

Outdoor Times



MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION
IT STARTS IN PARKS

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Racing4Research Touches Couillard Family



Fuel The Cure.



Four year old Sam, son of Parks Designer Jim Couillard, suffers from a rare disease, known as neurofibromatosis, or NF. NF causes tumors which grow on nerves and can lead to blindness, deafness, chronic pain, and disfigurement, among other very serious complications.

Sam has been chosen for the NF Heroes Program sponsored by the Children's Tumor Foundation. This national not-for-profit organization is dedicated to improving the health and well-

being of individuals born with NF. Joining forces with Farnbacher Loles Racing at the Rolex 24 Hours At Daytona - Racing4Research program, slated for January 24—25, 2009, the group is working to raise money to benefit medical research through corporate sponsorships and individual pledges. The race team will drive 24 hours, and over 600 laps, to raise awareness and find a cure for NF.

Affecting one in every 3,000 births, NF is more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, inherited muscular dystrophy, Tay Sachs and Huntington's disease combined. It affects all races and ethnic origins and half of all cases arise in families with no history of the disorder.

"We first learned of Sam's condition at a very young age. His right eye looked swollen from birth," stated Jim. "At his two month check up, it was suggested that we see an ophthalmologist. It was there that we heard the

word "tumor" for the very first time. Sam was diagnosed with NF1 at only nine months of age." With a lack of NF clinics in Florida, the Couillard family travels to Birmingham, Alabama every three months.

A typical pre-schooler, Sam has adjusted to wearing a patch and glasses. Despite his surgeries and annual MRIs, he remains playful and upbeat. "Sam is just the same as any other rough and tough four-year old," added Jim. "So many people are unfamiliar with NF, as we once were. Help us spread the word and educate as many people as possible about all forms of NF."

Please help us by donating money to help find a cure. Sam and many others like him need your help...please help us "Fuel the Cure!"

For more information on NF, please visit www.racing4research.org or call 800-323-7938 ext. 236.

the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department at 352-671-8560.



Canoe / Kayak & Coffee

Adult paddling trips are planned for beginner canoe / kayakers. These fun social outings will include coffee and fun conversation after each paddle.

Trips will be held the first and third Thursday of each month. Most outings will be three hours or less.

The \$5 program fee includes all equipment and refreshments. Park admission, if applicable, is not included and should be paid at the park upon entrance. Interested participants must pre-register, as seating is limited.

For more information, or to pre-register, please contact

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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Parks Office - Marion Friendly Landscape Model



The Parks and Recreation Department recently completed the installation of a Marion-Friendly and Low Volume Irrigation project around the newly renovated Parks and Recreation offices at the McPherson Government Complex.

Elements of this project include landscape grading and drainage, the installation of a drip irrigation system and dedicated tree irrigation system, Marion-Friendly landscaping, environmentally responsible

mulches and drought tolerant turf.

“The Department’s staff participated in the construction and installation while local contractors, H&J Landscaping, Inc. and A Sodscape, Inc. provided plant material and labor.

“Due to the layout of this site, managing stormwater runoff to drain around and away from the building was the first goal of the project. Carefully crafted landscape berms and swales provide for the drainage to work correctly,” stated Commissioner Andy Kesselring.

Secondly, a Marion-Friendly landscape design was implemented using native and drought-tolerant

plants which were selected based on their being proven to be adapted to this area of Florida. Visitors to the office will be surprised at the mixture of plant species which are known to attract wildlife and butterflies.

The next step included the installation of drip irrigation. This is the most efficient of all irrigation systems since it delivers water directly to the root zone of the installed plants and minimizes waste.

Mulch was then applied to the landscape. Mini pine bark nuggets and Maleluca mulches were used to demonstrate how these mulches look in the landscape. Cypress mulch was not used since it is not a renewable

resource.

Lastly, Bahia sod was installed to finish off the project. Besides one or two days of hand-watering the sod, no irrigation was provided to the sod.

In cooperation with the Extension Services Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program, a Florida-Friendly Certification will be achieved. This project will serve Ocala and Marion County residents as an example of how Marion-Friendly landscaping and low volume irrigation can work together to provide a beautiful landscape while providing habitat and forage for wildlife while being environmentally responsible.

Board Awarded William Penn Mott, Jr. Award for Excellence

Commission Chair, Charlie Stone, recently accompanied Parks & Recreation Director Dr. Lee Niblock at the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) Conference in Baltimore.

“The Board is an extremely well deserving group for the **William Penn Mott, Jr. - Award for Excellence** because of their unwavering commitment to ensure adequate recreation opportunities and quality open space for the citizens of Marion County,” stated Niblock.

The Department nominated the Commission because of the exceptional success the

Board has had in receiving grants for park development, in receiving donations of parklands, in protecting environmentally sensitive lands and funding the development of resource based outdoor recreation programming.

