



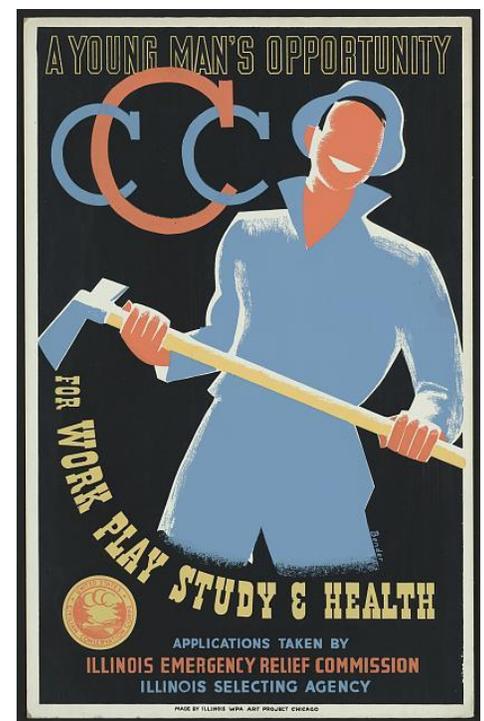
Myakka River State Park  
November 2018



# The CCC at MRSP: Part 1

Myakka River State Park would not exist without the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC was a New Deal relief program passed quickly after President Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated. Young men from the lower economic sectors of society were hired by the national government to improve and preserve public lands and natural resources. For Roosevelt, this program was an ideal combination of two strong beliefs: providing immediate economic relief and instilling an appreciation for nature into the young generation.

Enrollees in the CCC were given food, housing, and clothing, all efficiently provided by the United States Army. They were typically enrolled for about six months, and each received \$30/week for their labor. As per mandate, \$25 went to the enrollee's family, and the enrollee kept \$5 to himself. This was a lucrative opportunity for young men and their families struggling in the Great Depression. Additionally, the enrollee's \$5/week proved very economically beneficial to communities nearby the CCC site.



Due to the allure of economic relief, many communities across the nation petitioned to have a CCC camp nearby. Former mayor and Sarasota aficionado Arthur B. Edwards was instrumental in securing a CCC camp in the Myakka River Valley. Like former landowner Bertha Palmer, Edwards appreciated the area's innate natural value. Palmer had maintained the land as a cattle and swine ranch with extensive camping, hunting, horseback riding, and other wilderness experiences for her beloved grandchildren. After a series of passings in the Palmer family (including Bertha's), Edwards became increasingly concerned that commercial interests would purchase and exploit the land.



*The Log Pavilion, built by the CCC in the late 1930's*

When initial attempts to create a national park failed, Edwards convinced Florida State Forester Harry Lee Baker to recommend the Myakka Valley as a CCC site for a State Park. Baker complied, under the condition that Edwards could secure the land holdings before a fast-approaching deadline. Determined to meet the challenge, Edwards used his strong professional network and experience in politicking to maneuver around legal obstacles in the Curry Lands, negotiate a tax settlement with the A. C. Honoré estate (former lands of Bertha Palmer), and secure a land donation from Bertha Palmer's sons, Honoré and Potter Palmer. When the deadline approached, Edwards had accrued nearly 25,000 acres of land.

**“Men and Nature must work hand in hand. The throwing out of balance of the resources of nature throws out the balance also the lives of men.”**  
**-Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1935**

Within a few months, early arrivals came to begin setup. On November 2nd, 1934, the whole company arrived in the Myakka Valley and to begin the many projects. While pastoral reminiscences of the CCC paint a tranquil scene of young boys working in nature, taking classes, and enjoying recreational activities, early Myakka was far from this utopian paradise. Labor was brutal and unending. The swamplands were unforgiving: drenched, hot, and swarming with rattlesnakes and malaria-infected mosquitos. The first enrollees lived in primitive conditions, without proper housing, plumbing, or kitchens. The company suffered significant losses to disease and abandonment in the face of such harrowing conditions.



Yet, they prevailed. After almost two months, the enrollees had erected proper barracks. They built sheds to process materials and hold equipment. They began making trails and roads through the rough wilderness. After six months, they had expanded into bridges, telephone lines, fire breaks, and culverts.

While this early success was promising, the Myakka CCC would face another significant challenge in the fall of 1935, when racial issues forced Sarasota to confront its segregationist attitudes. Stay tuned- part 2 of *The CCC at MRSP* will be in our February newsletter!

# PARK ALERT:

North Gate entry and South Gate exit will be **CLOSED**

**Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>  
5:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.**

During this time, everyone must enter through the South Gate (off of SR 72) and exit through the North Gate (Clay Gully/Fruitville).

## Save the Dates!

The Friends of MRSP are excited to announce the schedule for the 2019 *Moon Over Myakka* concert series. Concerts will start at approximately 7:00 p.m. on:

**Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>**

The concerts are great family fun for all! Bring your marshmallows and enjoy our campfires run by the Friends' as you listen to wonderful bands sing the night away.

Stay tuned for updates on tickets, bands, and more!

“The Conservation of our natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem, it will avail us little to solve all others.”

-Theodore Roosevelt

## A Tale of Happy Trails

Every year, Myakka River State Park is happy to work with Professor Woody McCree from State College of Florida. As a faculty member, Professor McCree has been involved in many (and ever-evolving) Environmental Ethics/Philosophical Environmental clubs on campus. This year, the SCF's Food Forest Club will be continuing the traditional Myakka 10k Walkathon.

The Food Forest Club is planting an all-organic garden designed to mimic a natural forest ecosystem as closely as possible. They will use a variety of trees, bushes, vines to create this delicious forest, in which everything is edible to humans! Inspired by a similar project at Florida Gulf Coast University, they hope to learn more about environmentally-friendly organic horticulture and inspire others on campus to support similar efforts.

