



# Pine Island Knots

Newsletter of the Pine Island Preservation Society  
Number 45  
March 2024

## 12th Annual Pioneer Day Another Great Event

The 12th Annual Pioneer Day celebration on February 10 was another fantastic event held at Sams House and St. Luke's Episcopal Church! Couldn't have had better weather. A steady crowd of about 1000 guests enjoyed over 30 historical, environmental or nature-based exhibitions, live music, numerous craft and educational vendors and activities for young pioneers. It was delightfully noted that there were a higher number of families with young people this year.

A huge thank you to all who participated including our event leaders at Sams House, Diane Stees and Martha Pessaro and all who gave up their time, talents, and treasures to make this another memorable event.



Martha Pessaro gives Pioneer Tour of the Main House parlor to guests.



An 1830s Seminole Indian hunt camp is one of several living history exhibitors at Sams House.



Children sign Marine Resources Council banner.



Celery City Band entertains guests.

Top 3 photos by Diane Stees, rest by Photographer Chris Minerva. To view 130+ more Pioneer Day photos from Sams House and St. Luke's log on to [www.nmihoa.org](http://www.nmihoa.org) and click on 2024 Pioneer Day Feb. 10 - Images. You'll be glad you did.



"I love to play in the hay on Pioneer Day!"



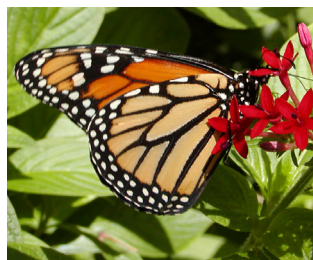
Vendor tents line walkways at St. Luke's.



The classic group photo pose before the parade.



Fife and Drum participate in the Sams House parade.



## MIWA Sponsored Spring Butterfly Walks

The Merritt Island Wildlife Association (MIWA) will hold Spring Butterfly Walks at Sams House and the Enchanted Forest in April, May and June. Retired Park Ranger from Sebastian Inlet State Park, Ed Perry, will be the guest speaker. Come early to sign up for the program which lasts from 10:00 to noon and includes a briefing, trail exploration, a discussion of findings, and finally a door prize drawing.

**Tuesday, April 16, Sams House**

**Wednesday, May 1, Enchanted Forest**

**Wednesday, June 12, Sams House**

# PIPS Board Meet For Vision Session



Photo by Shannah Trout

PIPS Board and members attended a "Vision" session in late March at St. Lukes Perrine Hall. Fantastic ideas were discussed by all and action items are underway including exploring the possibility of a new Visitor Center, a Packing House exhibit area, memorial bricks, a new website, an orientation video, recruitment of new docents and volunteers, added educational presentations, and more. Those attending the Vision Session are pictured above from left to right: John Schantzen, Tom McFarland Debbie and Mike Richard, Rick English, Elaine Williams, Elaine Leclerc, Denise Christopher, Josie and Mike Leclerc, Jerry Hunt, Alex Schilling EEL Education Coordinator, Jerry Stubbs, Joe Matta, Jeff Thompson, Diane Stees, and Darleen Hunt. Attendees not in photo are Vivian Shay and Shannah Trout.

## Owl Prowling at Sams House

In early January naturalists Rob Lane and Shannon Steele led another successful Owl Prowl at Sams House. Participants heard four screech owls and a flying squirrel and saw a pair of barred owls as they called out, "Who cooks for you?" This photo is of a barred owl that Shannon spotted next to the picnic area.



## Go Weed Warriors!



Photo by Shannon Steele

Volunteer Judy Johnson joined naturalists Rob Lane and Shannon Steele as they removed invasive Brazilian Peppers and Caesarweed from the perimeter of the green space at Sams House on February 24. They didn't have as much to remove from the white trail this year because last year's efforts helped keep them in check. Go, weed warriors!

## Parkhurst Students Visit



Photo by Mary Matta.

