

The JAY



www.seminoleaudubon.org

The mission of the Seminole Audubon Society, Inc. is to promote awareness and protection of the plants and animals of the St Johns River basin in order to sustain the beneficial coexistence of nature and humans.

June, July, August 2023



Phyllis Hall, SAS President

President's Message



I am very thankful for the great board we have as well as for all the volunteers who are so generous with their time and talents. We are a small chapter (under 500 members), but we are mighty! Compared to other chapters of our size, we accomplish a lot. Our programs and field trips committee has provided interesting speakers and great places for field trips.

We appreciated everyone's flexibility when we had to cancel or change plans on some field trips because of damage and water from the fall hurricanes. The conservation committee keeps a pulse on what is happening in Seminole County and our surrounding community. Our education and outreach committees have been quite active providing birding classes at libraries and having displays at various events. We have very large followings on MailChimp, Meet Up, and Facebook. See the updated board and committees list at the end of this newsletter and express your thanks those volunteers when you see them. If you would like to volunteer, contact me at seminoleaudubon@gmail.com.

A special thank you to Faith Jones, past president of SAS. Faith moved to Penney Farms, FL in 2020, but has continued producing *The Jay* as well as providing advice and insight on many chapter issues. This is her last issue with the newsletter. Tracey Comazzi and Corinne Wertz will continue producing future issues of this outstanding newsletter.

And finally, we certainly could not do what we do without you. We appreciate your attendance at meetings and on field trips plus your generous donations.

At the Annual Meeting, just prior to our program on March 12, members unanimously approved the new slate of board members.

- 2023-2026: Leslie Martin (VP), Tracey Comazzi (At-Large)
- 2023-2025: Jan Peters (Treasurer), Lewis Gray (At-Large), Connie Dolan (At-Large)
- Continuing terms 2022-2024: Phyllis Hall (President), Peggy Stickney (Secretary)

Our board and committees will continue working over the summer to plan programs and field trips for next season as well as our continuing projects.

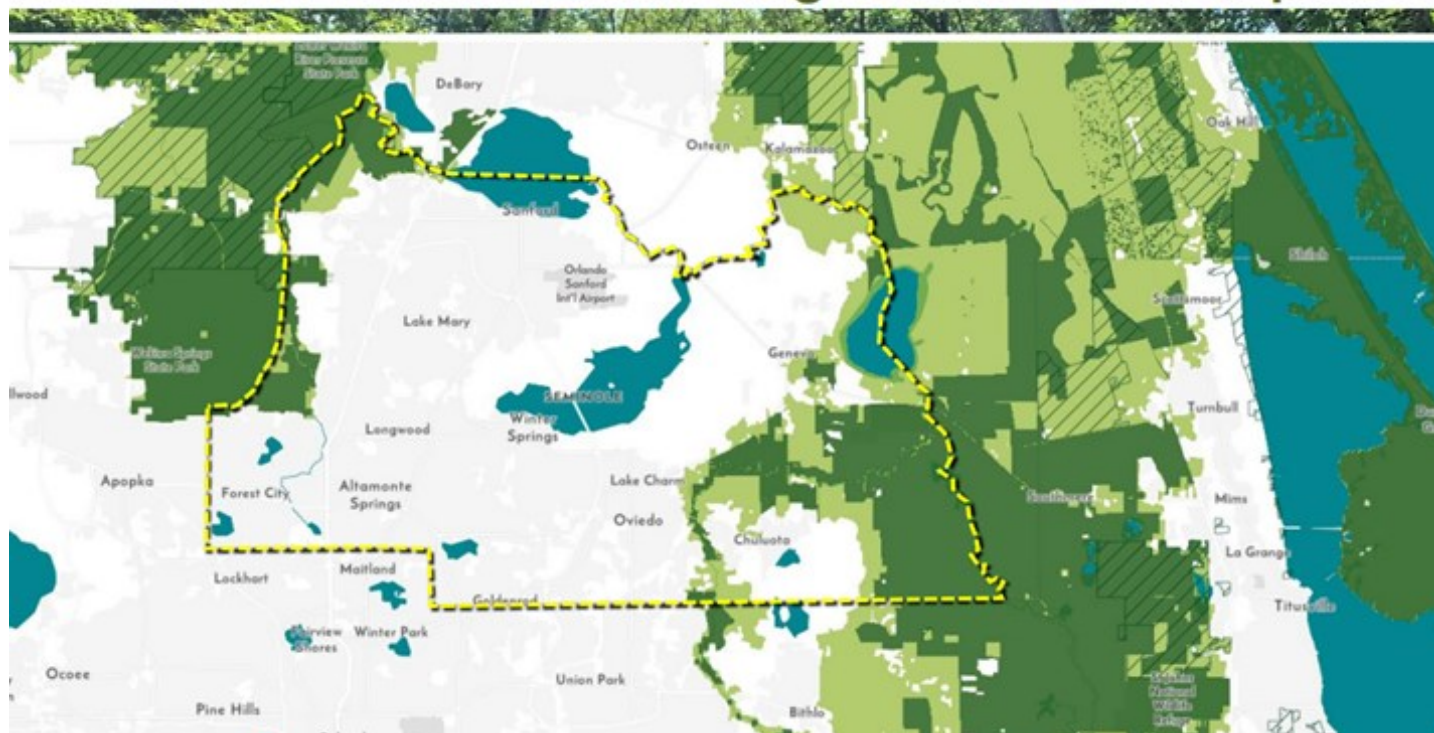
Have a safe and fun summer!