Over the past several years, the Board has received over \$4,200,000 in park devel-



opment grants. They have actively sought and received land valued at over \$9,000,000 for the creation of parks.

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners also has received over

\$89,000,000 in Environmentally Sensitive Lands that have protected nearly 5,000 acres from residential development. This has occurred with a Marion County investment of just 2.8 percent of the land value.

These great accomplishments has occurred within the last three years.

The Commission has exemplified sustained proficiency and excellence relative to the parks and recreation mission and contributing to the advancement of the profession by their proactive efforts in earning grants for park development, by receiving donations of parklands, in protecting environmentally sensitive lands and funding the development of resource based outdoor recreation programming.

Park Partnership Program - A Community Success

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners recently awarded \$42,332 to four organizations through the Department's Park Partnership Program.

The purpose of the program is to assist local groups with up to a 50 / 50 match in developing recreation facilities for use by all the citizens of Marion County establishing public, private and non-profit partnerships. Total funding provided is

\$60,000 per year, \$30,000 for playgrounds and \$30,000 for other capital improvements.

Commissioner Stan McClain stated that, "to date, over \$840,000 has been awarded since the program's inception in 1995. Many community partnerships have been formed as a result of this popular program."

Groups awarded funding during the 08/09 grant cy-

cle include the City of Belleview—\$10,000 for a restroom / pavilion at Cherokee Park; the Rotary Sportsplex Board — \$12,332 for playground equipment; Dunnellon Little League—\$10,000 for bleachers and covers and Ocala / Marion County Girls Softball—\$10,000 for a pavilion at Shocker Park.

Youth Outdoor Adventure Camp

There will be two three-day session youth Outdoor Adventure Camps for youngsters 7-12 years of age, scheduled for December 22-24 and 29-31 from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The camp program includes canoe/kayaking, fishing, outdoor nature crafts, guided nature walks, and environmental education.

Campers should bring a non-perishable lunch daily. Fruit juice drinks and water will be provided.

Participants should wear old clothes and sneakers as they will be getting down and dirty each day.

The weekly fee is \$35 per child which includes transportation to the program from the Marion County

Parks and Recreation Office located at the McPherson Government Complex in Ocala. Pre-registration is required.



Pat Gabriel Elected as PRAC Chair

Pat Gabriel was recently elected to serve as the Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Council. Appointed by Commissioner Jim Payton, Pat represents his district on the Council, while serving all residents county-wide.

Eager to establish goals for the Council while she holds the gavel, Pat has committed to work with the other Council members to deter-

mine their interests for establishing focus areas.

She will also encourage the Council to volunteer in the parks, especially during summer holidays and weekends. "This will allow the Council to experience, first hand, the challenges of managing a growing and professional parks system," stated Gabriel.

"I believe it is very appropriate that Pat is Chairing PRAC

while I am serving on the Board," stated Commissioner Jim Payton. "PRAC is considered a model advisory Board. Each Commissioner appoints his or her designee to represent them. This provides staff, and the public, the opportunity to know the Commission's direction immediately," added Payton.



Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
November 1	Birding & Nature Walk	Coehadjoe Park	9:30 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
		Liberty Community Park	12 noon—1 p.m.
		Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.m.
November 6	Canoe / Kayak & Coffee	KP Hole - Rainbow River	10 a.m.—1 p.m.
November 20	Canoe / Kayak & Coffee	Ray Wayside Park - Silver River	9 a.m.—12 noon
November 22	Family Adventure Day	Carney Island	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
December 4	Canoe / Kayak & Coffee	Carney Island - Lake Weir	10 a.m.—1 p.m.
December 6	Birding & Nature Walk	Ocklawaha Visitors Ctr	9:30 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
		Liberty Community Park	12 noon—1 p.m.
		Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.m.
December 18	Canoe / Kayak & Coffee	Ray Wayside Park - Silver River	10 a.m.—1 p.m.
December 22 - 24	Youth Outdoor Adventure Camp	Horseshoe Lake	8 a.m.—5 p.m.
December 29 - 31	Youth Outdoor Adventure Camp	Horseshoe Lake	8 a.m.—5 p.m.
January 3	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
		Liberty Community Park	12 noon—1 p.m.
		Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.m.

Patrons Hoot over Owl-Ween Program

Nearly 100 people attended the first annual Owl-Ween program at Carney Island.

The Avian Reconditioning Center provided an environmental education program which included such special guests as Mr. Picklesimer, the Barred Owl featured here, along with a Great Horned Owl, an American Kestrel, and a Red-tailed Hawk. These non-releasable birds of prey were acquired by the Center due to injury or social deficiencies as a

result of being taken and handled by misinformed and unqualified people.

“Along with a very informative presentation, our program also included a “hanging stuffed paper owl art activity for the children, guided bird/nature walks, a s’more snack, and a “Birds of Prey” book display by the Marion County Public Library, which kept our participants busy,” stated Cathy Norris, Recreation Manager.

