



ECHOS

<http://www.friendsofsavannas.org>



The Preserve kicked off the new year with a trip back to the past during the 11th annual Pioneer Day Festival held on January 4. Thanks to letters written by Miss Lucie, daughter of one of Treasure Coast's first pineapple plantation families, we have invaluable insight to what the life of a Pioneer entailed. Using her descriptions as our guide, we helped over 360 visitors experience how people in Florida lived during the mid-19th century. Visitors learned how to weave baskets, write with berry ink and feather quills, make corn husk and paper dolls, churn butter and knead bread. There were period soldier re-enactors as well as members of the Treasure Coast Muzzleloaders to demonstrate the life of a military man at that time. Park rangers used burn pits to demonstrate aspects of a prescribed burn and led folks on a hayride through the preserve while volunteers led visitors on guided hikes and kayak tours. We want to thank everyone who made this event such a success.

An Insider's Guide to the Savannas by...

Sue

Sue Munson wears several different volunteer hats at the Savannas Preserve State Park. She is a member of the Friends CSO Board of Directors, the Board secretary, and helps coordinate the native plants program. Sue started volunteering two years ago after friends suggested she give it a try. Her interest in gardening was a natural fit for the park's efforts around native plants. "I've always liked digging in the dirt," says Sue, "so when I discovered that the park not only sells

but also grows native plants, I was hooked." Sue is at the park several days a week cultivating plants and helping guests learn how to incorporate them into their own gardens. This year Sue looks forward to the park's initiative to grow native wildflowers from seed and install interpretative signage about butterflies that will be placed in the park's pollinator garden. So if you want to know more about plants, stop by and talk to Sue.



Sue Munson, native plant volunteer & CSO Secretary.

Sue says ...

My favorite Savannas Preserve experience is working with other volunteers. Everyone I've met is friendly and welcoming and committed to making the park a wonderful experience for visitors and workers alike. Being a volunteer makes me feel like I'm part of a big family.

Natural Wonders in the Preserve

The Roseate Spoonbill

The Roseate Spoonbill is a medium-sized water bird found in coastal areas of the South. They forage, roost and nest in small flocks with other water birds and breed in Florida during winter.

- **How to identify** - Roseate Spoonbills are pale pink with bright pink shoulders. They have white necks, yellowish green heads and a long bill flattened at the end like a spoon.
- **Habitat**— They live in marshes, lagoons, and mudflats where they forage in shallow water, swinging their head from side to side as they sift the muck for food. Large breeding colonies live in Florida Bay, Tampa Bay and Merritt Island.
- **Diet**—Roseate Spoonbills eat mostly small fish like minnows and killifish but will also eat shrimp, crabs, aquatic insects as well as some plant roots and sedge.
- **Interesting Fact**—Their pink plumage was used as hat and fan decorations. The feathers were so desired that they were nearly extirpated by the middle of the 19th century.
- **Significance at the Savannas**—Roseate spoonbills can sometimes be seen “fishing” in the shallows of the marsh and nesting in the shrubs along the water’s edge. Maintaining shallow feeding grounds like the mud flats at the park are essential to the survival of the species.



The Sabal Palm



The state tree of Florida, sabal palms, or Sabal palmettos, are slow growing palms, which are more closely related to grasses than trees.

- **Height**—Sabal palms grow up to 70 feet, taking about 10-15 years from seed to first signs of trunk, then grow about 6” per year.
- **Shape**—Tan and unbranching, sabal palms have a trunk topped by a round canopy of leaves. The bases of the leaves, or the “boots”, stay attached to the trunk when they die but are shed naturally over time, leaving behind a smooth bark.
- **Leaves**—Sabal palms have curved, fan-shaped leaves with 3-4’ long blades and 3-6’ long stalks. All leaves emerge from a terminal bud at the tree’s top, commonly known as the “heart of palm”.
- **Flowers**—They produce thousands of tiny, creamy-white flowers in spring.
- **Habitat**— As natives that can tolerate salt spray, sabal palms are found along the coast as well as in pine woodlands, hammocks and river banks.
- **Interesting Fact**—Leaf buds were once made into a “swamp cabbage”, leaves were used as roofing material, and their fibers were used as twine.
- **Significance at the Savannas**— Sabal palms host other plants in their “boots” and provide shelter and nesting materials for many birds, animals, snakes and insects. This hardy native thrives in Florida’s sandy soils and can endure fire, flood and hurricanes.



