

2017 Volunteer Award Winners

Thank You!

Jim Ellis

Director's Special Volunteer Service Award

Hugh Taylor Birch State Park



Since 2013, Jim has served as President of the Friends of Birch State Park where he has played an intricate role in revitalizing Hugh Taylor Birch State Park. He continues to work tirelessly for the park by cultivating relationships with stakeholders, finding new funding sources, creating new partnerships, and finding solutions to issues, often engaging his entire staff to ensure success. Thank you, Jim! His contributions include:

- Aiding the park in receiving more than \$5 million to renovate the crumbling seawall, add a public floating dock and welcome pavilion, create a meditation garden and clean out Long Lake.
- Funding a Project Manager to oversee projects.
- Purchasing multiple golf carts and a brush cutter for park maintenance.
- Funding the CSO's full-time staff from 2013-2016.
- Leading the CSO in securing donations for a new playground and renovating and opening the Terramar Visitor Center after it was closed for nearly ten years.

Motorola Solutions

Corporate Contributor of the Year

Dr. Von D. Mizell - Eula Johnson State Park



Motorola Solutions conducted its annual work day at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park. More than 66 employees and corporate officers came for a beach cleanup and planted 15 native trees. A few days later the park was surprised with a \$5,000 donation from Motorola Solutions to be used at the park.

Citizen Support Organization Awards

Friends of Fort Clinch

Overall Citizen Support Organization (CSO) of the Year

Fort Clinch State Park



Established in 1992, the Friends of Fort Clinch currently has 125 members. In this exemplary partnership with the park, there is great communication among the board, park staff and management with effective discussions of ideas and projects that enhance the park. Last year, the Friends of Fort Clinch contributed over \$50,000 to park needs. Their accomplishments include:

- Supporting natural resources, a 4x4 UTV was purchased for daily Sea Turtle Patrol to monitor nests, provide interpretation for visitors, and collect data for the statewide sea turtle survey.
- Enhancing visitor services, kayak gear and safety equipment was acquired for a new, ranger-led paddling tour on Egan Creek.
- Enhancing the living history program, a cannon carriage was purchased for display and historic weapon demonstrations both at the park and at offsite community programs.
- Assisting with park volunteer appreciation luncheons.
- Purchasing supplies for living history volunteers.
- Making improvements to facilities for resident volunteers.
- Completing the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Bronze worker statue and interpretative display.
- Partnering with the Annual Wild Amelia Nature Festival, the Wild Amelia Nature Photography Contest and Fish Florida to host an annual Kid's Fishing Clinic at the park. Over 300 children learn the basics of the saltwater fishing. Each child received a fishing pole, tacklebox and lunch at no cost.

Friends of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park

Citizen Support Organization (CSO) of the Year - Resource-based Recreation

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park



The Friends of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park is small but mighty. They have taken on enormous projects in a short amount of time with lasting park benefits. Accomplishments include:

- Purchasing park and visitor enhancements -- washers and dryers for volunteer use, Dyson vacuum for cleaning 32 rental cabins, and natural resource interpretive signs throughout the park.
- Providing visitors with two Wi-Fi hotspots.
- Purchasing the FPS volunteer t-shirts and hats for the park's large volunteer program.
- Operating the park's Campground Store including recruiting volunteers and hiring two employees to assist.
- Remodeling the store and add new merchandise requested by visitors.
- Adding canoe, kayak, and stand-up paddle boards rentals.

Individual Awards

Nancy Olson

Volunteer of the Year - Administration

Bahia Honda State Park



Nancy has served over 400 hours this year and over 1,500 lifetime hours in Florida State Parks. Irreplaceable asset at the park's Park Services Specialist. Nancy volunteers for the National Park Service the months she is not in Florida. Thank you, Nancy! Accomplishments include:

- Organizing and creating a database for our new volunteer handbook,
- Accommodating many changes throughout an everchanging work schedule.
- Assisting other volunteers in learning the volunteer management online system.
- Chairs different committees.
- Garnered thousands of dollars' worth of donations for the annual Earth Day event.
- Taken interpretive trainings to enhance her skills in visitor services.
- Learned and promoted the Junior Ranger program.

