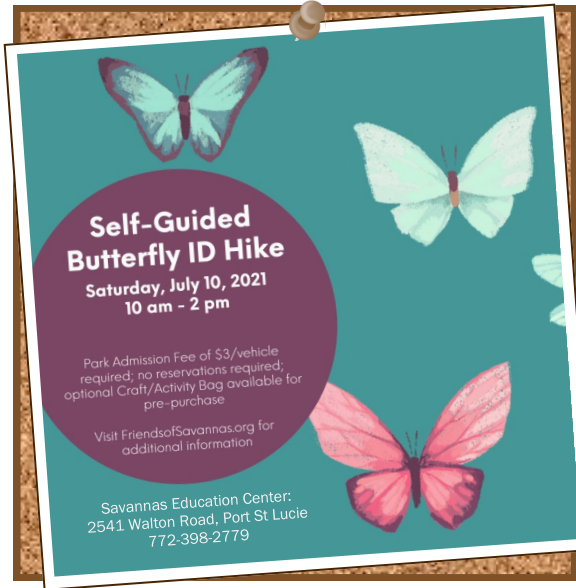




ECHOS

<http://www.friendsofsavannas.org>

Butterfly Identification Hike



On July 10, 2021, enjoy a self-paced Butterfly Identification Hike suitable for all ages! The quarter-mile long Glass Lizard Trail will be transformed into an educational experience from 10 am to 2 pm with pictures of the most common butterfly species of South Florida, along with identifying features and preferred nectar sources of each species. Enter the trail to the right of the Education Center. Be sure to pay attention as the trail will end with a surprise quiz!

The Glass Lizard Trail is unpaved and could possibly be muddy. We encourage closed toed shoes that can get wet! Park Admission Fee is required to walk the trail. You can purchase a one day pass online by visiting www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/savannas-preserve-state-park or you can purchase your pass at the park entrance with exact cash or via

credit card using the posted QR Codes. The online purchased passes are only valid on the date purchased. Cost is \$3/vehicle with up to 8 people or \$2/person for anyone arriving to the park on foot or by bicycle.

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

Echoes newsletter editor, Stacey Morrison, is the park's long-distance volunteer. Hailing from Maryland, Stacey fell in love with the tranquility and beauty of the Savannas after her first guided kayak tour in the winter of 2019. During her 2 month stay, she not only joined as many kayak tours as she could, but she also discovered the joy of riding her bike along the Walton Rd trails. "The Savannas are such a spectacular place," Stacey says,



"and provide the respite needed from the heavily developed landscape of coastal southern Florida." The hold of the Savannas was so strong that she searched for a way to stay connected; editing the newsletter was that way. Through her research of the park's flora/fauna and interviews with other volunteers, Stacey still feels a part of this special place, despite the distance.

Stacey Morrison at the Savannas' Walton Rd kayak launch.

Stacey says ...

"My favorite Savannas Preserve experience is kayaking through the basin. The marsh has such a subtle, understated beauty that each time I paddle among its grasses and wading birds I feel a sense of peace and serenity. I love seeing the small changes within the marsh, from the new blooming of a delicate wildflower to the appearance of a baby crane. I'm so thankful that this natural sanctuary continues to exist in crowded PSL."

Natural Wonders in the Preserve

SWALLOW TAILED KITE

Swallow-tailed kites (*Elanoides forficatus*) are raptors that spend most of their time gracefully swooping, gliding and rolling through the air as they search for prey.

- **How to identify** - Slender and large, swallow-tailed kites have long, pointed wings and a deeply forked tail. They are between 20"-25" long and have a wingspan of 48". Their head, body and wing undersides are white, but all other feathers are black.
- **Habitat**— Swallow-tailed kites nest in tall trees nearby the open landscape of their prey. In Florida, they are found in wooded river swamps, open pine woods near marshes or prairies, cypress swamps, and riverside swamp forests.
- **Diet**— Though adults will eat frogs, lizards, and young birds, they feed mostly on large insects like dragonflies, cicadas, grasshoppers and beetles.
- **Interesting Fact**— Rather than perching to eat their prey, these aerial acrobats feed while in flight, catching insects in the air and plucking small prey from tree twigs and leaves.
- **Significance at the Savannas**— Once common throughout the southeast, the swallow-tailed kite's habitat in the US has shrunk to Florida and a scattering of other subtropical areas. The open landscape of the Savannas provides safe, protected homes and hunting grounds for these birds.



