

# Outdoor Times



MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION  
IT STARTS IN PARKS

Volume 12, Issue 1

October 2008

## Park Used to Save Lives

We have all heard about the tragic bus accident last month that claimed the life of a young Marion County student. The accident occurred outside Wrigley Fields. Park Ranger, Jeremy Harris, heard the crash and rushed to the scene.

He boarded the crushed and smoking bus to rescue passengers, along with Parks seasonal employee Sam Owens. They distributed first aid kits and administered

basic first aid until paramedics arrived.

The park was used for emergency triage and a helicopter landing area was provided.

"I was just doing what anyone would do in that situation," stated Harris.

A memorial to honor the life of France Schee will be located within the park boundaries to offer a safe place for family and friends to grieve.

The Wrigley Fields Softball Association is hold-

ing a community barbecue as a fund-raiser for the Schee and Arbuckle families on Sunday, October 19.

Churches and local organizations have combined their efforts to help offset expenses incurred from this devastating accident.

"Something like this makes you remember to hug and kiss your children on a daily basis," added Harris.

## Baseball Speed & Strength Clinic Offered

The Marion County Parks and Recreation Department will offer a Baseball Speed and Strength Clinic for youth ages 14-17. The camp is designed to reinforce the significance of proper eating habits and exercise techniques. Bill Burgos, Strength & Conditioning Coach with the Hickory Crawdads (Pittsburg Pirates minor league team), will be the clinic facilitator. Through the principles of strength

and conditioning, Mr. Burgos will teach participants that by living a healthy lifestyle, they can perform optimally.



The camp will be held at the Rotary Sportsplex on October 11 and at Wrigley Fields on Octo-

ber 18. The clinic for pitchers will begin at 9 a.m. and the clinic for position players will begin at 11:30 a.m.

The fee is only \$5. Registration is limited to the first 16 pitchers and 16 position players for each location. For more information, or to pre-register, contact the Marion County 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](mailto:gina.peebles@marioncountyfl.org)

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## Prescribed Fire - A Natural Occurrence in Florida



Prescribed fire is defined as fire applied in a knowledgeable manner to forest fuels on a specific land area under selected weather conditions to accomplish predetermined, well-defined management objectives.

People of Marion County are very fortunate to have several natural, large acreages of land set aside for their recreational enjoyment. Through the efforts of your County Commissioners, state legislators, and federal agencies, we have thousands of acres of accessible land on which we can enjoy nature's bounty. Between the Ocala National Forest, State Forests and Parks, Greenways and Trails, and your Marion County parks, there is something out there for everyone.

When managing these lands, sometimes it becomes necessary to use prescribed fire as a management tool. The reasons for this are many and may include:

- Reduction of hazardous fuels
- Preparing sites for seeding and planting
- Improving wildlife habitat
- Managing competing vegetation
- Control of insects and disease
- Improve forage for grazing
- Enhance appearance or improve access

If you have lived in Marion County for very long, you are well aware of the wild-fire dangers associated with living at Mother Nature's backdoor. When the drought conditions occur in Florida like they did in 1998, or around the Okefenokee Swamp area in recent times, wildfires can quickly become catastrophic. To prevent this from happening prescribed fire is a land manager's number one tool. Using prescribed fire to remove the build-up of hazardous fuels is often the only cost effective

method available to insure the safety of our neighbors and the welfare of our lands.

Many of the early American settlers copied the use of fire in the pine stands from Native Americans and adopted the practice themselves to provide better access, improve hunting, and get rid of brush and timber so they could farm. This practice is still used to expose adequate mineral soil and control competing vegetation until seedlings from southern pines can become established.

Many of our wildlife friends depend upon prescribed fires to find food and nesting sites. Animals such as whitetail deer, dove, quail and turkey benefit greatly from the diverse habitat, grasses, and insects that prescribed fire provides. Some species such as the red cockaded woodpecker and the gopher tortoise are dependant upon prescribed fire in the mature stands of Longleaf pine for survival.

