



# Friends To Friends

Fall 2011

Citizen Support Organization of The Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park



## Celebration of Lights

**December 19 through December 24 and Tuesday, December 27, 2011-5:30-9:00 pm**

**Featuring "Sebastian's Winter Wonderland", in the Garden of the Springs by Sebastian Hawes**

**Monday, Dec. 19-Hearts to Hands Deaf Choir.**

**Tuesday, Dec. 20-Citrus Community Concert Choir.**

**Wednesday, Dec. 21-Toboggan Ice Slide and Six Tons of Snow! Taylor Eve & Sophie Robitaile perform.**

**Thursday, Dec. 22-Cajun Night with music by Cajun Dave, sponsored by Neon Leon's.**

**Friday, Dec. 23-Visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus and the Animals, sponsored by Wal-Mart of Homosassa Springs.**

**Saturday, Dec. 24-Non-denominational, Candlelight Christmas Eve Service by the Nature Coast Community Church starting at 6:30 pm. Please bring non-perishable food items to donate to We Care Food Bank.**

**Tuesday, Dec. 27-After Christmas Do-Wop party with DJ Joe Dube and a special performance by 'Elvis', (Billy Lindsay).**

**Holiday Music most nights in the Garden by DJ Joe Dube, Refreshments available most nights at the Miss-L-Toe Café.**

**Transportation will be provided from US 19 Visitor Center parking lot.**

**Suggested donations-\$3.00 for adults; \$1.00 for children ages 6-12; children 5 and under are free.**

**Sponsored by The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Citrus County Chronicle, Citrus 95.3 FM and Classic Hits 96.3 FM.**



**Santa feeds the Key Deer some Christmas treats!**

### Calendar of Activities

**Friends Board Meeting**— First Wednesday of the month, except July and August.

**Wildlife Meeting**—Last Thursday of the month, 9:30 am in the Children's Education Center.

**Manatee Watch**—Begins on November 15th.

**Bird Walks on Pepper Creek Trail**— Saturday, Nov., 26, 2011, Jan., 21, 2012, Feb., 25, 2012, March 24, 2012, April 28, 2012, 8:00 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. (Meet at 7:45 a.m.)

**Crystal River Christmas Parade**—Saturday, December 3, 2011, 6:00 pm.

**Christmas Party**—Sunday, December 11, 6:30 pm, upstairs in the Visitor Center. \$5.00 per person, children 8 and under free. Bring a covered dish to share and BYOB.

**Celebration of Lights**—Monday, December 19th, through Saturday, December 24th, and again on Tuesday, December 27th, from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

**Lu The Hippo's "52" Birthday**—Thursday, January 26, 2012. Parties scheduled at 10 am and at 12:30 pm.

**Wildlife Jeopardy**—In the Children's Education Center, Saturday's, December through May, 12-12:30, in the CEC.

**Calendar of Activities continued on page 4....**

## The Presidents Message



Dear "Friends",

Needless to say, once again we have had a busy quarter here at the Park. Our annual Haunted Halloween Tram Ride was a huge success thanks to the Friends, Park staff and volunteers who contributed. Additionally, we broke ground on a new Manatee viewing area.

The Manatee Viewing and Interpretation Overlook started on schedule and should be finished around Thanksgiving. This will be a great addition to the Park and will provide an awesome viewing area. The \$100,000 project was made possible by the Friends organization.

As we approach December, we find ourselves preparing for our annual Celebration of Lights. This year the Celebration will begin December 19<sup>th</sup> and run through December 24<sup>th</sup> with a special Doo Wop After Christmas Party starring Elvis (Bill Lindsay of Tampa) on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

We are very fortunate to acquire the services of Sebastian Hawes again this year to transform our Garden of the Springs into a spectacular Holiday light show. Sebastian has promised an awesome light show that I'm sure will have the community talking about it for months to follow.

We all know that our Park is a very special place.

It touches our lives in special ways every time we visit. We are, indeed, fortunate to have so many engaged and enthusiastic Friends members, volunteers and staff who help create and nurture a place like no other here in Florida.

Please feel free to email me directly at [joedube@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:joedube@tampabay.rr.com) with any questions, comments and/or suggestions you may have.