About twenty-five go-getters will be walking the 10k in Myakka River State Park on November 17<sup>th</sup>. It's a valued annual tradition between our staff and their campus. Thank you for your research and outreach, Food Forest Club and Professor McCree! Happy Trails!



# Meet a Ranger- Stephanie Suter

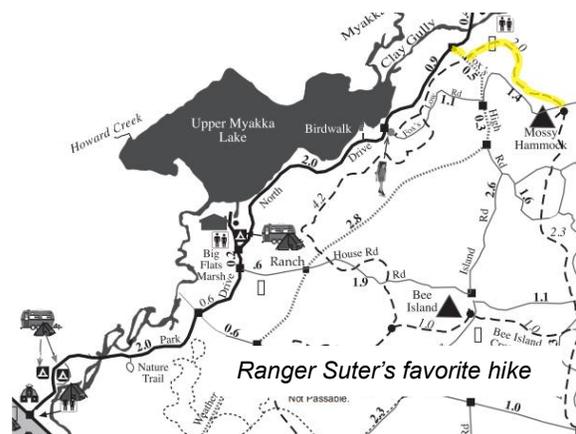
MRSP's rangers work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure quality environmental protection, safety, maintenance, visitor services, and much more. Our enthusiastic staff is top-notch with extraordinary wisdom and experiences to share. In these newsletters, we'd like to start featuring our staff and thank them for the work they do.



Ranger Stephanie Suter has been involved throughout the Florida State Parks system in many capacities: as a volunteer, as a campground host, and as a ranger. She came to Myakka River State Park as a ranger about two years ago and quickly fell in love with the wildlife here.

While she loves exploring the rarely-touched areas of Myakka's vast backcountry, she especially loves to hike from Fox's High road to the Mossy Hammock primitive campground. She enjoys the shade from the oak trees and the thriving flora in that area. It's approximately five miles round-trip. She highly recommends the walk (remember to bring water!).

She also loves camping in the Mossy Hammock primitive campsite. Her favorite memory in the park happened there, when she woke up in the cold at two in the morning. She remembers the incredulous flood of starlight, shining so bright that a flashlight was useless. The woods were alive--a nocturnal vivacity like none she had experienced before. She meandered around the site, soaking in the brightness and beauty of the night.



“I love the thrill of fishing. There is an excitement of not knowing what’s on the other end of the line.”

-Stephanie Suter

While she loves camping and hiking throughout the park, she is especially keen on fishing. For her, there is an indescribable excitement about not knowing what is on the other end of the line. Talking to her, she recalls the line from *Forrest Gump*, “Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re going to get.” Fishing brings her the same joy- the ups and the downs, the suspense, the challenge, the reward.

Ranger Suter loves MRSP and hopes everyone can appreciate the wildlife here. She is a licensed falconer, and she presents at campfire circle events with her Red-Shouldered Hawk, Buttercup (campfire circles will begin in season--more on that in later newsletters!). She also is a beekeeper and member of the Sarasota Beekeepers Association. She loves teaching people all about predatory birds, ornithology, and the importance of honeybees in guided walks and other interpretive programs.

Thank you Ranger Suter for all your hard work!

Friends of Myakka River

# Kayak Drawing of Chance



**39 lbs.**  
**12'6" long**

**Win a Hurricane  
Santee Sport 126\*  
by Hurricane Kayaks**

It's time for the Friends of MRSP's annual kayak drawing! This year, you can enter to win a brand-new Hurricane Santee 126 Sport kayak. It is 12 ft. 6 in., and its ultralight design makes it only 39 lbs. Easy to get in and out of, it also has ample room for camping, fishing, and photography gear in both its large cockpit and 10" hinge hatch. Comfort is guaranteed with it's AireStream Seat and foam thigh pads. It's the perfect width for maximizing both stability and maneuverability. Made in USA.

**Kayak provided by Economy Tackle/Dolphin Paddlesports**

**Funding for kayak provided by the Friends of Myakka River, Inc.**

**Drawing Tickets: \$5.00 each, or 5/\$20.00\*\* on Sale in the Ranger Station  
Drawing Held: April 19th, 2019 at the Moon Over Myakka Concert**

1. This drawing is being conducted by the Friends of Myakka River, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit group. The primary business address listed is 13208 State Road 72, Sarasota, FL 34241. Phone: 941-373-7839
2. All proceeds from donations received as a result of this drawing will be deposited in the "Friends" account. No proceeds will be used for salaries or administrative costs.
3. The drawing will be held at Myakka River State Park, 13208 State Road 72, Sarasota, FL 34241 on April 19th, 2019 during the concert intermission (8PM-8:30PM). Tickets will be available until then.
4. \*\*The minimum suggested donation is \$5.00 per chance or 5/\$20.00 and only 20 entries per person are allowed. No purchase or contribution is necessary to participate.
5. The winner of this drawing will be selected randomly from a container holding all tickets entered and is in no way predetermined or preselected.
6. The drawing will be held regardless of the number of tickets disbursed.
7. The winner of the drawing need not be present to win. If the winner is not present he/she will be notified by phone or in writing using information provided on the ticket.
8. Every effort will be made to contact the winner. If after 90 days the winner cannot be contacted, a second drawing will be held. The time & date of that drawing will be announced on the website: [www.friendsofmyakkariver.org](http://www.friendsofmyakkariver.org)
9. The winner will need to present his/her photo ID to claim the prize and will be responsible for its pick up and transportation.

\* Winner may chose \$500 pay out in lieu of kayak.