Bill Lewis

Volunteer of the Year – Park Maintenance

Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway



Bill does an amazing job with upkeep, repair and maintenance of grounds, buildings and equipment at the Marjorie Carr Cross Florida Greenway, paying special attention to safety and security. He routinely brings ideas for park improvements to management and uses his many maintenance skills to take the lead on making those improvements. Thank you, Bill! His accomplishments include:

- Contributing more than 2,000 hours in 2017 and over 4,000 lifetime hours supporting the park.
- Serves as campground host at the Cross-Florida Greenway's Santos Campground.
- Proactively engages park visitors, doing everything he can to improve their experience and make it memorable. He enjoys helping those in need.
- Recruiting his own team of volunteers for the Santos Campground. One volunteer he recruited has served over 500 hours.

Jean Fletcher

Volunteer of the Year – Park Maintenance

Hontoon Island State Park



Jean is a Friends of Hontoon Island board member and has served at Hontoon Island State Park weekly for the past 13 years as the Island Store manager and clerk. She loves educating community members about the park and promoting park events. Thank you, Jean! Her accomplishments include:

- Before the hurricane Irma, she assisted staff with securing and protecting state property, and continued to assist even after the park closed and most volunteers were busy preparing their homes.
- When the island was inaccessible due to 4ft of flooding, Jean checked on the island from the mainland and give the Park Manager, who was displaced from his residence, daily updates.
- She was the first volunteer back on the island to assess hurricane and water damage to hiking trails, cabins, middens, other park facilities, and acted to protect items from mold caused by flooding.

Susan Kolterman

Volunteer of the Year – Resource Management

Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park



Susan has served over 600 hours from January to October 2017. Her cumulative hours for the past 11 years will reach 6,000 by the end of 2017. Everything Susan does contributes to the interpretation, preservation, and restoration of natural resources of our parks. She is a dedicated, self-motivated, dependable and hardworking volunteer. The hours she puts in contribute largely to the elimination of exotic plants and the planting of native plants on park lands. She is also an ambassador for the Florida Park Service, as a nature walk guide, speaker, and event booth attendant. Thank you, Susan! Her accomplishments include:

- Learning each of the 135-plus plants in the parks' native plant nursery, as well as plants not grown in the nursery. She continues to learn to identify both the native and non-native plants throughout the Florida Keys.
- Learning to identify butterflies, snails, lichens, and birds, and continues to be interested in increasing her knowledge about corals.
- Helping with the daily running of the nursery which includes watering, weeding, seed collection, seed planting, potting up plants, moving plants and much more.
- Helping with landscaping, outreach, restoration, exotic plant removal, teaching, and most aspects of what goes on in the nursery. Because of Susan the number of species collected and grown in the park has risen every year. In 2002, we had 60 species and currently it is more than double that number, sometimes as high as 140 species.
- This summer, Susan had the distinction of being the first person to sight a butterfly species endemic to Cuba and never seen in the United States: Poey's swallowtail, *Papilio caiguabus*.

Robert 'Bob' Deyle

Volunteer of the Year - Resource Management

Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park



Bob displays an unparalleled passion for service. His tireless dedication to the Florida Park Service, the park, and to FL's natural resources and people which we all serve is an inspiration to those fortunate to work by his side. Thank you, Bob! Accomplishments include:

- Serving hundreds of hours of as a river boat guide.
- Dedicating time and energy to park partners and advocacy groups such as the Wakulla Springs Alliance, Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association, and DEP's Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems Advisory Committee for the Wakulla Basin Management Action Plan.
- Providing park staff and volunteers educational programs about the Florida aquifer, Wakulla Spring and Wakulla River system.
- Carrying the message of preservation, interpretation and restoration to the public through outreach to the Kiwanis Club and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.
- Publishing articles in the Tallahassee Democrat on the ecological challenges facing Wakulla's delicate natural resources.
- Teaching student's appreciation for Florida's diverse ecosystems and natural communities through the Learning in FL's Environment (LIFE) program for middle and high schoolers and to students of Florida State University and University of Florida.

Karen Cloud

Volunteer of the Year – Visitor Service

Dade Battlefield Historic State Park



Karen is a woman on a mission, and her mission is to make a deeply positive impact on her state park and hometown. She is admired for her energy and loved for her consistently upbeat attitude by fellow volunteers and park staff. Karen leads events which bring in large numbers of visitors to Dade Battlefield Historic State Park as well as fosters good relations in the community. She had taken a special interest in the history of the park and has revitalized the local historical society; which is now partnering with the park. She is frequently at the park where she greets people and encourages them to get involved in the many park activities such as the after-school program, Dade Pioneers, for children ages 8 to 18. Thank you, Karen! Accomplishments include:

- Led several park events at Dade Battlefield Historic State Park including the Haunted Village, Frank Thomas Florida Heritage and Music Festival, Pioneer Day Camp, Dade Pioneers and initiated our upcoming 2018 Dade Quilt Show.
- Initiated a new event the 2018 Quilt Show.
- Serves on the Friends of Dade Battlefield board and actively helps with outreach events, fundraising and CSO sponsored festivals.

