

Outdoor Times

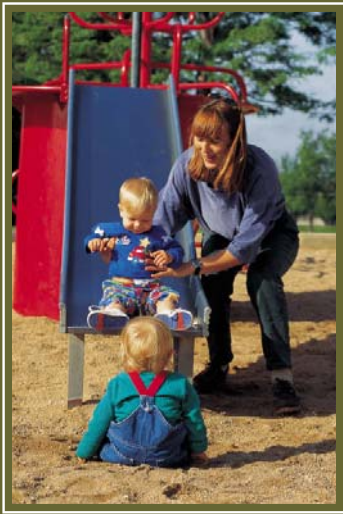


MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION
IT STARTS IN PARKS

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Playground Safety It's not Just for Kids



Did you know that over 200,000 playground injuries occur each year nationwide? And, nearly 15 children will die from these injuries? On playgrounds, children are hurt mostly by falls.

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Horseshoe Lake Vice

On December 13, three youth were arrested after causing thousands of dollars worth of damage at Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat.

The youngsters forced entry into a storage shed, kicked out a number of screens and took a small utility vehicle, known as a mule, for a joy ride.

Resident caretaker, Brian Bates, noticed the commotion and immediately notified

have committed to ensuring safe places for play by certifying specific Park personnel as Playground Safety Inspectors. Currently, there are two on staff with the Department, with a third awaiting testing this August.

"Twice each week, our 17 playgrounds are checked to correct or remove possible hazards," stated Don Hawkins, Operations Manager.

Parents can help prevent injuries by taking precautions, such as ensuring the equipment their children are playing on is age appropriate for their maturity level.

Adults can make sure their children properly use any playground equipment and do not engage in unsafe behavior around it.

area Park Ranger, Jeremy Harris and the Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO).

The boys were apprehended and sent to the County's juvenile detention facility. They were trespassing from all County parks and will be required to pay restitution.

Our sincere thanks is extended to Mr. Bates, the MCSO and Department

Children should always have adult supervision when they are at the playground. Young children cannot always gauge distances properly and generally are not capable of foreseeing dangerous situations by themselves. Older children often love to test their limits on the playground, so it is important for an adult to be there to keep them in check.

"Your safety, and the safety of your children, is our number one priority," noted Commissioner Stan McClain. If at any time, you question the safety of playground equipment, do not permit your children to play on it, and immediately report it to our office, or to the equipment's owner if located on non-County owned property.

staff for their quick response.

"It is important that appropriate and timely action is taken to address such acts of outright vandalism both from an environmental and economic standpoint," stated Commissioner Barbara Fitos. "Our parks are a treasured community resource to be enjoyed and respected by all residents. My thanks to all involved."

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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Welcome Recreation Specialist, Dan Burleigh

Dan Burleigh, a Florida resident for more than 24 years, has joined the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department family as our new Recreation Specialist.

Dan came to the Department from Orange County Parks and Recreation, where he has worked since 2005. During his time at Bear Creek Park, he was instrumental in many of the youth and adult athletic programs

such as flag football, adult softball, youth basketball and tennis, fishing programs and a number of youth camp programs.

Prior to working for Orange County Parks and Recreation, Dan taught physical education and coached basketball, track, and volleyball for Orange County Public Schools.

While attending college, he worked for Citrus County

Parks and Recreation as a camp counselor / supervisor during the summer. During winter and spring breaks, he worked at seasonal youth camps.

Dan received his Associates of Arts degree from Central Florida Community College. He later graduated from the University of Central Florida with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physical Education.

“Dan will be a great asset to our new and up and coming recreation programs servicing all of Marion County. His background will help in jump starting new programs such as Youth / Adult Flag Football at Wrigley Fields, on site recreational school programs, youth winter / spring camps, and outdoor recreational programs,” stated Recreation Manager, Cathy Norris.

Park Impact Fees Under Consideration

Impact fees are used by county governments to recover those capital expenses necessary to maintain adopted levels of service associated with new growth. These identifiable capital costs are assigned directly to those residents or

service users responsible for the additional costs to help offset capital funding deficiencies and to ensure equity amongst all users, existing and new.

At a workshop held by the Board on January 15, a Parks Impact Fee study, pre-

pared by consultants Land Design Innovations (LDI), was discussed.

Commissioner Andy Kessler noted that, “[he] and the rest of the Board are supportive of impact fees for parks...new growth should pay for itself.”

The consensus of the Board was to consider impact fees for parks at a future date after they further discuss an impact fee for roads later this year.

The amount of the impact fee for parks is still to be determined.

Horse Fever at the Veterans Park



A patriotic horse was recently donated to the Ocala / Marion County Veterans Memorial Park by Chris Spears, of Prestige Auto Sales, and his family. “The Park is a tribute

to Veterans, and we hope that this horse is a positive enhancement for all to enjoy,” stated Spears.

