

••••• NEWS • PROGRAMS • EVENTS • ANNOUNCEMENTS •••••

**UPDATE IN BRIEF**

- The Nature Center was open 6 days a week for the entire summer.
- The fishing pier now has benches and picnic tables.
- Volunteers welcome on National Public Lands Day, September 24th
- Halloween Haunted Trails on October 21st and 22nd
- Funding received for resurfacing Lester Finley Trail and upgrades to canoe launch
- Efforts with FWC to obtain more fish for Lake Osprey
- Funding approved for repaving roadways
- State Resources Managers Annual Meeting to feature dinner at the Park on November 1st

**Did you know...**



Cat face pine tree

Did you know that the Southern Florida Slash Pine Tree played a major role in turpentine industry? In the early 1900s turpentine workers moved to South Florida due to the depletion of pine trees in Georgia and North Florida. Various turpentine work camps were established in the Sara-

sota area. Woods workers would cut V shaded

grooves (cat faces) into the pine trees while attaching a cup and gutter system which collected pine gum into a clay pot attached to the tree. The pine gum was later collected into barrels to be processed into turpentine. In the 1950s the work camps closed

due to the diminishing demand for turpentine. Although the work camps have long been closed, evidence of the process can still be found throughout Oscar Scherer. Scattered about the park are fragments of old clay pots known as Herty pots, and cat face scarred trees remain visible on numerous pine trees.



Herty pot

## Manager's Message



**Matt Kruse**  
Park Manager

Hello Friends of Oscar Scherer Park

I hope you had a great summer. If you haven't been out to the park lately, please stop in and say hello. Now is a great time to view the autumn wildflowers in bloom throughout the park. The return of the Bald Eagles marks the beginning of a new season. We expect the eagles to start re-establishing territories and making nest repairs over the next couple of months. Scrub Jays are busy burying acorns in the sand in preparation for the winter months ahead. Park staff, volunteers, and Friends Board members are setting the groundwork for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Haunted Trails event on October 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>. I hope you can join us for the exciting occasion.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize Anne Heuer who has recently accepted the title as the new CSO Board President. Previously Anne served as Treasurer for the Board. Anne will be a great asset to the Board in her new role. Newcomer Joy Stone will be taking over as the Treasurer. We are excited to have Joy on the team. Congratulations to both Anne and Joy. We have also seen some changes with the park staff, most recently Park Ranger Alexa Kurowski promoted to the District 4 office as the new Government Operations Consultant. Alexa will be greatly missed; we wish her the best of luck in her new position.

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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 needs to be done for the day. Great way to meet new friends!

Did you know that, if you are a campground host, you can get a campsite for up to 4 months for no charge in exchange for your volunteering hours?

The heat of summer is almost over. Cooler weather and tourists will soon be arriving. Many regular resident volunteers return to Oscar Scherer for the season, and soon the park will be abundant with volunteers eager to assist rangers and park visitors.

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](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

Oscar Scherer held the summer volunteer appreciation picnic in July. Hot dogs and hamburgers cooked by staff and pot luck with lots of interesting varieties were included. 34 volunteers attended and 8 staff. The total volunteer hours were impressive with 46,771. Now that's a lot of dedication.

For the first time Oscar Scherer has had the Nature Center open 6 days a week for the entire summer season. July brought totals of visitors to the Nature Center at a whopping 664. August showed impressive numbers as well at 456.

As fall approaches, Florida residents welcome in the somewhat cooler temperatures, a break from the extreme hot days of summer. The days shorten, vegetation growth begins to slow and native plants begin to show their fall colors. Yes, Florida has fall colors too. The winged sumac, Virginia creeper, maple trees, and even poison ivy morph into shades of reds, oranges and yellows.

The park will begin to come out of "slow season" and prepare for fall, winter & spring events. Visitors will begin to frequent the park for camping, family gatherings and longer hikes on park trails. September has ushered in an event each weekend at the park. The International Literacy Day Event was a fun place to be over the Labor Day weekend. Families gathered for a nature word scavenger hunt, fun craft activities, free books and more. Oscar Scherer, Sarasota County Library and Suncoast Campaign for Grade Level Reading, part of the Patterson Foundation, all made this small powerful event exciting.



Nature Word Scavenger Hunt



Kids at the Event Table



A Family Reading Some of the Nature Center Displays

For the fourth year, Oscar Scherer has partnered with the Gulfcoast of Florida local Council for Girl Scouts Love State Parks. Girls and their families were provided a passport activity booklet that included a scavenger hunt, games and fun activities to earn badges. This year was almost a rained-out event. The tough, the proud and the dedicated showed up, sporting rain gear and proving the old saying "always be prepared."

By the time this newsletter is distributed, we will have once again been a host site for Sarasota County Keep Sarasota Beautiful Coastal Cleanup. Volunteers are registered through Sarasota County and have a choice of cleaning up along the creek from our 2 creek side trails, the Lester Finley & the South Creek Nature Trail. For the experienced and more adventurous, we offer creek cleanup from a kayak or canoe.

Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> Oscar Scherer will welcome volunteers of all ages for National Public Lands Day. A day of service to local public lands. The park has been a part of this event for almost 20 years. This year's service projects will include trail maintenance and cattail removal at Lake Osprey. Volunteers will enjoy a cold drink and a hotdog from Oscar's Grill.



