

Vistas



History Reborn: Jiggs Landing's Grand Re-Opening

On December 11, 2010, the Natural Resources Department re-opened Jiggs Landing to a gathering of nearly 300 individuals. The day began foggy and chilly, with a bald eagle watching...but still a crowd gathered to celebrate the new preserve and boat ramp. The event included candid stories about the location from Metcalf family member Sandy, a longtime resident of the historical fish camp.

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Jiggs Landing Grand Opening Continued

Like any good ribbon cutting, the grand opening featured speeches by County staff members and County Commissioners, celebrating another successful restoration project. The members of the Old Braden River Historical Society volunteered their time, helping to host the event by presenting donated refreshments, a photographic display of the construction at the site, and an informational outreach booth. The day also included interpretive tours of the historical cabin and riverfront habitats.

Jiggs Landing, nestled along the Braden River, is one of only two public freshwater boat ramps in Manatee County and is the only free location. The ramp will be open 24 hours-a-day, while the preserve will have the standard conservation land operating hours of 8:00 a.m. to sunset. Other amenities at the new preserve include boardwalks, bathrooms, picnic pavilions, and a dock. The site will also gain a new interpretive playground, which will feature natural-themed play structures, and a canoe/kayak launch in 2011. The site will also eventually feature a concessionaire vending food, bait, and will provide kayak rentals for visitors. There are four small cabins that will be available for daily and weekly rentals, providing visitors with a real taste of riverside living.

This historical site, which has been a longtime hidden treasure of Manatee County, originally opened in the 1940s. Now, in 2010, it is once again poised to enchant generations of visitors. If you would like to learn more about Jiggs Landing, or view more photos of the location, please visit us online at www.mymanatee.org.



Members of the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners (Commissioners Donna Hayes, Larry Bustle, Robin DiSabatino, and Michael Gallen) were all in attendance, Natural Resources Department Staff, Old Braden River Historical Society, and Metcalf Family gather together to cut the ribbon in front of the re-creation of one of Jiggs Landing's historical cabins.

Photo by Maggie Marr



Vistas Image of the Quarter: Artist Charles Taylor at Robinson Preserve



Photo by Charles Taylor

Photographer Charles Taylor gives a bug's eye view of native glasswort in the salt marsh at Robinson Preserve. Glasswort is an annual plant, one of Florida's few species that actually shows true fall colors by turning red for the cooler weather and then dying off during the winter. Charles is a volunteer at Robinson and, as he volunteers several times a week, often has the opportunity to capture some fantastic shots. Visitors to the Valentine House can see more of his photos in the slideshow in the Welcome Center.

Connect Online with Manatee County's Natural Resources

Have you heard the exciting news? Manatee County has launched a new outreach initiative designed to take advantage of modern technological advances with the goal of helping you stay connected with the County's latest news and improvements. The first change came in fall of 2010 with the re-launch of the Manatee County website. The new site is designed with the user in mind and boasts an array of new features. Already the Department has created a detailed resource for preserve visitors including maps, galleries, and downloadable documents. Coming in 2011, users will be able to register for preserve pavilion rentals, programs, and volunteer opportunities all online.

Also in 2011, *Vistas* will expand to include a quarterly Podcast called *Vantages*. This new offering will provide listeners with information on the preserves and current Department news. Look

for the *Vantages* Podcast available for download on www.mymanatee.org in the Natural Resources section beginning in early 2011.

Manatee County has also recently launched a Facebook page. You can connect with Manatee County at www.facebook.com/manatee.county.fl and gain information on a variety of news in the County, not just the events occurring in the Natural Resources Department. Keep an eye out for an NRD Facebook page coming soon, too!





