



December 4, 2008 Issue #3

Wilderness Journal

News from the T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve

Friends of the Carlton meetings: first Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m. at the picnic pavilion

Membership e-mail contact: RJohnson_22801@att.net

Park Ranger: Rick Storsberg 486 2547 rstorsberg@scgov.net

Friends of the Carlton website: <http://web.me.com/whatarelief/>

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Friends of Sarasota County Parks: <http://www.foscp.org/new/index.php>

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Welcome back! You might not have noticed above a new [e-mail address](#) and a [new trial website address](#) for the Friends of the Carlton where you will find previous issues of this e-letter, meeting minutes, directions to and weather in the Carlton, upcoming events, forms for joining and volunteering, helpful links, slideshows of wildlife and more to come as we develop it and try out hosting options. We welcome suggestions regarding what you would like to see on that site. Possibilities: web galleries of seasonal flowers, seasonal birds, Parks and Recreation news from Rick Storsberg, land management news from Debbie Blanco, hiking maps, etc.

Changes in the Carlton Reserve

Cabin Re-chinking. After Rick noticed moisture and insects in the cabin that entered through the gaps in the logs, a crew of volunteers spent two days scraping and re-chinking to protect the visitor cabin from the weather and “varmints.”

Security Cameras, Fencing and Gate. In the summer when the park was closed due to flooding, thieves drove over the cable and cut away the cabin A/C compressor, apparently for the copper tubing. The new A/C is protected now by a chain link fence enclosure, security cameras, and a new gate into the service area.

Kiosks. The Friends of the Carlton placed two new signs at the kiosks for the Myakka Island Trail behind the cabin and the Equestrian Trail in the Horse Trailer Parking Lot. The signs with wildlife photographs are near sign-out boards built as Eagle Scout projects. Most of the photographs were taken by FCR trail cameras, as were the pictures used on the Deer Prairie Creek kiosk.

A [sightings clipboard](#) will be placed at the cabin entrance so hikers can share recent wildlife sightings or other trail notes.

A [new bike rack](#) and rain gauge is in front of the cabin.

Tribute Plaque Just west of the cabin, a large rock and oak tree have been placed in preparation for a commemorative site, recognizing the public service of former Florida Senator Lisa Carlton, daughter of T. Mabry Carlton, Jr., after whom the Reserve is named.

Kayak Launch A new webbing material is will be placed on the riverbank for a 6-month trial period to protect the bank and make the site easier for launching.

A [working windmill and drinking trough](#) have been installed at the cowboy camp near marker 43.

Other News

Joe Sipos. SC staff member assigned to the Carlton, has had back surgery and will be recovering for several weeks. The Friends volunteers have been helping to fill in by sprucing up the public area, self-guiding trails and the horse trailer parking lot.

Champion Tree Walk Auction The Friends of the Carlton helped raise funds for the restoration of a historic building at Philippi Creek Park by offering to sponsor a special guided walk to view “champion” trees in the Carlton. We provided a photo gallery of some of the trees. Tickets were sold at auction in October with proceeds turned over to the building restoration fund.

Camping Discussions are underway possibly to allow remote, provisional camping at designated locations with pre-registration and fee.

Cattle leasing proposal After getting feedback from the Friends last spring, Debbie Blanco presented the County Commission with a proposal to try cattle leasing on a limited basis on the Jordyn parcel which borders the Carlton at Deer Prairie Slough that has already been impacted by livestock. The proposal is under review by the County Commission.

Timber Thinning There are timber thinning operations ongoing in the Carlton that may affect recreational activities. Area 1 is located in the central Carlton, south of the loop road and north of the power line where there was both a controlled burn and an uncontrolled fire caused by lightning. Area 2 is north of 20 on the Turpentine Trail and Area 3 is on the north end of the Stockade Trail. If you have questions, you can contact Debbie Blanco, SC Natural Resources, land manager in the Carlton, 861-5000.

New Neighbors The Carlton is growing with the addition of contiguous lands that have recently been acquired under ESLPP (Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program).

The parcel at the west end of the FPL power line, formerly known as the Wild Turkey Club, is now County owned and renamed the **Embry** parcel.

At the east end of the FPL power line, extending all along the Carlton east border, a 4640 acre parcel, called the **Ranch Reserve**, has been purchased. It includes a major section of Big Slough and extends south to Myakkahatchee Creek Park. A Conservation Easement has been purchased on a 7500 acre parcel east of that.

The 500 acre **Jordyn** parcel adjoins the Carlton on the south border near Deer Prairie Creek. There are walk-throughs at both gates. Another similar parcel, the **Churchill** tract, abuts the Carlton on the south border near Tucker’s Camp. Access by footbridge from the Carlton is planned within the next 6 months. The gate at the end of Border Road has been removed but access is still closed.

Along the river, only a few lots remain in private ownership on the east side. One is south of the “Youth Camp” and the others are south of the Turkey Club tract which is now County owned. The Ligon property on both sides of the river has been purchased and renamed. The western parcel is now part of the **Sleeping Turtles Preserve** that includes most of the land along the west side of the river from N. Jackson Road to Snook Haven. Parts of it allow equestrian access or pets on leashes.