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## Volunteer Spotlight

### Josh & Andrea Lucas



Andrea and Josh Lucas hail from Tahlequah Oklahoma. These parents of four and grandparents of two spent their years at home together working with people with disabilities and volunteering years with the local Boys and Girls Club as well as at Help In Crisis.

Andrea is a traveling nurse who specializes in home health. Josh has been chasing Andrea around for about 2 years just doing whatever needs done until it's time to pack up and move on to the next adventure and meet new people. Both are self-motivated and truly just want to help anywhere and anyone they can. Both believe wholeheartedly in the "pay it forward" philosophy.

"We've thoroughly enjoyed our time here at beautiful Oscar Scherer the scenery and people here are great. We're looking forward to seeing where our journey takes us and hopefully getting to explore other Florida state parks and leave our mark."

Josh & Andrea are new volunteers to the Florida Park Service. They will be at Oscar Scherer for three months. Josh was recruited when one day Ranger Alyssa was driving in the campground with a restroom stall door in the back of her golf cart. When Josh saw her he said "I can fix that for you" Alyssa immediately went into volunteer recruitment mode. The rest is history. Josh has helped the park with everything from plumbing repairs to fixing equipment. Josh's many skills have benefited the park immensely.

## ANNE HEUER ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT OF FRIENDS OF OSCAR SCHERER PARK



In August 2022 the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park Board of Directors elected Anne Heuer president. Anne has most recently served five years as Treasurer of the Friends. In April 2017 she retired from her position as Director of Revenue Analysis at Xcel Energy, a large publicly held utility company based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Immediately after retiring, Anne and her husband, Wayne, relocated to Florida. One of the first things Anne did after her move was to volunteer for the Friends in the Nature Center, join the Board of Directors and accept the position of Treasurer. The experience she gained over 42 years in the finance, forecasting, budgeting and regulatory areas at Xcel Energy uniquely prepared her for her position as treasurer. During the last five years as treasurer, Anne has been involved with most Friends activities in support of the Park, including, for example, work on fundraising committees, updating Friends policies and developing annual budgets. Anne earned her Bachelors of Arts degree in Business Administration with a focus on Finance in 1985 while working at Northern States Power Company, a current subsidiary of Xcel Energy.

### FRIENDS OFFICERS UPDATE

Following the resignation of David Pierce as President and Lora Pierce as Secretary of the Friends for health and family reasons, the Board of Directors of the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park has elected Anne Heuer as President, Joyce Stone as Treasurer and Oliver Janney as Secretary. Bob Frank continues as Vice President. The other directors of the Friends are Carolyn Morgan, Ron Newton and Joel Robbins. We thank David and Lora for their service to the Friends and the Park during the past several years.

### PROGRAM AND EVENT CALENDAR (continued from page 3)

The park will soon be rustling with spooks, ghosts and plenty of scare. Oscar Scherer's Halloween Haunted Trails will welcome its tenth year for this event. There will be fun times and treats for the young and timid also. Osprey Nokomis Chamber of Commerce, Nokomis Volunteer fire Department and Publix will be ready to welcome everyone. Tickets may be purchased only online at <https://www.halloweenhauntedtrails.com/>.



## *Manager's Message* (continued from page 2)

Recently the park received a few small new amenities. The Friends of Oscar Scherer Park provided five picnic tables and three benches for the new fishing pier at Lake Osprey. The Kiwanis Club of Venice also donated a bench for the pier. Eagle Scout Troop 50 constructed an observation deck overlooking a wetland along the Red Trail. These new additions will greatly enhance the visitors' experience, while providing them a place to rest and observe wildlife.

**Thank you for your contributions to the park.**

Facility upgrades and repairs continue throughout Oscar Scherer. Recently the park received funding to improve the Lester Finley Trail with new timbers bordering the path, and to resurface the walkway with crushed shell material. Canoe launch improvements are already underway at the South Creek Picnic area. Park staff and volunteers are replacing the deck boards on the walkway around the dock. The ADA slip that allows access into the water will also be replaced. The project is expected to be completed by the end of September. The Campground Bathhouse replacement project is carefully moving forward through the design process, while construction specialists review plans to ensure the park receives the best design to accommodate the park's needs. Most exciting is the news that Oscar Scherer received substantial funding from the State to repave the roadways within the park. It is encouraging to see that the Florida Park Service leadership is committed to providing the resources necessary to maintain and operate the parks at the highest degree possible.

Please plan a trip out to the park soon. Be sure to pick up an events and programs brochure. Although the full array of programs is not available, there is still much to enjoy at the park. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Park Manager. Hope to see you soon.



## Meet the Team

Park Manager – Matt Kruse

Assistant Park Manager – Dan Nelson

Administrative Assistant – Amber Shaw

Park Service Specialist – Diana Stinson

Park Service Specialist – Jonathan Hunter

Park Ranger – Alyssa Rothstein

Park Ranger – Deanna Lamont

Park Ranger—Anthony Zacarolli

Park Ranger – Isiah Selby

Park Ranger – Open

OPS Park Ranger—Mike Palella

OPS Park Ranger – Jerry Bodnar

OPS Park Ranger— Ben DeCosta

District ROAR AmeriCorps— Aaron Fried

Super Star – Francis Folkers