



Habi-Chat

Newsletter of the Merritt Island Wildlife Association

Volume 19 Number 2

Summer, 2013

Florida Friends Conference



Elizabeth Souheaver, Jim Kurth and Warren Camp

Photo by: Sandee Larsen

The weekend of April 13 and 14, 2013 the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR), Merritt Island Wildlife Association and Friends of Lake Woodruff NWR hosted a workshop (formerly called a conference) at the Holiday Inn in Titusville, Florida. Billed as a conference for Florida Refuge staff and Florida Friends, it provided an opportunity for Refuge staff and Florida friends to meet and share accomplishments, and to discuss issues facing the Refuge system. Forty five attended the event encompassing employees from seven Florida Refuges and members of eight Florida Friends groups. The highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Jim Kurth, Chief of the Refuge System. Jim discussed the issues facing the Refuge System and the actions being taken to minimize the impact. He also expressed his appreciation for the continued support of the friends groups throughout the country and stated that these types of meetings were very beneficial to both the friends and refuge staff. We appreciated

Jim traveling from Washington D.C. and giving up a week-end to meet with us. Also in attendance was Elizabeth Souheaver from the Atlanta Regional office. She also indicated her support for the friends groups and for the opportunities these meetings provide. During the meeting each Refuge representative gave a short presentation on the achievements, issues and some problems at their Refuge.

A tour of the Kennedy Space Center and the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge was offered to the meeting attendees on Sunday. Many of them joined the tour guided by Mike Legare, MINWR Biologist. Mike did an excellent job describing both the Kennedy Space Center and the Refuge.

The Ding Darling NWR offered to host a similar meeting next year and Crystal River NWR offered to host it the following year.

Warren Camp, MIWA Board Member and Conference Coordinator

Volunteers Enjoy Marine Discovery

Fifty plus volunteers enjoyed a day filled with marine science activities and an enjoyable meal sponsored by MIWA at the Marine Discovery Center for the Refuge's Annual Volunteer Recognition. The Marine Discovery Center located in New Smyrna is a non-profit environmental education organization offering a bounty of educational opportunities for adults and kids. Our volunteers enjoyed viewing the aquatic displays including a touch tank at the visitor center, admired and learned about our precious Indian River Lagoon on a pontoon boat ride, learned about the natural history of our local seashells (mollusks), and got up close and personal with earth worms.



Volunteer recognition at Marine Discovery Center
Photo by: Sandy Walters



Connie Foreman, Volunteer of the Year
Photo by Nancy Corona

The luncheon and award ceremony took place under a pavilion where all enjoyed a delicious meal catered by Aunt Catfish restaurant. We celebrated all of our volunteers' accomplishments and highlighted those achieving mile stone hours (increments of 250 hours). Lucky for us, we have lots of high achievers with several volunteers reaching more than 4,000 volunteer hours. Three of our volunteers received the President's Call to Service Award, a lifetime achievement of 4000 hours of federal service: Sandy Walters, Connie Foreman and Daryl Foerman.

Connie Foreman, was awarded the Volunteer of the Year 2013, and is best described as positive, diplomatic, organized and hardworking.

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Nature Connection Contest

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: How do you get today's children to get unplugged and go outside to experience and value nature? Space Coast Audubon and Merritt Island Wildlife Association actually managed to do this with their Nature Connection Contest.

The contest involved Brevard School students getting outside and then creating art, a poem, short essay or photograph. Students in grades Kindergarten through 12 submitted hundreds of great works.

The judges had a difficult time narrowing the entries down to the best. Those entries were displayed from April 1st to the 10th at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.



Lora Losi with Trey Felker, student from Apollo Elementary School
Photo by Nancy Corona



Tracy Liesenfelt from Central Middle School
Photo by Lora Losi

Winning students, parents and teachers attended an award ceremony on April 6th at the Visitor Center. The top three winners in each category received gift certificates to the Visitor's Center gift shop, "The Bookery", where they could choose from a great selection of nature related items. The prizes were supplied by both Space Coast Audubon Society and Merritt Island Wildlife Association.

NEXT MISSION? Get students outside on the refuge to experience and celebrate 50 years of Space for Wildlife!!
Lora Losi, Brevard County Science Teacher at Astronaut High School



The purpose of the Merritt Island Wildlife Association is to promote conservation, awareness, and appreciation of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and to provide assistance to Refuge programs.

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The Merritt Island Wildlife Association (MIWA) is a nonprofit, cooperating association for the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. The *Habi-Chat* is published quarterly. For MIWA information, call **321-861-2377**.

