



# Nota DeSoto

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2



APRIL/MAY 2016

## 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](http://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.

## Friends of the Friends

Many 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
- Chop Shop
- Fratello's
- Mateo's Restaurant
- Backstreets Salon
- Keeton's Business & Art Supply

## Annual Landing Reenactment Set April 16

One of the highlights of the DeSoto National Memorial season will be April 16 when park rangers and volunteers reenact the 1539 landing in Florida of Hernando de Soto.

There will be two reenactments that day – 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Both landings will be at the cove beach along the Manatee River in front of the two monuments on the east side of the park.

This year will mark the 76th reenactment of the landing, park ranger Dan Stephens said. Park staff and volunteers don clothing representing 16th-century Europeans as the row ashore and claim La Florida for Spain.

Visitors are encouraged to spend time after the reenactments to observe demonstrations by staff and volunteers and to walk the trails of the park.

Ample parking is available, and the reenactments are just a short walk from the parking area.



Park staff and volunteers dress the part of 16-century Europeans for the annual reenactment of Hernando de Soto's 1539 landing in Florida.

## Friends Seek Volunteers

Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc. is looking for volunteers from its membership to help with upcoming events and to help create some additional upcoming events for our members.

If interested in taking more of an active role and supporting the Friends and DeSoto National Memorial, please contact Margo Belaga (Friends president) at 941-704-6825.

## Keeton's Contributes to Friends' Mission

Friends of De Soto National Memorial Inc. says "thank you" to Keeton's Office & Art Supply for their contribution toward production costs for the organization's newsletter.

The Friends is a nonprofit organization that supports De Soto National Memorial. That mission is made easier and more productive with assistance from generous donors such as Keeton's.

Please visit Friends at [www.friendsofdesoto.org](http://www.friendsofdesoto.org)

## SAVE <sup>the</sup> DATES

**June 21-24 and July 26-29**  
9 a.m.-1 p.m. each day

The popular Junior Ranger summer camps will take center stage at DeSoto National Memorial in June and July. Each camp session will accept 20 youngsters ages 6-10. The camps are free and activities include marine ecosystems, archaeology, and conservation. Sign up for both camps begin June 1.

**May 6 and beyond**  
9:30 a.m.

Ranger-led kayak season at DeSoto National Memorial begins May 6 and tours will be held at 9:30 a.m. every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Sign-up began April 1. Interested kayakers must reserve a spot, and seats fill quickly; most tours book two months in advance. The 90-minute long tour is free and all necessary equipment is provided.



## Injunuity Concert Hits Sweet Note at Park

Several hundred visitors enjoyed the music of Native American ensemble Injunuity at the Feb. 27 Concert on the Lawn at DeSoto National Memorial.

"The Concert on the Lawn was a great success," said Marielle Lumang, park ranger. "Almost 400 people braved the beautiful but cold night."

Injunuity is a mix of Choctaw and Chickasaw members who play contemporary and traditional Native American music. The band members have been selected as cultural ambassadors for the United States and have toured Europe.

The award-winning four-piece group entertained visitors with musical selections from an extensive catalog of favorites. The musicians were a hit with the crowd.

"The public had nothing but wonderful things to say about the music and the band," Ranger Lumang said. "The debut of First Encounter also went very well."

Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc. covered expenses for the concert as a part of the organizations ongoing mission to support the park. For more information on the friends, please visit [www.friendsofdesoto.org](http://www.friendsofdesoto.org).



Native American ensemble Injunuity entertained visitors during a concert on the Lawn event Feb. 27.

## 5 Centuries Overcomes Rainy Start



PHOTO BY MEG DURSHIMER

Re-enactors representing World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Operation Iraqi Freedom delivered hands-on history lessons at the 5 Centuries event. From left: Vietnam veterans Lee Stephens and Bob Grimshaw, Iraqi Freedom veteran Jason Harvey, Greg Abramowitz, Ron Epps and Art Durshimer.

The 5 Centuries of Florida history event at DeSoto National Memorial the weekend of March 19-20 began under sunny skies and was on track to welcome record crowds before thunderstorms rolled in and put a damper on the event.

Sunday started rainy, but cleared quickly and more than 600 people visited more than 20 reenactors and living historians throughout the day. Visitors toured period-accurate displays, including tents and artifacts, and heard presentations in the palisade area.

Demonstrations of the various weaponry were highlights for the visitors. The 5 Centuries event is one of many special programs DeSoto conducts during the year with the support of the Friends of DeSoto National Memorial Inc.

"Five Centuries was a success despite the rain on Saturday," said Art Durshimer, a Friends board member and re-enactor who portrayed a Korean War Marine. "We enjoy sharing our knowledge with visitors."

Durshimer also thanked the park staff for their hospitality and effort.

On Saturday of the event, the Friends group brightened the spirits of the damp re-enactors by providing a sub-sandwich lunch from Publix.

## Annual Parade Set for End of April

DeSoto National Memorial once again will have a float and marchers in the annual DeSoto Parade. The parade, which will begin at 6:30 p.m. April 30, will be one of the last highlighted Centennial events for the park, ranger Dan Stephens said. The park's float will display the National Park Service's Centennial banner.

"We are looking for volunteers from the Friends of De Soto and their families to march in the parade," ranger Stephens said. Please contact 941-792-0458 for more details.



The DeSoto contingent lines up for the start of the 2015 parade.



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**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  
Jamie Linnane  
Elfie Starrett



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

**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))