



ON THE RANCH NEWSLETTER – JULY 28, 2017

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News You Can Use

BRAZILIAN PEPPER TRIM

Landscape workers will be trimming Brazilian Pepper trees throughout Palmer Ranch the week of **July 31st** weather permitting. *Please use caution when driving in active work zones.*

PALMER RANCH PAW PARK UPDATE – [SEE ATTACHED](#)

CULVERHOUSE NATURE PARK PLANT ADDITIONS

You may have noticed some Wild Coffee and Coontie plantings in the southern portion of Culverhouse Nature Park, where the Brazilian pepper monoculture was mulched. The county recently transplanted some native plants from an area soon to be cleared for a road extension and they seem to be doing well with the summer rains.



STONEYBROOK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB BINGO NIGHT – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club, located at 8801 Stoneybrook Blvd., is hosting Bingo Nights **the 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday nights of each month through the summer.** Call (941) 918-9595 for more information or to RSVP.

YMCA ON PALMER RANCH – FREE ADULT SWIM LESSON

Evelyn Sadlier Jones YMCA, located at 8301 Potter Park Drive, is offering free adult swim lessons in their indoor pool **Saturday, July 29th from 12pm-1pm.** Please call (941) 922-9622 x1307 to reserve your spot and to learn more about adult swim lessons taught by USMS-certified instructors.

Happenings at Oscar Scherer State Park

Oscar Scherer State Park is located at 1843 South Tamiami Trail, Osprey. For more information, please contact the Ranger Station (941) 483-5956.

GUIDED SCRUB JAY WALK

This walk begins at the Nature Center on **Sunday, July 30th at 8:30am** and includes an informative walk through an ancient dune system. This unique habitat is home to the threatened Florida scrub-jay and a variety of plants and other animals. Participants should wear comfortable footwear for walking in soft sand. Cameras and binoculars are suggested. Space is limited to 15 people. There is no cost to participate other than normal park entrance fees for day-use visitors.

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Wildlife Neighbors of Palmer Ranch – River Otter



These semi-aquatic, slender, long-bodied mammals are specialized for finding and capturing prey in the water. The broad flattened head has numerous stiff whiskers around the nose and snout, and these very sensitive tactile hairs are used for locating prey underwater. Otters have a long muscular tail, short stout legs and thick oiled fur. Small rounded ears and nostrils close when the otter is underwater. In Florida, river otters weigh 5-14 kg (11-31 lb). Males are larger than females.

River otters forage alone or in pairs. They are active during the day and at night, hunting in streams, rivers and ponds for fish, crayfish and turtles. Otters have a high metabolic rate, an adaptation for living in an aquatic environment where body heat is rapidly lost. They need to eat 15% of their body weight a day.

Although otters always remain in or near the water, they spend their inactive time in burrows dug into riverbanks or at other rest sites on land. Dens are located in shelters dug by other animals or natural hollows.

They breed once a year and in Florida Though the embryos actually develop for about 8 weeks, gestation can last for 11 to 12 months because of the extended period of delayed implantation. Litters usually consist of 2-3 young, which are born fully furred. The young open their eyes after a month and are weaned at three months. They travel and feed with their mother until they are about a year old.

River otters are the most commonly encountered of Florida's mustelids; they are found throughout the state except the Keys. It is not uncommon to see an otter if you are canoeing or kayaking in one of central Florida's springs or rivers.

Pictured here are some otter families visiting The Glenridge and South Creek.



Palmer Ranch Paw Park - Update

- As of our last update on the paw park (distributed the week of May 22nd), we were advised that Sarasota County Park Planners had completed a preliminary concept plan for a dog park at Bay Street Park. Though this is not on Palmer Ranch, it is considerably closer than the existing paw parks. Here is a link to the 19-acre Bay Street Park, as shown on the county's website: <https://www.scgov.net/parks/Pages/BayStreetPark.aspx>.
- County staff anticipates the cost of the construction to be somewhere around \$450,000. The county is now in their budget planning process and have created a draft project. These requests go through the budget process which eventually go to the Board of County Commissioners for their consideration. The projects are prioritized and compared with other potential projects and budgetary needs as well as the operating impacts for ongoing maintenance.
- As of July 17th, county funding for the paw park is proposed to be divided in two parts; partial funding in FY18 (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018) and the remainder of the funding for FY19 (October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019). The Board of County Commissioners approves the final budget at the end of September, this year.
- Everything is contingent upon the project and funding being approved. From that point, engineered drawings and permitting would be the next steps before construction.
- Residents are asked to contact Sarasota County, to encourage funding of this project.
 - Sarasota County Call Center (941) 861-5000
 - Email: ContactCenter@scgov.net