Wildlife Monitoring/Trail cameras

During the summer, Donna Day, Linda Lovallo and Sherm Stratton were invited by the Manatee-Sarasota Group of the Sierra Club to present a program on the Friends of the Carlton’s trail camera project for wildlife monitoring. As a result, several news media contacted the Friends and did stories about us. There was a feature article by Kate Spinner with photos in the Herald Tribune and a web gallery posted on their site. Bruce Asbury did a video piece for SNN that aired several times. And Jackie Barron did an interview that aired on WFLA.

Despite all the good publicity, a second trail camera was stolen during the rainy season when we had pulled cameras closer to the paved road so that we could service them when the trails were flooded. We replaced one camera with donations and now have 3 devices deployed at remote locations, well away from public trails.



Here is a male fawn (spots arranged in lines indicate male). His mother “stashed” him in the woods in front of the camera several times as she grazed in a nearby wetland.



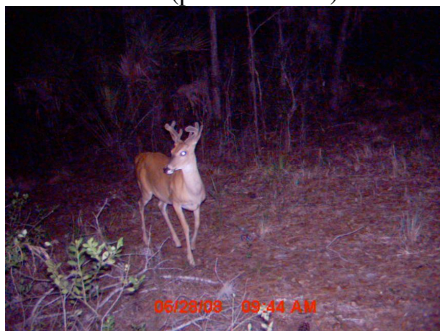
Here he is a week later.



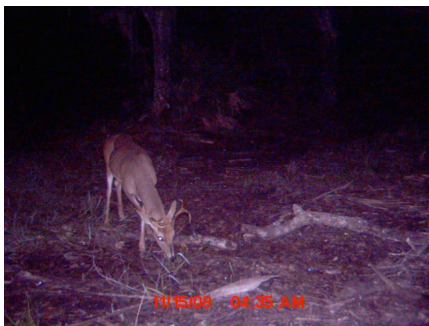
A leucistic (partial albino?) buck



1 year later (last month) at the same camera.



Buck in velvet (new antlers)



Buck—note thinness

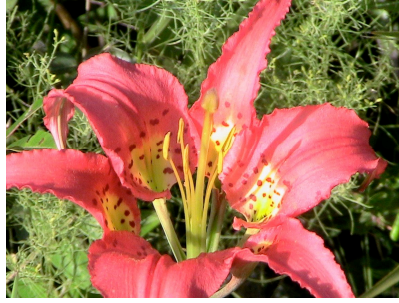


Lone coyote as many as 3 are in one photo



Watch for atamasco lilies in recent burned areas—they often appear just a few days after a burn, especially under pines in wet areas, before anything else has sprouted.

Just finished blooming, pine lily—along the central red trail, west of the intersection with the green.



Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering, we have task lists from both Debbie and Rick. Linda Lovallo is the volunteer coordinator. There are forms on the website that the County requires or we can send them via e-mail. We work different days, in groups or as individuals, depending on the tasks we have to do and the experience of volunteers. Some of the tasks we have worked on this fall include:

1. Weed whack, clear branches, pick up trash at the kayak launch and parking area.
2. Pick up trash along Border Road from the bridge and along the MC Parkway to the gate to the water treatment plant.
3. Pick up trash along entrance and exit roads (exposed by burn).
4. Trim overhanging brush, throw debris from trails, reset and clear markers on orange, green and red trails.
5. Man the visitor's center, sweep display cases and floor, update bulletin boards and re-supply kiosks.
6. Rake and remove pine needles, fronds from picnic area to decrease fire load.
7. Leaf blow pavilion, cabin sidewalk, parking lot and trails in public area.
8. Weed whack horse trailer parking lot.
9. Set cameras in field, locate with GPS, trim vegetation from immediate area, replace batteries and memory cards.
10. Download and re-title trail camera pictures, enter into Excel spreadsheet, save selected photos.
11. Compose electronic newsletter and distribute.
12. Transcribe taped (digital) interviews for Carlton history project.
13. Publicize Friends of the Carlton sponsored activities in local media and on website.
14. Gather trash for pick-up at the cowboy camp.
15. Trim overhead for mower access on remote trails.
16. Maintain trail markers on remote trails that can only be accessed in dry season.

Upcoming Work Details

1. Load trash into dumpster at cowboy camp.
2. Install fencing at cowboy camp near dipping pen.
3. Remove barbed wire fencing in selected areas of the Carlton.
4. Finish trail maintenance on blue, yellow, pink, and red trails.
5. Scrape and paint exterior cabin window frames.
6. Paint numbered marker plaques and replace throughout the Reserve; replace, reset, and clear markers.
7. Pick up trash on Jordyn and Churchill parcels.
8. Help with GPSing exotic invasive plants as follow up to State grant (after training).
9. Clear Wilderness Bike trail

There are volunteer opportunities on many other SC sensitive lands where several of the Friends also volunteer.