



Nota DeSoto

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4  OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2015

SAVE the DATES

Oct. 17 • 5:30 p.m.

Take a sunset cruise on Paradise Boat Tours with the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc. Cost of the trip is \$35 per person; the boat sails at 5:30 p.m. from Historic Bradenton Beach Pier on Bridge Street. To make reservations, go to the Friends of DeSoto web site at www.friendsofdesoto.org and click on the **Donate** button. Please make reference to “**October Boat Tour Tickets**” when remitting. For more information, call 941-704-6825.

Oct. 24 • 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Desoween VII: Camp Desoween is DeSoto National Memorial's spooky trail walk. Campers have run amuck and something sinister is behind it. Are you brave enough to go into the woods at dark? Event suggested for children and adults ages 7 and up. The later you come the scarier it gets.

Nov. 14 • 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Membership Drive and Member Appreciation Social:



Blue Jasper Restaurant • 5718 Cortez Road. Complimentary food and drink provided. For more information: www.friendsofdesoto.org, 941-704-6825.

Nov. 22 • 10:30 a.m.

Take a cruise on Paradise Boat Tours with the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc. Cost of the trip is \$35 per person; the boat sails at 10:30 am from Historic Bradenton Beach Pier on Bridge Street. To make reservations, go to the Friends of DeSoto web site at www.friendsofdesoto.org and click on the **Donate** button. Please make reference to “**November Boat Tour Tickets**” when remitting. For more information, call 941-704-6825.

Donor Plaque Displayed in Park Visitor Center



Park rangers Shannon Wilson, left, and Marielle Lumang flank the donor plaque.

A plaque recognizing donors recently was unveiled at the DeSoto National Memorial Visitor Center.

The plaques, which features various levels of contributions, lists names of those who have donated to the park via the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc.

The Friends organization “is the park’s right arm,” said **Jorge Acevedo**, park superintendent. “One of its most important roles is to find ways of funding the park events.

“I am extremely grateful of the philanthropic efforts the group puts forth to assist the park financially,” Acevedo said. “We could not be as successful without their help. Since (the Friends) incorporation in 2008, the park has experienced a boost of confidence in being creative, outgoing and bold pursuing excellence of service and quality of programs it puts together for our community and its visitors.”

Continued on page 2

Dec. 5, 2015 - Apr 15, 2016

Camp Uzita living history programs begin in early December at DeSoto National Memorial. Visitors get a unique look into Spanish and American Indian life in the 16th Century. Park staff offer talks and demonstrations on the lasting impact DeSoto would have on the history

of America and its native people. Programs run 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the top of every hour.

Dec. 19 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The holiday season comes to light at DeSoto National Memorial at the popular winter luminary walk. Thousands of lights line the trails at the park during this annual event.

Who are Friends of DeSoto?

Friends of DeSoto National Memorial, Inc. was created for the purpose of supporting the National Park Service's DeSoto National Memorial. We are a private non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Florida. Our purpose and mission statement:

To initiate, promote, and support the educational, historical, interpretive, and scientific activities of the DeSoto National Memorial.

Please visit www.friendsofdesoto.org.

Membership

We are now enrolling new members at a donation level of \$25 per person annually. Join our Email List. We send out periodic notices and email newsletters with the latest information on activities at the Park or with the Friends group.

Members help the park in various ways, including raising money to help pay for Junior Ranger camp, concerts, special membership events, the annual luminary walk, improvements to the park, and much more. Joining the Friends organization allows one to help preserve a valuable natural and historical resource, and enjoy a special relationship with the park and community.

Thanks to park volunteers for donating more than 1,000 hours of their time in the past year.



Park Hosts Popular Desoween Event



The trails at DeSoto National Memorial feature a collection of colorful characters during the annual Desoween celebration.

Haloween comes a week early at DeSoto National Memorial when the park hosts its popular **Desoween** event. Desoween is **6:30-9 p.m. Oct. 24** at the park. This year's theme is **Camp Desoween**, a haunted summer camp where the campers have been possessed by the dreaded Sisters of the Swamp and are terrorizing the counselors and the families who have come to find their children.

The park needs volunteers to portray summer campers and counselors, play the parts of the Sisters of the Swamp, serve as make-up artists and to work the line and crowd control.

If you would like to volunteer for this year's event, please contact **Ranger Daniel Stephens** at **941-792-0458**.

Boat Trips on Calendar for October, November

Join the Friends of De Soto on **Oct. 17** for a sunset cruise of Sarasota Bay on **Paradise Boat Tours**. The boat leaves from the Historical Bridge Street Pier at 5:30 p.m. for a leisurely, informative 90-minute cruise. Tickets are \$35 for non-members and \$30 for members per person.