Kim Samson, artist of the original *Old Glory* horse from the Painted Ponies series was commissioned to paint the artwork for this magnificent depiction of actual Marion County veterans.

The horse will be permanently displayed at the Park, located on the corner of Ft. King Street and NE 25th Avenue.

The official unveiling of the horse was at the *Veterans Light the Stars* event, held on November 11, 2007.

Brown Bag Bunny Brunch

High-tail it to Liberty Community Park, Baseline Road Trailhead or Wrigley Fields on March 18—20 respectively, where we will have a hopping good time with games, storytelling and an Easter egg hunt led by our



own Mr. Bunny. The fee is \$5 per child which includes a hotdog lunch. Extra lunches for parents are only \$2. The program will run from 10:30 until 12:30. Space is limited so sign-up early.

Veterans Park Marquee Sign Unveiled

The Ocala Jaycees sponsored the Veterans Park sign unveiling on January 5, 2008.

Veterans Services Director, Jeffrey Askew said, "during the last five years, the Ocala Jaycees have been significant contributors to the Park...their involvement is greatly appreciated."

On July 4, 2007, the annual Freedom Run was held to

celebrate Independence Day. The event was a part of the God & Country Day festivities. The race was hosted by the Ocala Runners Club for the Ocala Jaycees with the proceeds benefitting the Park.

The race raised \$2,100 which was used to purchase a marquee sign. Another \$500 was donated by Paul Franck, President of the Ocala Jaycees, which will be used for a

Declaration of Independence plaque.

The 2008 Freedom Run will be held on July 4th at 7:30am. Anyone wishing to be a sponsor or run can contact Gregg Miller, Race Director, at 352-629-9682.



Taste of the Tropics

In addition to water fountains or vending machines, park visitors may now choose to purchase a delicious, refreshing shaved ice or a variety of other food and beverage products from *Taste of the Tropics*.

Concessionaire, Rhonda Arbuckle provides this service at the Baseline Road Trailhead, Carney Island Recreation and Conservation Area and Hope Boat Ramp. Ms. Arbuckle is under contract with the County to provide refreshments for a percentage of her gross sales.

This revenue is deposited into the Parks and Recrea-

tion fund. Until recently, all revenue gained from park pass sales, park entry fees, pavilion and cabin rentals and recreation program fees was added to the County's general fund.

"These dollars (roughly \$498,000 annually) will now be added to the Parks and Recreation Fee Fund, which can be used to leverage grant monies, offset operation costs and used for site improvements," noted Commission Chair Charlie Stone.

The concept of generating revenue from private concessionaires is not a new

idea, but is new to the Department. The benefits are that we are providing a service to our park guests and are doing so at no expense to the Marion County tax payer.

Future concession opportunities exist. Several years ago, the Department advertised a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a restaurateur to construct a restaurant at the newly renovated boat ramp facilities on Lake Weir. Although no interest was received at the time, future consideration may be given to this innovative idea.

VISITORS MAY NOW CHOOSE TO PURCHASE SHAVED ICE OR A VARIETY OF OTHER FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTS FROM TASTE OF THE TROPICS.



Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
February 2	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	12 noon—1 p.m.
	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.m.
March 1	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	12 noon—1 p.m.
	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.m.
March 18	Brown Bag Bunny Brunch	Liberty Community Park	10:30—12:30
March 19	Brown Bag Bunny Brunch	Baseline Road Trailhead	10:30—12:30
March 20	Brown Bag Bunny Brunch	Wrigley Fields	10:30—12:30
March 29	Family Adventure Day	Carney Island	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
April 5	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park	10 a.m.—11 a.m.
	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead	12 noon—1 p.m.
	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields	2 p.m.—3 p.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.
September 13	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.
November 22	Family Adventure Day	Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat	10 a.m.—3 p.m.

Fallen Officer Memorial

The Marion County Commission is proceeding with the creation of the Fallen Officer Memorial to be located at the McPherson Government Complex, near the intersection of SE 25th Avenue and SE 4th Street.

The memorial will include the original monument, which was formerly located at the Marion County Judicial Center in downtown Ocala. The monument was relocated to the McPherson Complex to help clear the path for the Judicial Center expansion

project, which is currently underway.

The new Memorial will include seating areas, gathering areas and Marion-Friendly landscaping.

Vice Chairman Jim Payton mentioned that “this memorial will be a legacy for all Marion County citizens to gather and pay homage to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.”

As part of a fund raising campaign, memorial bricks will be on sale to help sup-

port the construction costs of the Memorial. Donations are anticipated to be received through local law enforcement associations, the business community and from private donors.

The design for the Memorial is being provided by the Parks and Recreation Department, while construction will be in conjunction with the Marion County Facilities Management Department and local contractors.