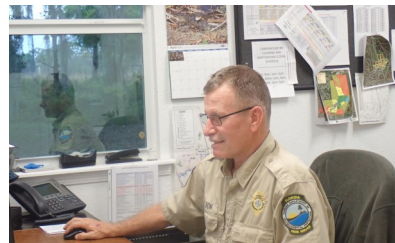


## Team Spotlight

I don't remember dreaming of being a Park Ranger, but I always loved nature, and everything related to it. Once I joined the **AmeriCorps** team at Oscar Scherer I was hooked. While working my way from AmeriCorps to Park Ranger to Park Service Specialist I learned and experienced so many new things about nature and about myself. Watching life emerge, the new seasons of flowers that bloom, and the unending life of nature itself. I think that is what I really love about my job.

Diana Stinson—  
Park Service Specialist



Love is not something I usually associate with work, but working at Oscar Scherer State Park is the best job I've ever had. And there have been many. The beauty of Mother Nature combined with the challenge of protecting these rare habitats, plants and animals makes the daily experience infinitely better than any 9-5 job. Being a park ranger, outside, working with my hands is the best I could hope for as a career and, for the past 8 years, a home.

Dan Nelson – Assistant Park Manager

Oscar Scherer State park is an amazing park, and we have the pleasure of seeing its natural beauty every day. As a team we work to protect the park and create memorable experiences for all our visitors. While going about our daily routines, there is always something interesting that catches our eye. Whether it be a vibrant Florida Scrub Jay family bouncing around in search of food, or a Bald Eagle perched in its nest, there are endless sights to be seen. We love our job and encourage others to help us protect our parks.

Alexis Wallace – OPS Park Ranger



## Manager's Message



**Tony Clements**  
Park Manager

### **Tony Clements - Park Manager**

Hello Friends,

During the past few months the park has been very busy. The campground is full and many visitors are exploring the trails. It is good to see so many new people trying out camping and hiking for the first time. We feel honored and take great pride in offering such a safe and beautiful place for people to recreate. We have not loosened up any rentals yet and are not offering programs at this time. The team does enjoy any opportunity to talk with visitors about the park and share their park experiences.

The nesting bald eagles have produced 2 fledglings and we are seeing signs of nesting in our Florida Scrub Jays. We hope for another successful nesting season for our Florida Scrub-Jays due to our restoration efforts. I've been seeing many young gopher tortoises wandering about in the park with several species of wildflower currently in bloom.

Our team of volunteers and staff are very busy working on projects and keeping the park clean, safe and usable for visitors while working on restoring and protecting our natural resources. The volunteers at Oscar

(continued on page 5)



## **VOLUNTEER**

Are you interested in helping out with the operations of a state park? We have many volunteer opportunities, day positions and residential positions.

Some examples of the volunteer opportunities are: Nature Center host, Ranger Station assistant, field worker, trail maintenance, butterfly gardening, park maintenance, campground hosts, specialty skills worker, and many others. Something for everyone; all skill levels and abilities are welcomed and encouraged.

We have a group of volunteers that work strictly on Mondays and/or Wednesdays from 8 am to noon on various different tasks. They split wood, work on trails, carpentry, mowing and trimming, and whatever else that needs to be done for the day. Great way to meet new friends!

Did you know that if you are a campground host that you can get a campsite for up to 4 months for no charge? **We are currently looking for residential volunteers that would like to try out campground hosting for the months of May through September 2021.**

Since park events have been canceled for the past several months and expecting to be through the end of the year we have not been requesting volunteers to assist. When the park begins programs and events again we will look forward to your assistance. Without volunteers many of these events cannot take place. Check back soon for updates.

So... Get involved and meet new friends!

If interested in volunteering, please complete a volunteer application and submit to the park. You can obtain an application at <https://www.floridastateparks.org/get-involved/volunteer>.

If you would like more information on volunteer opportunities, please feel free to contact Diana Stinson, Park Service Specialist at (941) 882-7219 or e-mail at [Diana.Stinson@floridadep.gov](mailto:Diana.Stinson@floridadep.gov).

**"Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are PRICELESS."**

**Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers for all you do at Oscar Scherer State Park!**

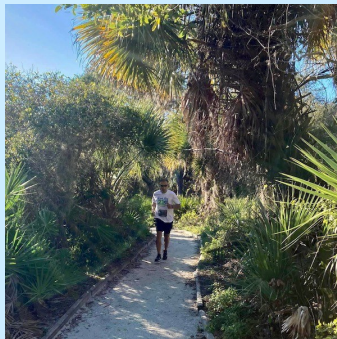
## **PROGRAM AND EVENT CALENDAR**

Park events and programs have remained cancelled for the season this year due to COVID. Our annual Earth Day Festival will be held Virtually. Check out the Event section for details. We are planning ahead for the day we can hold programs and event once again.

### **Program and Events**

The park held 2 virtual events in January this year. On January 1<sup>st</sup> our annual first day hike and scavenger hunt had a great turn out with over 500 park entries for that day. A number of families hiked and searched for clues to complete their scavenger hunt. We received some interesting photos of their find.