**Joe Dube, President**

### Board of Directors

President.....**Joe Dube**  
Vice President...**Karen Franklin**  
Secretary.....**Sandy Valente**  
Treasurer.....**Bill Perko**  
Park Manager.. **Art Yerian**

**Brenda Baxley**  
**Sue Buchheister**  
**Vicky Iozzia**  
Jo "Mama Jo" **LeCount**  
**Mark Lowe**  
**Susan Lowe**  
**Abelard (Vic) Maldonado**  
**Carla Nicklas**  
**Art Swanson**  
**Beverly Swanson**  
**Virginia Svoboda**

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Editor...**Virginia Svoboda**

Proofreader.....**Patti Griffith**

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### Membership Committee

Chairman

Jo "Mama Jo" **LeCount**

2nd Saturday Sales Team.....

Art & **Beverly Swanson**

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*Friends to Friends is published twice a year in May & November by The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc., 4150 South Suncoast Blvd., Homosassa, FL 34446 Phone # 352-628-5343 Visit us on the web at; [www.friendshswp.org](http://www.friendshswp.org)*



### Mission Statement

*To help conserve and enhance the wildlife and other resources of the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park and to expand public interest in the heritage of natural environment it represents.*

## Christmas Party

Tickets are on sale now for the 2011 Park Christmas Party. You can purchase them via cash or check (made out to: Friends of HSWP) in the Administrative Office.

**ELLIE SCHILLER HOMOSSASSA SPRINGS  
WILDLIFE STATE PARK  
2011 Christmas Party**

**Cover Charge -- \$5.00 per person  
(Children ages 8 and under FREE)**

**BRING A COVERED DISH TO SHARE  
The Friends will provide the meats**



**Sunday, December 11, 2011**

**Starts at 6:30 P.M.**

**BYOB!!!! Upstairs in the Visitors Center**

Please support our partner CSO, the Friends of the Florida Panther Refuge. Visit their web-site;

[floridapanther.org/](http://floridapanther.org/)



We welcome your contributions to the newsletter of the Friends of HSWP Inc. The deadline for the Spring issue is April 20, 2012. Ginny Svoboda (352)-628-9187 E-mail; [vsvoboda@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:vsvoboda@tampabay.rr.com)

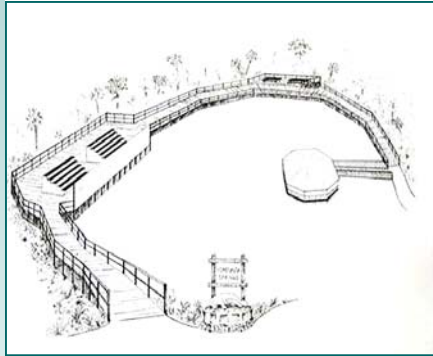
# *Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park Improvements 2011*

**FLORIDA  
State Parks**  
*...the Real Florida*



The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc., are funding a new Homosassa River Walk and Manatee Viewing and Interpretation Overlook at the Main Spring. The new Boardwalk will continue from the Manatee Fountain at the West Entrance to The Underwater Observatory (The Fishbowl.)

This Project should be completed by Thanksgiving!



Future Friends Projects in the works; Continuing the Boardwalk from the Gopher Tortoise Exhibit, extending through the Deer Park.

Enlargement of the Shorebird Aviary, to allow Visitors to get up close and personal!

## *Friends of Florida State Parks 2012 Workshop*

### **Florida Park Friends & Alliances Annual Forum and Workshop January 6, 7 & 8 at the Hilton Hotel, University Center, Gainesville Fl.**

Each year the **Friends of Florida State Parks, Inc** sponsor our signature event, the **Annual Friends Workshop**. This event draws park Citizen Support Organizations (CSO) from all over the state to learn, share and network in an effort to better support the award-winning Florida State Parks.

The conference features seminars and workshops from professionals in nonprofit leadership, development, marketing and management. It also provides an opportunity to learn from State Park management and from each other. Last year's workshop, held at Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort & Spa was rated the best ever.

This year's event promises to be even better, so don't miss out!

#### **Who Should Attend?**

CSO Presidents  
CSO board members  
CSO members at large  
Park Managers  
District Managers

Greenways and Trails Support Organizations  
District program specialists  
Park volunteers  
Park donors and supporters  
Park business partners  
Friends leadership from regional or county parks

Registration is \$50.00 and includes a Friday evening reception; breakfast, lunch & dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. It also includes a pre-workshop tour of Dudley Farm Historic State Park and a post-workshop tour of Paynes Prairie State Park.



