



INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA
INFORMATION ITEM
Parks, Recreation & Conservation Department
Conservation Lands Division

Date: March 14, 2024
To: The Honorable Board of County Commissioners
Thru: John A. Titkanich, Jr., County Administrator
Michael C. Zito, Deputy County Administrator
Beth Powell, Parks, Recreation & Conservation Director
From: Wendy Swindell, Conservation Lands Manager
Subject: Celebration of Earth Week in Indian River County

BACKGROUND:

Earth Day is the annual worldwide celebration to raise awareness of environmental issues that affect the planet. Initiated in 1970 by Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, this unique annual celebration preceded Congress authorizing the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. The overwhelming support of the Earth Day concept is thought to have been a catalyst for the development and implementation of the Clean Water Act (1972) and the Endangered Species Act (1973). As young people often are the group with the enthusiasm to take on challenges, the date of April 22nd was chosen for Earth Day to maximize the participation by students of all ages.

Indian River County Conservation Lands Division plans to celebrate Earth Day through a series of events planned for the week of April 22nd through April 26th. Community members will be encouraged to participate in these events with the goal of providing educational opportunities that foster responsible stewardship of the natural resources within our County and beyond. Below is a summary of the week's planned events:

Monday April 22nd – Hallstrom Farmstead Volunteer Day (9:00a.m. to 11:00a.m.)

The County plans to have a Grand Opening ceremony for the Hallstrom Farmstead in May 2024. On April 22nd the public will be invited to further our habitat restoration activities on the Hallstrom site by removing debris from natural areas and installing native plants along the trails. The event will include a walking tour of the new improvements on the Hallstrom site, which include a parking area, restroom, picnic pavilions, nature trails and a wetland boardwalk. Please register by clicking the GO! Button at www.indianriver.gov/parksandrecreation. The conservation area is located at 1723 Old Dixie Highway, Vero Beach.

Tuesday April 23rd – Powerful Pollinators (10:00a.m. to 11:00a.m.)

Come join County staff at the Intergenerational Recreation Center at 1590 9th Street SW (Oslo Road) to learn about the powerful pollinators that live in Indian River County, and why they are so important to maintain biodiversity and sustainable habitat. There will be a story time, singing and dancing, and a pollinator craft activity. This event is open to anyone but is geared towards preschool and elementary age children and their parents. Please register by clicking the GO! Button at www.indianriver.gov/parksandrecreation.

Wednesday April 24th – Eco Yoga (9:00a.m. to 10:00a.m.)

Healthy Earth Healthy You! Join Recreation and Conservation staff at Jones' Pier Conservation Area for a special Earth Week yoga flow event. Volunteer instructor Danielle will lead a yoga class under the pavilion, followed by a short interpretive walk around the saltmarsh habitat on site. The class is open for all levels, beginners welcome! Please register by clicking the GO! Button at www.indianriver.gov/parksandrecreation. Jones' Pier Conservation Area is located at 7770 Jungle Trail, Vero Beach.

Thursday April 25th – Changing Landscapes (10:00a.m. to 11:00a.m.)

Landscapes around the world are ever-changing, both from man-made influences as well as natural ecological processes. Here in Florida, we have many fire-adapted habitats, where plant communities need periodic burning to maintain their structure and composition. This Earth Day event will include an interactive tour of the North Sebastian Conservation Area to learn about prescribed fires – what dictates the need for fire, how the burns are planned, and how a prescribed fire is conducted. Participants can expect to learn about the native plant and animal species that depend on fire to maintain their habitat, especially the many endemic Florida scrub-jays that reside in this conservation area. Please register by clicking the GO! Button at www.indianriver.gov/parksandrecreation. The group will meet at the North Sebastian Conservation Area Equestrian Entrance at 1295 Main Street, Sebastian.

Friday April 26th – Movie time at the Brackett Library (movie begins at 10:00a.m.)

Conservation staff are rounding out Earth Week by coordinating with the Brackett Library to host an eco-themed movie event suitable for all ages. Brackett Library is located at 6155 College Lane, Vero Beach.

APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR APRIL 9, 2024