Sam Carr

Volunteer of the Year – Visitor Service

Dunns Creek State Park



Sam is a driving force behind the Friends of Dunns Creek events in the park and helping to educate the community about Dunns Creek State Park. Sam is an enthusiastic force on behalf of the park. He is a dedicated CSO member and volunteer who is a constant champion for the park. Thank You, Sam! Accomplishments include:

- Bringing the Putnam County Earth Day event to the park (now the park's largest event).
- Organizing guided tours and became a kayak instructor to provide paddling programs at the park.
- Serving as Vice President of Friends of Dunns Creek State Park and was president for years.
- Bringing groups, such as Putnam Blueways & Trails and Paddle Florida to provide programs at the park.
- Attending community events and is always looking to educate community members and leaders about Dunns Creek; constant champion for the park.
- Assisting with other park needs, and daily tasks such as opening and closing the park.

Matthew Thayer

Youth Volunteer of the Year - Maintenance

Colt Creek State Park



This extraordinary young man wants to become a Park Ranger at Colt Creek State Park after he graduates from High School. In 2017, he has volunteered every Thursday after school. Despite his young age, he has many skills and is eager to take on any assignments. Thank you, Matthew!

Accomplishments include:

- Helping with mowing, weed-eating, trail maintenance, fence installation, facility repairs, Ranger Station operations, carpentry, pressure cleaning, invasive exotic plant removal, hurricane clean up and more!
- Is self-motivated, friendly to staff and visitors, and takes each assignment seriously, regardless of size or difficulty level.

Makenzie Shaw

Volunteer of the Year – Visitor Service

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs State Park



Makenzie, pictured here with her family and Florida State Park Director, Eric Draper started volunteering four years ago at the age of 12 and has contributed more than 650 hours of service. She is integral to the park team and always represents the Florida Park Service in a positive, professional way. Makenzie’s outgoing personality and helpfulness has made her a favorite and a mentor to other volunteers. Thank you, Makenzie! Her accomplishments include:

- Spreading the word about Homosassa, its animals and the preservation of our natural world. As a park host, she staffs interpretive carts that provide hands-on displays about an animal such as the Florida panther or Florida black bear. She answers questions but also has the uncanny ability to make each visitor feel comfortable learning about the role of that animal in Florida’s natural environment.
- Assisting with the park’s manatee and reptile programs.
- Working as a Junior Camp counselor for the Youth Ranger Camp.
- Representing the Florida State Park’s Junior Ranger Program on the premiere episode of “The Outsider’s Club” TV Show.
- Benefiting Friends of the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park by volunteering at every Easter Egg Hunt, Haunted House/Tram Night and the annual Celebration of Lights.

Team and Event Awards

Darwin and JoAnne Matthews

Team of 2 of the Year – Maintenance

Anastasia State Park and Ravine Gardens State Park



Darwin and JoAnne have worked as resident volunteers at multiple state parks but most recently have been campground hosts at Anastasia State Park and now Ravine Gardens State Park. Thank you, Darwin and JoAnne! Their accomplishments include:

- Identifying situations that can be improved and act on it.
- Helping with electric, plumbing, park patrol, facility maintenance, and special park projects.
- Creating a gorgeous wood conference table from scratch. They cut the wood, prepped it, assembled it, stained and sealed it.
- Working on more carpentry projects, such as book cases and displays which have significantly improved aesthetics, work effectiveness and morale.

Bob and Marteen Dillon

Team of 2 of the Year – Resource Management

Bahia Honda State Park



Bob and Marty Dillon are dedicated volunteers to exotic species removal at Bahia Honda State Park for four months each year for the last five years. They spend most of their nights searching out Green Iguanas by bicycle. Iguanas are an invasive species that wreak havoc with the native wildlife in the park. Thank you, Bob and Marty! Their accomplishments include:

- Ridding the island of more than 1,800 iguanas.
- Contributed 9,000 hours each with the Florida Spark Service.
- Making snare poles out of scrap materials and repurposed worn out pillowcases to contain the captured iguanas.
- Removing this year, in a month about 100 iguanas.
- Benefitting the state's python management program, they give iguana carcasses to help with the trapping efforts.

