

LEISURE SERVICES DEPT

JOE ABEL, DIRECTOR



Seminole County Leisure Services Department, is dedicated to enriching lives through outstanding cultural, educational, environmental and recreational experiences. The Department's vision is to be a nationally recognized agency for delivering excellence in leisure services. The Department is made up of four divisions representing: Extension Services, Library Services, Greenways & Natural Lands, and Parks & Recreation. Through these divisions the Leisure Services Department provides quality services to the entire community with diverse leisure programs for all ages and an integrated, efficient, and safe system of parks, trails, and recreational, extension, and library facilities.

The Leisure Services Department manages **7,2100** acres of parks and natural lands including: **6,634** Acres of Protected Natural Lands; **63** Acres of Trailhead; **51** Miles of Paved Trails; **85** Miles of Unpaved Trails; **54** Tennis Courts; **30** Campsites; **35** Baseball/Softball Fields; **18** Racquetball Courts; **14** Playgrounds; **12** Basketball Courts; **12** Neighborhood Parks; **9** Special Use Parks; **6** Fishing Piers; **6** Regional Parks; **5** Trailheads; **10** Boat Ramps; **5** Libraries; **4** Trail Systems; **12** Multi-Purpose Fields; **6** Volleyball Courts; **3** Wallyball Courts; **4** Canoe Launches; **1** Museum; **1** Nature Center; and **1** Skate Rink.

2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- *Cameron Wight Park Renovations completed, and included widening the existing boat ramp, restoring the riverbank, resurfacing the parking lot, painting the pavilion and replacing the floating boat dock.*
- *Completion of Lake Harney Wilderness Area Improvements included the new, public wildlife observation tower, a boardwalk ramp, an ADA path and ADA parking. Black Bear Wilderness Area Entrance and Lake Proctor Wilderness Area Entrance enhancements were completed, as well, and included replacement of the existing wood fences, installation of new signs and stabilization of the parking area.*
- *A Jetta Point/Rolling Hills Public Workshop was held, and over 400 residents attended the County-facilitated public meeting to take input on the Rolling Hills project.*
- *The Seminole County Sports Complex was completed and opened to the public in May, 2016. Project management responsibilities include on-site construction observation, project punch lists, completion of FF&E items and turnover to the Parks & Recreation Division for on-site management. In 2016, during its first nine months of operation, the Complex hosted 40 tournaments and generated \$21 million in economic impact.*
- *Development and approval of Soldier's Creek Park Redevelopment Plans were finalized with construction drawings completed and the project's GMP approved for a project construction start of June, 2016.*
- *Implementation of Bear-Safe Refuse Cans replaced 139 existing refuse cans were replaced, converted or removed between February – July 2016 on County Properties and Trails within the County's Urban Bear Management Area.*
- *New Boat Ramp Informational Kiosks with Boater Information Signs at CS Lee Park, Cameron Wight Park, Mullet Lake Park, Wayside Park and Lake Jesup Park were installed.*
- *Selective replacement of declining/stressed/missing plant materials was completed at a total of 75 medians for portions of Ronald Reagan Blvd., Tuskawilla Rd, International Parkway, Lake Mary Blvd and Red Bug Lake Road.*
- *Completion of Trailhead Improvements at Jones, Big Tree and Snow Hill Trailheads – the parking areas at three trailheads were permitted, paved and striped to accommodate the extensive vehicular use at all three trailheads.*