*The Friends are a 501(c)3 Not-for-Profit Corporation established in 1991 to support the goals of Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park*



# Haunted Tram Ride 2011



In general terms, volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and services. Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity, intended to promote good or improve human quality of life, but people also volunteer for their own skill development, to meet others, to make contacts for possible employment, to have fun, and a variety of other reasons.

Our volunteers at ESHSWSP are the exception to the rule, they work hard and long hours for the good of the Park and the Friends. This years Haunted Tram Ride was a success yet again, because of our volunteers. The ticket takers, tram drivers, greeters,

candy bag stuffers, spooky scenario volunteers, trinket sellers, haunted house, tram riders, food wagon, Popcorn, bouncy house, bouncy slide, rock climbing wall, costume contests, costume characters, Park staff, and the list goes on and on. The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park want to thank all of you for your support and the work that you do, to make all our Special Events become a reality!



This years winners were;  
 First Place-***the Transportation Department***,  
 second place-***Publix Supermarket, Homosassa***,  
 third place-***the Wildlife Department***.  
 Congratulations to all of you and thank you!



## ***The 2011 Whooping Crane Migration***



The Whooping Crane is the most famous endangered bird in North America. On October 9, 2011, 12 young whooping cranes left White River Marsh SWA, to start their migration to their new Winter homes in Florida. The Class of 2011 will be the 11th group of endangered Whooping Cranes to take part in a project conducted by Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, a coalition of public and private organizations. Follow their flight on; [www.operationmigration.org/](http://www.operationmigration.org/)

## ***Young Black Bear cub released back into the Wild***



This Florida black bear cub was found after her mother died of injuries caused by a vehicle strike when the cub was only 7 pounds and under 2 months old. Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park took on the responsibility of raising her with VERY minimal exposure to humans while keeping her in a large area. Biologists found natural food taken from the woods for the cub, entered the area and hid it for her so that she would learn how to forage. Released on November 7, the cub is now 9 months old, 57 pounds and classified as a sub-adult. During the medical workup, biologist Dave Orlando talked with Jeff Corwin of Animal Planet. After the exam the cub was given a lip tattoo for identification purposes and taken to her new home in the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge.

The Wildlife Department did an outstanding job in raising the cub and thanks to all the volunteers and staff who diligently foraged for natural foods so that she could survive in the wild.

***...Calendar of Activities continued from page 1;***

***Staff Art Show & Sale***-Saturday, February 11, 2012.

***Citrus Watercolor Show and Sale***-Saturday and Sunday, February 18 and 19, 2012.

***Homosassa Heritage Day***-Saturday, March 10, 2012. 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

***Friends Annual Meeting***-March 24, 2012, 5:30 pm, at the Wildlife Encounter Pavilion.

## ***Ambrosia Beetle Attacks Park's Red Bay Trees-Xyleborus glabratus***



Redbay ambrosia beetles were first detected in a survey trap at Port Wentworth, Georgia near Savannah in 2002.

Apparently the insects hitchhiked a ride on a container ship all the way from their native landscape in India, Japan, or Taiwan. U.S. scientists didn't realize the severity of the beetles' impact until two years later, when thousands of redbay trees were reported dying in South Carolina, on Hilton Head Island. Since then, laurel wilt, a fungal disease carried by the beetle, has been identified as the killer of uncountable numbers of redbay in more than 33 counties in South Carolina,

Georgia, and Florida. and other hosts to wilt and die within a few weeks or months. This insect and disease complex has collectively been named "laurel wilt". In addition to redbay, other hosts of the laurel wilt fungus that have been confirmed from diseased plants in the field include swamp bay, avocado, sassafras, pondspice, pondberry, and camphor tree. Xyleborus glabratus is the twelfth species of non-native ambrosia beetle known to have become established in the US since 1990. All are suspected to have been introduced in solid wood packing materials, such as crates and pallets. The problem of invasive exotic pests is large and growing. Introduction of new pests must be regulated and the continued sale of those already here should be stopped. More effective weapons to control existing pests, especially bio-control, must be developed. Home owners can educate themselves about potential plant pests. Your stewardship can help make a difference in stemming this tide of invaders that threatens our quality of life.