Seminole Forever

Seminole Forever is the County's newest blueprint to conserve our natural resources, enhance efforts to preserve and protect environmental systems, and provide future generations increased access to public lands. Without requiring any new taxes or fees, this program aims to identify, acquire, and preserve environmentally-sensitive lands, water resources, forests and farmlands, and outdoor recreation lands. Priority areas will be on lands connecting the wildlife corridor and the Wekiva River Basin.

Phyllis Hall and Cindy Haller attended the Seminole Co. Commission meeting on March 14 and spoke in support of Seminole Forever. Other speakers included representatives from *1000 Friends of Florida*, *Friends of Wekiva River*, *Wekiva Wild and Scenic River*, Jay Exum, Geneva residents, Gabby Milch and another person from *Seminole Soil & Water Conservation*, Charles Lee of *Audubon Florida*, David Bear of *Save Rural Seminole*. Each commissioner expressed support. The draft ordinance was reviewed and will be finalized after review from the county attorney and county manager.

Critical Wildlife and Ecological Corridors Map



Yarborough Ranch

This ranch near the Econlockhatchee River consists of about 1,313 acres. It has been in the Yarborough family for more than five decades. The Yarboroughs once owned more than 7,000 acres of rural land in east Seminole until the mid-2000s, when the family entered into an agreement with the state of Florida and Seminole to sell 5,187 acres for conservation to the St. Johns River Water Management District. The sale also included two miles of property fronting the St. Johns River and five miles along the environmentally-sensitive Econlockhatchee River. For conservationists and environmentalists at the time, the sale was a win because it protected the sensitive land near the rivers from development.

However, as part of the deal, the Yarboroughs were granted limited development rights on their remaining acreage, dotted with ponds, wetlands, and woods, which the family has since continued to operate as a cattle ranch. In December, 2022, the Planning and Zoning Commissioners approved a

Continued on page 3

Yarborough Ranch *Continued from page 2*

plan to allow a 300-unit gated subdivision on one-acre lots on the property. It was then approved by the Commissioners in February, 2023. At that meeting Geneva citizens and other groups spoke to oppose the development. A letter of opposition was also sent by *Audubon Florida* Advocacy Director Charles Lee. *Geneva Citizens Association* and the nonprofit wildlife group *Bear Warriors United* then jointly filed an appeal with the circuit court asking a judge to suppress the commission's decision. In March commissioners reversed their decision and at their meeting on April 25, they agreed to ask the state's Florida Forever program to acquire the 1,314 acres of old pasture land for conservation. The land sits between the Little Big Econ State Forest to the west and the Little Big Econlockhatchee Wildlife Management to the east. It would fill in the missing gaps to a larger statewide wildlife corridor that lead to South Florida. The state will rank the funding requests in December. If approved, Seminole's request would then be eligible for funding in Spring 2024.



Yarborough Ranch

Image from their FB page

Conservation Leadership Academy

This event, sponsored by Florida Audubon's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI), was held on March 25. CLI accepts 25 college students each year from across the state. They are mentored by an Audubon chapter leader. Phyllis Hall has been a mentor for the past five years to students from Seminole, Valencia and Rollins Colleges.

The Academy planning committee was composed of current CLI students & mentors from SAS and Orange Audubon. The goal was to introduce students to Audubon, some of the conservation work being done, and possible career opportunities.

