

A Message from the President

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to thank you for your support by being a Friends of JD Park. Your membership is most important to the success of the programs and volunteers at the Kimbell Center.

Now it is your time to have a voice in the elections of the Board of Directors. Our next meeting will be on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 5:30 pm, at the Kimbell Center in Jonathan Dickinson State Park.

Nominations are welcomed from the floor and a slate of officers will be presented by the Board.

Remaining Directors for 2009 are: Roy Kimbell, Alana Edwards, Jim Snyder and Patricia Magrogan.

Nominees for 2009 are: Patrick Hayes, Pat Jebb, Mason Walsh, Joanne Talley, Roger Bursey, Michael Gostel, Nancy Marshall, Lois Nickerson and David Nickerson.

We hope that you can attend this important meeting!

Pat Magrogan, President

Friends of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Inc.

Biologist's Corner

By Rob Rossmanith, JDSP Park Biologist

Animal Name: Painted Bunting
Genus/Species: *Passerina ciris*
Family: Finches

Can be found at JDSP: Throughout. Most easily visible at bird feeders because they are very small (bird feeders are discouraged in state parks).

Food: Eats seeds and insects.

Status: No official listing. However, the eastern population has declined significantly over the past 40 years. Population declines are thought to result from degradation of breeding habitats in the eastern US, which may include the conversion of agricultural land to pine plantations and an increase in urban areas. Research about this bird's life history will help land managers understand why this animal is declining.

Range: Exists in two breeding populations: mid-continental and eastern US. On the east coast this bird breeds primarily on the coasts of North and South Carolina, Georgia, and north Florida. Birds from the eastern populations migrate to the Caribbean and south Florida.

Interesting Facts:

- This bird lays 3 to 4 eggs in a clutch and has as many as three clutches in a single breeding season.
- Males get their blue head, yellow nape, red breast, and green wing bars after their first year of life. Females are green. Both male and female are hard to spot as they are small and shy.
- Research on Painted Buntings focuses on their east coast breeding range. However, researchers are investigating their presence in wintering habitats, including south Florida. Go to <http://www.paintedbuntings.org/> to learn how you can help scientists further understand Painted Bunting population biology.



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**Friends of
Jonathan Dickinson
State Park, Inc.**

Executive Committee

Patricia Magrogan,
President

Patrick Hayes, *Vice
President*

Shirley Willis, *Secretary*

Joanne Talley, *Treasurer*

Board Members

Roger Bursey

Alana Edwards

Michael Pat Gostel

Pat Jebb

Roy Kimbell

Nancy Marshall

Jim Snyder

Mason Walsh

Club Scrub Liaison

Bill Meyers, *President*

**Jonathan Dickinson
State Park Staff**

Mark Nelson, *Park
Manager*

Thomas Brown, *Asst. Park
Manager*

Martin Morse, *Park
Services Specialist*

Libby Reinert, *Park
Services Specialist*

Rich Hauck, *Park
Services Specialist*

Sandy Jensen, *Park
Services Specialist*

Janet LaMont, *Admin.
Assistant*

Sandra Lovelady, *Secretary*

Liz Baxley, *Secretary*

Rob Rossmannith, *Park
Biologist*

Park Rangers

James Moye

Keith Peterson

Mark Peyton

Barry Richardson

Bob Schuh

Jane Shauan

Scott Tedford

Pat Walsh

Cheri Wells

Visible Changes at Jonathan Dickinson State Park

Managing the natural resources at Jonathan Dickinson State Park (JDSP) in Hobe Sound is an ongoing part of the job for Park Manager Mark Nelson and staff. The 11,500-acre park contains diverse natural systems which raise a variety of challenges that necessitate continuous evaluation. At the same time, these needs must be balanced with the needs of park visitors so they may experience the remarkable resource-based recreational opportunities offered. Refinements of these types are oftentimes subtle or may even go unnoticed, away from the public areas of the park, but recently some changes have been more visible to those driving by the area or making a trip into the park for a day of activities.

Driving past the park along U.S. 1, one very noticeable transition is the newly burned zone adjacent to the entrance area and the highway. This was a 21-acre prescribed burn meticulously planned, permitted, and carried out in a fire-dependent community, the sand pine scrub. Many people aren't aware of the ways in which fire is vital to Florida's natural ecology and don't realize that it is oftentimes purposefully applied. Due to Florida's unique climate, characterized by its tropical-like wet and dry seasons, lightning-induced fire continually shapes the landscape. Plants and animals require this periodic fire regime. For example, the cones of the sand pine will not release their seeds until the heat from a fire melts their waxy seal, allowing them to open. The Florida scrub-jay, a bird species designated by both the federal government and the State of Florida as "Threatened," requires open, sandy areas in the scrub so that it can bury, or cache, its acorns for later use. These conditions only occur if fire is not suppressed. State parks manage their land using prescribed fire because it gives the benefits of natural fire but at the same time is safer, less costly, and reduces the chance of wildfires. In the coming weeks, passersby can watch as the once-blackened scrub area rapidly renews itself and bright green shoots rise out of the charred earth.

