



# Nota DeSoto

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4  DECEMBER/JANUARY 2015-6

## Who are Friends of DeSoto?

**F**riends 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](http://www.friendsofdesoto.org).

## Membership

**W**e 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.

## Friends of the Friends

**M**any people and organizations play key roles in helping the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc. The Friends and DeSoto National Memorial extend a hearty and heartfelt "thank you!"

- Capt. Sherman and Paradise Boat Tours
- The Hair Company
- Bridge Tender Inn
- Mateo's Restaurant
- Shortcut to Fitness

## Join Friends for Sunset Cruise



*A Friends-sponsored sunset cruise shows the colors of the evening over the Gulf of Mexico.*

**F**riends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc. will sponsor a sunset boat cruise **December 5** on Paradise Boat Tours. The relaxing 90-minute cruise on Sarasota Bay departs at 4:45 p.m. from the historic Bradenton Beach Pier. The boat will return to the pier about 6:15 p.m.

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

The cost is \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. For reservations go to the Friends of DeSoto website at [www.friendsofdesoto.org](http://www.friendsofdesoto.org), or for more information call 941-704-6825.

Friends of DeSoto and guests previously enjoyed a Paradise Boat Tours sunset cruise October 17 on Sarasota Bay.

## Park Event Lights up the Holiday Season



*Thousands of holiday lights will line the trails for DeSoto National Memorial visitors during the winter luminary event.*

**D**eSoto National Memorial will host its popular winter luminary event 6:30-8:30 p.m. **Dec. 19**. The park's trails will be lit up beautifully with thousands of holiday lights during the seventh annual event. Come out and listen as musicians such as native flute player Juan Leon, classical violinist Amberly Waterman and the Manatee High School orchestra fill the air with festive holiday melodies.

The Feast Restaurant will sell food at the event. The menu is pulled pork sandwich, lasagna, homemade baked beans and rice and homemade chips for \$10 (including drink).

Shuttle service from King Middle School will be available so visitors need not worry about finding parking at DeSoto. Make this truly unique event a part of a family holiday tradition.



## Friends Mix Food and Fun at November Social



Current Friends and prospective members enjoy a meal at the Blue Jasper Restaurant on Nov. 14.

**F**riends of DeSoto President Margo Belaga said the November 14 membership drive and social at the Blue Jasper Restaurant was a great success.

"We had 44 people in attendance," Margo said. "The food and atmosphere were wonderful."

The evening provided a time to eat and socialize with current and prospective Friends members.

"We were able to get to know our existing members," Margo said, but even better "we received nine new members."

Friends of DeSoto Inc. is a private non-profit organization created to support DeSoto National Memorial. Please visit [www.friendsofdesoto.org](http://www.friendsofdesoto.org) to learn more about the organization.

Blue Jasper Restaurant is at 5718 Cortez Road, Bradenton, Florida.



Friends board members Carol Heckman, left, and Joan Dowling work the desk at the Blue Jasper.

## SAVE the DATES

**Dec. 5, 2015 – Apr. 15, 2016  
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. daily**

Camp Uzita provides visitors 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 at the top of every hour.

**March 19 and 20  
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. daily**

Five Centuries of Florida History gives visitors a first-hand glimpse of 500 years of history. More than 30 re-enactors portray men and women from Florida's extensive history. All time periods set up camps and displays with talks and demonstrations throughout the weekend.

**April 16 • 10 a.m. & 3 p.m.**

Be at the park as conquistador Hernando de Soto comes ashore and claims Florida. Stay all day as park staff and volunteers provide talks and demonstrations about De Soto's expedition and its lasting impact on early American history, and the native people of the Southeast.

## Thrills, Chills Define DeSoto's Desoween



"Campers" move out on one of the park's trails during Desoween VII.

**D**esoween 2015 on Oct. 24 was a resounding success with more than 1,025 visitors experiencing the terror of Camp Desoween, said DeSoto National Memorial Ranger Dan Stephens.

Possessed campers and terrorized counselors greeted the visitors as they braved the dangers of a summer camp gone horribly wrong, Ranger Stephens said. At the center were the dreaded Sisters of the Swamp, who jumped, shrieked and tried to steal the souls of all who came into their clutches. This year, the seventh for Desoween, the park had great support from volunteers, including some friends of DeSoto members, many who came as families and volunteered for the first time.

With the success of the 2015 event fresh on their minds, Ranger Stephens said park staff and volunteers are off and planning already for the theme of 2016's Desoween VIII.



One of the Sisters of the Swamp lurks in the foliage at Desoween.





# 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](mailto:info@friendsofdesoto.org)

**Website:** [FriendsofDeSoto.org](http://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](http://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



**D**eSoto 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](http://www.paypal.com))