Twenty students from various colleges in Central Florida attended the event that was held at Wekiwa Springs State Park. Participants chose a morning field trip of either a tram tour led by a geologist or a guided nature walk with a naturalist. After lunch there was a presentation about Audubon. The second presentation was given by former Florida legislator and current Seminole County Commissioner Lee Constantine who spoke about his work and career as an advocate for conservation. The presentations were followed by a number of panelists who explained their background and what they do in various environmental fields.



Dr. James Adamski, Geologist and President of Friends of the Wekiwa River, led the morning tram tour.



Audubon Florida JayWatch

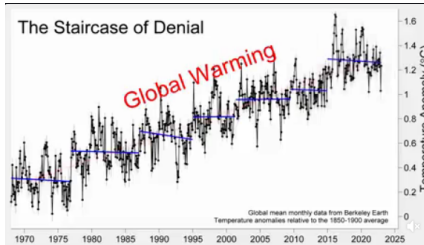
The annual report of the results of the 2022 Florida Scrub Jay nesting season is now available at this link: <https://fl.audubon.org/about-us/audubon-jay-watch-annual-report>

If you would like to become a Jay Watch volunteer, contact Chuck Honaker at chonakerjr@gmail.com

Riding the Wave of Climate Disruption

By Sam Kendall

The bad and good news about global warming are riding the same wave. Will it crash or roll in gently? There's no use grumbling that you've heard enough about global warming. The voices are going to get louder and for longer. Have you heard about El Nino and La Nina? They refer to a multi-year circulation of warm and cold water in the Pacific apparently forming first off Peru. Bill McKibben, in a recent newsletter, correlated rising global atmospheric temperatures with El Nino, the warm circulation, going back to 1970. Here is the graphic he used, It is located at https://americasbestpics.com/video/the-staircase-of-denial-temperature-anomaly-anomaly-anomaly-anomaly-CWEf5PKOA?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email



We are at the end of a La Nina cycle and the next El Nino will probably begin this summer or fall. Record global temperatures are consistently occurring during El Nino periods. Oceans around the globe absorb much of the heat along with CO2. Sea levels rise, corals bleach and the normal predator/prey marine relationships get displaced.

In the Antarctic, a new study * shows that greenhouse gas emissions are slowing down the rate by which cold water sinks. The sinking cold water creates an overturning effect which drives important ocean currents around the world. The currents carry oxygen, carbon and nutrients marine life depends on. Without these currents nutrients are being trapped in deep water and unavailable.

Efforts to reduce greenhouse gases in the US are now mainstreaming as we transition to an electric economy. Between 2005 and 2023 emissions have declined by 18%. Yes, they're going down! A goal of 100% by 2050 is still said to be the safe deadline. Solar and Wind energy are now the least-cost option for utilities in most areas. Solar farm developers are utilizing biodiversity strategies to preserve habitat and secure carbon. Nearly 70,000 wind turbines are operational and offshore wind turbines, including floating turbines, will be online in a few years. In 2022 more electric heat pumps were sold than gas furnaces. Five percent of new cars are now EVs, including record sales of the electric Ford F-150 truck. Dept. of Energy has set a goal of 10 million annual EV sales by 2030.

I'm excited about the work now being done to recycle EV batteries, wind turbine blades and solar panel components. This will drive circular, sustainable transportation and power industries. Lithium, nickel, cobalt, glass, copper and more are in these components.

When I listen to arguments about the environmental impacts of mining these recyclable materials, I rarely hear any mention of the often cataclysmic environmental and human consequences brought on for two centuries by the mining, excavating, drilling, refining and burning of coal, oil and gas. The electric economy means the end of burning things for energy. The Climate Disruption wave could still just settle softly.

*<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/03/230330102327.html>



Flooded homes along the St Johns River

Monthly Survey at Econ River WA

SAS members had a great bird survey morning at Econ River Wilderness Area (ERWA) on Friday May 5th! Thirty-two species were identified including a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Eastern Towhee. Several species were observed feeding nestlings or fledglings. This was the fourth survey on the property completed for the Greenways and Natural Lands Division of Seminole County Leisure Services Dept. One of the Division's goals is to document bird species on each of the Wilderness Areas in Seminole County through monthly surveys focusing on one Wilderness Area each year. So far, the SAS survey team led by Chuck Honaker has documented over 63 species and 683 individuals at the ERWA.



