



FALL 2020

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## UPDATE IN BRIEF

Florida Scrub Jay count : 27 - 7 Families

Covid Update

Eagles Back

Cancelled programing and events

Virtual Scrub Jay Race

## Did you know...

There are over 13 plant and 26 listed animal species found at Oscar Scherer State Park? In 1973 Congress passed the Endangered Species Act. This act protects and helps recover imperiled species and the habitat they need to survive. There are 2 listing categories: Endangered, meaning a plant or animal is in danger of extinction and Threatened, meaning a plant or animal is likely to become endangered in the future. Florida also has a list of imperiled species that breaks down the categories even further. In place of boring you with all this information I thought we would share some photos of the species found here at the park, Enjoy!



Giant Air Plant



Red margin zephyr lily



Erect prickly pear



Many flowered grass pink



Pine lily



Tampa vervain

(Continued on page 4)

## *Manager's Message*



**Tony Clements**  
Park Manager

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

Hello, I hope this newsletter finds you well? Given our current circumstances I wanted to share with you some of the adaptations we've implemented at your favorite state park. To offset some of the COVID cost to the state, the park's operating budget was cut by about 20%, including a hiring freeze. Currently we are operating down one Ranger position until the freeze is lifted.

Our current focus is on the day-to-day operations, keeping your park open so visitors have the opportunity to safely recreate at Oscar Scherer State Park. In order to reduce direct physical contact with visitors and reduce contact with cash, we've implemented touchless entry at the Ranger Station for day use, utilizing a drop box system. Day use entrance can also be purchased online or at the gate using a QR code over your phone, and we are still accepting debit/credit cards. We are not renting pavilions and canoes or providing any programming and events at this time. Our Youth Camp, Nature Center and playgrounds also remain closed.

To keep our visitors safe, we are cleaning and sanitizing our facilities 3 times a day and promoting CDC guidelines on social distancing and group sizes.

The campground upper loop was closed through the summer to get some resource management and maintenance completed.

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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? **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!**

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

We did open them up for the busy holiday weekends and will reopen the upper loop in October. Unfortunately, replacing the 2 bathhouses in the campground had to be put on hold for this fiscal year. We will keep our fingers crossed for next year. I want to give a shout out to our summer hosts and staff for adapting to the new guidelines in place and staying positive. The level of teamwork and comradery is impressive.

September was shaping up to be an active event month with a scheduled event every weekend. As we all have had to do, we had to make the call to cancel all the events. September 12th & 13<sup>th</sup> was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual nationwide Girl Scouts LOVE State Parks Event. We were a host park last year with a great turnout of girls coming to Oscar Scherer and rotating through stations led by volunteers and staff, learning about prescribed fire, junior ranger program and guided hikes. This year we adapted, and the event went virtual with all 50 states participating. Each state had their State Park link on the map and the girls could visit a State Park in any state they wanted to. With Florida being the 4-time gold medal winner, we did not disappoint and set up a great page for the Girl Scouts.

<https://www.girlscouts.org/lovesstateparks>

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/events/programs/girl-scouts-love-state-parks>

We all put our heads together to haunt up some great ideas for our signature fundraising event known as "Haunted Trails." Everything from drive-in movies to haunting parades. But in the reality of this frightful idea was the concern about the crowds and the possibility of spreading the virus to the monsters and ghouls that attended. We decided to cancel all these events for safety and staffing reasons. We are currently reviewing our popular winter programming for this year. Florida State Park website is kept current with all up-to-date programs, events and reopenings. Keep checking the FPS website, the Friends of Oscar Scherer website and The Friends Facebook page for all updates.

[www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org)

[https://friendsofoscarscherer.com/](http://friendsofoscarscherer.com/)

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofOscarSchererPark/>

As far as programming and events go, we are taking things one month at a time. We've looked at all our events and programming through the rest of this year and into next and are ready to adapt as necessary, keeping our visitors' and staff's safety paramount.

We finally burned the section of the park that is directly behind the homes in Willowbend. We were burning within 10 feet of their screened porches. Everything went great, and it was good to see all the positive comments from the neighbors about the burn and the fire team. It just goes to show how important it is to have buy-in from your neighbors through education and outreach. Reducing the amount of flammable material on the ground makes their homes safer, and some neighbors saw deer in that area the very next day.

Florida Scrub-Jays are doing well, with more fledglings this year; we currently stand at about 27 birds; that's more than double what we had 4 years ago. Thanks to Super volunteer Francis and David from Quest Ecology, we were able to get several more banded this year. The Eagles just returned this week to both the Green and Red Trail nests. We will be closing down sections of both trails in the near future.

More than ever, we need a place to connect with nature and get away from our stressors. I believe Oscar Scherer State Park is the perfect respite, and our job is to provide our visitors with a safe place to get away, relax and let the mind wander in wonder.

Stay Safe, Be Well, and we hope to see you soon.

## PROGRAM AND EVENT CALENDAR

All programs and events are cancelled through the end of 2020.

### Did you know...(continued from p. 1)



Florida Scrub-jay



Limpkin



Gopher frog



Indigo snake



Gopher tortoise



Sherman's fox squirrel



Hello Members,

Hope this finds all our members in good health. The Friends of Oscar Scherer Park are in the planning stage for our Fall and Spring events. The Park is open with restrictions due to the virus. The Park Manager will keep you abreast of those restrictions as they change. We hope you are still able to come and visit the park and stroll around in a relaxing atmosphere.

We had to say goodbye to our Membership Chair, Darlene Newton, who resigned as of 1 September. She put in three dedicated years as Membership Chair. She has been replaced by Patty Harshbarger, who has taken over the duties. She is very enthusiastic about the work, and we feel she will do a terrific job.

We sadly have to cancel our premier event Haunted Trails and the rest of our activities for the remainder of the year. We have hopes that the situation will improve to allow us to conduct the Scrub Jay Race in January. We will keep you updated on our events as the new year approaches. Keep safe.

Ronald Newton  
President



## Volunteer Spotlight

Goes to **ALL** our summer resident volunteers who sweated, sanitized and sweated some more.

Nellie & John Lunger – July, August, September

Joyce Fain – June, July, August, September

Bruce Eales – May, June, July, August

Lisa Gifford & Kelly Fosdick – April, May, June, July

Rod Taylor – May, June, July

Jeff Farnsworth – August, September, October, November

Rich White – August, September, October, November

Richard Buffington – September, October, November

Rita Budig & Joyce Bergman – September, October

And we can't forget all our regular summer volunteers who are committed to making a difference at Oscar Scherer every day.  
From all of us "Thank You."

## Who's Who on the Board?

**President:** Ron Newton

Director: Jane Reeves

Director: Jim McGuire

**Vice President:** David Pierce

Director: Oliver J. Janney

Director: John Danylak

**Treasurer:** Anne Heuer

Director: Kim Thomas

**Secretary:** Lora Pierce

Director: Ethan Poore—Youth Advisor

Director: Steve Uglonica - Community Outreach

## Meet the Team

Park Manager – Tony Clements

Assistant Park Manager – Dan Nelson

Administrative Assistant – Therese Wright

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 – Jessica Miller

OPS Park Ranger – Mfume Kalu

OPS Park Ranger – Alexandra Merritt

Super Star – Francis Folkers

FLCC AmeriCorps ROAR – Katie Wojcicki