



April 1, 2008 Issue #1

Wilderness Journal

News from the T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve

Friends of the Carlton meetings: first Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. at the picnic pavilion

Membership e-mail contact: RJohnson_22801@att.net

Park Ranger: Rick Storsberg 486 2547 rstorsberg@scgov.net

Links: Friends of Sarasota County Parks: <http://www.foscp.org/new/index.php>

<http://www.co.sarasota.fl.us/CommunityServices/ParksandRecreation>

EVENTS

T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Reserve Open House

The Friends of the Carlton will sponsor a public open house on **Saturday April 5, 2008, from 9-3**. There will be informational booths, including introduction to birding, canine search and rescue, Sarasota County herpetologist Brian Pavlina, Wildlife Center of Venice and others. There will be bike tours for families, children, adults, and advanced. The open house also features nature tours, butterfly tours, biking and kayaking information, and a wildlife photography clinic taught by Robert Shainline of Englewood. Sarasota County Sheriff school resource officers will conduct a bicycle rodeo. There will also be informational talks on ecological burning, trail maintenance and management, feral hog control, and the Myakka Wild and Scenic River. These events are free and open to the public--rain or shine. For more information, please call the Friends of the Carlton at 941 486 2547.

Update: Trail Cameras

The wildlife monitoring project now has 4 digital cameras deployed. They are recording wildlife activities on the Carlton as well as adjacent tracts. We now have well over 600 pictures which are being entered into a database so that we can record and report the date, time, location, gender, number of species. Mostly we are recording deer, feral hogs and turkey but occasionally coyote, bobcat, otter, raccoon, opossum, or a passing sandhill crane. These shots (male coyote and fawn) were taken near the "No Wake" sign east of marker 32 on the Venice-Arcadia Grade. Note that the pictures are time-stamped and dated. This camera was donated by Russ Johnson and gives excellent quality shots. The fawn picture is being used on the kiosk at Deer Prairie.



Under Discussion

With GPS and mapping help from Peter, the Friends are exploring new single track paths along which to guide small groups into areas of the Carlton to view champion trees and unique habitats. These guided walks might involve both loops as well as one-way transport and treks back from remote locations to the public area. While still protecting delicate wildlife habitats and pristine areas from general public access, the Friends might use these occasional, special walks to raise public awareness of the remote beauty of the Carlton-- the only tract of its kind in Sarasota County to offer a true wilderness experience. A preview of some of our champion trees and pristine habitats is below.



On-going Project: Carlton Reserve History

The tape recorded interview with Boyce Blackmon that was conducted by Rett and Priscilla has been transferred to a CD which will be archived in the cabin. When Linda has transcribed the interview and Boyce has confirmed its accuracy, it will become part of the Friends' ongoing project to record the history and personal anecdotes ("Cow Tales") of the Carlton. We hope to contact all persons who had experience in the Carlton before its acquisition by the County as we trace its past from the days of turpentine and cattle ranching to present uses--water resource, protected wildlife habitat and passive recreation.

Preview: Boyce describes his 30 year recreational lease from the John D. MacArthur Foundation, beginning in the 1960's; and he recounts some of his favorite experiences: an encounter with an enormous alligator barring the trail, the abundance of wildlife, sharing the wilderness with his family at his hunt camp which was located east and north of the Windy Sawgrass cowboy camp.

Look For This Month—Flag Iris Barred Owl



Rick's Corner

I am often asked about snakes in the park, and we have a wide variety. One of the most asked about and misunderstood snakes we have is the Florida Cotton mouth or Water moccasin. Water moccasins prefer flooded woodlands but can also be found in rivers lakes and ponds. They are sometimes found in dry habitats like pine flat woods.

The Water Moccasin has a bad reputation for being aggressive. This is not necessarily true. Many of the water snakes quickly seek shelter in the water when disturbed while the poisonous Water Moccasin will hold its ground when approached. It will open its mouth wide showing its white lining and large fangs in an attempt to frighten any potential threat. If approached it will strike aggressively and the venom is potentially lethal. Found on open ground the snake will often try to find safety in the tall grass or in the water if there is any close at hand. In the water the Cottonmouth swims with its head high out of water.

This picture was sent to me by the Orens from one of their trips to Myakka River State park.



Volunteer Opportunities

The April 5 Open House. See Rick.

Manning the cabin—more help needed both on weekends and during the week. See Tom, Bill or Russ.

Data entry—recording info from trail cams in database in Excel. See Sherm or Donna.

Reset and paint self-guiding posts in public area (pink, yellow, blue, green, orange, and red trails). See Rick.

Minor clearing and cleaning trails in public area of fallen debris. See Rick

Trail scouting and minor clearing for special walks (see Sherm).

Newsletter composing/editing—in Word. See Rick, Sherm, Linda or Russ.

Construction at the cowboy camp and the utility shed is on hold, pending funding from the County.

Look for in Upcoming Issues

Cow Tales and historical information excerpted from interviews with Boyce and others.

A complete description of the wildlife monitoring program

Featured plants and birds and other seasonal flora and fauna in the Carlton.

Snapshots, trail notes and sightings.

Featured volunteers and special events.

Map downloads, linked resources,

News from partner organizations—Friends of Sarasota County Parks, Legacy Park