Our Annual Scrub Jay 5/10K race was virtual but runners had an option to use a route we had set up in the park. Our registration was no comparison to our in person races, but we did attract runners from Canada and Hawaii.



### **32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Earth Day Festival – Virtually**

We have reached out to our local environmental organizations to partner with them for this year's virtual Earth Day. Organizations are submitting videos or scheduling an interview with us. Each day we will be posting videos, scavenger hunt clues and action items to The Friends of Oscar Scherer Face book page. April 1<sup>st</sup> will kick off the 22 ways in 22 days to "Restore Our Earth" Be sure to visit

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofOscarSchererPark> each day. Share and like the post and visit our partners websites for some interesting ways you can help.

### **Haunted Trails Event – Oct. 22 & 23**

We will be confirming plans for our Haunted Trails Event by the end of March. It is still possible we will not be holding a full scale event at this time. We will be working with our partners, Friends of Oscar Scherer and park staff to determine what our best and safest option will be.



# Volunteer Spotlight

## Meet the President of the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park: David Pierce.



Lori and David Pierce

David (or Dave) was nominated and elected to the role of President, FOSP in January 2021. David and his wife Lori, who also serves as the Board's secretary, began their experience with OSSP in June of 2018 when both worked as resident volunteers for park maintenance and campground host until September 2018. Both joined the Board of FOSP the same year. David has served as VP FOSP for over a year prior to being nominated as President.

David is a Kentucky native. Raised in the Midwest, he spent most of his early adulthood in Southern California, where he met and married his wife Lori in March of 1991. Leaving California, David returned to the Midwest to complete his education. He earned a BBA from Evangel University in Springfield, MO and an MBA from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, MO. David and Lori moved to Venice Florida in 2013.

David has retired from his professional life as an HR Professional and Educator after 15 years serving in senior leadership across multiple organizations. After leaving his professional life in 2017, David and Lori purchased an old RV and began to tour various Florida State Parks over the next year, until they finally found their favorite park in OSSP. David is currently owner of Professor Paint LLC in Venice, FL where he provides residential and commercial painting services.

David loves all things nature. He loves to camp and hike when he can, especially at his favorite place, OSSP. David currently shares a home with his wife Lori, David's parents and their dog Onyx, whom they lovingly refer to as their canine master.

## Volunteer Appreciation “Drive Through” Luncheon

On March 3, 2021 Oscar Scherer State Park celebrated our volunteers in a unique, fun and COVID safe way by providing them with a “Drive Through Luncheon.” Invites went out to current volunteers, who responded with their lunch choice. Volunteers also had the option to participate in the “Decorate Your Dashboard Contest.”

Park staff provided burgers and hotdogs for the luncheon and served volunteers. The area was set up with 5 “drive up windows”, chips, drinks, entrée, cookies, and a recycled medal from this year’s Scrub Jay Race which had a new ribbon attached with a special volunteer message. Each staff member created their personal thank you note which randomly went into each volunteer lunch bag.

The park manger Tony Clements offered a clean windshield to each vehicle as they waited in line for pick up. The “Decorate Your Dashboard” was a big hit. Volunteers proudly displayed their creativity. Everything from a simple pinecone to extravagant full dash scenery. Each dashboard was a winner.

The selfie station reflected “The best volunteer ever” from a large mirror staged up on a table. The Florida State Parks volunteer banner hung high above as they exited with their lunch in hand. But not before the photographer snapped pictures of the great volunteers we have.



Continued from Page 2

Scherer State Park won more Florida State Park awards this year than any other state park in Florida. That's no news to me though, I've always known we have the best volunteers in the state.

A big THANK YOU to our Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc. for purchasing a new utility cart for the park. This cart will be critical in supporting daily tasks throughout the park. We are still down 2 Park Rangers, Alyssa is on loan to Stump Pass but we hope to have her back soon and we just got approval to fill our other Park Ranger position so hopefully within the next month or so we will have all our great team back in action. With that said I do have some sad news, Park Service Specialist Rob Collins will be retiring from the Florida Park Service on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Rob has been a source of inspiration for the team and I'm still in denial that he will be leaving us. Rob will be moving out West to New Mexico to be with his wife and start working on that to do list. He will be greatly missed and has left an indelible mark on the park and the people that have had the honor to work with him. I'm going to miss that unmistakable laugh of his. Best of luck Rob and keep in touch!

A few project updates:

The fishing pier boardwalk project just went out to bid.

Check out the new "sulfur falls" down at Lake Osprey.

Wetland restoration project is moving forward.

Look for a new set of front gates in our near future.

## Meet the Team

Park Manager – Tony Clements

Assistant Park Manager – Dan Nelson

Administrative Assistant – Amber Shaw

Park Service Specialist – Diana Stinson

Park Service Specialist – Rob Collins

Park Ranger – Alyssa Rothstein

Park Ranger – Deanna Lamont

Park Ranger - position frozen

Park Ranger – Michael Hubbard

Park Ranger – Alexa Kurowski

OPS Park Ranger – Sawyer Pascoe

OPS Park Ranger – Alexis Wallace

OPS Park Ranger – Mfume Kalu

OPS Park Ranger – Evelyn MacQueen

Super Star – Francis Folkers