Philip and Ann (Mickie) Anderson

Team of 2 of the Year – Visitor Service

Myakka River State Park



Philip and Mickie volunteered as campground hosts at Myakka River for several years. As campground hosts they consistently received amazing reviews from campers claiming that they had gone above and beyond the call of duty. Now they have taken on a leadership role as volunteer liaisons between the park and the Friends of Myakka River. Their roles include coordinating events, membership development, soliciting donations, and managing the CSO's gallery sales and inventory. Thank you, Philip and Mickie! Their accomplishments include:

- Representing the CSO and the park at all in-park and community events.
- Operating the CSO's booths at events and sharing their passion for the park.
- Managing the annual CSO kayak raffle and selling tickets with their inspirational attitudes!
- Helping to gain support for the CSO while freeing up valuable time for park staff.

Freddie & Deb Morgan, Chris Graves and Mike Crane

Team of 3+ of the Year – Maintenance

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park



At the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park campground this team of volunteers improved visitor service by tackling a major maintenance project. They were a pleasure to work with and our visitors greatly enjoyed all the improvements they made. Thank you all! Their accomplishments include:

- Working together to clear, enhance campsites by cutting and removing trees and brush, removing overhanging or dying trees to improve the safety of the campsites and reduce the risk of damages to personal property.
- Removing old tent pads and leveling the campsites and adding fill and limerock, as needed.
- Adding additional picnic and campfire area to each camp site.
- Improving the visibility along the road ways.
- Enhancing the bathhouse facilities by detailed deep cleaning and replacing numerous fixtures.

Beach Cleanup Team

Team of 3+ of the Year – Resource Management

Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at Flagler Beach



Teams of park volunteers and local community members contributed more than 400 hours to clean-up trash and debris on Gamble Rogers and North Peninsula State Parks after both Hurricane Matthew and Irma. Removing debris off the beach was important to complete before sea turtle nesting season started. Volunteers spent countless hours helping the parks fill two dumpsters with debris, creating a safe nesting beach for the sea turtles, a clean habitat for other animals, and a safe and appealing beach for visitors to enjoy. One volunteer was instrumental in organizing these clean-ups, Ramona Rutkowski. Thank you, Ramona and to each of the volunteers!

Bulkhead Reinforcement Team

Team of 3+ of the Year – Protection

Hontoon Island State Park



Hontoon Island State Park volunteers contributed 270 hours to reinforce a bulkhead. The bulkhead prevents erosion and protects the island's natural and cultural resources, which include Native American artifacts in the shell midden. Thanks to volunteers David and Judy Wall, Douglas Johnson, Harvey Gilbert, and Bob Clarke for transporting concrete. Thanks to AL and Peggy Thibodeaux, Joe Dowdell, and Jean Fletcher for running the other park operations --the ferry, store, and Ranger Station allowing staff to work on the project. Accomplishments include:

- Loading 675 concrete bags, each weighing 80 pounds on and off the ferry, crossing the river and placing each on the seawall during the summer heat.
- Completing the project just before Hurricane Irma and aiding in protecting the island's resources from significant hurricane and flood damage.

Moon Over Maclay

Special Cultural Event of the Year

Friends of Maclay Gardens

Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park



Friends of Maclay Gardens sponsors this annual special event as close to the full moon in late October or early November. Board member and event coordinator Fred Calder is seen here accepting the award with Sasha Craft, Park Manager. Thank you, Fred!

- More than 700 attendees enjoy picnic dinners on the expansive front lawn of the Maclay House while Jazz musicians play on the front porch, and with beautiful Lake Hall as a scenic backdrop.
- The CSO raised nearly \$15,000 from this years' event for park projects.

Celebrate Cayo Costa

Overall Special Event of the Year

Friends of Cayo Costa

Cayo Costa State Park



Celebrate Cayo Costa is an opportunity for guests to visit Cayo Costa State Park that would normally not be able to visit, as the park is accessible only by boat. It takes a dedicated group to coordinate with vendors, ferry operators, park staff, and volunteers to host over 200 visitors. Visitors meet park staff, volunteers, and members of Friends of Cayo Costa. Thank you all! Accomplishments include:

- Improving the park's visibility by offering a reduced cost ferry service to the island.
- Advertising for the event and the CSO's booth at the event promotes Cayo Costa State Park, park volunteer opportunities and CSO membership.
- Helping to preserve, protect and promote the unique unspoiled natural beauty and heritage of Cayo Costa State Park for present and future generations.