## ***Friends of the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway***

The Longleaf Pine Tree is part of an Endangered Ancient Ecosystem that is critical to the well being of over 30 Endangered Species in Florida. This much maligned tree once covered much of the Southeast, but today because of unscrupulous logging and construction, it has been reduced by well over 90 percent, making it the most Threatened Ecosystem on this Continent.

We are surrounded by these beautiful trees here in the Ocala National Forest and many of Florida's most Endangered animals depend on them for a variety of uses. The needles are incredible and range from 8 to 18 inches long, The massive cones are between 5 and 10 inches, bigger than any other pine. Longleaf Pines are very hardy, being insect, disease, fire and wind resistant, an important factor, considering the turbulent environment that is everyday weather in Central Florida. Their great strength and superior qualities are what made them a popular choice for building ships and homes by the early settlers, who promptly wiped out the Ancient virgin stands in a little over one hundred years.

All that remains today of these once proud pines are relatively young ones, which are now being carefully

watched by Florida Environmental groups.

Hopefully some of them will be allowed to reach their full potential and grow as old as their ancestors once did.

### **Handy Florida Facts**

**Total area of Florida: 58,560 square miles**

**Distance from Pensacola to Key West (by road): 792 miles**

**Coastline: More than 1,260 (more than any state in the continental U.S.)**

**Sandy beaches: 825 miles**

**Total conservation lands purchased by Florida: 3.8 million acres**

**Total fresh water area: 11,761 square miles**

**Longest river (entirely in Florida): St. Johns River at 273 miles**

**Largest lake: Lake Okeechobee at 435,840 acres**

**Number of known springs: Approximately 70**

**State Parks: 160**

**CSO's-Currently more than 80**

**Remember your loved ones with a Partners in Giving donation to the Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc.**

***The population of the only bird that lives solely in Florida is declining at a rate that threatens its survival, according to a federal wildlife report.***



The Florida scrub-jay is one of the indicators of the health of the state's scrub ecosystems, which contain a number of rare and endangered plants and animals, particularly along the Lake Wales Ridge in Polk and Highlands counties.

The report by Raoul Boughton and Reed Bowman at Archbold Biological Station in Lake Placid, was the result of the first Florida scrub-jay survey on public and private conservation lands in nearly two decades.

"Despite two decades of ambitious acquisition of sensitive conservation lands ... populations of Florida scrub-jays have continued to decline on most managed lands," they concluded, adding the declines have been even worse on land that's not managed and in suburban areas. The report was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in May, which collects data on such species.

The Florida scrub-jay has been listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act since 1987 because the species' population has declined by about 90 percent since European settlement.

An earlier survey showed Florida scrub-jays had already disappeared from 10 of the 39 Florida counties in which they had existed as recently as the 1980s, and the overall population had declined by 50 percent since the 1980s. The lack of an updated statewide survey was cited as a need in a 2007 report on the status of Florida scrub-jays issued by The Nature Conservancy, based on a volunteer monitoring program called Jay Watch that the private conservation organization coordinated.

"This is a problem statewide," he said, adding the last five-year review in 2007 identified an updated survey as a research need.

The long-term survival of the Florida Scrub-Jay depends on preservation and restoration of suitable scrub habitat. Florida's citizens also need to take action to help conserve our native habitats, plants, and animals, including the imperiled scrub habitat and the wildlife that depends on it for survival.

***The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc.,  
Annual Meeting and Picnic-March 24, 2012***



**The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc.,  
Notice of Annual Membership Meeting and  
Election of Board of Directors  
The Annual Meeting and Election of Board Members will be held on  
Saturday, March 24, 2012, at 5:30 pm, at the  
Wildlife Encounter Pavilion, at Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park.  
The Friends will furnish the food and beverages. Please bring a dessert and come and meet other members of the Friends and enjoy time together for fun, food, and fellowship**

**Consider remembering The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc., in your Will**

It's quite simple to do.

You may name us in your will as follows: "Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park, Inc., a Florida not-for-profit corporation".

The IRS and any donations have long granted tax-exempt status to our organization, and is tax deductible and will help to offset inheritance taxes you might otherwise be obligated to pay.

If you have further questions about this subject, you may call Park Manager Art Yerian at the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park,  
**352 – 628-5445 ext.1009**

**E-mail;Art.yerian@dep.state.fl.us**

## *Marion Knudsen, The end of an era!*

The Garden of The Springs in Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park, is as Florida Friendly as you can get and the years that Marion Knudsen volunteered as the Park's Garden Coordinator, are the foundation of our beautiful garden today.

