



FRIENDS OF FLORIDA STATE PARKS

E-Newsletter August 2011 Edition

ABLE TRUST NAMES FLORIDA PARK SERVICE “PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR”!

TALLAHASSEE – 07/19/2011 The Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Florida Park Service was recently honored as Public Organization of the Year by The Able Trust as part of the 2011 Ability Awards. The award recognizes the Florida Park Service for outstanding efforts to advance employment and training opportunities for people with



disabilities across the state.” This recognition by The Able Trust demonstrates our commitment to communities, the core values of the Florida Park Service and our dedication to help create employment opportunities for people of all abilities,” said Florida Park Service Director Donald Forgione. “It is because of such high caliber service and profes-

sionalism that Florida remains the best state park system in the nation and a key player in job creation in Florida.” The Able Trust Ability Awards annually recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions toward the employment of Floridians with disabilities. The Able Trust, with the help of their outstanding collaborators and champions, is the leader in providing Floridians with disabilities fair employment opportunities through grants, public awareness, public education, policy recommendations and corporate partnerships.” The Ability Awards recognizes exceptional individuals and organizations from throughout the state, like the Florida Park Service, who go above and beyond to make sure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities at education, training, employment and the best life possible,” said Dr. Susanne Homant, President and CEO of The Able Trust. “It is an honor for The Able Trust to work with the Florida Park Service and

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ABOUT THE ABLE TRUST

About The Able Trust The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, is a 501(c) (3) public-private partnership foundation established by the Florida Legislature in 1990. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities successful opportunities for employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded nearly \$30 million to individuals with disabilities and nonprofit agencies throughout Florida for employment-related purposes, enabling thousands Florida citizens of all ages with disabilities to enter the workforce each year. In addition, The Able Trust youth programs provide career development and transition to thousands of students with disabilities annually, helping to reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school. For more information about The Able Trust, visit www.abletrust.org

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we are humbled by their contributions to the mission of our organization."In the last year, more than 17 state park locations were involved as job shadow sites for The Able Trust's Disability Mentoring Day, Ready to Achieve Mentoring Programs (RAMP) and High School/High Tech (HS/HT) projects. DEP and park service staff were involved as planning committee members, guest speakers, mentors and tour guides. Staff also conducted outreach to local parks to assist in creating year-round disability mentoring and community service projects. Numerous park staff and AmeriCorps State Park service members have worked alongside HS/HT and RAMP students, teaching them the value of service and basic job skills by restoring trails, removing invasive plants, removing debris from Florida's shoreline and building animal habitats. The award reflects the Florida Park Service's willingness to offer meaningful community service and career mentoring opportunities to participants of The Able Trust programs.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

FOLKS BOARD VISITS REGIONAL NATURE CENTERS (excerpt from Friends of Lovers Key website) 06.30.2011

The Friends of Lovers Key are committed to making the park's visitor center a reality. Several board members took a road trip in May to visit with those who have funded and constructed centers. Their goal was to get clear on the obstacles and identify the key ingredients to success. "We have a long way to go, but we are going to get there," insists FOLKS President, Pamela Jones-Morton, PhD. "We learned it will take any number of committed members with a variety of talent to 'ramp up' our fund-raising efforts." During this road trip, board members visited the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation Nature Center, the Education Center at the J.N. DING Darling National Wildlife Refuge, and the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Interpretive Center. The last week of June

finds the board at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Rookery Bay, and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. Much was learned about building options, function of the space and fundraising strategies. The FOLKS Board came away with a new understanding of distinctive differences between a Education Center, a Nature Center, and a Visitors Center. To craft a clear scope for the proposed center, they plan to review reference materials borrowed from the facilities they visited, and study Lover's Key Park Unit Management Plan. For more information visit the FOLKS website at www.friendsofloversonkey.org



photo courtesy of Sandra Friend

FLORIDA STATE PARKS, GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

The nation's best state parks and trails have joined forces. Now a part of the Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Park Service, the award-winning Office of Greenways and Trails manages the 110-mile Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, eight state trails and more. Florida's

award-winning state parks have inspired residents and visitors with recreation opportunities and scenic beauty that helps to strengthen families, educate children, expand local economies and foster community pride. With 160 parks, 700,000 acres, 100 miles of beaches and more than 600 miles of multi-use trails, visit soon and often to enjoy Florida's natural treasures. For more information visit : www.FloridaStateParks.org or www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/guide/



photo courtesy of Columbia County Tourist Development Council

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Tammy Gustafson



STATE PARK SUMMER CHALLENGE FOR CHILDREN CONTINUES THROUGH SEPTEMBER

As September approaches and children are focused on reuniting with school friends, parents and grandparents can take advantage of learning opportunities in our state parks and even assist with meeting their new fall A/R

goal. The summer challenge program will continue through September providing encouragement to enjoy outdoor activities geared to the natural amenities in each state park. Whether you fish, hike, paddle or bike – there is much to enjoy. Go to the state park website at www.floridastateparks.org to print out the checklist and entry form. Pick up a camera and capture a photo of your child reading, hiking, biking bird-watching, fishing or any other of the many activities listed. Send your photos with the entry form and earn a FREE one-day park pass to return for even more family fun. And don't forget to share your favorite photos on the FFSP facebook page. If you haven't yet done so...join Friends of Florida State Parks and help us save these special places so that one day our children can still bring their children to our great Florida state parks.

NATURE NEWS

EASTERN FENCE LIZARD (*Sceloporus undulatus*) by Paula Russo - A strikingly beautiful lizard, whose species name, undulatus, in Latin means "wave" and refers to the intricate undulating pattern on the backs of the females and juveniles. Perfect camouflage for blending in on tree trunks and in leaf litter.

Males, though, have their own special bling of bright blue patches, mostly hidden on their underbelly and throat, but, compulsively displayed with head bobs and body pushups at breeding season.

The range of this lizard in Florida is all of north Florida to about halfway down the peninsula.

The picture of the basking female was taken by the author at

PARK HISTORIC FACTS



ALFRED B. MACLAY GARDENS STATE PARK

The park was named for the husband of the donor Louise Fleischman Maclay who donated the property for a state park. Maclay was a New York financier and used the place as a winter home. The park was originally named Killearn Gardens State Park and was renamed in the 1970s.

"Park Historic Facts"
courtesy of Phil Wendli

Camp Helen State Park in Panama Beach.



photo courtesy of Paula Russo



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