Tom Adler, Earl Cross, Barry Blitvich, Shaun Suydam, Mike Anderson and Steve Lemonds

Team of 3+ of the Year – Visitor Service

Myakka River State Park



Tom, Earl, Barry, Shaun, Mike and Steve are maintenance volunteers working as a team led by Park Services Specialist Jeremy Johnson to keep the Myakka River State Park running. They come from diverse backgrounds with experience in many trades. The team regularly repairs buildings, maintains and repairs park facilities. They took on and completed a historic preservation project to repair damage and repurpose an original 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) structure. The building received a complete makeover and now houses the park museum and visitors center. Investing to keep the CCC structure relevant to the historic period, yet informative for today's visitors helps to create a great first impression of Myakka River State Park. Thank you all! Their accomplishments include:

- Replacing rotten rafters, rafter tails, wood siding, window frames, broken windows and the roof on the rear addition of the building, as well as critical structural wooden framing of exterior walls, the team followed the U.S. Department of the Interior standards for historic preservation.
- Completing the repairs, the visitor center received a full facelift with a fresh coat of paint to reflect the updated park service standards.

CCC Festival

Special Event of the Year - Historical

Highlands Hammock State Park



This historical festival is Highlands Hammock State Park's signature event and marked its 32nd year on November 11, 2017. This year, 144 individuals prepared or worked on-site at the event. The festival includes a guest speaker, heritage crafts, folk bands, tram rides, a selection of period-style games for children and a Junior Highwaymen art contest. Thank you!

Get to Know Colt Creek

Special Event of the Year – Resource Management

Friends of Colt Creek State Park

Colt Creek State Park



This special event focuses on introducing the community to Colt Creek State Park and educating visitors about different recreational opportunities and the importance of protecting our native environment. The event is a collaboration of park staff, CSO members and park volunteers. More than 100 team members participate in event planning, setup, operation and cleanup. Ranger-guided hikes, tram tours, nature photography lessons, paddling lessons, and horseback riding was offered. A variety of environmental and recreation vendors including a local wildlife rehabilitation center. Attendance has steadily increased each year, topping at 1,000 visitors in 2017. Thank you!

Earth Day Celebration

Special Event of the Year – Natural Resource Education

Dunns Creek State Park



Initiated by Friends of Dunns Creek and requiring collaboration between staff, the CSO and more than 25 volunteers and outside organizations, the event increased visibility of the newly opened (2016) main section of the park. Accomplishments include:

- More than 17 different environmentally friendly agencies coming together to celebrate Earth Day at Dunns Creek State Park.
- Guided hikes, wagon tours, boating and kayaking, music, food, and children’s activities.
- Activities focusing on educating visitors about the natural resources found at the state park, why they are important, and what actions individuals take to help.

CCC Statue #71

Long-Term Project of the Year - Historical Friends of Ft. Clinch State Park

Fort Clinch State Park



Through fundraising efforts beginning in 2015, the Friends of Fort Clinch State Park purchased a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) bronze worker statue for the outside of the park's museum. Additionally, a viewing area was constructed with an interpretive panel honoring the CCC developing Florida State Parks in the 1930s. The men of the "New Deal" era CCC Company 1420 stabilized Fort Clinch and built the roads, trails, campground and built several structures which still serve the park today. This multi-phased project totaled \$30,000 and over 100 hours of volunteer service was contributed. The entire CSO supported project, but it was championed by President Don Hughes. Don organized the fundraiser and Vice President Jim McCannell talked to anyone who would listen. Park staff including Jackie McGowan, an expert mason, worked together to construct the viewing area. Now complete, this park enhancement will help future generations understand how important this "New Deal" era program was to Fort Clinch, the local community and the Florida Park Service. Thank You!

