

# Outdoor Times



MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION  
IT STARTS IN PARKS

Volume 17, Issue 1

March 2009

## Arts & Crafts Club

An *Arts & Crafts Club* will be offered for four to 14 year olds at Brick City Adventure Park beginning in March. Classes will be held each Wednesday. Participants ages ten to 14 will meet at the community center from 10 a.m. – 11 a.m., while participants age four to nine will meet from 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Jane Gravois, a former art instructor, will teach the classes. Activities include:

painting, drawing, pastels, clay sculptures and various craft projects. The fees are \$10 per month for the first child in the family and \$7 per month for each additional child. A special rate of \$15 for a two month registration is available for the first child and \$10 for each additional child.



Brick City Adventure Park is located at 1211 SE 22 Road in Ocala.

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.



SportsAbility is the premier event of the Florida Disabled Outdoor Association (FDOA). This event is about enhancing the lives of people with disabilities by promoting active living. SportsAbility provides first hand access to resources and demonstrations of activities designed to encourage participation regardless of age or ability level.

People who attend SportsAbility learn about the value of recreation and active leisure for everyone - especially people with disabilities. People discover the latest in equipment, trends and resources. This event provides an opportunity for people to network with people with disabilities, resource providers and

community organizations.

SportsAbility is coming to Ocala on October 2 and 3. This two day event, developed through a partnership between FDOA, Ocala Recreation & Parks and Marion County Parks & Recreation, will enable all individuals with disabilities the opportunity to experience a variety of recreation and leisure activities. The experts and adaptive equipment will be provided to allow most individuals the chance to participate in an activity previously thought to be inaccessible.

Saturday's events will be held at Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area located at 13275 SE 115 Avenue in Ocklawaha. The events will include ac-

tivities such as kayaking, sit-down water skiing, pontoon boat rides, archery, target shooting, fishing, jet skiing, nature presentations, therapeutic horseback riding and more!

SportsAbility is much more than fun. It is a wonderful occasion to help educate the public about the importance of physical activity and about recreational opportunities while also providing valuable information of other important community resources available to people, including those with disabilities.

School groups, group homes, organizations, families and individuals are all invited to participate.

For more information, please contact Diane Leaf, Ocala Recreation & Parks, at 352-401-3916.

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)

### Inside this issue:

UPLAND RESTORATION PROJECT	2
SIDEWALKS ENHANCE SAFETY	3
MIRAGE KAYAK OUTING	3
CALENDAR OF EVENTS	4
BIRDS-EYE	4

## Upland Restoration Project at Carney Island

In the late 1800's, Captain John L. Carney and his brother E.L. purchased land on Hammock Peninsula, Orange and Lemon Island, now known as Carney Island. These islands were named for existing naturalized orange and lemon trees that had been introduced by the Spanish in the 1600's and perpetuated by the Indians.

It is believed that these trees were grafted with sweet citrus and used to propagate several new varieties, among them the "Parson Brown." The citrus was shipped by steamboat from a packing house on the east shore of the property (pilings still exist) across the Lake to the railroad.

the property at that time, planted slash pines.

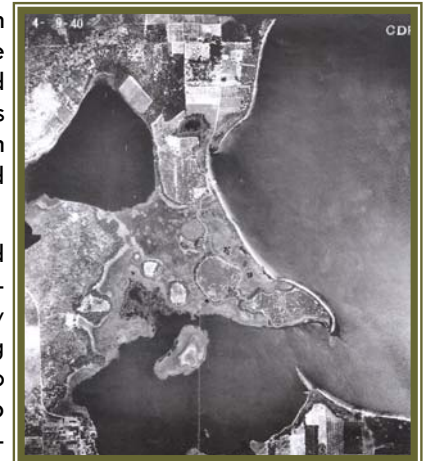
Marion County purchased the Carney Island property in 1991, Ward Grove in 1996 and Merrill Island in 1997 through the "Pennies for Parks" program. The purpose of the acquisition was to protect the ecological character of the site and to provide a resource-based recreation area for residents and their guests.