Special students from Parkhurst, a private school in Eau Gallie, pose during a tour of Sams House in February led by Rob Lane assisted by volunteers Mary Matta, Jessica Kelty, and Darleen Hunt.

# Mattas Hike and Photograph the PICA Trails

What's it like to hike the trails on the Pine Island Conservation Area (PICA)? Ask Joe and Mary Matta who do so every couple of months.

In early January they took an hour long hike along the Flatwoods Loop. Mary said "It was amazing to see all the different birds." She was able to photograph a wide variety with her small Canon Power Shot.

The Matta's have hiked all 12 of the trails covering 11.2 miles on the 900+acre PICA. Joe said "All the trails are kept really well, but you need to wear all weather shoes as there are some low muddy areas in places." He added, "Off the Flatwoods Loop there is a trail branch that goes all along the Indian River which is really spectacular."

Joe, a retired Firefighter Lieutenant, serves as a Board member for the Pine Island Preservation Society (PIPS). Mary, a former Social Worker, is a PIPS volunteer at Sams House. Both are very active in the community and enjoy travel and entertaining friends and family on their five acre paradise on North Merritt Island.

*A brochure with a map showing all of the hiking trails on the PICA is available in the Sams House Cabin.*

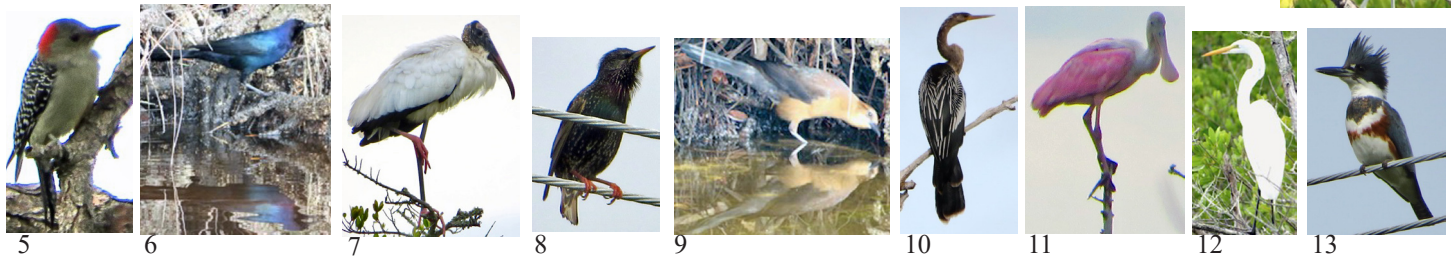
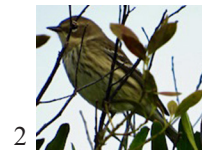


Mary and Joe Matta on Flatwoods Loop.

Birds shown here photographed by Mary Matta on a one hour hike of the Flatwoods Loop in January at PICA.



1. White Pelicans & a Roseate Spoonbill
2. Palm Warbler
3. Grey Catbird
4. Little Blue Heron
5. Red-bellied Woodpecker
6. Great-tailed Grackle (M)
7. Wood Stork
8. Starling
9. Great-tailed Grackle (F)
10. Anhinga
11. Roseate Spoonbill
12. Great Egret
13. Belted Kingfisher



## Upcoming Sams House Programs

(Please Call for Reservations 321 449-4720)

- **Gopher Tortoises** - April 13, 1 pm to noon. Dig into the lives of these keystone species and learn more about their role in the ecosystem. Recommended for families with kids aged 12 and under.
- **Bring Your Own Kayak- Monday, April 25, 9:30 am - 12:00 noon** - Meet up at the Thousand Islands Conservation Area for water tour. Registration is required. Meet at 599 Ramp Road, Cocoa Beach.
- **Saturday Bird Walks at Sams House** - Saturdays 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Join the naturalists of Sams House (weather permitting) to look and listen for birds. From beginner to expert, all levels of birders welcomed. Bring binoculars if possible. Meet in front of cabin.
- **Scavenger Hunt** - Sundays 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Stop by the 1888 house to pick up nature hunt guide and explore the grounds.