FRIENDS HIGHLIGHTS

- + Jan 11, 12:30-2pm - Annual Membership Meeting to elect 2020 Board members.
- + March 14, 12:30pm - CSO Board meeting.
- + The Board now consists of five members.
- + Several committees were created or reactivated, like Outreach, Marketing, & Membership.
- + Gopher Tortoise activities will resume in 2020.
- + We now have 2 new tandem kayaks and will offer Monday tours for the winter season.
- + The Pre-holiday Plant & Gift Shop Porch sale was a great success.

Become a Member of the Friends of Savannas

Friends of Savannas is a volunteer-based, nonprofit corporation created to enhance, support, and educate while also protecting the natural and cultural resources of the Savannas Preserve State Park.

By becoming a member, you will play a critical role in preserving the largest freshwater marsh system on the southeast coast of Florida.

Membership benefits include:

- * 10 FREE entries into Savannas Preserve State Park
- * 10% discount in the Friends' Gift Store
- * Invitations to Member-Only events

Visit us online or at the Park during business hours to learn more!



PARK HIGHLIGHTS

- + During the Education Center closure, an Information Desk is available Saturdays and Sundays from 9am-5pm in the Lecture Hall.
- + Our former FLCC AmeriCorps Member, Ashley, has been promoted to an OPS Park Ranger.
- + Park staff and volunteers hosted one of the largest Volunteer Appreciation Dinners at which four volunteers and one special event were nominated for state-wide awards.
- + The Savannas Spooktacular was a huge success and drew in over 600 visitors.



EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Pine Flatwood Hikes



9-11:30am

Hike a mile with a naturalist in the Pine Flatwoods to learn about the Preserve's flatwoods and freshwater marsh.

🌿 Jan 19 🌿 Feb 9 🌿 March 8

Hawk's Bluff Hikes



9-11:30am

Join a naturalist for a mile hike along the Hawk's Bluff Trail to learn about the Preserve's scrub habitat and freshwater marsh.

🌿 Jan 26 🌿 Feb 23 🌿 March 29

Guided Sunset Hikes



Evans Creek

Take in the glory of the pine flatwoods during sunset and watch the moon rise in the sky with Ranger Paul as your guide.

🌿 Feb 9, 5:30pm 🌿 Mar 9, 7pm



Song Circle/Folk Jam 3-5pm

Bring a stringed instrument and jam or just come by and listen.

🌿 Jan 12 🌿 Feb 9 🌿 March 8



Drum Circle, 7-9pm

Bring a drum or just enjoy the music. \$5 cash admission/pp.

🌿 Jan 12 🌿 March 22



Morning Kayak Tours

Every Thursday through Monday
8am - 10/10:30am



Sunset Kayak Tours

🌿 Feb 5 & 6, 5:25pm 🌿 March 5 & 6, 5:45pm
🌿 April 3 & 4, 6:55pm

Guided Kayak Tours Information and prices

Join a Friends of Savannas volunteer guide trained in the ecology of the Savannas on a kayak trip through the marsh basin. If you cannot make it on tour day, please call 772-207-8310 to cancel. Participants must be 6 or over; anyone under 18 must be accompanied by an adult and anyone 6-10 must be in a double kayak with an adult. Morning tours are a \$10 donation/pp and sunset tours are a \$15 donation/pp; please bring exact cash since credit cards are not accepted. The \$3 state park admission fee is not included in tour price.

- 🌿 All events require reservations unless otherwise noted. Please call 772-398-2779 to register.
 - 🌿 Events are free with park admission of \$3 per vehicle unless otherwise noted.
 - 🌿 Park admission is waived for Florida State Park pass holders.
 - 🌿 For more details on events, check out our website at www.friendsofsavannas.org