GREENBRIER



S. Rotundifolia (Bullbrier)

There are 12 species of Greenbrier (*Smilax sp.*) found in Florida. Though the species are difficult to distinguish from each other, the majority of them have woody stems and rhizomatous roots; spread via subterranean runners; climb using tendrils; and have sharp prickles on the stems.

- **Height**— Greenbriers can stand alone up to almost 6 feet; supported by a tree or bush, they can grow as high as 30 feet.
- **Shape**— Greenbriers begin as a clump but spread by vine-like runners.
- **Leaves**— In Florida, greenbriers are mostly evergreen to semi-evergreen, with simple, alternate leaves with 3-5 major veins.
- **Flowers**— Small, clustered, flowers are green, yellow or brown give way to very small black or purple berries.
- **Habitat**— Because of the variety of greenbriers, they exist in many habitats, from coastal areas, mesic woodlands, wet bottomlands, and maritime forests.
- **Interesting Fact**— The roots and new shoots can be cooked and eaten; sarsaparilla was once made using greenbriers and their terminal shoots taste of asparagus.
- **Significance at the Savannas**— Greenbriers are a beneficial plant for many creatures in the Savannas. Caterpillar moth larva feed on the leaves, bees sip the flowers' nectar, birds eat the berries, and animals like deer nibble on various parts. Additionally, greenbriers provide protected shelter for birds and animals.





*Friends of Savannas volunteers at the June 2021 For Dad's Plant Sale.
L to R: Barb L., Anna A., Mary A., Mary S.
Front: Sue M.*

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 to 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

- + We welcome a new OPS Part-time Park Ranger to our staff, Trevor.
- + The park recently acquired a new Chevrolet Silverado 1500 from the Florida Park Service, which will be used primarily for Closing Shift.

FRIENDS HIGHLIGHTS

Last year at this time, we were trying to keep busy and figure out what could we do. CSO Committees started 2021 by reducing their annual budgets by half; our ability to fundraise for the Park was abruptly curtailed with the pandemic. With hopes of extending use for another year, equipment was sharpened and treated; plants were propagated or shared from member gardens.

Today, growing tables of the Shade House are filled with healthy, beautiful native plants and have welcomed new selections started and nurtured by the Team. Monthly plant sales are now online followed by curbside pickup; sales for 2021 have already surpassed those of 2020. Likewise, all purchases from the CSO Gift Shop – i.e. books, event tickets, or memberships, evolved to online.

The CSO is pleased to support the Special Events creatively developed and offered this year by the Park. Self-guided tours and scavenger hunts offer imaginative educational experiences; many have optional customized activity kits available to compliment the Event.

We patiently wait the opportunity to resume CSO and Park activities that have been put on hold. In the interim, your energy and support is so very appreciated. Have a safe and healthy summer.

Diana Gregory, CSO President

SAVANNAS PRESERVE TRAILS

Tales on the Trails, 10am - 2pm

Stroll along a trail and enjoy an environmentally-themed storybook along the way; each date features a new book. Get your Tales on the Trails Passport and have it stamped with each visit for a chance to win prizes and earn Happy Hiker and Trail Trekker status. This program is geared toward K-4th grade, but all are welcome to participate.

July 3, 17, and 31



Song Circle & Folk Jams 3 - 4:30pm

Bring a stringed instrument and jam or just come by and listen. Free with park admission fee.

July 11, Aug 8, Sept 12



Drum Circle 6 - 8pm

Bring a drum or just enjoy the ambiance. Check the website for ticketing info closer to the event.

Sept 19 - Fall Equinox



Whose Scat is That? 10am - 2pm

Stroll along the Glass Lizard Trail while learning to identify the most common critter scat seen in the Savannas!

Sept 25

Kayaking

The water levels in the park's fresh water basin marsh varies depending on rainfall, sometimes drying up during prolonged dry spells.



➤ The Park is open to the public 7 days a week, 365 days a year, from 8am to sunset.

➤ The Education Center remains closed until further notice fore renovations.

➤ Park entrance fees can be paid online or with exact cash on site - \$3 per car, \$2 per person or bicyclist

➤ For a park map, visit the park's website at: <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/savannas-preserve-state-park>