

April
2017



FRIENDS OF FLORIDA STATE PARKS

Legislators Are in Session and Now is the Time to Act

Governor Scott's 2017-18 recommended budget totaling more than \$153 million for the Division of Recreation and Parks is a 17% increase over the last budget. This request includes, more than \$50 million for Florida state park enhancements, management and facility improvements.



Show your support for the parks you love by contacting your local representatives and asking them to approve this budget. Tell them what these parks mean to you whether it's rest or play or discovering Florida's natural beauty and history. Let your voices be heard – call, write, phone.



[Find contact info for your State Senator.](#)

[Find contact info for your State Representative.](#)

View Key Environmental Committees and Legislators [here](#).

Funding Prescribed Fire in Florida State Parks

Governor Scott's proposed budget includes funds to purchase much needed fire trucks another fire equipment enabling the Florida Park Service to continue to conduct prescribed fires in the parks and control wildfires. This request for funding is being considered by key legislative environmental committees right now. Contact these committees and your local legislators ([contact info here](#)) and urge them to support this important funding.



Gov. Rick Scott declares a state of emergency across Florida due to increased wildfires.

The Florida Park Service has always endeavored to prevent wildfires in its parks by conducting what is called "prescribed fires". Frequent fire is a natural part of Florida's ecosystem. It's nature's way of cleaning up fallen branches, leaves, and dry dead grasses. If this debris is allowed to build up and a fire occurs, be it by human accident or a lightning strike, the fire will be much larger and hotter and may blaze up into the canopy potentially causing tree damage or even death.

Read more [here](#)...

2016 Youth Volunteer Awards

Park staff can often be heard to say, "We couldn't do what we do without our wonderful volunteers." To help show appreciation every year park staff nominates those who deserve special recognition. Friends of Florida State Parks organizes a committee (also volunteers) to review the nominations for the nine categories and pick the winners. Also, we fund the cost of the award plaques. In this newsletter, we send our congratulations to Nevaeh Sheats and Brendon Kerkela! Best wishes and many thanks to you both!

Read their full stories [here!](#)



Prepared. Optimistic. Positive.

The Florida Park Service is constantly looking for ways to give park visitors the best experience possible. This is shown in the newest initiative called P.O.P. Be prepared with information, be optimistic for a good outcome, and have a positive attitude. Good advice for all of us!



Owlet Rescue at Honeymoon Island State Park

On March 19th, a park visitor noticed that our baby owl was hanging upside down by its talons, and then fell about 70 feet to the ground. Park staff responded quickly and rescued the owlet. Fortunately, the bird was not injured.

The next day, the owlet was placed in a crate and strapped to a branch near the nest by a brave tree climber. The adults began feeding their chick and all is well. Take a hike on the Osprey Trail to view this amazing scene (bring binoculars!)



Check out the Real Florida Guides

Are you ready for a road trip?

Easily plan your adventure with multi-day trip guides for Florida's state parks and trails. Separated by region, it's a great tool to plan your next road trip.

View the website [here.](#)



Document your Explorations to Florida State Parks

A fun way to document your explorations to Florida State Parks. Read more about the Florida State Parks Passport [here](#). Ask for availability at any state park or get it on line [here](#).

