



# The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

December, 2020–January, 2021

Volume 5, Issue 2

## Notepad

### Welcome

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteer Ilse Zeigler.

### Bikers, hikers... help still needed

Two January programs still need volunteers to sweep. Sign up to help at Track-it-Forward. Select the month and those programs in blue boxes need help.

- Jan. 16: Bike the loop, BRS (2)
- Jan. 27: Guided walk, BRS

### Hunting season

The small game hunting season on CREW lands runs from December 5 through January 3. See page 3 for more information.

### Like to write?

Ideas for future topics or written contributions to *The Buzzard Bulletin* and the CREW Trust blog are always welcome. Contact Nan Mattingly about the online blog ([mattinglyn@comcast.net](mailto:mattinglyn@comcast.net)) or Dick Brewer about the Buzzard Bulletin ([rdbrewer@gmail.com](mailto:rdbrewer@gmail.com)).

### CREW Review

Watch for email announcements about the all-volunteer CREW Review coming in January.

### Concert reminder

The February CREW Concert & Silent Eco-auction has been cancelled due to COVID/social distancing concerns.

## Educator returns as full-time coordinator

Julie Motkowicz is returning to the CREW Trust staff.

Julie worked as the Environmental Educator the first half of this year as the second recipient of a Dr. David Cooper Education Fund grant (thanks David and you'd be happy to see your legacy continue). After her May graduation from FGCU and due to COVID, she moved back to Bradenton in June.

Now she'll be back with the CREW Trust, and this time as the full-time Education Coordinator.

Her goal to be a leader in environmental education along with her experience



already working many of our trail-based programs is an ideal fit.

Julie has already worked with volunteers doing trail maintenance and leading programs, and those who worked with her will recall her passion for plants and her overall enthusiasm for learning.

Julie will engage with our community partners

as we adapt to the COVID situation, so virtual field trips will be an area of priority. This is new for CREW Trust because we've always preferred to get students out on the trails. Creativity is required in these times, and Julie is well prepared to take on the job.

### Spring, summer work nears completion

## Kiosks renovated to provide better information

Before hitting the trails, take a minute to look at the updated information kiosks at CREW Marsh Trails (CDT), Cypress Dome Trails (CDT), and Flint Pen Strand (FPS).

Over the past year, the kiosks have been repaired and renovated, and information has been updated.

Work began at CMT, a frequent site for educational programs. An enlarged trail map was one important need, and information about the other three trail systems was added. Text was as brief as possible and was illustrated with big, colorful photographs.

To engage visitors, one whole side of a kiosk was dedicated to striking photos of flora and fauna (green stuff and critters). Photos will be rotated every few months.

After those kiosks were finished, similar renovations were completed at CDT. The newly refurbished kiosks include tips for hiking and staying safe. At both trails, visitors can take a photo of the new trail maps to use on the trails.

FPS had the luxury of brand new kiosks already installed at the three parking areas by the South Florida Water Management District. A trail map is the centerpiece on the front side and short explanations of what a watershed does for the community are on the back.

Work is in progress at the kiosks at Bird Rookery Swamp. It is a little different than the other trail systems and its kiosks will reflect that difference, highlighting its logging history and previewing what visitors can expect on the nearly twelve-mile loop trail.

## Identification tip

### Downy/Hairy Woodpeckers

The quickest way to distinguish between the two woodpeckers is to look at the length of the bills. The Downy's bill is shorter than the width of the head while the Hairy's is noticeably longer than the width of the head.



## Staying connected

### People

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### Web sites

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

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.

## Volunteers learn from each other

by Nan Mattingly

When I began volunteering for the CREW Land & Water Trust several years ago, I aspired to be a trail guide but I hesitated because I didn't have a relevant background. I was fortunate to be paired as a sweep with experienced guides who taught me the basics and gave me the confidence to become a guide myself. Here are some things I've learned.