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For the past several years Michigan natives Connie and her husband Daryl have been winter work campers. Connie has a “above and beyond” work ethic. Her creativeness, determination and enthusiasm have allowed the refuge’s environmental education, interpretation and visitor service program to flourish. Connie’s accomplishments include the development of the refuge’s GPS Family Backpack Scavenger Hunt, Visitor Center Boardwalk Bingo, and a variety of environmental education and interpretive activities. Connie revised the Black Point Wildlife Drive brochure, annually staffs off site exhibits at a variety of festivals, and this year she assisted in the creation of the refuge’s 50th anniversary display. In addition, Connie has been an outstanding mentor for many of our public use interns. In the fall, when our work campers from Michigan head southbound, I am reassured that that the refuge will be ready for the busy winter season. Thank you Connie for all that you have done for our refuge!

We also wished longtime volunteer Beverly Campbell goodbye and best wishes on her new position as a full time grandmother and great grandmother in Ohio. Beverly worked at the refuge for more than 15 years. The refuge just couldn’t accomplish our mission without our dedicated, enthusiastic and skilled volunteers. Thank you to our MIWA members for making this recognition possible.

50 Hours: Sandy Juba, Pat Kingsley and Donald Metzger; **100 Hours:** Marlaine Manus, Linda Somers, Chuck Tague, Eric Gardze and Louise Robertson; **250 Hours:** Roz Grimm and Brian Waldron; **500 Hours:** Doris Franklin, Andrea Matthews and Dale Nichols; **1000 Hours:** Ron Henderson; **1250 Hours:** Curt Arnold, Mel Fringer, Dot Fringer and Ned Steel; **1500 Hours:** Al McKinley and Patricia Thomas-Arnold; **1750 Hours:** Donn Bruse; **2000 Hours:** Susan Waldron, Ron & Michelle Corbett; **2250 Hours:** John Boucher, Al Brayton, Kathy Eichinger and JoAnn Heenan; **2500 Hours:** Barbara Schoen; **2750 Hours:** Bev Campbell, Connie Foreman and Daryl Foreman; **3000 Hours:** Dan Witmer; **3500 Hours:** Jim Stahl; **4000 Hours:** Sandy Walter; **5000 Hours:** Betty Salter; **6000 Hours:** Bill Nunn and Cary Salter; **Volunteer of The Year:** Connie Foreman; **Interns:** Patrick Barnes, Stephanie and Renata Vaz Padolfo, Nancy Corona, Refuge Ranger



Ranger Nancy Corona with Volunteer Beverly Campbell
Photo by: Sandy Walters



Merritt Island Wildlife Association

Supporting the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Joining is simple. Just fill out this form and mail it to the Merritt Island Wildlife Association at P.O. Box 2683, Titusville, FL 32781 or join online at www.MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Type of Membership:

Seniors and Students – \$10

Individual – \$15

Senior Couples – \$15

Family Membership – \$20

Supporting Membership – \$50

Senior Couple Supporting – \$75

Life Membership – \$250

Patron – \$1000

Optional – Donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed _____

Make checks payable to MIWA. For credit card payments please call the MIWA office at:

321-861-2377

Goodbye to...



.....**Gregg Bailey** – a winter seasonal Visitor Use Ranger left on April 18th at the end of his season and headed home to NH. He has worked at MINWR for the last 5 winter seasons. Thanks for your all your helpfulness and hard work.

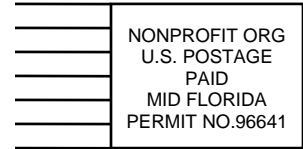
.....**Daryl and Connie Foreman** – work campers headed home to Michigan in April. They will stop in Goldsboro, NC to spend time with family and then on to Cumberland Gap National Park, KY before reaching home. Enjoy your summer!

.....**Renata Vaz Pandolfo**– Biology intern finished her internship with the refuge and returned to her home in Brazil. Good luck to you with your future endeavors!

Habi-Chat has email! If you would like to be on our mailing list to receive MIWA announcements, please add us to your safe senders list and send a request to HabiChat@MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org

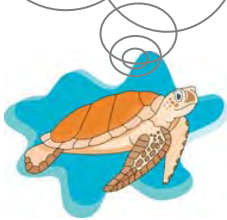


Merritt Island Wildlife Association
P.O. Box 2683
Titusville, FL 32781
www.MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org



**Call for Silent Auction
Donations**

MIWA is requesting
donation items for the
annual meeting fundraiser!
Please contact the MIWA
office at 321-861-2377 for
information



MIWA Members-Only Sea Turtle Walks

***Saturdays: June 29 and July 13
7:30 pm till Midnight?***

Meet a Refuge Ranger at the MINWR Visitor Center for a short informational program followed by a trip to Canaveral National Seashore's Playalinda Beach in search of a nesting sea turtle.

A long sleeve shirt, bug spray, and comfortable walking shoes are recommended. Children must be 8 years or older.

No cameras or flashlights allowed.



**You must RSVP as limited space is available.
Call 321-861-2377 to reserve your space.**

**New Summer Visitor
Information Center Hours
Tuesday through Saturday
9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Closed on Sundays and
Mondays**

**The Refuge is open daily
from sunrise – sunset**