

Outdoor Times



MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION
IT STARTS IN PARKS

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Special Olympics at Brick City Adventure Park



"Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."
-Special Olympics Oath

"The determination, courage and skill of every athlete is impressive to watch,"
stated Commissioner

Amsden during his opening remarks.

The friends, family and spectators of the athletes watched them participate in track & field, cycling, bocce and motor activities.

"The passing of the torch was the most moving part of this special ceremony. I am honored that I was in attendance for this wonderful event," added Amsden.

This annual event has been held at Brick City Adventure Park for a number of years

and is one of the events sponsored by the Commission for citizens with disabilities.

The County, in partnership with the City of Ocala, will be offering a SportsAbility event on October 2-3. The two day event will include athletic sports activities on that Friday at the ED Crosky Center / Hampton Aquatic Center MLK Recreation Complex. The second day will feature outdoor recreation activities at Carney Island. The two day event will run from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

For more information on the upcoming SportsAbility program, please contact Cathy Norris, Recreation Manager at 352-671-8560.

The Special Olympics enhances the lives of people with disabilities by promoting active living and healthy competition.

Commissioner Mike Amsden was asked to serve as the Master of Ceremonies for the Special Olympics "County Summer Games for Adult Athletes" at Brick City Adventure Park earlier last month.

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, Acting Director, 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

Brown Bag Bunny Brunch

High-tail it to one of your County parks, where your pre-schoolers will have a hopping good time with games, crafts and an Easter Egg Hunt led by our own Mr. Bunny.



The fee is \$5 per child which includes a pizza lunch. Extra lunches for parents

are only \$2. The program starts at 10:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required. The program will be held on Monday, April 6 at Brick City Adventure Park, located at 1211 SE 22 Road in Ocala; Tuesday, April 7 at Liberty Community Park, located at 10575 SW 57 Terrace Road in Ocala; Wednes-

day, April 8 at the Baseline Road Trailhead, located at 4255 SE 58 Avenue in Ocala; and Thursday, April 9 at Wrigley Fields, located at 405 E Hwy 316 in Citra.

For more information, or to pre-register, please contact the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department at 352-671-8560 or stop by our office located at 111 SE 25 Avenue in Ocala.

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Overnight Kayak Trip a Success



they received pre-trip instruction. They then re-packed their personal gear in dry-wet bags, before setting off for the launch site at Ray Wayside Park.



Once at Ray Wayside everyone helped unload their gear and the kayaks. They were then fitted for lifejackets and received paddling tips to make their journey a little easier.



The trip started around 9:30 a.m. The group had lunch at Gores Landing, where they arrived later than planned due to the varying skill levels of the paddlers. Once there, however, everyone was eager for lunch

and the use of a “real restroom.” After lunch, the group proceeded to their remote camp site off Dead Creek. Maneuvering around fallen trees and branches up the narrow creek, the group arrived at their unloading site for the night. Everyone pitched in to unload, trekking the gear a ten minute walk off the water’s edge. After a quick instruction on

It promised to be a beautiful weekend as ten adults took part in Marion County Parks and Recreation Department’s first overnight kayak camping trip on the Ocklawaha River. After postponing the trip one weekend due to unexpected bad weather, the group couldn’t have asked for a better weekend.

The group, most unfamiliar with each other, met at the McPherson Complex, where

setting up their tents, all proceeded to help each other with campsite preparations. With tents set up and everyone ready for a hot meal, the group gathered at “the kitchen site” while Kevin, their guide, prepared dinner.

While some of the conversation dwelled around the day’s trip, much of it was about family, friends, and stories from Kevin. With the evening running short and everyone tired from their adventure, the group ended the night with s’mores and conversation by the campfire.

The next morning, everyone was repacking and taking tents down for their trip up River towards Eureka. While it felt like a late start due to the time change, the clocks on their wrists had them an hour ahead of schedule. A good breakfast of pancakes, sausage and coffee was whipped up by Kevin. Shortly after breakfast, the group was off to the launch area to finish their trip.

The lower half of the River, from Gores Landing to Eureka, was a little more challenging with down trees and branches. The group maneuvered around and over the obstacles like pros.

Occasionally a boater or jet skier would cross their path, generating an occasional wave in the water. All passerby’s were smiling and friendly, slowing their

boats down to minimize the wake. Three quarters of the way, the group stopped along a sandy part of the River for a short break. Once again, Kevin was able to talk more on the River, its wildlife and answer questions.

