



The Night Owl

Encouraging Conservation Around the Clock

Volume 2, Issue 1

the newsletter from Nature Wise, Inc.

August 2008

Upcoming Program: Florida's Coastal Treasures

Number nine in the *Wildlife Matters* series, *Florida's Coastal Treasures: Canaveral National Seashore and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge* is a 30-minute television documentary focusing on the natural significance of two important wildlife habitats and eco-tourism destinations. The program will highlight the unique natural features as well as the conservation efforts of each park.



Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge year-round resident, the Great Egret

Operated by the National Parks Service, Canaveral National Seashore hosts over one million tourists each year from around the globe. The 57,000 acre park has 24 miles of beach, the longest remaining stretch of undeveloped beach in Florida, and is a critical nesting ground for endangered sea turtles.

At 140,000 acres, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is also a critical wildlife habitat. Situated between the subtropic and temperate climate zones, the park's geographic location makes it ideal for many migratory and resident birds including the endemic Florida Scrub Jay. The refuge is also home to other listed species including the manatee and gopher tortoise.

With a combined total of over 1.5 million visitors annually, Canaveral

National Seashore and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge are important sources of local tourism revenue. As the NASA Space Shuttle program comes to an end, these natural areas are even more important to the local economy.



Roseate Spoonbills, winter visitors to the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Florida is the top travel destination for both international and domestic tourists. It is the goal of Nature Wise, Inc. through *Florida's Coastal Treasures* to not only showcase the area's recreational activities,

but also to educate viewers and tourists about the significance of these critical habitats to the existence

of so many of our native wildlife in an effort to inspire others to preserve wildlife habitat in the same manner.

Two thirds of the funding necessary to produce *Florida's Coastal Treasures* has been secured. If you would like to donate to this or any other Nature Wise, Inc. program, please see the "Make a Donation" section in this newsletter or visit our website at www.naturewisetv.org.

Nature Wise Receives Awards

Tracy McCommon, president and founder of Nature Wise, Inc., received two distinguished awards for her TV program, *Florida's Water... Wealth For Our Future*.

Tracy was honored with the *Business for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow 2008 B.E.S.T. Partner Award for Supporting Efforts in Water Conservation* from Orange County Government.

The Florida division of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) also honored the TV program with the *2007 Award for Excellence, Best In Class*.



Tracy receiving the Best in Class award from AWWA's Rob Teegarden

“Turtle Watch” Offers Turtle Nesting Videography Opportunity

In June, Nature Wise, Inc. was given the opportunity to participate in a “Turtle Watch” on Canaveral National Seashore and to film sea turtles nesting on the beach for the upcoming program, *Florida’s Coastal Treasures*.



loggerhead sea turtle depositing eggs in nest

make their nests along the foredunes.

In the 1980s, CNS park rangers found that raccoons were destroying over 98 percent of the sea turtle nests. To help ensure the survival

and volunteers work nightly to screen the nests. Once the eggs hatch, rangers excavate one of every 10 nests to monitor the success rate.

Since its inception, the program has protected over 80 percent of the nests. This season, 3500 nests have been documented on CNS.

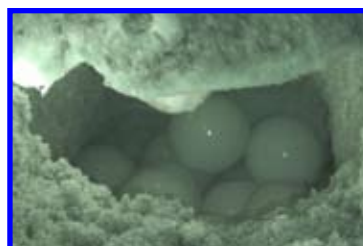
At 24 miles long, Canaveral National Seashore (CNS) is the longest stretch of undeveloped beach in Florida. It is also one of the most important nesting sites for several kinds of endangered sea turtles, including loggerhead, green and sometimes leatherback sea turtles. During the summer, thousands of sea turtles lumber up from the ocean to

of the turtles, the park began protecting the nests by securing them with a wire mesh screen that would prevent raccoons from digging into the nests but still allow the hatchlings to exit.

From May through August, park rangers

Florida’s Coastal Treasures will highlight the natural significance of Canaveral

National Seashore as a nesting ground for endangered sea turtles in an effort to encourage the preservation of more coastal habitat for turtles throughout Florida.



eggs deposited in nest

Upcoming Program: Save Space for the Gopher Tortoise

Nature Wise, Inc. has recently begun production on the 30-minute documentary, *Save Space for the Gopher Tortoise*. Through this program, Nature Wise, Inc.



gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

seeks to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of gopher tortoise populations and the need to conserve their habitat.

Gopher tortoise population in Florida has declined, primarily due to habitat loss from development. As a result, the gopher tortoise was recently reclassified from a Species of Special Concern to the status of Threatened.

Save Space for the Gopher Tortoise will educate the public (which includes landowners, land managers, builders, developers, educators, students, the general public and other interest

groups) as well as local, regional and state government officials about the crucial link between the gopher tortoise’s (and its commensal species) survival and habitat availability.

