



The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

August-September, 2018

Volume 2, Issue 6

Notepad

Hello

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteer Liz Kellar, a frequent BRS hiker who enjoys finding birds and other wildlife.

Good-bye

CREW Trust's Education Coordinator Jessi Drummond is leaving on August 7 for a new position at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) where she will also begin work on her Master's degree.

Lightning safe

Remember that lightning detectors are available at the office for volunteers to sign out. These are especially important during rainy season when storms can surprise hikers on the trail.

CREW tee

Need to replace your volunteer t-shirt or order another one? Short sleeve shirts are available for \$10 and long sleeve shirts for \$13. Email Anne (anne@crewtrust.org) with your size.

Contact update

Has your contact information changed, including your seasonal address? Please email Anne with all updates. The shared contact information page will be updated soon, so if you would like to share your contact information with other volunteers, let Anne know.

2018-19 schedule coming into focus

Registration to attend a Strolling Science Seminar or one of the Specialty Walks opens in September.

Strolling Science Seminars

Additional Strolling Science Seminars may be added later

November 8 (Thursday)

Mad Batters of CREW
with Kathleen Smith

November 10 (Saturday)

Not-So-Naked and Afraid, with Roger Hammer, based on his consultant experiences on the television show "Naked and Afraid"

December 7 (Friday)

Exploring the Outdoors with your Inner Child, with Jessi Drummond and Ricky Pires

February 23 (Saturday)

Descent with Modification: Natural Selection, with Jack Berninger

Specialty Walks

October 20 (Saturday)

Fall Wildflower Walk
with Brenda Thomas

January 26 (Saturday)

Birding with the Master
with Dr. Bernie Master

March 9 (Saturday)

Birding with the Master
with Dr. Bernie Master

April 13 (Monday)

Spring Wildflower Walk
with Roger Hammer

Fundraisers

October 26 (Friday)

CREW Stanley Hole Golf
Tournament

February 16 (Saturday)

2019 CREW Concert & Silent
Eco-Auction

Family Fun Day

April 6 (Saturday)

CREW Trust Member Events

January 22 (Tuesday)

Wine & Cheese Social

March 2 (Saturday)

Member Appreciation Picnic

Nature's Peace Walks

Contact George Luther if willing to assist with any of the following walks. Phone/text 860-287-2628 or email geluther9@gmail.com.

November 5 (Monday, 9:15-11:15)

Lighthouse

November 19 (Monday, 10:30-12)

StarAbility

December 3 (Monday, 10:30-12)

Alzheimer's Support Network

January 14 (Monday, 10:30-12)

StarAbility

February 4 (Monday, 10:30-12)

Alzheimer's Support Network

March 4 (Monday, 9:15-11:15)

Lighthouse

Volunteer Socials

December 11 (Tuesday)

at Anne Reed's home in Estero

March 7 (Thursday)

at Brenda Brooks' home in Olga

Volunteer Training

Dates and topics for small group sessions will be announced later

January 12 (Saturday)

CREW Review for all current
volunteers

Volunteer Appreciation Day

April 5 (Friday)

Volunteer appreciation event

In memoriam

Dr. David Cooper

We were deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. David Cooper at the end of May. We are planning a hike for our staff and volunteers during the upcoming season to honor his memory and the many hours he spent with us on the trails.



Dr. John Herman

FGCU professor and former CREW Trust trustee and Strolling Science Seminar leader Dr. John Herman passed away in early July. His passion for herpetology and his research in the watershed inspired us all.



Staying connected

People

Brenda Brooks
239-229-3948
brenda@crewtrust.org

Jessi Drummond
239-229-1088
education@crewtrust.org

Anne Reed
419-206-8800
anne@crewtrust.org

Web sites

www.crewtrust.org
www.trackitforward.com (hours)
www.crewtrust.org/crew-trust-volunteers (volunteer library—the password is **crew17**)

Good app for smart phones
weather bug (radar, lightning)

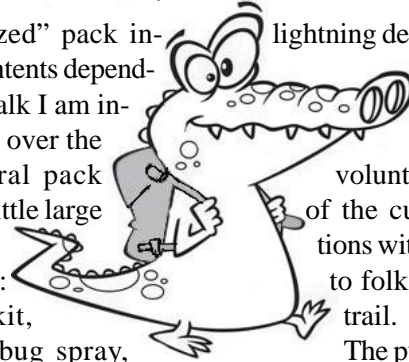
The Buzzard Bulletin contains notes and information for CREW volunteers and is emailed six times a year (September, November, January, March, May, July). Dick Brewer, editor.

On the trails: What are you packing?

In addition to water and a fully charged cell phone, CREW Trust volunteers share what they like to carry when on the trails.

