



# The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

February-March, 2024

Volume 8, Issue 3

## Notepad

### Welcome

Welcome to new volunteers **Paul Barnicke, Stephanie Barrett, Stephen Birtz, Allysa Ford, Will Hoyt, Michael Picciano, Darin Sanders, Josh Shultz, and Ryan Walsh.**

### CREW brew night

A volunteer appreciation night will be Wednesday, February 21, at Riptide Brewing Company in Bonita Springs. Meet volunteers and staff starting at 6 pm.

The tap room is on Hunters Ridge Blvd. in the Bonita Grande Crossing near the southeast corner of Bonita Beach Road and I-75.

### Trail Work Tuesdays

Willing to help weed whack, install signs, mow, and/or pick up trash at the CREW trails? Trail Work Tuesdays provide the opportunity.

Crews meet at 9 am for the morning work. Contact Robin for information, or sign up in TiF.

### Logging for CREW

Please log in to Track-it-Forward regularly to keep up to date on entering volunteer hours.

Those hours are submitted to the SFWMD to help support the case for financial support from the District.

### Hunting dates

Hunting by permit occurs in CDT and non-trail parts of FPS.

- Mar. 4-7 & 8-12: spring turkey

## Trails benefit from new equipment, more volunteers could help projects

Nearly all of the Flint Pen Strand trails have been mowed, branches trimmed back, and new trail marking medallions installed, with more trail marking paint on the way.

The trail work crew, led by **Charlie Egli, Tom Maish, Paul Barnicke, Will Hoyt, and Rick Skrivan**, has been busy at FPS on Tuesday mornings.

The work pace accelerated with the arrival of a new storage pod in the main parking lot which houses trail tools and a mower.

Each of the trails needs more volunteers to help with trail maintenance. Already, new trail work dates have been added in TiF. The Wild Coffee trail in particular needs to be reclaimed. Contact Robin for more information and to set up possible work days.

Some volunteers are already at trails doing maintenance on their own schedules. If they contact Robin ahead



Tom Maish moves tools to a different location during a morning in FPS

of time, she can bring tools and supplies and meet them there.

## Upcoming spring programs need assistance

Volunteer help is needed at each of the following events. Information and sign-up are posted in Track-it-Forward (TiF).

### Weekly Guided walks

*(through May except holidays)*

1st & 3rd Tuesdays: CMT

2nd & 4th Tuesdays: CDT

Wednesdays: BRS

Saturdays: FPS

Saturdays: tabling/walk, BRS

### Specialty walks

Feb. 7: Survival of the Fittest, CDT

Mar. 16: Spring Blooms at Sunset, CMT

### Strolling Science Seminars

Mar. 2: Herpetology for Kids, FPS

Mar. 23: A to Z of Biodiversity, CMT

### Monthly Guided walks & rides

*(through May)*

2nd Saturday: Family hike, CMT, FPS

3rd Sunday: Hike the Loop, BRS

1st Saturday: Bike the Loop, BRS

3rd Sunday (Feb/Apr): tabling/walk, BRS

4th Sunday (Mar): tabling/walk, BRS

### Soil Rocks (2nd grade field trips)

Feb. 6-8, CDT

Feb. 13-15, CDT

Feb. 21-22, CDT

*see article on page 2*

# School, individual, member events on spring schedule

## *Soil ROCKS! lets students enjoy outdoors while learning about nature*

During February, CREW is hosting Soil ROCKS! for second graders in several Collier County schools.

The program was created in 2018 and was designed by teachers to meet Florida state curriculum standards

The two part program has students completing a series of learning activities about birds, animal anatomy, basic plant and animal identification, and the importance of a watershed.

Then, students hike the Cypress Dome Trails as soil scientists, using a soil auger and moisture meters to study the soil types across different habitats.

Teachers and CREW Trust staff lead the activities, but volunteers have an integral role in the program, helping facilitate fun activities.

After exploring the marsh, pine flatwoods, and cypress dome habitats along the trails, students will learn about skulls, search for signs of wild-



life, and identify birds around the pavilion.

Many of these students will return next year as third graders for the Walk Through a Watershed program.

Volunteers can help the student scientists by shadowing the teachers and helping at the learning stations. Please sign up in TiF.

### *Additional field trips*

In addition to Soil ROCKS!, there are several other school trips planned in the upcoming months including high school science classes, home school groups, and private schools that have requested programs.

We look forward to a busy second semester field trip schedule.

## *Downloadable self-guided tour app coming for Bird Rookery Swamp*

The CREW Trust team has created a self guided tour for Bird Rookery Swamp utilizing the STORY app.

The tour will include some well known stops along the trail such as the witches broom and Ida's pond as well as some stops further along the trail that are less well known.

The STORY app has the ability to present the tour in multiple languages, making it accessible to almost all visitors to the BRS trail.

