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Please join us for this
year's Summer Volunteer
Appreciation Picnic



Where: South Creek Pavilion (shade provided)

Date: Wednesday July 6, 2022

RSVP your entree choice please: 941-882-7219

Bring a Dish to Share

Time: 12:00 noon

Hot Dog, Hamburger, Veggie Burger (cheese)

Winter Watermelon & Cold Drinks Provided

A gathering to appreciate your hard work, sweat and your dedication to the park in the heat of summer.

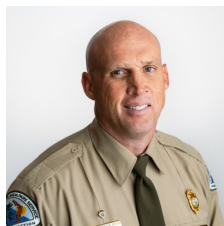


Did you know...



Prescribe fire is a safe way to apply a natural process to the land to ensure ecosystem health while reducing the risk of wildfire by removing dense vegetation build-up. This practice allows for native plants and wildlife to thrive, reestablishing a more diverse ecosystem, by removing old vegetation to make room for new growth.

Manager's Message



Matt Kruse
Park Manager

Matt Kruse - Park Manager

Hello Friends of Oscar Scherer Park

As always, I want to thank you for your continued support. It is a pleasure to work alongside a committed and devoted organization. As we move into the summer months, I encourage you to plan a visit to the park. Although temperatures during the afternoon can be extreme, mornings and evenings offer cooler temperatures with more opportunities for wildlife sightings. Currently wildlife is teeming at every corner, with sightings of deer, gopher tortoises, cotton tail rabbits, and Bobwhite Quail. Mother Deer with her fawn have been spotted throughout the park. Most exciting is the discovery of a Scrub Jay fledgling during the most recent Scrub Jay survey. Be sure to keep a close watch as you drive through the park, several very small young gopher tortoises are curiously exploring the area.

Please welcome new employees Isiah Selby and Ben DeCosta, Ben and Isiah have recently filled the two Park Ranger vacancies. Both new additions come to us with military backgrounds and diverse work experience. Ben and Isaiah are both a great fit for our team and will be a great asset to the park moving forward.

Park Staff are busy wrapping up the fiscal year with the new year starting July 1st. The park has seen progress over the year with a new

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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?

The heat of summer often brings fewer park visitors, programs and events. It also means fewer volunteers who make the park accessible to our visitors. We can use your help this season to keep the park inviting to guests.

So... Get involved and meet new friends!

If you are 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

Florida summers bring fewer visitors into the park. Fewer programs and events take place as the days heat up and many people seek cooler temperatures.

We continue to offer the Wednesday morning guided paddle year-round. Canoe & kayak rentals are available at the park or guests can bring their own. South Creek is an estuary filled with life both seen & unseen. Paddlers could have the opportunity to see the yellow crowned night heron looking for breakfast along the water's edge or just hanging out on a tree limb hovering above the water. Participants can register at the ranger station by 8:30 AM and the paddle will begin at 9:00. At times when the tidal influenced South Creek is too low for a guided paddle a guided walk along one of the creeks trails will be offered.

The park's 33rd Annual Earth Day Festival featured the Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of the park's new ADA fishing pier at Lake Osprey. Celebrations included live music, speakers from local organizations, guided hikes and earth conscious exhibitors. The ribbon cutting ceremony offered the history of the pier that started with just an idea by The Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Inc. Up and coming Laura Hedderman, a young musician sang a revised edition of "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay"

By the time this newsletter gets published our Father's Day Orienteering Event will have passed. This was a popular event last year after cancelling for the previous 2 years. Families get to learn compass use and put their skills to test with courses set up in the park of different challenges from very simple to challenging.

September will bring an event each weekend at the park.



Local Author Fran Palmeri

Literacy Under The Trees: Sept. 3rd from 10-1. An international day with Oscar Scherer partnering with local libraries, The Patterson Foundation, and local authors. Games, crafts & fun activities are available. This is a free event and visitors can get free park entry just for showing a library card or donating a gently used family friendly book.

Keep Sarasota Beautiful (International Coastal Cleanup): Sept. 17th from 8-11. Participants register with Sarasota County for this event. Oscar Scherer offers opportunities to help clean up our waterway along South Creek. Experienced paddlers can choose to clean up from the creek or clean up from the bank. Registration opens early August. Contact Sarasota County to register at 941-861-5000.

National Public Lands Day: Sept. 24th 9-1. Support your local public lands by giving back. We will have service projects in the park like trail work, trimming, cat tail removal and more. Lunch and music are provided for registered project participants. Give back to the environment and make a difference. Great opportunity for groups, schools, individuals and families.



2019 Playground Project

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Volunteer Spotlight

Shout out this season to our year-round, local, totally dedicated summer volunteers who continue to give back to Oscar Scherer through the sometimes-brutal summer heat. We thank you for sweating it out with us.