The program will engage viewers in the importance of preserving land for gopher tortoise. It will also teach them how public and private land can be managed to maximum gopher tortoise carrying capacity.

Fundraising efforts for *Save Space for the Gopher Tortoise* are just getting started. If you would like to donate to this or any other Nature Wise, Inc. program, please see the “Make a Donation” section in this newsletter or visit our website at www.naturewisetv.org.

Make a Donation

Nature Wise, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. We depend on donations from individuals, businesses and corporations as well as grant monies from government and private foundations to sustain our mission of “improving the environment through educational television and video.”

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please make your check payable to NatureWise, Inc. and mail it to:

Nature Wise, Inc.
PO Box 560277
Orlando, FL 32856-0277

For additional information on making a donation or for corporate sponsorship opportunities, please contact Tracy McCommon by phone at 407-579-7989 or by email at positivetracy@bellsouth.net.

Upcoming Program: Gardening for Native Pollinators

Coming soon from NatureWise, Inc. is *Gardening for Native Pollinators*, a 30-minute television documentary that aims to educate viewers on the importance of Florida's native



Pollinators on scrub dayflower

pollinators and on gardening principles that will enhance the survival of both wild pollinators and their dependent native wildflowers.

There is overwhelming evidence that wild pollinators are declining worldwide, as well as in backyards and natural lands right here in Central Florida. Native pollinator populations are suffering due to loss of habitat, pesticide use, competition with introduced species including honey-bees, imported

diseases, climate changes and fragmentation of ecosystems.

Wildflowers, both naturally-occurring as well as cultivated, are very much

dependent on a healthy, growing population of native pollinators. Seventy-five percent of Florida's native wildflowers rely upon native pollinators for successful reproduction. Declines in native pollinator populations have been linked to lower native wildflower "birth rates."

Gardening for Native Pollinators seeks to increase the value of pollinators in the public's eyes and to inspire them to help preserve native pollinat-

ors and wildflowers by conserving habitat and by using native wildflowers to create more pollinator-friendly habitats on private land, in parks and on public property.

Gardening for Native Pollinators has obtained two thirds of the funding necessary for production. If you would like to donate to this or any other Nature Wise, Inc. program, please see the "Make a Donation" section in this newsletter or visit www.naturewisetv.org.



Gulf Fritillary on golden aster

Ordering Nature Wise, Inc. Programs

If you would like to order a Nature Wise, Inc. television program, please visit our website.

Programs are available in DVD or VHS format for \$19.95 each (includes shipping and handling).

Complimentary copies are available to television stations interested in broadcasting the program.

Organizations interested in distributing copies of these videos to their constituents to encourage conservation will receive a bulk discount.

To view a segment of a program before you order, visit the "TV Program Samples" link on the NatureWise, Inc. website at www.naturewisetv.org or by clicking on a title to the right.

Nature Wise TV Programs

(Click on a program title to view a 60-second sample.)

Restoring Florida's Lakeshores with Aquascaping

Wildlife Matters: Audubon Center for Birds of Prey

Wildlife Matters: Preserving Large Tracts of Land

Wildlife Matters: Creating a Backyard Habitat

Wildlife Matters: Balancing Conservation & Development

Wildlife Matters: Florida Ecosystems and their Endangered Animals

Wildlife Matters: Unique Landscapes Using Florida Native Plants

Wildlife Matters: Successful Gardens Inspired By Nature

Wildlife Matters: Florida Wildflowers

Florida's Water...Wealth For Our Future

Nature Wise Receives Tourism Grant from VISIT FLORIDA

VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official source for travel planning, recently awarded a Cultural Heritage and Nature Tourism Image Development Grant in the amount of \$5,000 to Nature Wise, Inc.

Tracy McCommon, President and Founder of Nature Wise, Inc. said the funds will be used for the upcoming program, *Florida's Coastal Treasures*, which will introduce viewers to the uniqueness of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and Canaveral National Seashore, both located near Titusville. As part of the *Wildlife Matters* series, *Florida's Coastal Treasures* aims to enlighten viewers throughout Florida on the impor-

tance of preserving these vital habitats for many listed wildlife species and bring them to Titusville to see for themselves.

"The purpose of these grants," as described by Kerri Post, Vice President of New Product Development for VISIT FLORIDA, "is to help non-profit entities and local governments stretch their tourism marketing dollars in an effort to expand cultural heritage and nature tourism activities in Florida."

"We were pleased that VISIT FLORIDA and the Florida Commission on Tourism selected us from among a large number of grant applicants,

during their most competitive grant cycle to date," said McCommon.



VISIT FLORIDA is the operating company of the Florida Commission on Tourism, which is a private/public partnership made up of top state government officials and representatives of the Florida tourism industry.



Nature Wise, Inc.
PO Box 560277
Orlando, FL 32856-0277

Phone: 407-579-7989
E-mail: positivetracy@bellsouth.net