Katie Badolato (Seminole Co.), John Carey, Joy Rector, Kate Dolamore, Brenda Feliciano, Sharon Lovell and Chuck Honaker from SAS
Photo by Cecilia Carey

SAS Receives \$1,000 Grant from National Audubon Society (NAS)

Each Fall National Audubon requests applications for Collaborative Grant projects. Goals of the project need to align with national and state Audubon goals. St. Richard's Episcopal Church in Winter Park (SW corner of Seminole County) wants to reduce their carbon footprint as well as be a role model for their parish members and the surrounding community to use native plants to provide food and habitat for birds and to reduce watering needs.



Conservation Leadership Initiative student Tracey Comazzi, Rollins College, did an independent study spring semester 2022 to develop a master plan for converting the large front section of the lawn from St. Augustine grass to native plants. Phyllis Hall and Tracey worked with the church minister and church leaders to develop the grant application to focus on a small area along the driveway and church entry which has prominent visibility. The grant was approved by NAS!

Planting was done on May 6 by Boy Scouts from the troop that meets at the church, church volunteers plus Tracey and Phyllis.

Native Plants Available at Lukas Nursery in Oviedo

Lukas Nursery has partnered with the Cuplet Fern Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and now has a dedicated area for Florida native plants. Their goal is to provide sought-after native plants. On **Wed. May 31 and Sat. June 3**, SAS's Cecilia Carey and Phyllis Hall will give a presentation at **9 am** on **How to Attract Birds to Your Yard** at Lukas Nursery & Butterfly Encounter located at 1909 Slavia Rd. in Oviedo. All birds need food, water, shelter, plus places to nest and raise their young. We can attract birds by meeting their needs, in essence, creating bird habitats in our yards. Phyllis and Cecilia will talk about different types of bird foods, bird baths, and native plants that meet bird's needs. After the presentation, the group will walk to the new native plant area of the nursery. The talk will be held at the picnic area.



Seminole County Garden Expo

On February 25, over 1,350 people attended the annual Seminole Garden Expo put on by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (UF/IFAS) Extension Service. Pictured to the left are Kate Dolamore, Phyllis Hall, and Marty Shepherd who enjoyed the good weather and talking with everyone who visited the SAS booth.

Audubon Advocate Newsletter

The Advocate is Audubon Florida's monthly newsletter featuring up-to-the-minute developments for environmental issues in Florida. Sign up to receive the Advocate. <http://fl.audubon.org/signup/>





SAS Provides Program for Seminole Co. Leisure Services

In late February, Seminole Audubon Society's Cecilia Carey presented a program entitled "Winter Birds of Central Florida" at the Northwest Branch of the Seminole County Library in Lake Mary. Her program included information about migration and featured *the birds that migrate to Florida Central Florida for the winter. The real "snow birds"*.

Open House at Ed Yarborough Nature Center



In partnership with Seminole County Natural Lands Program, SAS hosted an Open House at the Ed Yarborough Nature Center in Geneva Wilderness on March 4. About 50 people attended this event. The Center provided craft tables. Leslie Martin, Chuck Honaker, Connie Dolan and Kate Dolamore led



two bird walks. Cecilia Carey gave two bird talks about how to identify backyard birds. Marty Shepherd, Joy Rector, and Phyllis Hall provided information about SAS. Children compared their arm length to the wingspan of a life-sized Bald Eagle model made of felt.

2023 Earth Day Festival at T.W. Lawton Elementary School in Oviedo

Marty Shepherd, Joy Rector, and Cecilia Carey (pictured to the right) had a wonderful time working with students at the Seminole Audubon Society booth during the T.W. Lawton Elementary School Earth Day Festival on Friday, April 21st. At the SAS booth, students and their families looked at the "Backyard Birds of Florida" and "Your Yard is a Universe" posters, compared their arm span to that of a Bald Eagle, and made a bird craft. Each bird craft had a small information panel on how to invite birds to the yard by providing clean water, places for sheltering and nesting, and food for the birds via feeders and native plants. Over 55 bird crafts were made!



Smallest Shifting Fastest: Bird Species' Body Size Predicts Rate of Change in a Warming World

According to a recent article in *Science Daily*, birds across the Americas are getting smaller and longer-winged as the world warms, and the smallest-bodied species are changing the fastest. The article can be found at <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/05/230508150924.htm>

Program Notes

Orlando Wetlands—March 12

Rachel Kessler, Public Outreach Coordinator for Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP), gave a wonderful presentation at Seminole Audubon's March meeting. She talked about how OWP has three goals. The first goal is to provide advanced treatment for reclaimed water from the Iron Bridge Water Reclamation Facility in Oviedo. At OWP, this water flows through a series of vegetative communities for 30 – 40 days before leaving the park to enter the St. John's River. During the route, over 98% of the nitrogen and phosphorus are removed by physical, biological, and chemical processes. The water leaving the park is lower in nitrogen and phosphorus than the water in the St. John's River where it enters.



