



Oystercatcher

Citizen Support Organization for Amelia - Big & Little Talbot - Ft. George Islands, Yellow Bluff Fort and Pumpkin Hill Preserve

A Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2010

In Good Hands: The Plight of a Plover

by Mike Simmons, Environmental Specialist

Monday, May 9, 2010, wasn't a typical Monday for the parks, as Mother's Day had arrived. Given the potential for nesting shorebirds on the parks' beaches, park patrons were being informed that they could encounter nesting shorebirds on the beach. While this message can glance off of some arriving visitors eager to get out on the beach, one such family took it to heart.

This family was enjoying their day on the beach. Walking down the second to last boardwalk on Little Talbot Island the couple decided to head north to get away from the crowd and enjoy the nice weather and beautiful view. During their trek they settled on a spot and set their things out to relax. That's when they noticed a baby chick on the beach beginning to be covered by sand. The couple looked around and didn't see any adult birds in sight. Worried, they contacted the Ranger Station and informed Park Ranger Kelly Dill know what they had found. Kelly contacted me on the radio and informed me of the situation. Unfortunately, I was on Amelia Island documenting least tern nests and behavior. By the time I had arrived on Little Talbot's beach, the family had brought the baby chick to the Ranger Station. I asked Kelly to see if the family could wait till I got to the Ranger Station, which they politely agreed. I met Kelly and the family about 5 minutes later where I picked up the baby chick and identified it as a Wilson's Plover chick. The family agreed to take me to the area they were recreating in.

After arriving on seen, I briefly looked around and didn't see an adult Wilson's Plover in

sight. The family told me what had happened and asked what would happen with the chick. I informed them that I would try to locate the parents in order to reunite them because the parents would take care of the chick better than anybody else could. If that failed, we would try a bird rehabilitator. The family wanted to continue their park visit and decided to go for a walk on the beach. Just as they began to depart a female Wilson's Plover landed near us frantically wandering about and calling distressingly. I, then, was able to point the adult out to the family and began a short interpretive program explaining the birds' behavior and why the situation had occurred.



The family continued up the beach and I watched the frantic mother look around calling for her chick. I identified a general location to place the chick and placed the chick near some vegetation and returned to my vantage point, a safe distance away. However the mother returned to a different location just north of where I placed the chick and called, the chick didn't respond and then the mother began to move north up the beach. I went to collect the chick to try again and noticed when I returned to my viewing spot the mother would land in one particular spot and move to a clump of vegetation before moving north. Worried that the chick was getting hot, (it was the hottest part of the day and full sun) I tried a second location to the north where the mother was eventually going past, which was good because the vegetation provided some much needed shade for the chick. I placed the chick down and went back to my viewing spot where I noticed,

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Plight of a Plover

cont'd from pg. 1

again, the mother land in the same spot and head to the same location as before, but this time instead of heading to the north where the chick was she went south to where I had the chick the first time, where she remained. Frustrated, I thought I would give it one more shot. I went and got the chick and placed in the middle, at the spot the mother was initially running to before she turned north or south. By this time the chick was starting to call and I could tell the mother could hear it based on her calls. I placed the chick down and went back to my spot. Moments later the mother landed on the beach and went back to a spot of vegetation near the chick. The mother's distress calls, plus more-than-likely, a visual sighting

of its mother caused the chick to get up. But, the mother was moving in the opposite direction. I stood up to get a better view through my binoculars, and that is when the mother tilted her head, and began acting like she had a broken wing. She gave a distress call and the chick immediately stopped moving and laid on the ground motionless. Both the mother's and chick's behavior signified that they were aware of each other and happily reunited on Mother's Day.

I am happy to report the chick fledged in the first few days of June!

Sun, Surf, Sand and Seahorses!

by Kelly Robinson, President Friends of Talbot Island

We couldn't have picked a more beautiful day on May 23, 2010 at the Kelly Seahorse Ranch for our 7th Annual Ride-A-Thon. While we had only a few competing riders, we all still managed to raise a total \$2,915 in funds and new memberships. First Place Fundraiser was Paul Mee who won a gift certificate from the Ritz Carlton, Second Place went

to Ashley Blind who will be enjoying a dinner at Baxter's Restaurant on her prize, and Third Place went to Nathan Rezeau, who received a gift certificate from Publix. Congratulations and a heartfelt thank you to all who participated, contributed and made it possible this year and in all past years. We can't do it without your support.