The site is comprised of over 780 acres with more than five miles of shoreline. The park consists of several large sandhill "islands" connected by causeways and surrounded by an extensive wetland system. Due to the freeze losses, areas that were once citrus are now in

years are now slash pines planted after the freezes of the mid 1980's. These pines are now marketable, in need of thinning and shading the understory.

Marion County thinned 130 acres by harvesting every third row allowing the remaining trees ample room to grow while opening up the canopy up to provide more sun for the understory plants. All the pines were cut on two separate 40 acre sites, one located at the entry of the park and the other toward the back, to begin the upland restoration from slash pine plantation to mixed long leaf pine / wiregrass communities.

The park's sandhill community is missing wiregrass, turkey oak, long leaf pine and some of the other plants that typically grow in sandhill uplands, probably because the sandhill was totally disturbed and actively farmed for over 150 years. Natural seed sources needed to regenerate a typical sandhill community are likely too far away to benefit this site. Also, gopher tortoises were losing preferred habitat as the closing canopy was shading out some of the low growing plants they eat and tortoises favor more open terrain found in long leaf pine / wiregrass-type communities.



1940 aerial with Carney Island is in the center; notice no causeway to Bird Island or canal connecting Little Lake Weir.



A freeze in 1894 obliterated the citrus trees around the Lake. Most of the groves were re-established, and citrus remained an important economic crop until another freeze in 1984. A couple of years after that, Coca-Cola, the owner of

planted slash pines.

Carney Island is made up of an estimated 300 acres of wetlands and 480 acres of uplands. Approximately 206 acres of the well drained uplands that were citrus groves for over 150

The Marion County Parks and Recreation Department's goal is to begin restoring the sandhill upland to a mixed long leaf pine community in the two 40 acre clear-cuts. The Department will begin preparing the sites this year for planting long leaf pines and other sandhill plants in the winter of 2010. As the existing slash pines are thinned, every five to ten years, the Department plans to restore portions back to mixed sandhill upland communities. The money generated from the timber harvest is allocated for the restoration of the park.

Carney Island is located at 13275 SE 115 Ave in Ocklawaha.

For more information on this project, please contact Greg Wiley, Parks & Natural Resources Manager, at 352-671-8560 or via email at [greg.wiley@marioncountyfl](mailto:greg.wiley@marioncountyfl)

## Finished Sidewalks Enhance Pedestrian Safety in Silver Springs Shores



Pedestrians enjoy a newly installed sidewalk near Greenway Elementary School.

The Marion County Transportation Department announced completion of the Silver Springs Shores Sidewalk Improvements Project, an undertaking which added nearly 25 miles of paved sidewalk to roads in the subdivision located just southeast of Ocala.

Department officials said improvements were needed to enhance foot traffic in the area. The new sidewalks will also provide increased safety for students traveling to and from nearby Green-

way and Emerald Shores elementary schools and Lake Weir High School.

The \$2.6 million project, carried out in three phases over a three-year period, was finalized in December. Funding was provided by a special grant from the Florida Department of Transportation, which the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department applied for.

The project provided a paved trail connecting public facilities such as schools, fire station and park areas to each other. Users can now walk to these locations in lieu of driving their vehicle.

Initial funding came through in 2004, but additional

state aid was needed to complete the last phase.

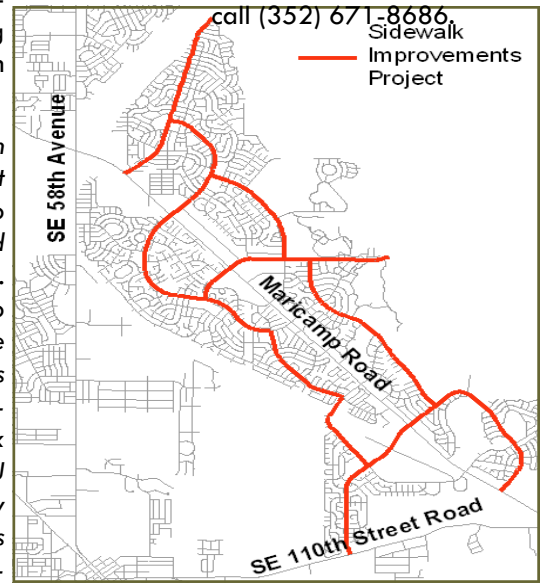
“Thanks to the good work of the Marion County Transportation Department, we came in under budget,” stated Gina Peebles, Parks & Recreation Administrative Manager.