Bird Peninsula Restoration

Short-Term Project of the Year – Cultural

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs State Park



The Bird Peninsula is a habitat for the Homosassa Wildlife State Park’s pelicans, flamingos, herons, egrets and wood storks. Wild birds also fly into the area. Following damage from Hurricane Irma, immediate repairs were made but additional restoration was needed. Over three months, the damages from wind, downed trees and shoreline erosion were repaired. The area is now an appealing wildlife viewing area for park visitors. It took 500 hours to complete the project with the collaboration of talented volunteers, park staff and the CSO. Additionally, volunteers from Friends and Families Reaching for the Abilities (FFRA) contributed significantly to the project. The Friends of the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park raised more than \$7,000 in donations to complete the project. Thank you!

Manatee Pavilion

Short-Term Project of the Year – Resource-based Recreation

Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at Flagler Beach



Volunteer Jerry Allen, who has spent 30 plus years in construction, assisted in constructing a pavilion from a kit at the park, saving the park \$8,500. Jerry when not on-site was available for advice and consultation on ordering supplies and remained very flexible in his schedule. The resulting covered pavilion provides shade and protection for visitors and campers while they enjoy the beautiful views of the intracoastal waterway and wildlife. The pavilion is a universally accessible picnic area including an ADA picnic table with grill and a paved sidewalk leading to an accessible parking space. Thank you!

Earth Day Bio Blitz

Special Event of the Year – Resource-based Recreation

Friends of Oscar Scherer State Park

Oscar Scherer State Park



This was the first year Friends of Oscar Sherer State Park incorporated the Bio Blitz into the Oscar Sherer State Park Earth Day Festival. Over 1800 visitors attended the event with over 200 participating in the Bio Blitz. A Bio Blitz is a group of people recording plants and animals all at the same time and in different areas of the park. In part, the event serves to educate people to different areas in the park. Thank you! Accomplishments included:

- Creating a booklet describing different ways to make observations, how to record them, and which parts of the park to explore.
- Helping participants identify the plants and animals they observed and used a large map and white board to map locations of everything observed.
- Working with the local county school board to encourage school-aged children participate. The kids were fascinated by the things they found. They also had the opportunity to ask and have questions answered by a biologist.

20+ Years of Volunteer Service

Lynn Cherry

21 Years of Volunteer Service

Camp Helen State Park



Often the efforts of one remarkable person can make a significant impact in achieving the mission of the Florida Park Service. Lynn is that one remarkable person. She has dedicated her professional and volunteer work to improve the lives of the citizens within her community, especially at Camp Helen State Park. Thank you, Lynn! Her accomplishments include:

- Leading the “Save Camp Helen” 1995 grassroots campaign resulting in the state acquiring the state park.
- Coordinating meetings, contacting and promoting Friends of Camp Helen activities with the media, developing the kayak rental program, revamping park and membership brochures.
- Coordinating CSO events including the Fall Festival, Pumpkin Patch, and 20th anniversary celebration.
- Serving as CSO Vice President and President for many years.
- Providing leadership and inspires to others as a current Friends of Camp Helen board member.
- Becoming a board member with the Friends of Florida State Parks.

Arthur Nersadian

30 Years of Volunteer Service

Fort Cooper State Park



Arthur is huge asset with his unwavering dedication to Fort Cooper State Park. He is an inspiration to other volunteers and to park staff. Thank you, Arthur!

- Began his 30 years of dedication to the park in 1987. He is still volunteering at 93 years young!
- Founding member of the Friends of Fort Cooper.
- Thoroughly enjoys participating in special events and takes advantage of every opportunity to talk to people to promote the park.
- Always willing to help whenever and wherever he is needed.

Agnes Eslava

24 Years of Volunteer Service

Rainbow Springs State Park



Agnes started the Rainbow Springs Gift Shop and has worked there for many years. She worked as Secretary/Treasurer of the 'Crafty Ladies' committee and continues to do so. Highly self-motivated with concerned with detail. Thank you, Agnes!

Amilcar Eslava

26 Years of Volunteer Service

Rainbow Springs State Park



Amilcar volunteer from 1991-2017. Assisted in the clean-up of the park before it opened to the public and completed many minor repairs in preparation for the opening. He has been on the lighting crew for the event Santa Over the Rainbow since the event's beginning and a member of the construction crew also since the beginning. Thank you, Amicar!

Shirley Kuntz

21 Years of Volunteer Service

Rainbow Springs State Park



Shirley started volunteering in 1994. She is a charter member of the Friends of Rainbow Springs. For 14 years Shirley has overseen the 'Crafty Ladies', creating items to sell in the parks' gift shop to raise money for the CSO. Thank you, Shirley!

