretative areas and applying for status as a National Scenic Highway. The group's goals include reducing wildlife road kill and improving habitat connectivity; building and maintaining community support; promoting and encouraging sustainable economic development and providing economic opportunities for local and regional residents; while supporting the community plans within the corridor.

The Byway traverses some

of Florida's most pristine ecosystems. Included within the corridor are many public lands such as Juniper Springs Wilderness Area, Silver River State Park, the Cross Florida Greenway, Florida National Scenic Trail and the Tiger Bay State Forest. The route also crosses several waterways, which have received special designation because of their uniqueness, including the St. Johns River, an American Heritage River and the Ocklawaha River, an Outstanding Florida Water Way.

For more information, meeting dates and locations; please visit www.flbbb.org or contact Carrie Christman, at 625-2520, ext. 2521.

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL CLINIC

Mondays Nights—
6:30PM

Basic play clinic for women who want to get back into playing recreational softball again. The clinic starts on May 5 through June 9. For more information contact 671-8560.

Jim's Corner: Why Kill a Tree to Grow a Flower?

Using Cypress mulch for landscaping purposes has been accepted for a long time as the "best mulch" for a number of reasons. People believe that the inherent properties of cypress mulch have made it the mulch of choice for landscapes. Yet where cypress mulch originates is a much more important issue. The cypress mulch industry is fueled by illegal logging of cypress wetland forests. Wetlands are protected by federal, state and local laws and regulations. Unfortunately these protected sites are

where the majority of cypress mulch is harvested and only 20 – 30% of these areas will ever grow back after they are harvested. Wetlands play a critical role in water resource protection, natural habitat and cultural resources. It is also noted that cypress mulch is NOT a superior product and alternative mulches are cheaper, less environmentally harmful and may even be better for your garden. Look for mulches which originate from renewable resources such as

pine straw (needles) or mini-pine bark nuggets. Another excellent mulch is maleleuca mulch which is generated through the eradication of the invasive/exotic maleleuca tree in south Florida. Rubber mulch is another alternative as is rock, or simply rake your oak leaves into your landscaping. Contact your local Extension Services agent to learn more about the availability of maleleuca mulch and enjoy your garden! (source: Waterkeeper Alliance)



Sixteenth Annual Fishing Derby A Reel Success

Spring in Marion County means it's time for the annual Lake Eaton Kids' Fishing Derby which was held on Saturday, April 19, at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Ocala Conservation Center and Youth Camp on Lake Eaton in the Ocala National Forest. The Derby was free for kids ages 5-12 and ran from 8:30 a.m. until noon. A derby for special needs children was held on April 18, to allow children of all capacities an opportunity to enjoy the thrill of catching a fish or two.

Everything the kids need to fish, including cane poles, bait, instruction and help was provided. Channel catfish raised at the Florida Bass Conservation Center was stocked in the lake to increase everyone's chance of catching fish. Kids fished from the pier and for safety and to avoid tangled lines only cane poles were used.

In addition to fishing, there was a casting contest and an all-time favorite of derby-goers called *Bugs and Critters*. In this creepy-crawly activity, kids get to wade into the lake with dip nets and scoop up bugs and

critters. An FWC biologist uses the experience to teach kids about the aquatic ecosystem.

New this year was a hands-on craft activity provided by Marion County Parks & Recreation where the kids were able to take their finished product home. Each registered child who participated received a Lake Eaton Kids' Fishing Derby t-shirt, absolutely free.

Back again by popular demand was the Bullet and Jada Show, an entertaining act by a pair of comical Frisbee-catching Australian cattle dogs. And, after a morning of fishing and fun, kids were treated to lunch in the camp cafeteria.

And there's one more thing. This year, for the first time, every child who signed up for and participated in the derby took home a brand new starter fishing combo, which includes a rod, reel and basic tackle kit. The fishing kits were courtesy of Fish Florida, a non-profit organization that supports activities to teach children about fishing and aquatic habitats. Fish Florida's funding comes from the Fish Flor-

ida specialty license tag, featuring Florida's official saltwater fish, the sailfish.

"This annual event offers families a chance to connect and introduce children to the great sport of fishing," stated Commissioner Barbara Fitos. "I look forward to having my grandson participate in our many wonderful fishing opportunities in Marion County," added Fitos.

Space was limited to 150 kids, who must pre-register. To sign kids up for next year, call the FWC's Ocala office at 732-1225 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., weekdays. The Ocala Conservation Center is located about 8.5 miles north of SR 40 off CR 314 in the Ocala National Forest.

This is the 16th year the FWC and its sponsors have been holding these derbies for children.



CANOE/KAYAK OUTINGS

Adults interested in monthly canoe/kayak outings can call (352) 671-8560 for more information.

Rotary Sportsplex Board Praise Commissioners Support

The Rotary Sportsplex hosts a number of qualifying events each year drawing thousands of spectators to the park.

In a letter received by Chairman Charlie Stone early last month, the Rotary

Sportsplex Board, Cal Ripken Baseball Association complemented the Board for the improvements made to the Rotary Sportsplex since the County took over its operation in October 2006.

Treasurer Dean Blowers

noted that, "improvements have been made to enhance the overall experience of our players and our teams...from all the players, parents, coaches and volunteers we thank you for all you do."





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Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
May 3	Read on the Green	Liberty Community Park	10 a.m.—2 p.m.
May 16	Ribbon Cutting Celebration	KP Hole Park	1:30 p.m.—2:30 p.m.
May 21	Parks & Rec Advisory Council	Headquarters Library	3 p.m.—5 p.m.
May 26	Memorial Day Program	Veterans Memorial Park	10 a.m.
May 28	Faithful Friends	Veterans Memorial Park	9 a.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.
June 27	Youth Outdoors Adventure Camp	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	8:30 a.m.—4 p.m.
July 4	God & Country Day—5k Run	Veterans Memorial Park	7 a.m.
July 5	Quarterly Memorial Service	Veterans Memorial Park	10 a.m.
July 11	Youth Trail Biking / Disc Golf	Baseline Road Trailhead	8 a.m.—3 p.m.
July 25	Youth Canoe / Kayak	Carney Island	9 a.m.—2 p.m.
July 28	Horseshoe Lake Summer Camp	Horseshoe Lake	8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
October 4	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
October 18	Owl-ween	Carney Island	4 p.m.—7 p.m.
November 22	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.

Horseshoe Lake Adventure Camp

A new and exciting outdoor experience for youngsters ages 7-12 years of age will be held at Horseshoe Lake Park and Retreat, located in Orange Springs. Canoeing / kayaking, trail hikes, outdoor living skills, environmental education, nature crafts and much more will be offered.

Campers should bring a non-perishable lunch each day. Fruit juice drinks and water will be provided at lunch time. Participants should wear old clothes and

sneakers as they will be getting down and dirty each day.



The program will run on July 28-31 and August 4-7 from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

The cost for the program will be \$85 per week.

Early transportation is available for an additional \$35 per week. Pick up/drop off will be offered at the Parks and Recreation Department at the McPherson Governmental Complex, Wrigley Fields in Citra and Cougar Park in Ft. McCoy.

Register early as participation is limited. To sign up for one or both weeks, please contact Cathy Norris or Dan Burleigh at 671-8560.

MOMMIE AND ME & HOME SCHOOL GROUPS

Contact Marion County Parks and Recreation at 671-8560 for outdoor recreation and environmental programs for your children.