



# EcoAdventures E-Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 3, March, 2011 Send questions or comments to: [ecoadventures@miamidade.gov](mailto:ecoadventures@miamidade.gov)



William A. Fishbaugh. Florida State Archives



Florida State Archives



Florida State Archives

Above: Barron Gift Collier  
Right: Ted Smallwood and Charlie Tigertail

Drill rig used for Tamiami Trail construction, late 1920's

## Living on the Fringe

*Barron Collier, The Ox Woman, Bloody Watson, and other stories*

Maureen Sullivan-Hartung's new book, *Hidden History of Everglades City & Points Nearby*, The History Press 2010, is a charming look at the early days of Florida's "last frontier". Her folksy style settles you in quickly for a homespun tour of the area and it's amazing history.

The cast of characters is numerous and begins with Barron Gift Collier. Yes, that's his real middle name Sullivan-Hartung informs us.

Collier made a fortune in the street lighting business and later printing and advertising. He persuaded the Florida legislature to create Collier County from southern Lee County with a pledge to complete today's Tamiami Trail finishing it in 1928.

From Collier the book chronicles stories that make "Survivor" and "Real Housewives of Miami" look tame.

My favorite is the tale of the Ox Woman, Sarah McLain, a six-foot, four inch gal who arrived in 1907 driving her team of oxen with her shotgun and dogs in tow. In

search of her sister Hannah (Big Six), for six weeks she hacked her way across the Everglades only to find out later her sister had been killed at the Watson place.



Florida State Archives

Watson's place was the homestead of the notorious Edgar Watson made famous in Peter Matthiessen's book *Killing Mister Watson*. To say Watson was a nasty guy would be an understatement. He's rumored to have killed more than fifty people, mostly hired help, just so he wouldn't have to pay them. He's also suspected of

killing the famous outlaw Belle Starr. Ultimately he met his death at Smallwood Trading Post after his gun misfired and a hail of bullets hit him from locals gathered to accuse him of numerous recent murders. Ultimately no one was ever charged.

Smallwood Trading Post was the crossroads of cultures in the Everglades area. Charles "Ted" Smallwood and his wife Mamie established it in 1906. Until the Tamiami Trail opened it was where Seminole and Miccosukee Indians would come to trade their animal hides, bird plumes, fish and produce.

Then there's the legendary "Totch" Brown, a born and bred local who alternately was a fisherman, moonshiner, Bronze Star recipient, poacher, author, marijuana smuggler and environmentalist.

The characters and stories continue through this gentle book told as if you were sitting at a kitchen table with a friend having a cup of coffee. Pass the cream please, and tell me another.

- Ernie Lynk



Florida State Archives



Florida State Archives

Above left: Loren G. "Totch" Brown. Above right: Smallwood Trading Post in Chokoloskee, site of Edgar Watson's demise made famous in *Killing Mr. Watson*.



Florida State Archives

Monroe Way Station, the only remaining station of the original six located on the Tamiami Trail to assist motorists and keep law and order.

## Nature Centers

### [AD Barnes Sense of Wonder Nature Center](#)

3401 SW 72 Ave.  
Miami, FL 33155  
305-662-4124

### [Arch Creek Nature Center](#)

1855 NE 135 St.  
North Miami, FL 33181  
305-944-6111

### [Bill Sadowski Nature Center](#)

17555 SW 79 Ave.  
Palmetto Bay, FL 33157  
305-255-4767

### [Castellow Hammock Nature Center](#)

22301 SW 162 Ave.  
Miami, FL 33170  
305-242-7688

### [Crandon Park Visitors & Nature Center](#)

6767 Crandon Blvd.  
Key Biscayne, FL 33149

## Take a Hike Florida!

The Florida Forever Coalition is hosting a statewide celebration of Florida's natural treasures and the outdoor recreation opportunities provided by 20 years of state land conservation. Join us on March 26th at Greynolds Park, one of Miami-Dade Park's largest and oldest metropolitan parks. Enjoy ancient and beautiful live oak-pine scrub habitat that once covered much of north Miami-Dade County. Meet at 9 AM at the Greynolds boathouse. The park is located at 17530 West Dixie Highway, North Miami Beach. For further information call the EcoAdventures office at (305) 365-3018. Best of all— it's free!