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- The Seminole County Public Library System was the recipient of a \$10,000 award from the 2016 Sparks! Ignition Grant program provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. These grants encourage libraries to test and evaluate specific innovations in the ways they operate and the services they provide. We received the funding to support our S.T.E.a.M. (Seminole Teens Empower and Mentor) program, which is aimed at empowering teen girls to become future leaders in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Marth) fields.
- The Library, in partnership with the Small Business Development Center, continued to offer its popular small business seminars, which were attended by 314 entrepreneurs and prospective small business owners. Online Marketing 101, a new addition to Startup 101 and Business Plans 101, delivered information on the power and tools of social media marketing to grow small businesses in Seminole County.
- The five Library branches had 2,593,523 customer transactions and 1,561,292 in-person visits in 2016, while Reference Librarians answered 853,661 information requests, nearly 192,000 children, teens and adults attended the 6,058 Library programs and events. The Library received \$485,705, donated by Library volunteers who worked 22,476 hours.
- A new "Forgotten Foundations" Exhibit opened at the Museum of Seminole County History in September. The Exhibit showcases early 19th century settler life in Seminole County.
- Soldiers Creek Park closed in May to begin the redevelopment of the park which is set to reopen in May 2017.
- 1st Annual Great American Campout at Lake Mills Park hosted 37 families. First time campers experienced overnight camping, interpretative reptile programming, canoeing, star gazing and other outdoor activities.
- The Extension Office offered lunch-time, on-line educational sessions in health, nutrition and financial management and reached 1,095 participants on topics including preventing heart disease, healthy eating, debt management, retirement planning and identity theft in 2016.
- In 2016, Seminole County was awarded the 4-H Food Smart Families Grant funded by National 4-H Council and United Healthcare and reached a total of 189 youth. The Seminole County 4-H Food Smart Families Program is currently advertised on the National 4-H website as an example of reaching diverse audiences.
- Seminole County 4-H had eight youth qualify for the 2016 Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships. Additionally, Seminole County 4-H Hippology team traveled to Louisville, KY where they placed 12th in the nation at the Eastern National 4-H Roundup.
- The Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Extension program built agricultural awareness through training pesticide applicators and teaching residents how to "raise their own" hydroponic veggies, chickens, and bees in response to the needs of the community. The program reached nearly 1,000 participants.
- The Seminole County Farm Tour highlighted county agricultural operations to 160 individuals. Collaborations are being cultivated that connect farmers to aggregators, distributors, grocers, restaurants, and consumers. By facilitating connections and supporting growers, Seminole County has an opportunity to build a robust local food economy.
- Seminole County UF/IFAS Extension taught pesticide licensing and administered 102 Restricted Use Pesticide exams. Attendees of the review sessions passed with a 90% or above.
- The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program reached 180 limited income families and 102 youth. A total of 153 families successfully completed the series of 6 classes and received Certificates of Completion. Post tests showed an increase in food safety practices, improved eating habits and increased physical activity for the whole family. For every dollar spent on EFNEP programming \$10.64 is saved on health care costs and \$2.48 is saved on food expenses.
- UF/IFAS Seminole County Master Gardener Volunteers donated 4,282 hours to provide educational programming to Seminole County Residents.
- Seminole County Extension opened a new Housing Program in June. The program covers classes in Pre-Purchase, Financial Coaching on Credit, and Financial Coaching on Budgeting, Small Steps to Health and Wealth, and Foreclosure Prevention. The first class started in July and since the first class, 130 limited income participants have attended. A participants obtained an 8-hour, HUD-approved first time home buyer class certificate. The certificate is a mandatory document needed to apply for the Seminole County Purchase Assistance Program.
- In partnership with the Wekiva Wild and Scenic River system, Florida Friendly Landscaping led four Eco-paddles on the Wekiva River, where 67 participants learned about the impact residential yards can have on the Wekiva while seeing the river firsthand in a canoe.
- The Florida Friendly Landscaping video "Protecting Your Lake" received first place in the Florida Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals.
- A new 4-H spin club, "The 4-H Water Guards" had eleven high school juniors and seniors learn about different water conservation topics. Collectively, the Water Guards efforts will save over 240,000 gallons of water in the community annually.

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LOOKING FORWARD

The Seminole County Leisure Services Department, is excited about all of the great opportunities for continued success in 2017.

- *Library branches begin 7-day-per-week operation in January;*
- *The reopening of Soldiers Creek Park in May features renovation of the Park into a completely new six field, tournament-level facility focusing on fast pitch softball and youth baseball, placing emphasis economic impact tournaments while providing field space for the community;*
- *The reopening of Kewannee Playground in February provides removal and replacement of old playground with updated playground apparatuses;*
- *Renovation of Jamestown Park will complete in February, and improvements include removal and replacement of old playground equipment;*
- *A new Bookertown Restroom Facility will be constructed in fall 2017, providing restroom a facility for park patrons;*
- *CS Lee Park Solar Lighting Installation will occur in spring 2017, providing the entire park, including parking lot and front signage, with solar-powered lighting; and*
- *Seminole County is moving forward with the acquisition and development of the 100 acre Rolling Hills Golf Club in the summer of 2017.*
- *The Lake Monroe Wayside Park Master Plan, to be completed in fall 2017, will provide direction and vision for the park, as well as construction documents for boat ramp and floating dock.*