



Nota De Soto



FALL 2019



Who are Friends of De Soto?

Friends of De Soto National Memorial, Inc. was created for the purpose of supporting the National Park Service's De Soto 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 De Soto National Memorial.

Please visit www.friendsofdesoto.org.

Friends Seek New Friends — Membership Opportunity

Please take a moment to read the last page of this newsletter. More than ever we need your help to provide financial assistance for concerts, educational programs and park maintenance. Through your membership donation you join hundreds of other supporters who are committed to helping the Friends of De Soto National Memorial. Thank you for your support!

Friends of the Friends

Captain Sherman, Paradise Boat Tours
Porges, Hamlin, Knowles & Hawk

Friends Seek Volunteers

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

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

Friends of De Soto Donate Funds to Restore Boat



Friends of De Soto Memorial board members: Margo Belaga, left, Sharry Lueck, Jean Gallagher, Joan Dowling, and Susan Johnson with the boat Anna Mendez.

The Friends of De Soto National Memorial has donated \$5,457 to restore the park's replica Spanish boat the **Anna Mendez**. Florida shipbuilders at the historic Cortez boat works built the Anna Mendez in 2009. The 27-foot long wooden boat was crafted by hand, and constructed using 500-year-old ship building methods. The Anna Mendez is used by the park as the primary vessel in the park's annual De Soto landing event. It represents the park in the annual De Soto Grand Parade, and De Soto Children's Parade, held every year in April.

Over the years, the Anna Mendez has started to show wear and tear from exposure to the environment and continual use. The ship has shown damage in its deck planking, and has cracks around its oarlocks. It also will need general sanding, sealing, and painting to ensure that the ship can continue to be used by the park for many future public events. Tim Smith Marine Services has been contracted to do all of the work on the Anna Mendez.

The Friends of De Soto voted last week to donate the funds to the park so that the Anna Mendez can receive the much-needed repairs it needs. The Friends of De Soto rely on memberships and fundraising to assist the park in its mission. Its membership consists of local community members who love De Soto National Memorial, and the mission of the National Park Service. If you would like to become a member of the Friends of De Soto, and help out the park and its programs please visit <https://friendsofdesoto.org/> to learn more.

De Soto National Memorial commemorates Conquistador Hernando De Soto's 1539 expedition through the Southeastern United States and tells the history of the Native American tribal societies they encountered. Learn more about the park and upcoming events at www.nps.gov/deso or follow De Soto National Memorial on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DES01539/. To learn more about the Friends of De Soto visit <https://friendsofdesoto.org>.



What's Going on at De Soto?

Kayak Tours



Continuing to be one of our most popular programs, our ranger-led kayak tours run every Friday,

Saturday, and Sunday morning from June until October. These tours are great for every visitor, from kayaking novice to kayaking pro. After going over safety procedures and kayaking basics, a ranger, accompanied by a volunteer, leads a group of up to 10 visitors in tandem kayaks around the perimeter of the park. Throughout the tour, the ranger tells a story of our park. Each ranger writes their own story, so any given tour could cover the history of De Soto, the expedition, and the natives of the area, or the ecosystem and the importance of the Manatee River. Tours are by reservation only and are often fully booked a month or more in advance.

Park In Classroom

The purpose of the National Park Service's (NPS) PIC program is to give schools the chance to allow students to experience an in-class field trip. The PIC program is funded by federal grants and is offered free of charge to any educational institution, public or private, that wishes to participate.

Junior Ranger



De Soto National Memorial offers year round an award winning Junior Ranger program. While visiting the park, a

Junior ranger will receive an activity book, pencil, and compass to get them started. Junior Rangers will learn about the De Soto expedition and the Native American people as they are guided around the park and its trails. Junior Rangers must complete six activities as well as the map activity within the book. When they finish, the Junior Ranger says the pledge and is given their Junior Ranger badge!

We are also in the midst of developing a Master Junior Ranger program. When a Junior Ranger receives our 3 badges—Junior Ranger Book, Junior Ranger Summer Camp, Fishing Rancho—they will be eligible to receive a Master Junior Ranger coin!

BARK Ranger



The B.A.R.K. Ranger program introduces visitors to responsible behavior on the park's trails and encourages the community to explore and learn more about this great re-

source with their dogs. B.A.R.K. stands for Bag your poop, Always use a leash, Respect wildlife, and Know where you can go. The B.A.R.K. Ranger program is offered year-round and dogs are able to become De Soto B.A.R.K. Rangers at any time.

The program launched on August 25th and has been receiving great reviews from visitors, both in the park and on social media. The program was also displayed at the Southeast Region Chief of Interpretation Conference where it grabbed the attention of regional and national leaders within NPS.

Escape Room

Staff at De Soto are eagerly preparing to launch our new Escape Room in December! This new program will introduce visitors to the De Soto expedition and native cultures through an immersive, challenge-based experience in which the visitors take on the role of French spies looking at la Florida as a possible colony. Ours will be one of the only escape rooms in the National Park Service!

Night Sky Event



De Soto staff are excited to also be launching a Night Sky Program! This program will bring visitors into the

park after closing to explore the sky and learn about telescopes, constellations, and all other things night sky. It will be great for all ages and will provide a unique view of the park at night! You can look for us to launch this program in December.

Staff Changes

- **Nathan Souder**, Superintendent of De Soto National Memorial, has left the park to take a Superintendent's position at Colorado National Monument. His family started their journey to their new park and new opportunities on September 18.
- **Sanchez-Hernandez**, our permanent Park Guide, will be leaving us in mid-October. She has taken a position with National Park Service RTCA in Washington D.C.
- **Cindy LaBarge** and **Alyssa Troxel**, our two summer interns, will be leaving in November when their term is up.
- **Susan Anderson**, our one-year term Park Guide will be leaving the park after her term position is through on October 19.
- **Wayne Boyd**, our Facilities Chief, will step into the roll as Acting Superintendent until the park brings in a new Superintendent.



Nota De Soto



**FRIENDS OF DE SOTO
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 De Soto's men would have encountered when they landed. Trails include interpretive signage and waysides that tell the story of the De Soto Expedition and the natural history of the area. Bicycling is allowed in the parking lot, but not on the sidewalks or trails.

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 De Soto National Memorial.

Camping: De Soto 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 De Soto Point Beach is located west of De Soto 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 De Soto 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.

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 De Soto 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 De Soto

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 De Soto 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 De Soto 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 De Soto 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 De Soto 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 De Soto 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 De Soto National Memorial, our parks Friends Group, is that the amount will be deposited in an 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 De Soto National Memorial • PO Box 14422 • Bradenton, FL 34280-4422

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joan Dowling, President
Jean Gallagher, Vice President
Sharry Lueck, Secretary
Linda Benedict, Treasurer
Margo Belaga, Susan Johnson,
Bob Milligan



Nota De Soto



**FRIENDS OF DE SOTO
NATIONAL MEMORIAL, INC.**

De Soto 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 De Soto each year. With federal funding cuts, the best way to maintain these programs is to join Friends of De Soto 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 De Soto 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 _____

My check for \$_____, (membership renewal plus an additional donation if desired) made out to "Friends of De Soto 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: Friendsofdesoto.org)