### Native Plant Day

*Saturday, March 12*  
Elaine Gordon Enchanted Forest Park  
1725 NE 135 St. Miami  
9 AM to 4 PM  
305-262-3763

## Become a Parks Champion!

Every great community has a great parks system. Help support Miami-Dade Parks and get great discounts too by becoming a member of the Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade. Help us continue the great legacy of your national award winning parks system for this and future generations. Call 305-270-2984 Ext. 21 for more information or visit us at [www.mdparcs.org](http://www.mdparcs.org).



# March Calendar of Events

## A.D. BARNES PARK

3401 SW 72 Avenue,  
Miami, FL  
305-662-4124

Barnes Park has a variety of programs at the nature center including group camping and campfire programs. Call for the latest information.

## ARCH CREEK PARK

1855 NE 135 Street, North Miami,  
FL  
305) 944-6111

## ECO-ACTION DAYS

March 12  
9 AM -Noon  
FREE

Connect with nature and get down and dirty at one of our monthly volunteer days! Join our naturalists in restoring Arch Creek Park and its natural areas. Projects include removing weeds or invasive exotic vegetation, planting, mulching, and picking up garbage. Bring your work gloves and small hand tools. Wear closed-toed shoes. Sunscreen, long shirts/pants, water, hats, sunglasses are highly recommended.

Reservations are required. Call (305) 944-6111 for more information. Projects and work locations subject to change. Recommended for all ages!

## CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

March 11  
6:30-8 PM  
\$6 per person

Ease the stress of your workweek with our classic campfire program. Join our naturalists around the campfire for a night full of campfire games, stories and don't forget marshmallow roasting. Reservations required.

## NIGHT HIKE

Friday, March 18  
6:30 PM - 8 PM  
\$6 per person

Venture into the beautiful Tropical Hardwood Hammock with a naturalist guide and discover the marvelous nocturnal life of the park at dusk. Experience the sights and sounds of eastern screech owls, raccoons, night time spiders and much more. Reservations are required.

## JUNIOR NATURALIST PROGRAM

Saturday, March 19

1 PM – 3 PM

Join Arch Creek Park's Junior Naturalist program! This program consists of six different themes based on the parks tropical hardwood hammock with topics ranging from birds and plants to historical facts and more. Children will participate in nature identification, games and arts & crafts to reinforce topics discussed. Children must be accompanied by an adult. At the completion of all six themes the children will be awarded certificates declaring them Junior Naturalists! January 15 - History, February 19 - Birds & March 19 - Plants.

## OLETA RIVER CANOE TOUR

March 13 and 26  
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM  
Rated: Moderate  
Ages 7 and older  
\$28 per person

The beauty of the Oleta River has drawn man to its shore for centuries. As early as 500 B.C., the river was home to Tequesta Indians who camped along its shore and was part of the route used by Federal troops in the 2nd Seminole War to travel south from Loxahatchee. The river linked the Seminole Indians living in the Everglades to Biscayne Bay. Relive the river's historic past with park naturalists as you explore this natural haven for wading birds, osprey, fish and the endangered West Indian Manatee.

Reservations required. *Meet at East Greynolds Park, 16700 Biscayne Blvd, North Miami Beach*

## ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

NATURE TRAIL WALKS  
Saturdays & Sundays  
3 PM – 4 PM

Rated: Easy  
\$3 per person

Join us on this naturalist guided tour through a tropical hardwood hammock where you will find an assortment of interesting plants and animals native to South Florida and come learn about Arch Creek's role in the early history of North Miami.

Reservations required.