## MANGO HARVEST FESTIVAL - JUNE 22 10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

### Sams House

The Mango trees are in bloom now. Anticipating a bountiful crop, another Mango Harvest Festival is in the planning for Saturday, June 22.

The day will be filled with recipe demonstrations, taste sampling, sales of mango delicacies including jams, hot sauces, baked goods, fresh mangos from local farms, live music, mango themed basket raffles as well as a lunch booth and exhibitors including the Tropical Fruit Club.

The festival was a huge success last year. This is in harmony with the spirit of the Pioneer Sams family who were successful citrus and fruit farmers in the late 1800s.

Hope to see you there on Saturday, June 22!

### Contact Information

David DeMeyer, EEL Land Manager for Central Region; Alex Schilling, Education Center Coordinator, and Shannon Steele, EEL Naturalist at Sams House, and Rob Lane, EEL Naturalist can all be reached at (321) 449-4720.

www.facebook.com/eelbrevard

Volgistics, this website which allows volunteers to sign up for shifts or projects online, as well as record volunteer hours, is located...at:

https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.dll/?from=53695

The Docent Desk computer is set up for entry as well.

Website: https://www.brevardfl.gov/EELProgram/Sanctuaries/SamsHouse

https://www.facebook.com/pineislandpreservationsociety/

www.nbbd.com/godo/sanctuaries/SamsHouse/

Pine Island Knotes editor: Darleen Hunt, 321 452-8433, dhunt125@aol.com

### President's Thoughts...



With the arrival of Spring, the PICA is once again blessed with temperate weather and the new growth of both flora and fauna. Make sure that you take the opportunity to explore and enjoy the wonders of PICA and the Sams House Education Center. As noted in the article about the Mattas, this is a great time of year to take a hike with your camera and binoculars. The wildlife here is amazing.

Our 12th annual Pioneer Day was a great success. The vendors, exhibitors and the goats were great draws. The parade, as usual, a highlight of the morning hours. Awesome weather made the day perfect. Make sure you don't miss next year!

PIPS can only succeed in supporting PICA and prosper through our members and the work of our volunteers. Thanks to all of you who have given your time, skills and talents through the years. We all want to see the work of PIPS continue to grow. If you have time during the Sams House open hours, please consider volunteering your services.

*Rick English*

President, Pine Island Preservation Society

#### Pine Island Preservation Society

#### Board of Directors

- Rick English, President
- John Schantzen, Vice President
- Jeff Thompson, Secretary
- Darleen Hunt, Treasurer
- Denise Christopher
- Elaine Leclerc
- Brenda LaRoche
- Joe Matta
- Josie Neal
- Martha Pessaro
- Vivian Shay
- Diane Stees
- Jerry Stubbs
- Shannah Trout
- Elaine Williams



### Welcome New Members

The Pine Island Preservation Society is pleased to welcome the following new members who recently joined this Association: **Melissa Lewis and Joanie Falls.**

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is open to any individual or organization willing to support the Pine Island Preservation Society in its activities to assist the Pine Island Conservation Area, including the historic Sams House, and the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program of Brevard County, Florida.

Your contact information will be handled as private data and will not be shared with anyone.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CHECK CATEGORY OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:  New  Renewal

<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (55+)	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	<b>Corporate Memberships</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple (55+)	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe Crab	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Sams Descendants	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gopher Tortoise	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple Supporting	\$75			<input type="checkbox"/> Eagle	\$1000
				<input type="checkbox"/> Mastodon	\$5000

Please make check payable to Pine Island Preservation Society or "PIPS" and mail check and membership application to: Pine Island Preservation Society, Inc., 6195 North Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, FL 32953