- Arrive early and take a quick walk around the trail, noting interesting things to point out.
- Make an effort to engage clients individually; ask them what their interests are and if they've been to a CREW trail system before. Learn how to handle "difficult" clients.
- Be prepared to talk about the CREW Project and the CREW Land & Water Trust. Politely note that donations are welcome.
- Don't be afraid to admit what you don't know. If a client asks a question you can't answer, ask the other clients and the sweep if they can help. I find it difficult to carry and consult books during a tour so I have a few photos of things we're certain to see.
- Set the tone – be serious and substantive but also easy to comprehend. Make your clients feel safe and comfortable on the trail. We want them to come back again.
- Be enthusiastic – it's contagious.
- Sharpen your observation skills – as one experienced guide said, "Don't look down at the trail – look out and up. Use all your senses and your peripheral vision."
- Make sure everyone can hear you; face the clients as much as possible. If they seem uninterested in what you're talking about, change it up. Ask them questions that can be easily answered and encourage them to ask questions. For example, ask them to compare the trees around them to the trees they grew up with.
- Talk about your own environmental interests. Share any funny stories about your experiences in the woods.
- Explain the "Leave No Trace" idea. Carry a trash bag in your pocket.
- Keep things you might need in your car: extra shoes or boots, dry socks, old towels, trash bags, water, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

## Online shopping pays dividends

### Amazon smiles on CREW Trust with donations

With the holidays fast approaching and online shopping more popular than ever, most purchases made from Amazon will benefit the CREW Trust.

It costs nothing and there are no additional fees involved. Once a person signs up, there's nothing more to do except shop on Amazon.

The program is called AmazonSmile and signing up is free. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com> to get started or download the SmileAmazon app on a smart phone.

When signing up the first time, Amazon will ask which charity to support. Search for "CREW Land and Water Trust" and select it.

From then on, almost every purchase automatically earns a 0.05% donation to the CREW Trust from Amazon. It's painless giving.

Amazon is already donating a few hundred dollars to the CREW Trust each quarter based on purchases by people who are already participating in the AmazonSmile program.

# Be alert during hunting seasons, hearing gun shots in FPS

FWC opens parts of the CREW Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA) for hunting during different times of the year. This December and January, hunting is limited to small game from December 5 through January 3.

In CREW, small game includes armadillo, beaver, coyote, gray squirrel, nutria, opossum, rabbit, raccoon, skunk and migratory birds *in season*. That's a state list — not all of those species are present on CREW lands. Huntible birds and their seasons are listed at [www.myfwc.com/hunting/regulations/birds](http://www.myfwc.com/hunting/regulations/birds).

In CREW, most hunters tend to hunt gray squirrel and rabbits.

Big Cypress Fox Squirrels are NOT huntible small game. They are a state-threatened species and are protected under state law.

All of Cypress Dome and Caracara Prairie Preserve are in the hunting area. There is no hunting at the CREW Marsh Trails or most of Bird Rookery Swamp and it is only allowed in portions of Flint Pen Strand (*see map below*).

For all seasons except small game, the number of hunters is limited and each is issued a permit. Volunteers and visitors should be aware of the hunting season dates and that they may hear gun shots during those times. Please go to [www.dickbrewer.org/CREW/hunting.pdf](http://www.dickbrewer.org/CREW/hunting.pdf) to read FWC's CREW area hunting brochure with guidelines and how to contact FWC if violations are suspected.

However, people on the FPS trails may hear gun shots at other times during the year. That is because there are three privately owned gun ranges north of the trails.

One is on Shovelhead Road and the other two are on Sand Road west of Vincent Road (*see the map below*).

At a gun range north of Sand Road, targets are placed in such a way that the direction of shooting is toward the CREW WEA, which would place anyone hiking, working (FWC, SFWMD/CREW personnel), or legally hunting in that area in danger.

The issue is that this location is private property, and FWC does not enforce what is allowed or is not allowed on private property.

However, private property owners or their guests cannot shoot into the WEA or public lands.

Florida statutes consider that "trespass by projectile" which is a felony violation punishable by five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

*Remaining hunts this season: December 5-January 3: small game ~ March 6-14: spring turkey*