The park received several inquiries lately regarding the earth-moving machinery working on the property across from the park entrance, east of U.S. 1. This land is not managed by the Florida Park Service and has no connection with the park itself. It is, however, part of the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) a special state taxing district that manages the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. FIND has been dredging the waterway and temporarily placing the spoil material onto their site until it can be hauled away. These activities are not impacting JDSP.

Upon entering the park, visitors have seen some conspicuous modifications along Park Drive, the 4-mile road that runs from the entrance to the Loxahatchee River area. Park staff and volunteers have been mowing and felling live and dead vegetation in order to widen a treeless corridor along the drive but keep it green. The reasons for this are many. Improving safety is one major benefit. Visibility will be enhanced for the vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians sharing the roadway. Animals, such as white-tailed deer and gopher tortoises, crossing the road will be more readily seen by drivers. Parking along the drive will also be easier and safer now that vehicles can pull completely onto the shoulder. Another important element is fire safety. During a burn, the cabbage palm and saw palmetto flanking the roadside tend to be more troublesome because they can send up burning embers that, when carried by winds, can cause a fire to "spot" or spread out of its intended zone. Additionally, the many standing dead trees, or snags, adjacent to the road area could be easily toppled during a hurricane, greatly impeding any post-storm clean-up process. Removing them now will allow the park to reopen sooner in the event of a tropical storm or hurricane. After this project is completed maintaining this area will be much easier, resulting in continued cost savings. This change, which may be a bit unsightly for the short-term, is a great long-term enhancement for the park and its visitors.

Recently, volunteer crews have removed by hand nonnative plant populations along Park Drive. Showy rattlebox, which was introduced to the U.S. from India as a soil-building plant because of its ability to support nitrogen-fixing bacteria, and bowstring hemp, a popular and hardy houseplant brought here from Africa, are invasive exotics. These pest plant species must be eliminated so that the natural ecological balance of the park can be restored. The before-and-after image resulting from these removal efforts is readily apparent, as growing spaces are opened up so that native plants can repopulate.

Whether visibly noticeable or not, Jonathan Dickinson State Park is a dynamic place undergoing constant change, sometimes aided by the human touch but always operating under the intricate checks and balances of nature. It is open to the public 365 days a year, from 8 a.m. to sunset.

*This article was written by Park Services Specialist Sandy Jensen and is featured in this month's **Hobe Sound Magazine**.*

Park Visitor Guide to Debut Soon



In the making for over a year, a first-ever Visitors' Guide to Jonathan Dickinson State Park should be off the presses in early April.

The 96-page, four-color booklet was written by Jupiter author Jim Snyder, a member of our Board, and sponsored by the Friends. Many of our officers and the park staff have been involved in the fact-finding and editorial review process.

In this comprehensive guidebook, with 12 maps and 173 photos, you'll find sections on:

- Plants, trees and animals in the park.
- The park's eight major ecological systems.
- Activities for visitors – including neighboring sites.
- The stories of Camp Murphy, Trapper Nelson and other highlights of our 5,000-plus years of human habitation.

The booklet winds up with a chapter that aims to help visitors understand the many challenges facing park managers in their mission to keep the park's riverfront wild and scenic in a time of surrounding urban development.

The Visitors Guide will sell for \$9.95. However, for several weeks initially it will be offered free to all who purchase a \$25 family membership to Friends of JDSP.

Because the booklet is published and sponsored by our nonprofit organization, all net proceeds from sales will be used to fund projects within the park and/or add to the Elsa Kimbell Environmental Education Center's endowment fund.

Manatee Program

Once again, the Kimbell Center special program series sponsored by the Friends of JDSP was a hit! Representatives from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) put on a great show for visitors of all ages. John Cassady, FWC manatee biologist, presented Manatees 101 covering everything from manatee rescue to rib bones. After the presentation visitors took a close-up look (and climbed on!) the rescue boat and life-size stuffed manatee. Visitors also enjoyed the craft activity and took home a stocking-stuffed manatee that resembled the real thing - although just a little smaller! Thanks to FWC and the Friends of JDSP for an enjoyable event!