AmbassaDogs Hit the Trail at Robinson Preserve

The next time you visit Robinson Preserve, you might notice some new volunteers. But these aren't the typical helpful humans who hang out at the preserve. No, these volunteers are furry, four-legged, and are part of the new AmbassaDogs program. A partnership between Manatee County and Tampa Bay Estuary Program, this program is designed to help volunteer dog owners and their pets educate others about the importance of proper pet paw-litics when visiting natural areas. AmbassaDogs, in their bright blue vests, bring their human helpers along as they model good behavior for other visitors. The AmbassaDogs are more than just role models, however. The human members of the AmbassaDog team can also answer questions about the pet-related rules in the preserve and can provide preserve visitors in need with pet waste collection bags. The AmbassaDog teams also have portable waste bag containers that they distribute to anyone willing to take the Pooches for the Planet Pledge, vowing to help clean up pet waste, thereby committing to protecting Tampa Bay's water bodies.

So why should people pick up their pet waste? Believe it or not there are lots of great reasons to remove the waste. For one thing, it's the law; in Manatee County and throughout Florida pet owners are required to collect any pet waste and dispose of it. It's also pretty messy stuff and can be quite unhygienic to leave the waste in places where they can be an unsightly mess. It's common courtesy, too. Ever take a misstep into an unexpected pile? No one likes to find that surprise!

And, of course, some of the best reasons to pick up the pesky pet waste are environmental concerns. Most people don't realize it, but domestic dog waste can carry bacteria that can be transmitted not just to dogs but also to the preserve's resident wildlife, too.



Common Facts about Pet Waste

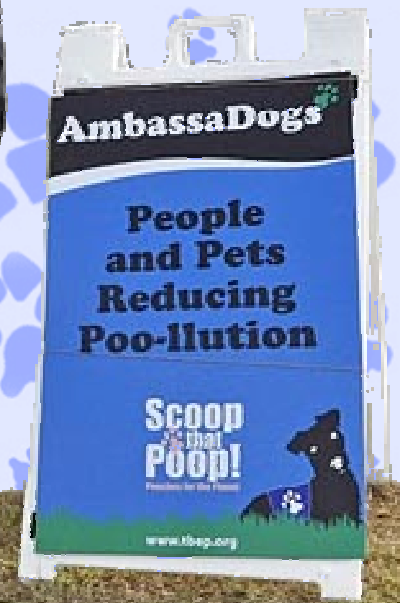
Did You Know?

- Dog poop can transmit diseases to humans and other dogs.
- A single gram of doggy doo can contain 23 million microorganisms of bacteria.
- Studies show that two to three days' worth of pet waste from just 100 dogs in a 20-mile watershed can contribute enough bacteria to make swimming unsafe.
- About 40% of all dog owners do NOT pick up after their pets.

Manatee County has over 13 TONS of doggy doo deposited DAILY!

Sure, the waste produced by one dog may not seem like a big deal, but multiply that by the estimated 500,000 dogs that live in the Tampa Bay watershed and it can really add up to a huge problem!

(taken from Tampa Bay Estuary Program website at www.tbep.org and Yvette Little's Ambassadogs Training Manual)





Many people believe that leaving waste in a preserve, or a neighbor's yard, is not a problem because it is "natural." While it is true that wildlife droppings are commonly found in nature, domestic dog waste is not. Because of their diet, dog wastes more closely resemble human waste and can create a great deal of damage to an already delicate cycle of natural assimilation of wild animal waste. The numbers are astounding – the droppings of one single dog may not seem like much, but when taken alongside the tens of thousands of pets in Manatee County, there's a huge impact on our waterways and a great deal of pollution.

Is dog waste that big of a problem at Robinson Preserve? The answer may surprise you. To pilot this program, Rangers and Volunteers were asked to stop removing waste from the property. That's right – the Rangers and Volunteers work hard to keep the pet waste problem under control and regularly remove the fecal matter. If you've never seen pet waste at Robinson, it's thanks to the work of these hard-working individuals. But just how much of an impact do they make? After just two days of not removing waste, more than **40 piles** of waste were found in a less than ¼ mile stretch of trail (check out the map below – this is a small section of the trail near the main entrance and each yellow mark represents a pile)! That's an awful lot of visitors who are not removing their pet's poo. It's the hope of Natural Resources and the Tampa Bay Estuary Program that the AmbassaDog teams can help spread the word about why it's important to scoop the poop and what a huge impact it has on Robinson Preserve, encouraging dog owners to take part in helping to care for the environment.