In its first months since completion, the project has proven a success among pedestrians in the Shores.

“The children are using it everyday to walk to and from school. They’re also walking to the Silver Springs Shores Community Park and the MSTU Community Center. It has been well re-

ceived by the community,” stated Commissioner Mike Amsden.

The Marion County Transportation Department is committed to providing an efficient, economical and quality transportation and stormwater management system to satisfy the diverse mobility needs of our community. Learn more at [www.marioncountyfl.org](http://www.marioncountyfl.org) or call (352) 671-8686.

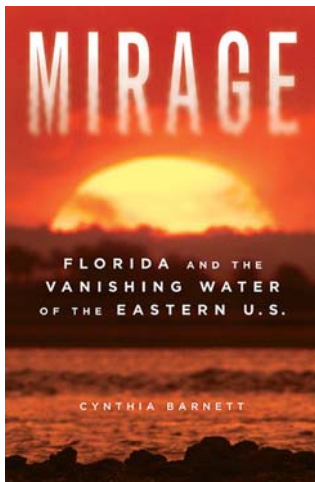


Map illustrates the areas in Silver Springs Shores where sidewalk improvements were completed.

## Mirage Kayak Outing

Enjoy a *Kayak Outing* for beginner and advanced kayakers, on Saturday, March 28.

Kayakers will meet at Ray Wayside Park, located at 9560 NE 28 Lane in Silver Springs at 9 a.m. The program will begin with a history of the River, led by Watershed Action Volunteers



(WAV) Coordinator, Ellie Falbo. Following the discussion, participants will kayak the Silver River for a three-hour round trip

paddle. Participants are encouraged to bring a bag lunch as we gather for discussion following the trip with dessert and beverages provided.

Interested persons must pre-register. Park admission is not included and should be paid at the park upon entrance. The program fee is \$12 per person which includes a kayak, equipment

and refreshments. The fee for persons with their own kayak is \$5. All participants must pay the park entrance fee at the gate.

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



## Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
March 1	Art Van-Go	Post Time Farm (HITS)	12 noon—2 p.m.
March 4	Home School Physical Ed	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.
March 5	Kayak & Koffee	KP Hole—Rainbow River	10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
March 7	Art Van-Go	Kidfetti	9 a.m.—3 p.m.
	Youth Kayak Clinic	Carney Island	9:30 a.m. and 12 noon
March 9	Adult Kayak Clinic	Carney Island	10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
March 11	Home School Physical Ed	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.
March 13	Adult Kayak Clinic	Carney Island	10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
March 14	Birding & Nature Walk	Silver Springs Shores Park	9:30 a.m.
	Youth Kayak Clinic	KP Hole	9:30 a.m. and 12 noon
March 18	Home School Physical Ed	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.
March 19	Kayak & Koffee	Ray Wayside Park—Silver River	10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
March 25	Home School Physical Ed	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.
March 28	Mirage Kayak Outing	Ray Wayside Park—Silver River	9 a.m.

## Birds-eye

The weather report for Saturday, February 14, was “scattered showers early, thunderstorms in the afternoon.”

In spite of the pending weather, seven birders met at Sunnyhill Restoration Area and they did find birds. They saw pied-billed grebe, anhingas, double-crested cormorants, turkey vultures, black vultures, Cooper’s hawk, American kestrel (a pair), great egrets, great blue herons, white ibis, sandhill cranes

(dancing and calling), common moorhens, mourning doves, pileated woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, Eastern phoebes, chimney swifts, trees swallows, blue jays, American crows, tufted titmice, Carolina wrens, American robins, Eastern bluebirds (in breeding plumage), palm warblers, yellow-rumped warblers, common grackles, boat-tailed grackles Northern cardinals and red-wing blackbirds.

They also saw some turtles,

alligators, a raccoon, some nice butterflies and a black snake. Although the walk lasted from 9:30 until almost noon, we did not get rain during the walk.

Please join us on our next walk, Saturday, March 14, at Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat, located at 10800 E. Hwy 318 in Ft. McCoy.

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