All proceeds benefit the DeSoto National Memorial through the Friends of DeSoto, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

To make reservations, go to the Friends of DeSoto website at www.friendsofdesoto.org and click on the **Donate** button. Please make reference to "**October Boat Tour Tickets**" when remitting. For more information, call **941-704-6825**.

There also is a Paradise Boat Tours trip tentatively scheduled for **10:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 22**, departing from Bradenton Beach Pier.

Friends Group Officers Re-elected

All officers of the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc. were re-elected to serve another one-year term at the organization's annual meeting and election Aug. 20 in the Visitors Center of DeSoto National Memorial.

Serving as officers are: **Margo Belaga**, *president*; **Carol Heckman**, *vice president*; **Mary Hawk**, *secretary*; **Scott Bassett**, *treasurer*.

The Friends organization is a private, nonprofit organization created to support the national memorial.

Donor Plaque *Continued from page 1*

The donor plaque recognizes those folks who serve on the Friends board for their contributions, he said. It also recognizes people and organizations that have contributed to the park via the Friends.

"There are three levels of recognition," Acevedo said. Those levels are: Canoe level, \$1,000-\$2,499; Galleon level \$2,500-\$4,999; Stargazer level, \$5,000, and more.

Canoe and Galleon levels make reference to our historical period contact between indigenous people and Europeans," Acevedo said. "Stargazer represents visionaries, those who help us look toward an empowered, creative future."

Superintendent Acevedo truly is a friend of the Friends, and is highly appreciative of the organization and donors.

"I am very proud to have our Friends, our donors and our community leaders recognized in our Visitor Center," he said. "Together we showcase that no cause is too small or future too grim. We are part of something greater, the sharing of our culture, our history, and our heritage."

Superintendent Acevedo is effusive in his praise for volunteers and the Friends organization.

"I thank each and every one who have helped us in the past and encourage those who are willing to help us in the future to become part of this success story," he said. "We are a small park by many measures, but there is no measure for the amount of heart, dedication and devotion we are blessed to receive.

"Thanks to our staff, the volunteers and our dear Friends, we are a great organization," Acevedo said. "Our past has been great, our today is full of hope, but our future will define us as the great collective group of leaders who did not give up in the times of hardship and trouble."

The future is bright, he said. "Time will show that our commitment and efforts have set the bar of excellence for how the park continues to move forward in pursuing excellence."



Nota DeSoto



**FRIENDS OF DESOTO
NATIONAL MEMORIAL, INC.**

Walk the Nature Trails

The Nature Trail winds along the shoreline and through several Florida ecosystems, including a mangrove forest like the one that DeSoto's men would have encountered when they landed. Trails include interpretive signage and waysides that tell the story of the DeSoto Expedition and the natural history of the area. Bicycling is allowed in the parking lot, but not on the sidewalks or trails.

Forty-five minute guided Trail Walks are offered by Park Rangers daily at 11 a.m., staff availability and weather permitting. Inquire at the Visitor Center. For tour availability, call 941-792-0458, ext. 105.

Picnic Area: A ten table picnic area is located adjacent to the parking lot and is available for visitors on a first come basis. Large groups and schools should call ahead to reserve seating. Grills and alcohol are not allowed within the park.

Bird Watching: The seasonal migration of birds brings many bird watchers to the park in the fall and early spring. The exact timing of migration is dependent upon weather. Come to our visitor center and inquire what new and rare birds have been sighted recently at DeSoto National Memorial.

Camping: DeSoto National Memorial has no facilities for camping. The park grounds are closed from sunset to sunrise.

Beach: Several small beaches are located within the park. The DeSoto Point Beach is located west of DeSoto Point and northwest of the Visitor Center. This beach is exposed to the current of the Manatee River and the waves of Tampa Bay. The Cove Beach located on the south side of DeSoto Point and is more popular because it is sheltered from most current and waves. No life guards are on duty. Swimmers use park beaches at their own risk.

Fishing: Fishing with rod and reel is allowed within the park with a valid Florida drivers license and valid State of Florida fishing license. Fishermen are not allowed to stand on rip rap or to clear brush from any area in order to gain access to the water. For questions of licensure and eligibility please visit <http://myfwc.com/license/>

Boating: The Cove is a popular temporary anchorage for small pleasure boats. Canoes and kayaks may be launched and carried to the water by hand. They can be launched from the park beaches provided that vegetation, terrain, and wildlife is not disturbed. Loud motors and the creation of excessive wave action is prohibited.