I use a “generalized” pack instead of varying the contents depending on what kind of walk I am involved in. I just found over the years that one general pack works for me albeit a little large and heavy.

Here’s what’s in it: jackknife, first aid kit, chemical ice packs, bug spray, extra bottles of water (four to six 6 oz. bottles to be given away), trash bags, cell phone, CREW Field Guide, show and tell items, binoculars, plastic bags (for phones, cameras, and binoculars),



lightning detector, and laser pointer. A whistle would be a good idea, too.

I think that all CREW volunteers should carry a few of the current CREW publications with them to be handed out to folks that they meet on the trail.

The publications I’m thinking of are programs schedule, trail map, CREW pamphlet, CREW membership application, and the card with the locations of all CREW trailheads.

...George Luther

Flint Pen Strand preparation, planning continue

Trail marking: Several volunteer/staff work days have resulted in the installation of 4x4 posts for trail markers, which were painted red or blue for those two trails. Trail markers still need to be installed north of Harrell Road.

Hiking trail: CREW Trust volunteers are still cleaning out trash and surveying routes for a new trail. A future trail will connect to the loop portion of the Bird Rookery Swamp trail.

Equestrian trail: Planning for a 6-mile equestrian trail is underway. The SFWMD

will require riders to get a special use permit just as they do now at Cypress Dome in order to limit the number of horseback riders per day.

Parking lot: The SFWMD has enough funding to fence half the parking lot this year with the other half planned for next year. The fencing will be the same design as that around the Bird Rookery Swamp parking lot. Fencing materials

are now at the office. The lot will not open until phase one of the fencing is completed.

Signage: The district is currently working on kiosks, “rules & regulations” signs, and moving the FWC check station from the start of Vincent Road to the parking lot.



Nan Mattingly finishes painting a red trail marker post.

What’s open now: Even though not all of the trails are completely marked, people can already use the area west of Vincent Road, but the parking lot will not

open until the fencing and signage are completed.

Future plans: Plans are to offer guided walks and to create an education program geared towards high school students.

Opening date: It is still unknown. The decision will be made by the SFWMD.

Swallow-tailed Kites enjoy most successful nesting season yet

by Kathleen Smith
FWC wildlife biologist

Soaring serenely above of South Florida skies is arguably one of the most iconic birds in the southeastern United States, the Swallow-tailed Kite (STKI).

For many of us, Christmas comes in mid-February, not in December, when the kites glide their way back into our consciousness.

In mid to late February, kites arrive in Florida having completed their 3,500-mile migration from their wintering grounds in South America to their breeding grounds in the southeastern United States and Central America.

Almost immediately, nest building begins, indicating that breeding pairs may form during migration or are carried over from the previous year (Meyer, 1995).

With enough patience and perseverance, Swallow-tailed Kite nests can be located by following adults with nest material as they fly to their final destinations.

It is during this nest building stage in early March that FWC biologists and volunteers dust off their binoculars, slather on their sunscreen, and lace up their boots to bushwhack through the dense southwest Florida vegetation in search of kite nests on the CREW Management Area (CREW).

Later in the nesting season, nests may be found by hearing young chicks begging their parents for a delectable amphibian or satisfying invertebrate.



FWC biologist and volunteers began conducting annual STKI nest searches and monitoring on the CREW lands in 2015. The nest searching begins in late February and continues until all of the

known chicks in the nests are fledged, which is typically in July.

In 2018, FWC biologists and volunteers had their most successful year to date. They discovered and monitored a total of 51 STKI nests in CREW and another 13 nests outside CREW for a total of 64 nests.

In comparison, we found 29 nests on CREW in 2017, 11 nests on CREW in 2016, and 0 nests on CREW in 2015.

Data are still being analyzed for 2018, but preliminarily, CREW fledged 26 chicks and 31 chicks were fledged among all monitored nests.

On CREW lands, STKI nests were found in the Cypress Dome Trails and Caracara Prairie Preserve (23), Corkscrew Marsh Trails (11), CREW's property near Pepper Ranch (10), and the Flint Pen Strand/Musca/Gargiulo areas (7).

Nests were checked every one to two weeks and success was determined by the number of fledged chicks.

Vegetative metrics about the nest and the nest tree were collected to identify preferred nesting habitat and compare those metrics with other regions in the state.

Additionally, we share CREW's data with partners at the Avian Research Conservation Institute (ARCI) in Gainesville to contribute our data to a greater understanding of STKI.

We will continue our STKI monitoring at CREW next year and possibly expand our research to determine the best land management practices for Swallow-tailed Kites.



Citation:

Meyer, K. D. (1995). "Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)," version 2.0. *The Birds of North America* (A. F. Poole and F. B. Gill, editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. (<https://doi.org/10.2173/bna.138>)