

Team Spotlight

WE WELCOME THE PARK'S NEW MANAGER, MATT KRUSE

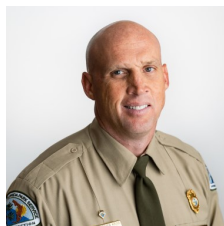


We welcome the new Park Manager at Oscar Scherer State Park. Matt began his Florida Park Service career in the summer of 1999 when he accepted a position at Lovers Key State Park as a Park Attendant. Within a year he was promoted to Park Ranger. As a dedicated Park Ranger, Matt was finally able to share his love for nature and use the skills he had acquired while working at Cesar Creek Lake State Park in Ohio and attending Hocking College. In 2006, Matt was promoted to Assistant Park Manager while remaining at Lovers Key. As APM, Matt was able to use his degree in Wildlife & Recreation Management along with his park ranger experience to further staff development and manage field operations.

After nearly 20 years at Lovers Key, Matt accepted the Park Manager II position at Collier-Seminole. At Collier Matt was able to take advantage of the resource management opportunities the park has to offer, particularly prescribed fire and its historical features. In his new role as Park Manager III at Oscar Scherer State Park, he is eager to develop new relationships with the park staff, the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park (the CSO), and the adjoining community. In his personal time, he will be taking advantage of the endless opportunities OSSP has to offer, enjoying wildlife viewing, hiking, and kayaking.

Please join us in welcoming Matt to his new role.

Manager's Message



Matt Kruse
Park Manager

Matt Kruse - Park Manager

As the new park manager, I welcome you to start a new beginning with me at Oscar Scherer State Park. New and exciting challenges are waiting around every corner. As I say good bye to Collier-Seminole State Park, I embrace the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead. Being part of the effort to protect and preserve critical Scrub Jay habitat will be an extremely rewarding experience. I am excited for the chance to develop working relationships with a dynamic team of park employees. I am also looking forward to working with the Friends of Oscar Scherer State Park. The wide range of programs and events that the Friends put on each year is remarkable. What I most look forward to is exploring the park and taking advantage of the endless recreational opportunities that Oscar Scherer has to offer. I also plan to get out and discover all the amenities and attractions located in the surrounding area. Community outreach and developing partnerships with local agencies will be one of the many highlights of the new position. Please plan a visit to Oscar Scherer State Park soon, and be sure to stop in and say hello. I look forward to meeting you and serving as your Park Manager. See you soon.



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 July 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.

"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

Program and Events:

We are looking forward to getting back into our park events and programs as state protocol's have opened up the opportunity for us to begin planning.

We are once again renting canoes and kayaks after shutdown. So everyone can get a chance to have their sea legs again and enjoy the serenity of South Creek as they paddle among the mangroves and the beauty of this special estuary right here in the park.

We are looking to get our weekly guided paddles on Wednesday scheduled again very soon and our monthly summer tram tours on Saturday mornings.

We just held our Annual Father's Day Orienteering Event on June 20th and had one of the highest number of participants for this event. Three levels of courses were offered. Beginning, Intermediate and Challenging. Our AmeriCorps District ROAR members, Sydney Whitlock and Mackenzie Shiner, led the day with registering families and giving an instructional class on compass use before orienteers set out on the course with map and compass in hand.

September welcomes our late summer events , which are being planned. We will kick off the month with Literacy Day on Saturday September 4th. The Patterson foundation and local authors often join us for this growing event where we offer a nature-based word search game and plenty of other fun activities for all ages.

This will be our fourth year partnering with the National and local Girls Scouts of America Council for Girl Scouts Love State Parks. Girls scouts and their families register with their local area council for park events. We are looking forward to hosting in-person activities on September 11th and 12th for the Girl Scouts.

Oscar Scherer State Park is planning to be a host site again for the Keep Sarasota Beautiful International Coastal Cleanup Day on September 18th. Participants will need to register with Sarasota County to participate. Waterway cleanup and park trails that border waterways in the park will be accessible for this event.

Wrapping up our month of September events is National Public Lands Day on the 25th. This event seems to continue to grow, as more people are becoming aware of the difference they can make in a short time by giving back to their public lands. Most people get inspired and want to continue to help and serve public areas and the environment. Projects on the list may include spreading mulch for our playgrounds, trail trimming, and cattail removal at Lake Osprey (fun mud bath included).

We are looking for volunteers for our Haunted Trails Event on October 22 & 23. If you like to dress up in fun costumes, pass out candy to kids (and adults), or just help to direct traffic we could use your help.

Volunteer Appreciation Summer Picnic – July 28, 2021 Celebrate the dog days of summer. More details to come.

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Volunteer Joyce Fain



This is the second summer in which Joyce has been a volunteer at Oscar Scherer State Park. Last year Joyce was a resident host taking care of the campground visitors, cleaning restrooms and campsites. She also was trained to work in the ranger station to fill in shifts as needed. We have been fortunate to be able to have Joyce working her volunteer hours at the ranger station this year. Florida State Parks transitioned to a new reservation system in May, and Joyce has taken a lead on learning this new system along with all the other rangers. Through trial and error and noting the glitches associated with any transition, Joyce continues to be that smiling face that greets our park visitors when they arrive.

Joyce spent 55 years as an RN nurse working ICU wards and dialysis. She began her career as a nursing aide in the dual high school enrollment program, which she later went on to lead at a local high school for students and adults. She spent time teaching nursing fundamentals to students and preparing them for a nursing career.

Born in Indiana and moving at the age of three. Joyce has a bit of a Georgian accent that you can pick up on right away. She has a son who is a paramedic, fireman, and police officer. "Because he can't make up his mind. He loves them all" she says.

Joyce has two small dogs that travel the roads with her to the next big adventure.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: SAWYER PASCOE, OUR NEW PARK SERVICE SPECIALIST



I enjoy working at Oscar Scherer State Park because every day provides a new experience. I am always learning something new, working on different projects, and I have met so many fantastic people. I also love being able to work in nature and can share my love for conservation.

I began my career in the park service over three years ago at Oscar Scherer as an OPS toll collector. After greeting most campers for a year and a half, I was promoted to an OPS Park Ranger, where I was able to get a full taste of everything the park service had to offer. After two years I was able to advance to an FTE Ranger and a month later advanced again to a Park Service Specialist. With this new position I will not be able to talk to as many visitors as I used to, but I will be overseeing projects to help maintain and improve the park that we all know and love.

Sawyer Pascoe

Park Service Specialist/Maintenance

Meet the Team

Park Manager – Matt Kruse

Administrative Assistant – Amber Shaw

Park Service Specialist – Rob Collins

Park Ranger – Deanna Lamont

Park Ranger – Michael Hubbard

OPS Park Ranger – Mfume Kalu

OPS Park Ranger – position open

Assistant Park Manager – Dan Nelson

Park Service Specialist – Diana Stinson

Park Ranger – Alyssa Rothstein

Park Ranger - position open

Park Ranger – Alexa Kurowski

OPS Park Ranger – Jerry Bodnar

Super Star – Francis Folkers