Dogs: Dogs are permitted within the park only when on a hand held leash. For all of our dog walkers and four legged friends make sure to come to our Dog Days at DeSoto event held annually in March.

Exhibits: The Visitor Center includes stunning displays of historic armor, weapons, and related period items. Helmets and armor are available to try on.

Theater: Our newly re-modeled theater and museum features a wide array of exhibits of Spanish and Native American artifacts. The new museum exhibits are designed to be rotating with new items and art that will be displayed periodically. Our theater shows our parks film Hernando DeSoto in America throughout the year. During season the film is shown on a time schedule to coincide with scheduled living history programs.

Bookstore: The bookstore features an excellent selection of books about the DeSoto Expedition and the Native American cultures encountered, as well as keepsakes to remember your visit by. Some items may be ordered on-line.

Other Amenities: Modern restrooms and a drinking fountain and a dog drinking fountain are available in the Visitor Center.

There are no entry fees for the park or the Visitor Center.

Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Friends of DeSoto National Memorial, Inc.
P.O. Box 14422, Bradenton, FL 34280-4422

Email: info@friendsofdesoto.org

Website: FriendsofDeSoto.org

Donations *How to Support Your National Parks*

The National Park Service appreciates your support in the form of visitation and donations. Your donations directly contribute to the services and features you enjoy at DeSoto National Memorial. Donation money supports the maintenance of our nature trails and boardwalk, they fund many of our special events like our living history programs and holiday events, and they support many of our youth programs like Junior Ranger Summer Camp.

There are several ways you and your family can make a donation to DeSoto National Memorial or the National Park Service. These options include: on-line giving through our friends group and cooperating associations, Memorial gifts for living or deceased family or friends, Wedding party favors or gifts, holiday gift, and wills and bequests.

Your donation and gifts will be greatly appreciated and be given direct recognition if you and your family desires. You have the option to give anonymously as well. Recognition of your donation can be used to inspire others to give to DeSoto National Memorial or to the National Park Service.

You can make a gift to benefit our park either directly to the National Park Service or to our primary non-profit tax exempt support organization the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial. If you make the gift directly to the park, the entire gift will be used for the purpose you identify. No administrative costs are deducted from your gift to the National Park Service. Your check will be deposited in a government account and the full amount will be spent as you intended. Most parks have separate donation accounts for park-specific projects and programs for which you can earmark your gift. Government accounts are non-interest bearing and cannot generate interest between the time it is deposited and the time it is spent.

The advantage of making your gift check to the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial, our parks Friends Group, is that the amount will be deposited in an interest bearing account to assist park-prioritized requested projects and programs.

To make a donation, go to www.friendsofdesoto.org or mail your check to:

Friends of DeSoto National Memorial • PO Box 14422 • Bradenton, FL 34280-4422

Shop at **AmazonSmile**
and Amazon.com will
make a donation to
**Friends of DeSoto
National Memorial Inc.**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Margo Belaga, *President*

Carol Heckman, *Vice-President*

Mary Hawk, *Secretary*

Scott Bassett, *Treasurer*

Directors:

Valerie Bell

Joan Dowling

Art Durshimer

Elfie Starrett



DeSoto National Memorial adds \$22 million annually to our local economy, according to a federal study of tourism dollars spend by visitors to our National Park. Help the Park maintain the programs that bring over 350,000 visitors to DeSoto each year. With federal funding cuts, the best way to maintain these programs is to join Friends of DeSoto National Memorial. Our Friends group raises money to support important programs such as concerts, educational programs, and maintenance of our Park's facilities. **Join today!**

Shop at AmazonSmile and Amazon will make a donation to Friends of DeSoto National Memorial, Inc.

Become a Member

Yes, I would like to support my National Park by becoming a member. Memberships are tax deductible.

(Check one)

- Individual Adult \$25.00 _____
- Family \$40.00 _____
- Youth/Student \$10.00 _____
- Business \$75.00 _____
- Senior Citizen 65 and over \$20.00 _____
- Active Military \$20.00 _____

Additional donation to help save the Gumbo Limbo trees is enclosed in the amount of \$ _____

My check for \$ _____, (membership renewal plus an additional donation if desired) made out to "Friends of DeSoto NM" is enclosed. Please send membership materials to the name and address below:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

I would like to help! (Check all that apply)

- _____ Membership Committee
- _____ Publicity Committee
- _____ Fundraising/Special Event Committee

Print out and mail to:
P.O. Box 14422, Bradenton, FL 34280-4422

(Renewals and donations can also be completed on our website using PayPal at www.paypal.com)