Visitor Service Providers in the Talbot Islands State Parks

Amelia Occasions at the Ribault Club - complete function facilities for weddings and meetings, 904-251-1050 www.AmeliaOccasions.com

Ecomotion Tours - morning & afternoon Segway eco-tours departing from the Ribault Club & Little Talbot Island, Wed - Sun, 904-251-9477 www.Ecomotiontours.com

Kelly Seahorse Ranch - one hour beach trail rides leave at 10, noon, 2 & 4, 904-491-5166, www.KellyRanchInc.com

Kayak Amelia at Long Island Outfitters - guided kayak & bike eco-tours, kayak & canoe rentals, cold drinks and earth friendly gifts. 904-251-0016 www.KayakAmelia.com

Thank you Friends of Talbot Islands State Parks

by Eric Steffey, Park Services Specialist

We, the staff at Talbot Islands State Parks, do not say thank you enough so it is time to publicly acknowledge the Friends of Talbot Islands, its members, officers and all involved with the organization. In recent years you have aided us in so many ways. You have funded important archeological work which has helped us better understand the significance of this area so we, in turn, can educate our visitors about the people who came before us. You have provided funds to various staff employees to continue their professional development enabling them to perform their duties at a much

higher level. You have helped us continue programs like the Trash Patrol by purchasing the prizes we give to kids who collect trash helping to keep the park clean. You helped purchase various park equipment when state funds were not available. You have helped the park's interpretive programs by providing funds for native animal taxidermy and replicas. It's not only monetary help, its also in-kind services during large events and gatherings. We could not provide the high level of service to our visitors without your support. In closing, we at Talbot Islands State Parks would like to say "Thank You"!

National & Florida Park Service Archaeological Weekend

by Eric Steffey, Park Services Specialist

During the month of June the National Park Service and Florida Park Service hosted a weekend of tours and presentations focusing on the vast local history we have in Northeast Florida. The event kicked off on Saturday the 6th at Kingsley Plantation. Mr. James Davidson, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and African Studies at University of Florida and members of the University of Florida Archaeological Field School gave tours and discussed the work they were currently doing this summer season. Their work at Kingsley Plantation was cantered around the plantation era on the island. This included the excavation of a slave quarter where one could see how the slow methodical process is done and what archaeologists are actually looking for. It surprised many people that a stain, or slight change in color in the soil could indicate a post or object placed in the ground. To an archaeologist this can be just as exciting as finding a tangible artifact.

On Sunday the event moved to the Ribault Club with three intriguing presentations and the Florida Public Archaeology Network providing hands-on children's activities. From the University of North Florida Anthropology Department, Assistant Professor Robert Thunen talked about recent work he has done focusing on the Mission period here in



Northeast Florida. Keith Ashley, a part-time Assistant Professor of Anthropology, also at University of North Florida, presented his recent work in looking for Mocama Villages. The last presentation was by Mike Russo, a National Park Service Archaeologist, who presented his work on the Rollins Shell Ring located on Fort George Island. This was followed by a tour of the site with Mike. Even though strong storms were rolling through, one which knocked out power for a brief second during Keith's presentation, a number of participants agreed to go on the tour during a break in storms.

This turned out to be a great weekend which gave people a better understanding of the immense amount of history Northeast Florida has. The event also showed that history doesn't stop at the boundary of one park but extends across the entire landscape. The work all of these archaeologist are conducting leads them from state lands to federal lands to private lands looking for the missing links which will make the story of the people who were here before us more complete. This also emphasizes the importance of the partnerships we continue to foster with other governmental agencies, non-profits, and private entities which in turn helps to continue research, interpretation of findings, and protection of these important jewels in our own backyard.

Please Consider becoming a Friend of the Talbot Islands State Parks

Our future efforts to help the Talbot Islands State Parks depend on the support of individuals, families and companies like you. With budgets shrinking, State Parks need even more help from the local community. If you are a member, thank you for your involvement and pass this on to a friend. If you are not, please consider joining today. For more information contact Kelly at 904-491-5166 or friends@talbotisland.com.

There are several membership levels:

Board Members

Kelly Robinson, President

Jim Kelly, Vice President

Midge Seigler, Treasurer

Elizabeth Pavlinsky, Secretary

Maren Arnett

Jody Hetchka

Name _____

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Member Level _____

Friend - \$30

- ~Quarterly newsletter
- ~12 free day use park passes
- ~Annual luncheon
- ~Holiday Party

Supporter - \$75

- ~All above plus
- ~10% discount on special events

Contributing - \$150

- ~All above plus
- ~2 for 1 tour with Ecomotion Tours, Kayak Amelia or Kelly Seahorse Ranch

Sustaining - \$300

- ~Supporter level benefits plus
- ~Trip for two with Ecomotion Tours, Kelly Seahorse Ranch or Kayak Amelia

Corporate Sponsor - \$300

- ~Corporate Sponsor listing in newsletter
- ~Supporter level benefits

O Y S T E R C A T C H E R

Friends of Talbot Islands State Parks

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Check out www.TalbotIslands.com to keep up to date with Ranger led tours and activities in the park

Friends of Talbot Islands State Parks is looking to expand its Board of Directors. We meet about every other month. If you want to help the Talbot parks contact Kelly at 491-5166 or kellyranch@bellsouth.net

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