



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Washington Oaks Gardens State Park

Sept/Oct 2007

ORIENTATION PROGRAM HELD

The Friends of Washington Oaks Gardens State Park held an Orientation program in mid-July to acquaint members with the park, its diversity, its history, and the volunteer opportunities available. It started at the Owen D. Young Visitors Center where Friends President, Bob Bouck, gave a short talk about the past achievements of the group, and its goals for the future. Park Ranger Joe Woodbury led the group to an Indian midden, and summarized the early history of the land now used as a park. Then he took the members into the former Young house and explained how Owen and Louise Young had found this special place, had built a simple winter house, and how they lived their lives while at Washington Oaks.



Park Services Specialist, Cristy Leonard, then took the group on a park tour which included the picnic area, the wood log cabin designated as the "Break Room", storage facilities that the Friends use, the workshop area, the beach with coquina on the other side of State Road A1A, the ranger station at the entrance to the park, the original A1A road, the special events field, and finally ended up at the greenhouse. Under the plant shade area, Friends Board member Liz Morrison described the propagation program that the Friends work on, the Second Saturday Plant Sales, and led the group into the greenhouse, which will be renovated by funds raised by the Friends.

The morning program finished with a Garden Tour led by Park Ranger Cheryl Thorndyke, who took the group into the Rose Garden, pointed out the citrus groves put in by the Youngs, showed us the Herb Garden, and the 250 year old live oak trees. She also pointed out various exotic plants brought in by the Youngs and planted along paths that follow the springs and ponds. By noon the members were thanking the organizers and the park staff for providing valuable information in such a pleasant format. Each person gleaned new insight into the park and its rich history.

If you were not able to attend, look for our next Orientation program in early 2008.

FERN WORKSHOP SEPT. 8

Ferns are among America's favorite plants for shady areas in the garden, and in planters on the patio or in the home. On Saturday, Sept. 8, the Friends are sponsoring "Discover the World of Ferns" workshop at 10:30 a.m. Come see the wide variety of ferns from the smallest moss ferns to the large Australian Tree Ferns. Learn their history, where to plant certain varieties, and how to care for them. You can choose your favorite from a large selection and the Friends will plant a container or hanging basket for you. There will be a Question & Answer time at the end of each session.

The Friends will also be conducting their Second Saturday Plant Sale on Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Choose from a large selection of air, bromeliads, butterfly, cactus, gingers, herbs, hoyas, orchids, stag horns, and succulents. Many of the plants were propagated and grown in the park.



HERB WORKSHOP OCT. 13

Here is a chance to freshen your fall herb garden with organically grown herbs from Tracy Anderson of Seminole Springs Herbs. In conjunction with Second Saturday Plant Sales, the Friends will present a Workshop on Herbs at 10:30 a.m., repeated at 1:00 p.m. In addition, you may select 6 herbs and the Friends will plant them for you in a container for \$15. There will also be herbed baked goods, beverages, and Friends Merchandise for sale.

(article by Bob Bouck)

NATURE SCENE

Well, it's that time of year!!! We have 6 Sea Turtle nests thus far. We excavated our first nest on 7/29 and 97 Baby Sea Turtles made their way safely to the waters edge.



Five species of sea turtles inhabit Florida's waters. Most common are: 1. Loggerhead, 2. Green, 3. Leatherback, with the occasional Hawksbill and Kemp's Ridley's. There are approximately 50,000 sea turtles in Florida. This makes it the most important nesting area in the United States. Sea turtles come ashore to nest beginning in May and hatching continues until late October. A female can lay several nests during one season and only nests every two or three years.



After incubating for two months, the hatchlings break out of their shells. The nest temperature during incubation determines a sea turtle's sex. Boys like it cool - Girls like it hot. Once near the surface, the hatchlings wait until the sand temperature cools to emerge. Therefore most emerge after dark. Once out of the nest, the turtles scramble to the water and swim offshore where they will live for several years in seaweed beds drifting along the Gulf Stream. As the turtles grow older they move into coastal waters. On a developed beach, artificial lights attract the hatchlings, causing them to crawl in the wrong direction. Let's help by keeping lights out May - October. *(article & photos - Cristy Leonard)*

HELP WANTED

The Friends are looking for volunteers for the following positions:

- Merchandise Chair
- Newsletter Editor
- Office Assistant

If you have the time & talent for any of these jobs, or to get

PARKS CELEBRATE LITERACY MONTH

In honor of Florida's designation of September as "Literacy Month", all state parks will grant free entry to a person showing a valid library card, a checked out library book, or donating a family appropriate book. Washington Oaks will have a special program on Sept. 8 from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., *Just Read Florida* presents "Butterfly Tales", a children's storytime with songs, games and butterflies. Meanwhile at Faver Dykes on Sept. 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Ranger Cristy Leonard will present a storytime and puppet show for children.

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SUNTRUST BANK OFFERS DONATIONS

SunTrust Bank is offering donations of \$100 to 501(c)(3) organizations to new clients. If you open a new account between Aug. 6 and Oct. 12, 2007, accept and make a purchase with your SunTrust Visa Check Card by Nov. 15, and submit a redemption form by Nov. 15, SunTrust Bank will donate \$100 to the Friends of Washington Oaks Gardens State Park. For more information contact your local SunTrust Bank or visit their website www.suntrust.com/mycause.

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KAYAK TOURS CONTINUE

Sept. 9, 25 & 26 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. *Wings Over Florida*. Cost: \$40 per person.

Sept. 10, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, *Indians of the Estuary*.

Cost \$60 per person. Call 904-347-1565 to register, or visit their website www.RippleEffectEcotours.com.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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| 2nd Sat. of each month | Plant Sales & Plant Rx |
| Sept. 8 | Fern Workshop, Plant Sales, Kids Storytime |
| Oct. 13 | Herb Workshop, Plant Sales |
| Dec. 1 | Holiday Tea Party |
| Dec. 7 & 8 | Holiday in the Gardens |
| Feb. 9 | Citrus Festival |

CORRECTION

In the previous Newsletter, the Friends website was reported to be www.fowo.org, however this domain was no longer available. The correct website is www.washingtonoaks.org. Take a look at what has been designed, and give us your feedback. Any comments should be emailed to