FWC Biologist, John Cassady with a manatee rib bone – bigger than your arm!

Volunteer Opportunities – HELP NEEDED

We are currently defining areas where members of *Friends of JDSP* who wish to volunteer can help. Please identify where you can assist the *Friends* by emailing Nancy Marshall, Volunteer Coordinator at info@friendsofjdsp.com or by calling Libby at the Ed Center at 561-745-5551. If you can help with something that you don't see listed here, please let us know. Your comments are welcome.

Ways you can help the *Friends*:

- Man table at events in park
- Help at socials
- Help with phone calls – for members without email
- Distributing membership forms – libraries, _____ (other?)
- Distributing event flyers
- Help with mailings
- Accounting help
- Other _____

Education center volunteers can help with:

- Greeting visitors at the reception desk
- Maintaining program and activity supplies and materials
- Maintaining exhibits and displays
- Leading school and visitor programs and activities
- Coordinating special events

Also, please tell your friends or neighbors that might be interested in helping about the opportunities at JDSP. We look forward to hearing from you with any questions or comments and appreciate your involvement. **Thank you for being a *Friend*!**



Impacts of Saltwater Intrusion On the Loxahatchee River in Southeast Florida

By Richard E. Roberts, Marion Hedgepeth and P. Lorraine Roberts



The dead cypress trees are a result of saltwater intrusion on the Loxahatchee River.

In May 1985, a portion of the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River was designated as Florida's first National Wild and Scenic River. Located primarily in Jonathan Dickinson State Park, it is one of the last vestiges of a native blackwater/floodplain swamp in southeast Florida. However, impacts to the river's natural hydrology had already been altered by drainage activities associated with agriculture, urbanization and a permanently opened Jupiter Inlet. These multiple influences have brought about changes in the balance of the freshwater and saltwater interface, resulting in significant shifts in the distribution of vegetation along the river's floodplain.

Since the early 1970's the Florida Park Service has had an ongoing concern about the future of the remaining bald cypress trees, their reproduction, as well as the freshwater flood-

plain swamp and bottomland hardwood forest. Extensive surveys and research have been conducted over the years to document this salinity change, starting in 1967 with a plant survey located within the river's lower tidal reach by Taylor Alexander, Professor of Botany at the University of Miami. At that time and location the overstory canopy was dominated by bald cypress and cabbage palm, although they were already being stressed and/or had died due to saltwater intrusion.

In our 2003 re-survey of this same transect, living bald cypress had completely disappeared from the study site, except for a few trees located next to the site on the higher elevations. Cabbage palms remained about the same, but there was an extensive influx of white mangroves. The shift from a predominantly freshwater community to basically a mangrove community can be measured by species loss. When a comparison was done, the 1967 study revealed there were 23 predominantly freshwater wetland species found on the site with no plant exotics. In the 2003 research, there were 22 species (including 4 plant exotics) that would tolerate higher salinities.

After the state's mandated Minimum Flows and Levels was approved by the Florida legislature in 2003, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Park Service and the South Florida Water Management District were charged with developing a "practical restoration plan and goal" for the river. A preferred Restoration Flow scenario to achieve these flows was developed. It's expected to reverse a portion of saltwater intrusion in the tidal floodplain. Unfortunately, the salinity will only be reduced by approximately 2 ppt immediately upstream of this research site.

As a means to prevent further loss to these state-owned lands (legally mandated), the restoration plan for the river also included the consideration of the positives and negatives of creating a barrier to manage salinity impacts. A modeling study was carried out to examine the effectiveness of two types of saltwater barriers at different locations within the river under average dry season flow conditions. The study determined that extreme caution should be used with this type of barrier because of the impacts on the ecosystem, water quality, boat navigation and recreational activities.

The need to restore this blackwater/floodplain swamp (as well as this research site) is an essential imperative to perpetuate this unique wetland ecosystem as we deal with the long term impacts of rising sea level, freshwater demands of an ever-growing southeast Florida population and global warming.

Note: For further information on this topic, please refer to "The Florida Scientist", 71(4) issue (2008) and the South Florida Water Management District's "Restoration Plan for the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River" (2006). The authors provided significant contributions to these studies.

ADOPT-A-BRICK!

The Elsa Kimbell Environmental Education and Research Center at Jonathan Dickinson State Park is now open. This center belongs to us all, from here to international visitors! It houses our Visitor Center, classrooms for students and adult programs, research labs for ongoing environmental studies, interpretive displays, special events, administrative offices and a meeting place for the Friends and volunteers! **AND NOW YOU CAN BE A PART OF IT ALL!**

Three lines, 20 characters per line, spaces and punctuation count.