The great news is that each individual visitor and their furry friend can make an immediate impact. Take the Pooches for the Planet Pledge and agree to scoop the poop and help keep Tampa Bay's waterways, and Robinson Preserve, clean. And don't forget to say "Hello" to the AmbassaDogs when you see them!



November 2010
Pet Waste Sites

Robinson
Preserve

Photos and maps courtesy
Nanette Holland O'Hara at
TBEP





Manatee County's Conservation Lands and YOU!

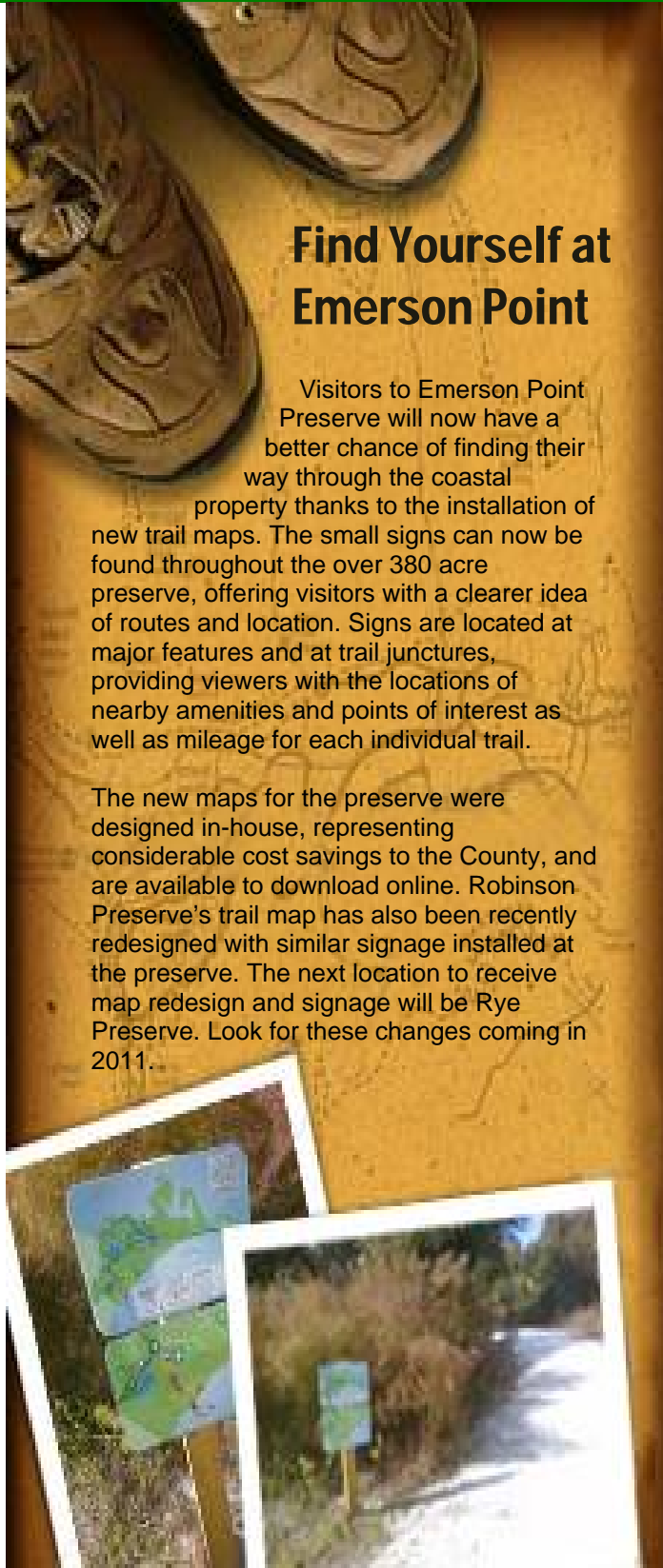
- (Right) The October Shutter Stroll at Rye Preserve featured an exciting opportunity to capture LED light shows in the dark woods. *Photo by Stacy Quaid*
- (Below) Participants learn about Robinson Preserve's resident aquatic wildlife in the World Beneath the Waves Workshop. *Photo by Michael Pepper*