The second goal of OWP is to manage the wetland ecosystem so that it supports a variety of fauna and flora. It is home to deer, otter, raccoons, fish, butterflies, dragonflies, native plants, and over a thousand alligators. More than 240 species of birds have been spotted at this well-known birding hotspot.

The third goal of OWP is to provide public education and outreach through private and public tours, the biannual OWP Festival, and presentations to outside groups. Visitors can walk, bicycle, or horseback ride on the 18 miles of berms that crisscross the park.

This innovative 1,650 acres of man-made wetlands was created in the late 1980's. At the time it was created, it was the only one in the world. Currently there are over 35 similar systems in Florida and over 600 in the United States with over 3,000 worldwide.

Florida Owls and Baby Bird Rescue at the Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland - April 16



Daisy Fiore, PhD, Sr. Coordinator for Education at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, provided interesting facts about the various owls seen in Florida. The largest is the Great Horned Owl that lives in wooded areas. The Barred Owl is the most common and lives in many habitats including urban. Barn Owls are the least common in Florida since they prefer open meadows or prairies. Burrowing Owls are ground dwelling and often nest in gopher tortoise tunnels in Southwest Florida. Primarily due to habitat loss, Burrowing Owls are classified as State Threatened by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Eastern Screech Owls are the smallest owl species in Florida. They live in many habitats and nest in tree hollows or nest boxes. They blend in well and are hard to see since they are out only at night.

All owls have these super powers:

- silent flight because of their special feathers
- * amazing binocular eyesight and ability to see at night
- * excellent grip strength in their talons for catching prey

Daisy Fiore with Barred Owl

Daisy also explained what to do if you find a baby bird and how the Center manages all those rescued birds. If you find a fledging bird, call the Center at 407-644-0190. Staff and volunteers can help you determine the best rescue plan. Keep the bird on a towel in a cardboard box in a warm place until you can transport it. Do not feed the bird. SAS also provides guidance on our website: <https://seminoleaudubon.org/rehab/>

Trip Notes

Orlando Wetlands Park

Seminole Audubon Society had a great trip to Orlando Wetlands Park on March 18th. Forty-one species were observed along the 2-mile walk. The highlight of the morning was taking the new boardwalk over the wetlands to a cypress dome. American Coots, Blue-winged Teals, and a Pied-billed Grebe foraged in the water while Common Gallinules, a Purple Gallinule, and a Green Heron focused on the emergent vegetation. Wood Storks and Anhinga appeared to be incubating eggs while the Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, and Roseate Spoonbills were busy tending to their offspring. The group also went to Oyler Overlook where they used a spotting scope to see a young Bald Eagle close to fledging and a few Black-crowned Night-Herons in a second cypress dome.



Orlando Wetland's Park new 2200' boardwalk



Orlando Wetlands Pk trip participants. Photos by John Carey & Cindy Haller

Gemini Springs Park

Bio-Bingo

On April 22 at Gemini Springs Park in DeBary, we gathered for a rousing game of Bio-Bingo. The park is one of Florida's Special Places, and was the perfect location for the game. Bio-Bingo is a biology treasure hunt combined with bingo.

Thanks to promotion of the event on Meet Up, we had many new adults and families with children participate in the game. The participants divided into teams to play the game which involved exploring the park to find birds as well as other animals, insects, and plants listed on their Bingo cards.



Least Terns Return to Altamonte Mall



Least Tern Photo by Ken Schmidt

Many of us remember the summers when Least Terns nested on the flat roof of the motel on Marina Isle in Sanford. When the motel was torn down we were concerned the birds might not be able to find a suitable nesting location in the area.

For a second year Least Terns have been sighted on the roof of the Altamonte Mall. It is not known if any of these birds have a history in Sanford, but we are glad a new nesting location has been found.

Homegrown National Park®

This is a grassroots call-to-action to regenerate biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants and creating new ecological networks. It is based on the research and publications by Doug Tallamy, Professor of Agriculture in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware. We are at a critical point of losing so many native plant and animal species that the ecosystem services we rely on (oxygen, clean water, flood control, pollination, pest control, etc.) will become seriously compromised. However, if many people make small changes, we can restore healthy ecological networks.