They arrived at Eureka on schedule, with the group loading up the gear and kayaks to head back to civilization.

“It was a successful outing and provided a new experience for all participants,” stated Cathy Norris, Recreation Manager. “Ten individuals, unfamiliar with each other, set out on an overnight outing. They took part in a new experience, saw our beautiful natural resources, learned about wildlife and our County’s rich history and came back friends with an appreciation for nature,” added Norris.

Marion County Parks and Recreation offers over night camping, kayak trips and kayak clinics for both youth and adults. Upcoming outings are planned later this month and in May. For more information on this or any number of recreation opportunities, please contact the Department at 352-671-8560.

The Simple Pleasure of Parks

By Elihu Gillespie - Parks & Recreation Magazine, February 2009

When people choose to move to a new area, what do they look for? Good schools and green spaces...A park is the place I go to bring my mental and physical health into balance.

Trails are just as important. They're designed to connect parks, schools and neighborhoods. When I see one winding through a serene landscape, it makes me want to get out and walk instead of hopping into the car to ride. Both parks and trails offer simple ways to enjoy life and appreciate nature and our environment. And there's no cost for the pleasure.

But they do have added value. Parks and trails sell



properties, and neighborhood developers understand that. They've come to realize that the more green space they preserve in building a community, the more attractive the home will be to buyers. The quality of the green space impacts our environment, which increases the value of our property. When cities de-

velop their parks' master plans, not much is missing. They're simple and encompass the simple pleasure of life.

In and of themselves, parks are a form of passive recreation where the whole family—no matter how old—can participate together, walking, jogging, sitting by the water, exploring, or investigating plant life. When my children were young, I often took them to a neighbor-

hood park where they could run and engage in open-air activities. These green spaces support my belief that the family that plays together stays together.

With such a great love of the outdoors, it's no wonder that I chose parks and recreation as my career. I'm glad to know that I share in preserving the native wildlife and natural formations that make up our parks. As a steward of our environment, I can join other park advocates in working with nature rather than against it and maintaining as much of our green space as possible.

March of Dimes at Baseline Road Trailhead



The March of Dimes will host its annual "March for Babies" event at the Baseline Road Trailhead on Saturday, April 25. Registration is at 7:00 and March for Babies begins at 8:00.

"The park was chosen because of its five miles of paved trails, parking capacity and park amenities," stated Gloria James, Community Director for the

March of Dimes. "We are looking forward to partnering with the Board of County Commissioners, through the Parks and Recreation Department, for this event for many years to come."

The goal of the walk is to raise money for research to prevent premature birth, birth defects and infant mortality. Recognition will be given at the Awards Party, which begins at 10:30, to the teams and individuals raising the most

money, and a BBQ will be held for all participants after the event.

For more information on this year's "March for Babies," please contact Gloria James at 352-629-7555 or visit their website at www.marchforbabies.org.





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Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
April 1	Home School Physical Ed Prgm	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
	Arts & Crafts Club	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
April 4	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	10 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park	12 noon
	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.
	Birding and Nature Walk	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	9:30 a.m.
April 4-5	Overnight Kayak Campout	Ocklawaha River	
April 6	Brown Bag Bunny Brunch	Brick City Adventure Park	10:30 a.m.
April 7	Brown Bag Bunny Brunch	Liberty Community Park	10:30 a.m.
April 8	Brown Bag Bunny Brunch	Baseline Road Trailhead	10:30 a.m.
	Home School Physical Ed Prgm	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
	Arts & Crafts Club	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
April 9	Brown Bag Bunny Brunch	Wrigley Fields	10:30 a.m.
April 10	Adult Kayak Clinic	Carney Island	10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
April 13	Adult Kayak Clinic	Carney Island	10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
April 15	Home School Physical Ed Prgm	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
	Arts & Crafts Club	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
April 16	Kayak and Koffee	KP Hole Park	10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
April 20-21	Overnight Kayak Campout	Ocklawaha River	
April 22	Home School Physical Ed Prgm	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
	Arts & Crafts Club	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
April 25	March of Dimes	Baseline Road Trailhead	8 a.m.
April 29	Home School Physical Ed Prgm	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
	Arts & Crafts Club	Brick City Adventure Park	10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.



Luke Lewis of Ocala poses with his large mouth bass "lunker" recently caught and released at Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat in Orange Springs.



Kriss Eismann, 10, of Grace School, takes off in the long jump competition of the Kingdom Conference Track Meet. Ten area schools competed at Brick City Adventure Park in Ocala.