Mary Lou Amirault
20 Years of Volunteer Service
Rainbow Springs State Park

Mary Lou became a volunteer in 1995 and served as Volunteer Coordinator for the park. She has also worked with artists on the 'Art in the Park' art shows and organized the park's library. Thank you, Mary Lou!

Linda Brown

22 Years of Volunteer Service

Rainbow Springs State Park



Linda has volunteered in the toll booth since 1995 and continues today. She leads the toll booth volunteers for the event Santa Over the Rainbow. As an active participant in Friends of Rainbow Springs she has been president, vice-president, secretary, membership chair and is currently garden committee chair and participates in all special events and educational programs. She does the accounting for large projects like the garden renovation and handles money for CSO every Monday morning. She teaches 4th graders the history of the park for the Learning in Florida's Environment program. Linda is a very diligent volunteer and a great asset. Thank you, Linda!

Bob Sprentzel

24 Years of Volunteer Service

Rainbow Springs State Park

Bob has volunteered from 1991 - 2013 and again from 2015 to present. He has worked throughout the park from the time the park first became as state park. He helped preparing the park to be opened to the public. He served as boat chief for six years with the Friends of Rainbow Springs patrolling the headsprings and providing interpretation to park visitors. He returned in 2015 as boat captain and to help with special events. Bob decorates his own boat with reindeer and drives Santa and Mrs. Claus on the river for the annual 'Santa over the Rainbow' event. Thank you, Bob!

Cathy Moore

32 Years of Volunteer Service

Little Manatee River State Park



Cathy is pictured above standing with Friends of Florida State Parks president Paula Russo. Cathy is a founding member of the Friends of Little Manatee River. She has filled multiple positions on the board and has been a vital part of its' prosperity and growth. Cathy has maintained a constant presence in the park for over 30 years. Thank you, Cathy!

Myra Coggesshall
20 Years of Volunteer Service
Highlands Hammock State Park



Myra’s combined hours of service contributed to Highlands Hammock and Myakka River State Parks is more than 6,900 hours. Myra forte is visitor services and interpreting the park and t’s natural resources to all ages. Thank you, Myra!

Bob Sendry

21 Years of Volunteer Service

Oscar Scherer State Park



Bob has faithfully volunteered in Oscar Scherer State Park on Mondays and Wednesdays for 21 years. He is vital to the ongoing maintenance of the park's Lester Finley 'Barrier Free' trail. Thank you, Bob!

Janet Heaton

25 Years of Volunteer Service

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park



Janet has been volunteering at MacArthur Beach State Park for 25 years. She has been actively involved in the park since 1992, dedicating more than 4,000 lifetime hours to the park. Early in her service career she joined the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park Board of Directors. In this capacity, she has organized events, participated in annual fundraisers, and helped secure vendors for the gift shop. Her greatest contribution is her involvement in the annual Art Show fundraiser. Over the course of 20 years, Janet has organized 19 Art Shows, raising over \$200,000 for MacArthur Beach State Park. These funds support the Natural Science Education Program, which serves thousands of students in Palm Beach County each year. Thank you, Janet!

Carol Herzog

21 Years of Volunteer Service

Savannas Preserve State Park



Carol began volunteering at Savannas Preserve State Park in 1994. She is a long-standing member and supporter of the Friends of Savannas Preserve. To date, Carol has contributed more than 3,200 hours of service. She plays an active role in the Shade House Committee, a group of volunteers propagating native plants for the plant sale at the Savannas Environmental Education Center. Additionally, we are grateful for Carol and her work with the Conservation Alliance, which was instrumental in gaining public support for the acquisition of the land that has become the Savannas Preserve State Park. Thank you, Carol!

Henry Mauricey

20 Years of Volunteer Service

Savannas Preserve State Park



Henry has been volunteering at Savannas Preserve State Park for 20 years. He is a long-standing member and supporter of the Friends of Savannas. To date, he has contributed more than 4,400 service hours. Most of his time has been dedicated to the education programs including field trips for school-aged children from all over St. Lucie and Martin Counties. Henry played a huge role in implementing the Learning in Florida's Environment Program at the Savannas when the program was first introduced. His knowledge and understanding of biology, ecology and anatomy has been an invaluable asset while educating visitors and students about the natural communities at the Savannas. Henry also assists with special events including Pioneer Day as a member of Living History to educate visitors on the daily life of 19th century pioneer. Thank you, Henry!