Although not a substitute for participating in one of CREW Trust's guided walks, people who are unable to attend one of the walks will now have a great alternative and introduction to the trails.

People can download the app to their phones when they get to the trails using a QR code that will be posted on a large sign, or the app can be downloaded from the CREW Trust web site by scanning the QR code.

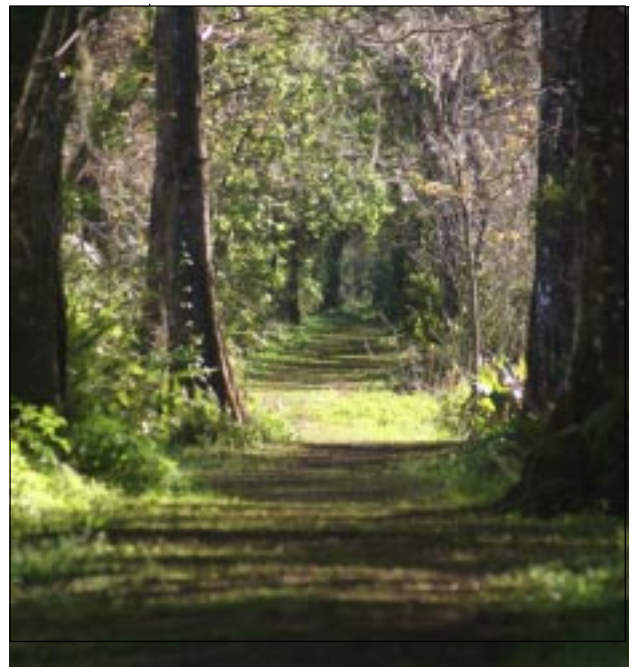
Although a specific release date hasn't been set, an official announcement will be sent to all volunteers and publicized on social media.

### *Calling all CREW Trust photographers*

The app will feature photographs of various spots along the trails in addition to text.

Quality photographs of plants and wildlife seen along the trail are needed to be part of the tour.

Please send any photos of plants and wildlife on the BRS trail, from the kiosk to the lakes that could be used to complement the text in the application, by e-mailing appropriate photos to Piper or Robin.



## *CREW Trust members-only events planned*

Four members-only events at the CREW trails are already scheduled once a month from February through May. Volunteers can either sign up to help, or if they are members, they can be participate by reserving a spot.

Details will be e-mailed to members. Sign up to help in TiF.

Feb. 24: Full moon hike at FPS

Mar. 18; Sunset hike at FPS

Apr. 12: Member bug watch at CMT

May 23: Full moon hike at CMT

Trails & volunteers...

## Robin Serne joins staff

**Robin Serne** has joined the CREW Trust as the Trail Operations Coordinator which includes scheduling volunteer activities.

She is enjoying hiking the trails, making to-do lists for trail maintenance, and working side by side with volunteers to keep the CREW trails accessible and enjoyable.



Her goal is to get regularly scheduled trail maintenance days established for each trailhead, so keep an eye on the TiF calendar for those dates.

There are also numerous guided hikes scheduled each week that are in need of guides and sweeps (*page 1*). These hikes are a great way to get to know CREW and to enjoy the company of others who enjoy the CREW Trails.

## New CREW trail challenge underway

The CREW Trails Challenge is a perfect way to explore CREW and build a routine of regular walks in the new year. Getting outside often improves physical health and emotional well-being and reduce stress—the perfect way to kick off 2024.

Your Challenge, if you choose to accept it: Walk 10 CREW trails and record the unique Challenge logo from a sign along each trail onto your Trails Challenge Card between now and May 31, 2024.

More information is available at [www.CREWchallenge.org](http://www.CREWchallenge.org). Download a printable CREW Trails Challenge Card for each participant to record trail



Paul Bernicke and Charlie Egli install a trail challenge sign on the FPS red trail.

visits. Challenge Cards and trail maps can also be found at the CREW trailhead kiosks.

The Challenge Card highlights ten CREW trails ranging from 1.1 miles to 3.25 miles in length across four different trail systems in Lee and Collier counties.

Participants may complete the trails on their own or on the scheduled CREW Trust guided walks.

People who submit their completed CREW Trails Challenge Cards by June 7, 2024, will be recognized for their accomplishment and will be entered to win one of twenty prizes selected at random.

## Staying connected

### People

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### Web sites

[www.crewtrust.org](http://www.crewtrust.org)

[www.trackitforward.com](http://www.trackitforward.com) (hours & events)

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.

## Quick ID: Little Blue Heron & Tricolored Heron

The two small, bluish herons are about the same size and forage in similar habitats. Their colors are similar much of the year although changes in breeding season are distinctive. Two clues will always distinguish them – bills and bellies.

### Little Blue Heron

The bill is two-toned, bluish by the head and dark at the tip. The feathers are all blue, including the belly.



### Tricolored Heron

The bill is a solid yellowish color although a little darker on the top. The belly is white.