1st Line (20) _____

2nd Line (20) _____

3rd Line (20) _____

Your Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Check Enclosed: ()



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

New Friends

- Dan Bishop
- Peter & Christina Brennan
- Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Douglas
- Jeff & Carol Fulford
- Matt Golden
- Karen Kerwin
- Fred Mazza
- Erin McDevitt & Family
- Jane Merritt
- David & Lois Nickerson
- Suzanne Redmond
- John Rees
- Mark Roberts
- Dan Rowlands
- Carol Schaming
- Richard & Linda Torgeson
- Scott & Caroline Warburton
- Patricia Zoratti

Friends Renewed

- Ginger Baldwin
- Lynn Bellizzi
- Brawley Family
- Roger & Carol Burse
- Banks & Anne Clark
- Charles & Donna Conklin
- Kendra Copeland
- Paul Cummings
- Michael Danford
- Sara Davies
- Constance Davis
- Susan DeLuccia
- Robert & Phoebe Dowdy
- Rick Nevulis & Alana Edwards
- Carl Engel
- Joan Eymmer
- Paul Feinsinger
- Doris Fenner
- Russell Foley & Family

- Alan Fullilove
- Edgar & Carol Fulton
- Sheldon & Naomi Gawiser
- Tom & Mary Ann Grieser
- John Guy
- Jack & Liz Hailman
- John & Judith Hicks
- Valerie Hobbs
- Floyd & Gail Hodge
- Jill Johnson
- Valerie Johnson
- Kari Johnston
- Zafar & Nathalie Khan
- Heather Lamond
- David & Rose MacGillivray
- Patricia & Bill Magrogan
- Chuck & Joanne Mailat
- Pat Manseau
- Wally & Michelle McCall
- Kathryn Miller

- Mary Helen Miller
- Walter & Bernadette Moore
- Anthony Rawson
- Thomas & Barbara Reilly
- Edward & Joan Riordan
- Marlene & Albert Rivera
- Lynnieste & Kyle Shepherd
- Daniel & Joan Sifrar
- Eileen Slater
- Laurie Smith
- Jim & Carol Snyder
- Jack & Debra Sobel
- Sawyer Thompson
- Ursula Alebrand & Jan Wijnand
- Shirley Willis
- James Wright
- Eric & Karen Zudans

Friends of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Inc.

Membership Application

A not-for-profit Citizen Support Organization (CSO)

- Lifetime Corporate: \$2500
- Lifetime Patron: \$1000
- Corporate: \$500
- Patron: \$100
- Organization: \$50
- Family: \$25
- Individual: \$15

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

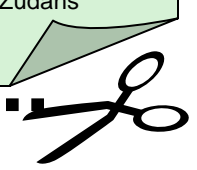
I am interested in volunteering with the Friends.

Please send this application along with your donation to:

The Friends of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Inc.
16450 SE Federal Hwy, Hobe Sound, FL 33455

For more information on the "Friends" please call (561) 744-9814

A copy of the official registration and financial information of the "Friends" may be obtained from The Division of Consumer Services by calling 800-435-7352



Stargazing

at Jonathan Dickinson State Park

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy—the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first astronomical use of the telescope!

To celebrate, the Friends have partnered with the Astronomical Society of the Palm Beaches to host our first Friends Stargazing event.

Join us on Saturday, March 21. We will meet in the Kimbell Center parking lot at 7:30pm. Dessert and drinks will be provided by the Friends. No fee at entrance when you mention this event.



Hope to see you there!

Scheduled Activities at the Park

Family Adventures in the Park—

Offered every Saturday, from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., these programs are full of fun and adventure for the whole family. Topics vary, so please call ahead for current information and registration (at least 2 days in advance preferred), 561-745-5551.

Hike with a Ranger—Every Sunday morning JDSP offers a hike with a Ranger. Check for location at the Ranger Station. Hikes begin at 9:00 am. No reservation necessary.

Loxahatchee River Adventures

Spend a couple of hours sightseeing on the Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee River. Board the Loxahatchee Queen at the concessions area. Pontoon tours depart the boat dock daily at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. Cost for the tour: Adults-\$18.78, Children (6-12)-\$11.50 and Children under 6 are free.



The Friends of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Inc.
16450 SE Federal Hwy
Hobe Sound, FL 33455

The Friends of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Inc. is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization whose role is one of advocacy for the historical, educational and ecological enhancement of Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Its mission is to assist park management in meeting the natural and cultural resource management objectives established for the park.

We are on the web at:
www.friendsofjdsp.org!