But our special volunteer spotlight goes to Oscar Scherer's Monday / Wednesday guys, also referred to as "The Curmudgeons." Rain, shine, holiday they just show up anyway. Many friendships have formed in this group that truly last. This is the toughest core group of summer. They still come in to split firewood, stock the wood bin, and even cut up fallen trees for more firewood. And yes, we still sell firewood in the heat of summer. The Curmudgeons have been known to mend fences, dig holes, trim and repair trails, get the park ready for events and so much more. This group comes in the park and gives back to the park to make a difference and expect nothing in return except the 15-minute coffee break where they get to mingle with one another, cool off for a minute and laugh with each other.



Dan Lauzun, Jim Murray, Jeff Cohen, Mike Murphy,
Ed DeRoche, Lee Ielpi and Steve Morris

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE FRIENDS IN THE SARASOTA GIVING CHALLENGE

The Community Foundation of Sarasota, in conjunction with the Patterson Foundation, conducts a philanthropic function called the Giving Challenge. This event is conducted to raise funds for the nonprofit organizations of Sarasota, Manatee, and Charlotte Counties. These funds provide additional financial needs of these organizations to help fulfill their programs. Participants must establish and maintain a current profile which must be approved by the Community Foundation of Sarasota to be eligible.

This year the Giving Challenge was held April 26 and 27, 2022. There were over 700 nonprofit agencies that participated in this year's event. Twenty-six donors contributed approximately \$1,900 to the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park. The conductors of the event must verify all contributions before giving the final totals. The Patterson Foundation is matching all verified donations up to \$100 for this event which will almost double the contributed amount. The Friends of Oscar Scherer Park want to thank all those who donated to this terrific event. This money will be used to help maintain the park in a pristine condition and make it a more attractive place to visit.

PROGRAM AND EVENT CALENDAR (continued from page 3)

October brings in slightly cooler weather and our popular **Annual Halloween Haunted Trails** on Friday October 21st & Saturday October 22nd. This night event runs from 8-10 on both nights and is spooky fun for the whole family. Tickets are purchased online only on the Haunted Trails website and will open for sale on Sept. 5th. The park is always looking for great volunteers to help support this event. Actors in costume are welcome and can register at <https://www.halloweenhauntedtrails.com> or call the park.



The Friends of Oscar Scherer Park have participated in the Sun Fiesta at Centennial Park for several years. These past few years the event has been cancelled. This year they are back. The Friends group could always use help manning the booth at the event. If you are interested, please contact Diana Stinson at 941-882-7219. Event dates are Oct. 14, 15 & 16.

The park has been fortunate this year with some volunteers that have learned the nature center operations. With that we have been able to remain open 6 days a week. The nature center's hours are Tuesday – Sunday, 10 AM to 2 PM.

During the month of May, 841 visitors walked through those doors of the nature center. We are grateful for all Oscar Scherer volunteers.

Manager's Message (continued from page 2)

front entrance gate. The shop compound received an upgrade with a new roof over the pole barn. Repairs to the road surface on the main park drive make for a more enjoyable drive through the park. Approximately 7,800 feet of boundary fence was installed along the western edge of the park, which will help define the park boundaries and prevent unauthorized entries into the park. A new hydration station has been installed along the Lake Osprey Trail featuring a water-bottle-filling apparatus, a drinking fountain, and a pet drinking source. Campground restroom number two renovations have been postponed while better design options are being researched to ensure the best outcome for park visitors.

Have you heard the new fishing pier is open at Lake Osprey? On Saturday, April 23rd during our Earth Day Celebration the park celebrated the official opening of the fishing pier with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Ceremony featured representatives from the Florida Park Service District 4 Administration, the Florida State Parks Foundation, the Selby Foundation, Friends of Oscar Scherer, current Park Management, and previous Park Management. Park visitors gathered around the entrance of the fishing pier as officials shared the story of the nearly 10-year project. Through challenges and setbacks, the venture was finally complete. Following the ribbon-cutting visitors filed out onto the new fully ADA compliant structure. This new feature will greatly enhance the visitor experience and provide additional recreational opportunities. CSO-funded benches and tables are expected to be delivered soon. Congratulations to the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park for a job well done. Please plan a trip out to the park to see the Lake Osprey fishing pier.

Hope to see you soon



Cake served at the ribbon-cutting ceremony

Meet the Team

Park Manager – Matt Kruse

Administrative Assistant – Amber Shaw

Park Service Specialist – Jonathan Hunter

Park Ranger – Deanna Lamont

Park Ranger – Isiah Selby

OPS Park Ranger—Mike Palella

OPS Park Ranger— Ben DeCosta

Assistant Park Manager – Dan Nelson

Park Service Specialist – Diana Stinson

Park Ranger – Alyssa Rothstein

Park Ranger—Anthony Zacarolli

Park Ranger – Alexa Kurowski

OPS Park Ranger – Jerry Bodnar

District ROAR AmeriCorps— Aaron Fried

Super Star – Francis Folkers