



Nature Ops News February 2005

A Monthly Publication of Nature Operations Division,
Recreation and Parks Department, City of Gainesville

Morningside Nature Center
3540 East University Ave.
Gainesville, FL 32641

Nature Operations Division
Recreation and Parks Department
City of Gainesville

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Created by Nature Operations Division Staff

Redbud in Bloom, *Cercis canadensis*
Photo by Gary Paul, Program Coordinator

What's Fun In Your Nature Parks?

Barnyard Buddies- FREE

Join us every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon at 3pm to help with afternoon feeding then meet and greet the heritage breed farm animals. Toddlers and preschoolers will love learning about the Living History Farm barnyard buddies. Meet at the barn at 3pm at Morningside.

Living History Days- FREE

Every Saturday the Morningside Nature Center Living History Farm is open with staff in period dress interpreting day to day life on a Florida farm in 1870. Sample homemade biscuits cooked on the woodstove with fresh butter and cane syrup grown and made on the farm. Help feed the heritage breed farm animals at 9am and 3pm daily.

Discover & Do- "Creatures of the Sand" FREE

Hey Kids! Bring your favorite adult along the third Sunday of every month for a fun activity and make a cool craft to take home! Please RSVP to 334-3327. On February 20th, get to know all the creatures that take advantage of Florida's ancient beaches.

Meet at Morningside Nature Center office, 3540 E. University Ave.

Nature Walk and Talk- "Spring has Sprung" FREE

The last Saturday of every month features a naturalist-guided walk at 9am. The walk is 1-1.5 hours, so wear comfortable walking shoes. Hunt the first signs of spring on February's Nature walk at Morningside Nature Center. Meet at the education office, 3540 E. University Ave.

By the Light of the Moon- "Buggy Night Safari"- FREE

By the light of the silvery moon with the owls and frogs we'll croon... and we hope you'll join us each Saturday nearest the full moon at one of our nature parks! Join us for a buggy night safari February 26th and find those who dare to venture into the night! We will start at 7pm.

Meet at Morningside Nature Center office, 3540 E. University Ave.

**For more information, call us at 334-2170 or visit
www.natureoperations.org**



The Florida Master Naturalist Program

Coastal Systems Module

Offered at Morningside Nature Center in Gainesville,
February 24- April 16, 2005, (see website for complete schedule)



What is it? A 40-hour educational extension program on Florida's ecosystems. The Coastal Systems module is one of three modules offered along with Freshwater Wetlands and Upland Habitats. Sign up for one, two, or all three! The Coastal Systems Module includes classroom instruction, field trips, and practical interpretive experience related to the general ecology, habitats, vegetation types, wildlife, and conservation issues of coastal areas in Florida. The program enhances naturalist interpretation skills and addresses environmental ethics.

Who should attend? Ideal for those in an eco-tourism business, teachers seeking environmental education contact hours, volunteers and staff members of environmental education facilities, or any interested adults. Appropriate for both novice and highly skilled environmental professionals.

What is the cost? \$200, which includes 40 contact hours of instruction, a comprehensive student reference workbook, registration in the UF FMNP database as a Coastal Naturalist, a certificate of achievement, an embroidered FMNP patch, and an FMNP Coastal lapel pin.

Register by February 21st, 2005 at www.masternaturalist.org
or call (352) 392-5930

For information, call 334-3327 or visit www.natureoperations.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1>February 2005</h1>						
	<i>Violet Twins, photo by Gary Paul</i>	1	2 Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm	3	4	5 Living History 9am-5pm Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm
6	7	8 ●	9 Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm	10	11	12 Living History 9am-5pm Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm
13 Discover and Do "Creatures of the Sand" MNC Office 2pm	14 Valentine's Day	15	16 Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm	17	18	19 Living History 9am-5pm Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm
20	21 Registration deadline for Master Naturalist Coastal Module	22	23 Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm	24 ○ Master Naturalist Coastal Module begins	25	26 Living History 9am-5pm <hr/> Nature Walk and Talk 9am, MNC <hr/> Barnyard Buddies 3pm MNC Farm <hr/> Buggy Night Safari 7pm MNC Office
27	28 SFCC/UF Spring Break	<p>“When you try to change any single thing, you find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” - <i>John Muir</i></p>				<p><i>Innocence, photo by Gary Paul</i></p> 

Naturalist Notes-

Many migrants and residents were seen in January:

- Goldfinches, Robins, and warblers throughout Morningside
- Coral Snakes around education office
- Cotton Mouse during the prescribed burn
- 9 point Deer Skull found in prescribed burn area
- Otter at Palm Point
- Tagged Black Vulture at Morningside gate

Spring Staff Training

by Gary Paul

Early spring is traditionally a time for NOD staff to get caught up on training, since generally the work load is a little more manageable during these cooler months. This spring, staff is taking the following training: Programs Coordinator **Gary Paul** is a 2005 Fellow in class V of the Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute, training "...Floridans who have a stake in the use and conservation of our natural resources..., studying personal and group leadership skills, communication skills, dispute resolution techniques...environmental law and policy. Habitat Naturalist **Don Musen** is doing advanced firefighter training (for prescribed burns/wildfires) at the Ocala National Forest later this month. Habitat Naturalist **Geoff Parks** is being trained on *Working Across Boundaries* (natural and political) with The Nature Conservancy. Program Staff **Kate Devine, Angela Yau, Susan Nassif, and Melissa Hagen** are attending the Southeast Regional ALHFAM (Association for Living History, Farms, and Agricultural Museums) meeting in preparation for us hosting this conference in conjunction with the Southeast Regional NAI (National Association for Interpretation) in February 2006. We thank the Friends of Nature Parks for their support of NOD staff by providing funding to make all of this training possible.

Morningside Updates

- The Schoolhouse restoration is nearing completion with the tin roof being installed and reproduction school benches handcrafted by Nick Iannelli being finished as we gather other period furnishings
- A prescribed burn for restoration and fuel reduction was conducted on Wednesday January 26th in a fire management unit adjoining the picnic area at Morningside

6th Annual Great Air Potato Roundup

This was another successful year for the Great Air Potato Roundup. Over 1200 volunteers registered to help out Saturday morning to help rid Gainesville's nature parks of invasive exotic species. 16,357 pounds of Air Potatoes were collected along with many Ardisia and other exotics. Over half a large dumpster of trash was also removed from parks. The volunteers gathered afterward at Morningside Nature Center for the post celebration and enjoyed food, music, raffles, and free t-shirts. The Weeds of Eden entertained the crowd again this year to support this effort. The grand prize was a bike donated by Spin Cycle, which was given away along with many gift certificates, native trees, and books on Florida. Many thanks to our sponsors who made all of this possible! Everyone had a great time and is looking forward to next year. Sign up for the new "Adopt-a-Spud" program where volunteers will monitor nature parks for Air Potatoes throughout the year. For more information, contact Gainesville's Ecosystems At Risk at (352) 334-2231.



Susan Nassif, our staff artist has been creating this beautiful faux food for the display in the cabin. The realism was revealed when a guest actually took a bite out of the faux cornbread and exclaimed "This tastes awful!" She was quickly corrected and luckily did not swallow the plaster the cornbread was made from. She must have confused it with the free biscuits given out on Living History Saturdays.