Things each of us can do:

- Shrink the lawn and leave the leaves for mulch.
- Generously plant the plants that do the most good.
- Create caterpillar pupation sites under trees by leaving leaves and providing groundcover.
- Remove invasive species that degrade the ability of ecosystems to function.
- Do not spray or fertilize.
- Reduce your nighttime light pollution.
- Get on the map at <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>

Phyllis Hall submitted before and after photos to Homegrown National Park. Her yard was featured with photos on Facebook and Instagram on March 23, 2023.



Phyllis Hall's yard "Before" and "After"

WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS or NEW to OUR Chapter

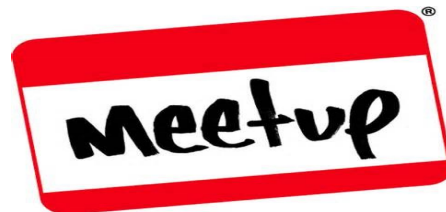
Silvia Braun	Sanford	John Marshall	Sanford
Geraldine Capizzi	Sanford	Claud Nelson	Sanford
Dallas Douglass	Sanford	Kimberly Pasquariello	Sanford
Jack Ferrell	Deltona	Pat Poore	Lake Mary
Jaime Fuentes	Deltona	Joseph F Thomas	Lake Mary
Samuel Goff	Geneva	Roy Walters	Deltona
Sarah M. Holt	Lake Mary	Taryn Whelan	Sanford
Deborah Jagodzinski	DeBary	Faye Winfrey	Sanford
Gene Leonard	Sanford		

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Introductory offer For New Members Only \$20.00/ 1 year

*Join on our website **SeminoleAudubon.org** using Chapter Code E31*

Make checks payable to **National Audubon Society**. Complete this form and mail with your check to:
Seminole Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2977, Sanford FL 32772-2977

Seminole Audubon Associate Membership \$10.00 / year

Available to Audubon Society members assigned to other chapters.

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2023-2024

Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/23)

SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com

Board	Name	Term
President	Phyllis Hall	2022/2024
Vice President	Leslie Martin	2023/2026
Treasurer	Jan Peters	2023/2025
Secretary	Peggy Stickney	2022/2024
At-Large	Lewis Gray	2023/2025
At-Large	Tracey Comazzi	2023/2026
At-Large	Connie Dolan	2023/2025

Per 9/11/2022 board meeting, keep the board at 7 members. Add a year to a term as needed to keep the terms balanced.

Committees

Bird Surveys

- The Big Sit! Leslie Martin
- Christmas Bird Count. Leslie Martin
- EagleWatch: Sarah Donlan, Michelle Vaughn, Chuck Honaker, Phyllis Hall
- Econ River Wilderness Area. Chuck Honaker (Chair)
- Jane Isle Survey: Lewis Gray (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger, Leslie Martin.
- Jay Watch: Chuck Honaker

Conservation: Phyllis Hall (Chair), Sam Kendall (Energy), Chuck Honaker, Sarah Donlan, Cecilia Carey, John Carey, Marguerite Terwilleger, Tracey Comazzi

Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI). Phyllis Hall

Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP). Connie Dolan (Chair), Corrinne Wertz.

Butterfly survey co-chairs: Connie Dolan & Tracey Comazzi.

Education. Cecilia Carey (Chair), John Carey, Joy Rector. Garden clubs, libraries, schools and scouts, eco-camp, etc.

History Archives. Stored in Seminole County History Museum. Electronic files: Phyllis Hall

Jay Newsletter. Tracey Comazzi (Chair), Corrinne Wertz

Lake Monroe Purple Martin Nests. Jim Peters (Chair), Jan Peters, John & Cecilia Carey

Lake Jesup Park Clean Up. Leslie Martin (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger

New Member Welcome Letter. Margaret Loring

Media:

- **Meetings PowerPoint, MailChimp, Meet Up, Facebook.** Cecilia Carey
- **Website.** Phyllis Hall

Membership. Marty Shepherd

Outreach/Festivals. Phyllis Hall (Chair), Marty Shepherd, Cecilia Carey, Leslie Martin, Joy Rector.

PO Box Mail Pickup. Marty Shepherd (Backup: Marguerite Terwilleger)

SAS Gmail Inbox. Phyllis Hall (Backup: Cecilia Carey)

Programs & Field Trips. Phyllis Hall (Chair), Leslie Martin, Cecilia Carey. Release keeper: Peggy Stickney.

Scholarships Eco-Camp. Marguerite Terwilleger (Chair), Corrinne Wertz, Joy Rector, Michelle Vaughn