Without Marion's perseverance to convince Citrus County to purchase the private attraction, there would be no Garden of The Springs and no Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park today.

Marion loved everything about nature: flowers, trees, wildlife, weeds and even bugs. She is the only person I know, that would move out of the way of the hated palmetto bug, so that it could cross the sidewalk, free to go on its merry way.

A lot has been written about Marion's past endeavors as a Citrus County resident and her 19 years on the Planning and Review Board. She was a straight forward and independent thinker, a staunch environmentalist who was instrumental in stopping development that would have changed the face of Citrus County forever. In short, she cared. Marion tirelessly and personally walked every piece of property under review in building variances and development.

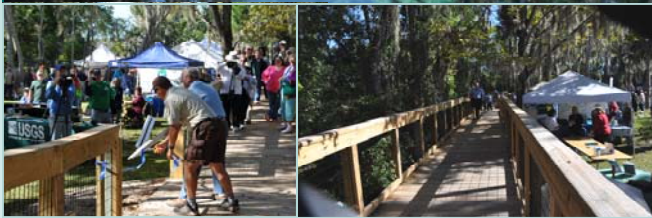
Marion founded **Nature World Wildlife Rescue** and rescued, rehabilitated and released many injured birds and animals herself. Marion loved the Park, all wildlife, western novels and John Wayne movies.

Marion Knudsen was one of a kind and she will be missed.

The Citrus County Board of Commissioners has proclaimed November 19, 2011, as "Marion Knudsen Day" in Citrus County Florida, in honor of her many years of dedicated service to Citrus County.



## *Congratulations to the Friends of Chassahowitzka*



The annual Refuge Day celebration on October 22, was extra special this year with a Ribbon

Cutting Ceremony to celebrate the boardwalk at Three Sisters Springs being official completed.

The event was packed with visitors and with many activities from an early sunrise boat tour hosted by the Friends' group to all day music just to name a few!

The event hosted wildlife shows/exhibits such as live raptors and reptiles, and a collection of confiscated endangered wildlife items from all over the world.

Children activities included a USGS manatee matching game; build your own manatee puppet, a marine tide pool touch tank, and wildlife identification games.

Representatives from a variety of non-profit organizations and local and state outdoor agencies were on hand to help promote Citrus County's bountiful natural resources.

Some of these included the Florida Wildlife Commission, Florida Park Service, Florida Public Archaeological Network, USGS and

many more.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation recognized the Friends of Chassahowitzka this year as the Friends Group of the Year.

Of the 230 Friends group around the county, they were chosen as the group that had shown outstanding leadership as a voice of the community and as an advocate for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the National Wildlife Refuge System overall.

Evan Hirshe, President of NWRA said, the Friends of Chassahowitzka's support and involvement with the Three Sisters Springs project, demonstrated an extraordinary dedication to developing a strong cooperative relationship between the Refuge Complex, the local community, government agencies, and other non-profit organizations.

This support was vital in helping to protect a prime manatee wintering habitat that is now part of Crystal River, National Wildlife Refuge.

# Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc. Membership Application

**I want to be a member of the Friends!**

- **Student** **\$10** **Name** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Individual** **\$15** **Address** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Family** **\$30** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Merchant/Group** **\$100** **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Lifetime Member (recognized on plaque)** **\$500**
- **Associate Family Member (non-voting)** **\$30** **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Associate Individual Member (non-voting)** **\$15**

*Thank you and welcome to the Friends !*

**Dues give membership for one year from date of receipt, except for lifetime members.  
Make your checks payable to: The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc.  
4150 South Suncoast Blvd., Homosassa, Florida 34446**

**Please check any areas in which you would be interested in helping**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Special events</i>            | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fundraising</i>                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Publicity</i>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Wildlife Outreach Programs</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Office help</i>               | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Park Host</i>                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Greeter at Visitor Center</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other</i> _____                |



**The Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, Inc.**  
4150 South Suncoast Blvd.,  
Homosassa, Fl 34446

Non-Profit Organization  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
Homosassa Springs, FL  
Permit No. 67



**Current Resident or**

*November 2011*

**Membership Appreciation Day—Second Saturday of Every Month—Immediate Family Free to Park**  
Visit the Friends Web-site at: [friendshswp.org](http://friendshswp.org)