## BY REQUEST ACTIVITIES

OLETA RIVER KAYAK TOUR  
10 AM -12:30 PM

Ages 7 and older  
\$28 per person  
Rated: Moderate  
Join park naturalists on this guided

kayak exploration of the Oleta River and its mangrove-lined creeks where many wading birds and other wildlife can be viewed up close. You will also have the opportunity to visit an archaeological site where Tequesta Indians made their home over 2000 years ago. Meet at the Greynolds Park Boat-house. Reservations are required. *Meet at East Greynolds Park, 16700 Biscayne Blvd, North Miami Beach*

## BILL SADOWSKI PARK

17555 SW 79 Ave.,  
Miami, FL  
305-255-4767

## NIGHT WALK & CAMPFIRE

Friday, March 4 & 18  
7:00 PM -8:30 PM  
All Ages

Fee: \$6 per person  
Join our naturalists as we take a walk on the nature trails after dark in search of nocturnal creatures including the Eastern Screech Owl. Then relax by the campfire. Bring your own marshmallows. Appropriate for all ages. Reservations recommended.

## NOBLE HAMMOCK CANOE TOUR

Saturday, March 5 & 26  
10:00 AM –1:30 PM  
All Ages

Fee: \$35 per person  
Join our naturalists as we take a walk on the nature trails after dark in search of nocturnal creatures including the Eastern Screech Owl. Then relax by the campfire. Bring your own marshmallows. Appropriate for all ages. Reservations recommended.

## SPRING BREAK ADVENTURES

Monday thru Friday  
March 14–18  
7:30 AM –6:00 PM  
6 –14 year olds  
Fee: \$110

Children come and discover the nature around them in this adventure camp. Activities will include nature studies field trips and lots of adventures.

## CASTELLOW HAMMOCK PARK

22301 SW 162 Avenue  
Miami, FL  
305-242-7688

## NIGHT WALK & CAMPFIRE

Saturday, March 5 & 19  
7 PM—8:30 PM  
All ages

Fee: \$6 per person

Join our naturalists as we take a walk on the nature trails after dark in search of nocturnal creatures including the Eastern Screech Owl. Then relax by the campfire. Bring your own marshmallows. Appropriate for all ages. Reservations recommended.

## MATHESON HAMMOCK PARK

9610 Old Cutler Road  
Miami, FL

## AQUATICS CENTER

Miami Adventure Sports offers kite surfing, kayaking, paddle boarding, yoga paddle boarding classes and rentals. Call 305-733-1519 for hours and prices.

## ECO-ADVENTURES

305-365-3018

## BISCAYNE BAY KAYAK FISHING

Call for dates

Ages 12 and above  
\$85 per person

Kayak fishing with local experts. Whether you use fly or spinning gear, expert or novice, we have the guide to put you on fish. You will be accompanied by an expert guide while fishing from a Wilderness Systems Tarpon 140 fishing kayak along the shallow western shoreline of Biscayne Bay. Your guide will instruct you on how to paddle a 14' sit-on-top kayak and will be available during your excursion to assist you with fishing techniques, lure selection, tying knots, and other professional advice. Targeted fish include barracuda, redfish, bonefish, snook, tarpon, and permit. Locations: TBD

For a full list of events, including on going programs [click here](#).

## CRANDON PARK VISITORS AND NATURE CENTER

6767 Crandon Boulevard, North Beach entrance, parking lot #1, Key Biscayne, FL

EcoAdventures office (305) 365-3018 or Visitors and Nature Center (305) 361-6767 ext. 112

### KAYAK AND SNORKEL ADVENTURE

Daily  
9:30 AM – 1:00 PM  
\$70 per person  
Come along with our naturalists and discover Key Biscayne's hidden jewel. Explore our underwater petrified forest teeming with tropical fish, spotted eagle rays, sea stars and a variety of other marine life. Serving as a bastion for wild-life, our "fossil reef" is truly a rare structure, one of only two on the planet. This trip is a great introduction to kayaking and snorkeling. We are certain it will be the highlight of your visit to Crandon Park. We require closed-toe shoes (water shoes). Reservations are required.

### SUNSET & MOONLIGHT KAYAK ADVENTURE

Saturday, March 19  
5:30 PM – 8 PM  
\$40 per person

Enjoy a relaxing kayak excursion through the serene waters of Biscayne Bay by light of the picturesque south Florida sunset and full moon. We require all participants to wear closed-toe shoes (water shoes). Reservations are required.