- (Below) Sensei Brian Nell leads new tai chi classes at Robinson Preserve. *Photo by Vicki Jarratt*



- (Left) Volunteer Emily trims the tree at Robinson Preserve's Valentine House. *Photo by Sue Wait*



Find Yourself at Emerson Point

Visitors to Emerson Point Preserve will now have a better chance of finding their way through the coastal property thanks to the installation of new trail maps. The small signs can now be found throughout the over 380 acre preserve, offering visitors with a clearer idea of routes and location. Signs are located at major features and at trail junctures, providing viewers with the locations of nearby amenities and points of interest as well as mileage for each individual trail.

The new maps for the preserve were designed in-house, representing considerable cost savings to the County, and are available to download online. Robinson Preserve's trail map has also been recently redesigned with similar signage installed at the preserve. The next location to receive map redesign and signage will be Rye Preserve. Look for these changes coming in 2011.

Girl Scouts Clean Up at Rye Preserve

Sometimes history needs a helping hand. Thankfully, there are some really special, hard-working volunteers out there that are ready and willing to assist. One example includes the members of Girl Scout Troop 793. In October, two of the scouts and five of their adult leaders visited Rye Preserve to tackle the mammoth task of cleaning up the Rye Family Cemetery.

Originally founded in the late 1800s, the last remnants of the Town of Rye are tucked away in a corner of the Rye Preserve woods. All that remains of this settlement is a lone cemetery, and while it is a popular spot to visit, very few attendants take the time to care for the location. While the graves are few, the weeds are many and the cemetery frequently needs a good and thorough cleaning to keep it from being reclaimed by nature and fading away into the woods.

But Girl Scout Troop 793 has adopted Rye Preserve through Keep Manatee Beautiful and the members arrived determined to make an impact on the landscape. And, with only seven people and two hours, the group weeded, mowed, and raked the entire cemetery, fixed the broken gate, and even landscaped around the perimeter of the fence. Their determination to make a difference was very appreciated and set a great example proving that many hands make light work. Thank you volunteers!





Manatee County Natural Resources Department

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Help us save paper! Add your name to our email list and receive *Vistas* electronically. Email Melissa.nell@mymanatee.org today!

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FREE Monthly Eco-Events!

Be a part of our newsletter! We're looking for photos that illustrate the spirit of our preserves. Submit a photo in JPG format to Melissa.nell@mymanatee.org and *your* photograph might be featured in an upcoming issue of *Vistas*!

PLEASE NOTE: Manatee County cannot return any photographs submitted to it. Submission of photographs or other images constitutes representation that the person making the submission has the legal authority to make the submission, and that Manatee County is granted permission to use the photographs or images without compensation in any of its print or web-based productions, including image databases and marketing materials. The County will make every effort to credit the artist, owner or photographer in such materials. Manatee County will not sell or market any individual image to the general public.

FREE Paddle Manatee Guide

This FREE publication features maps of the County's blueways, GPS coordinates, paddle tips, and much more. For a FREE copy, please call 941-748-4501 ext. 4613.

Wildlife Issues

Please report any sightings of injured or deceased wildlife!

For Emerson Point, Leffis Key, Robinson, and Riverview Pointe preserves call: 941-745-3723

For Rye Preserve call: 941-745-3723

For Duette Preserve call: 941-776-2295

Please leave a message if you are not able to reach a Ranger. Thank you!