Sometimes it is necessary to use prescribed fire to control competing vegetation. In pine stands for instance, prescribed fire is often used to control the competition of hardwoods which compete for nutrients and space. Typically the longer a pine stand goes without the introduction of prescribed burns, the more hardwoods will encroach upon it and reduce the size and value of the timber. Often times

prescribed fire is used to control the invasion of exotics such as Mimosa. It can also be used in conjunction with herbicides to aid in the control of Cogon Grass. Your Marion County Park, (Coehadjoe) located at 4225 N.E. 35<sup>th</sup> Street, is a prime example of this. On July 21, 2008, a control burn was conducted at the park with the cooperation of Marion County Parks, Greenways and Trails and the Division of Forestry. The purpose of the burn was to remove hazardous fuels, reduce competing hardwoods and invasives, and habitat restoration. Using prescribed fire as a management tool, we were able to accomplish these objectives.

When used correctly prescribed fire has many useful benefits. Not only can it help protect us from dangerous wildfires, it is a cost effective way to help manage the lands of which we have been entrusted. Join us next month when we will describe some of the criteria used to prepare an effective burn plan.

*"Taking fire out of the longleaf forest is like taking the rain out of the rain forest."*

-Larry Landers

## Art Van-Go

For the “little artist” in your family, a unique program is being offered in a park near you. In the upcoming months, a new art activity, for children ages 4-14, will be featured by art instructor, Jane Gravois.

The activity fee for the program is \$2 and will be held on November 1, December 6, January 3, March 7, April 4 and May 9.

The roving program will be at the Baseline Road Trailhead at 10 a.m., Liberty

Community Park at 12 noon and Wrigley Fields at 2 p.m.

For more information, please contact the Marion County Parks & Recreation Department at 352-671-8560.

## Home School Outdoor Recreation Program

Marion County Parks and Recreation will offer a customized Outdoor Recreation Program for families that home school their children.

The program can include guided native bird and

wildlife walks, canoe and kayak opportunities, nature craft activities and outdoor game fun.

Fees are reasonable and based on the age and num-

ber of youngsters in the group.

For more information, contact the Department’s Recreation Manager at (352) 671-8560 or e-mail [cathy.norris@marioncounty](mailto:cathy.norris@marioncounty)



## Canoe / Kayak & Coffee



Adult paddling trips are planned for beginner canoe / kayakers. Experienced paddlers are also welcome. 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 starting on October 16 at KP Hole Park. Most outings will be three hours or less. Upcoming trips will be held on November 6 at KP Hole and November 20 at Ray Wayside Park.

The \$5 program fee includes all equipment and refreshments. Park admis-

sion, if applicable, is not included and should be paid at the park upon entrance. Interested participants must pre-register.

For more information, or to pre-register, contact the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department at 352-671-8560.

## Family Adventure Day

Spend a day in one of your Marion County parks as you experience the outdoors through various activities from canoeing / kayaking, nature hikes, biking, games, outdoor crafts, and other outdoor fun activities, all suitable for the entire family.

Family Adventure Days are scheduled on October 4th at Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat, and November 22 at the Carney Island Park. The program time is 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Participants must pre-register for the program for only \$5 per adult and \$3 per child.

To register, or for more information on park locations, activities and program fees, please contact the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department at (352) 671-8560.





# Outdoor Times

## Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
October 4	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
October 11	Baseball Clinic	Rotary Sportsplex	9 a.m.—1:30 p.m.
October 16	Canoe / Kayak & Coffee	KP Hole	10 a.m.—1 p.m.
October 18	Owl-Ween	Carney Island	4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
	Baseball Clinic	Wrigley Fields	9 a.m.—1:30 p.m.
October 19	Community BBQ	Wrigley Fields	TBD
November 1	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park	12 noon—1 p.m.
	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.m.
November 6	Canoe / Kayak & Coffee	KP Hole	10 a.m.—1 p.m.
November 20	Canoe / Kayak & Coffee	Silver River State Park	9 a.m.—12 noon
November 22	Family Adventure Day	Carney Island	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
December 6	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park	12 noon—1 p.m.
	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 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.

## Youth Outdoor Adventure Camp



There will be two three-day 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.