### BAYSIDE BIRDING KAYAK ADVENTURE

Saturday, March 26  
2:30 PM – 5 PM  
\$40 per person

Join our naturalists on a kayak tour of Biscayne Bay as you explore Key Biscayne's coastline for different birds that call the area home. Depending on the season you may even see some migratory species taking a well deserved rest on their migration route. This trip is a great introduction to kayaking and birding. We require close-toed shoes. Reservations are required.

### KEY BISCAYNE BIKE ADVENTURE

Sundays  
1:30 PM – 4 PM  
\$28 per person  
Travel through time as you bike through Crandon Park's Bear Cut Preserve as well as the Crandon Gardens, the antiquated remnants of the original Crandon Zoo then explore the beautiful architecture as we travel through the Village of Key Biscayne. Reservations required.

### ECO ADVENTURES MIAMI CITY TOUR

Sunday, March 13  
10 AM – 3 PM  
\$50 per person  
Experience the natural and cultural side of Miami through the eyes of a

native. Cruise around town in our "Eco Van" as we make stops and walk among South Florida's historical landmarks. The Art Deco District of Miami Beach, Little Havana with a stop at a cigar factory and Domino Park, Coral Gables area as well as a stop a popular juice stand and home-style Cuban restaurant (meal not included) are just some of the fascinating places you will get to visit. Reservations required.

### CRANDON PARK'S BAYSIDE CANOE ADVENTURE

Saturdays  
1:30 PM – 4:00 PM  
\$44 per person  
Enjoy the clean and calm waters of Key Biscayne's bayside where our naturalist will guide you through and around mangroves and a very unique bird rookery island. Here you can encounter a variety of coastal birds such as the magnificent Frigate along with an array of marine life. Closed-toe shoes and reservations are required.

### CRANDON NATURALIST ECOLOGY SERIES: SEA-GRASS

Saturday, March 12,  
1 PM – 3 PM  
\$10 per person  
Bring your own mask and snorkel or rent ours for \$8 (you keep the snorkel).  
This workshop will focus on the amazing and hidden world of our underwater marine flora community. Learn about these amazing plants as we discuss species, morphology, life cycle, threats and much more. The presentation will

include snorkeling off Crandon Park beach for a total interactive experience. Don't miss this opportunity to discover and learn why our sea grass' are so important.

### CRANDON PARK SUNRISE BIRDING

Saturday, March 5,  
7 AM - 8:30 AM  
All ages  
\$6 per person  
Enjoy a leisurely walk along the beach wreck line. Learn about shorebirds and the many plant and animal species that inhabit the coastal environments of South Florida. Bring your binoculars along and your water shoes in tow!  
Crandon Park  
4000 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne, South Beach entrance, Parking Lot #4  
(305) 361-6767 ext 112

### KAYAK RENTALS

7 days a week  
9 AM – 5 PM  
Single or 2 Person Kayak: \$20 per hour or \$45 for 3 hours  
Fully equipped "sit on top" ocean kayak rentals and snorkeling equipment available at Crandon Park from our kayak concession building on the beach at lifeguard tower #3.  
Crandon Park Kayak Concession Stand  
6767 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne  
Parking Lot #1, North Beach Entrance  
(305) 361-6444

CRANDON PARK VOLUNTEER BEACH CLEAN UP  
Saturday, March 12,  
9 AM – Noon



Looking for a previous issue of the e-newsletter? Check out our [website](#).

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).

Questions or comments? Email us at [ecoadventures@miamidadegov](mailto:ecoadventures@miamidadegov) or call 305-365-3018

It is the policy of Miami-Dade County to apply with all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Call (305) 365-6706 (V/TDD) to request material in accessible format, sign language interpreter five days in advance, or for information on access for persons with disabilities.



County services are integral in the lives of so many in our community. Not a day goes by that all of us don't benefit in some way from the many the things the County does....when we turn on our faucet, there's water. When we're driving on our roadways, we rely on signs and signals to keep traffic moving safely. When we put our trash at the curb, it's gone when we get home. And for those who are less fortunate in our community, County services mean even more. From transportation for people with disabilities to meals for the elderly, the services received from Miami-Dade County are essential. Like most things in life, we tend to take this for granted. Learn more about how the County is serving our community every day, and take the time to tell others. <http://www.miamidadegov/wearemiamidade/>