

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Monday Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

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### **“Sweat and Elbow Grease Needed for National Public Lands Day Saturday September 27, 2008 – 4 Hernando County Volunteer Locations!”**

People find solace and recreation in public lands, places dedicated to keeping lands healthy for both humans and wildlife. If you have ever hiked, biked, swam, canoed, camped, hunted, rode your horse or simply watched wildlife you have probably done so on public lands. This year over 110,000 volunteers nationwide will give back to their public lands to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual National Public Lands Day on Saturday September 27, 2008.

National Public Lands Day, which is annually the last Saturday in September, is an opportunity to clean up America's most treasured spots and preserve them for future generations. This year volunteers are taking part at 1,500 sites across the nation, and Hernando County expects to see 100 volunteers participate at four local events.

“National Public Lands Day is a great way for people to give back to their community to make sure our public lands are safe, clean and healthy for wildlife,” said Becky Brown, local coordinator for National Public Lands Day.

Hernando County has four work sites on September 27, for you to get down and dirty giving your sweat and elbow grease by removing trash and debris, collecting native plant seeds for restoration and completing a demonstration butterfly garden. To ensure that everyone can take part, three local government agencies, Hernando County, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), have partnered to have worksites located throughout the county.

Four volunteer worksite locations:

- Spring Hill at the Weekiwachee Preserve managed by SWFWMD.
- Weeki Wachee at the Weeki Wachee Tract of the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management area managed by FWC.
- Central Hernando County at Peck Sink, near Brooksville Regional Hospital, managed by Hernando County.
- Northern Hernando County at Chinsegut Nature Center managed by FWC.

Each worksite will start their projects at 8 am and complete their work by 11:00 am. An after party for all volunteers will ensue at Bud McKethan Park, in front of the Quarry Golf course in Brooksville, with free lunch, drinks and a Thank-You ceremony. All participating agencies and groups will speak and have table information about their public lands and volunteer opportunities.

Non-governmental sponsors for Hernando County National Public Lands Day include the Hernando Audubon Society, whose mission is to promote an awareness and appreciation of nature, to preserve and protect wildlife and natural ecosystems and to encourage responsible environmental stewardship and the Hernando Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society whose mission is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant ecosystems of Florida. National Public Lands Day is also being held in coordination with the International Coastal Clean-Up sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy.

“The groups partnering together for Hernando National Public Lands Day all have a commitment to conservation, and are working together to spread the word about the importance of public lands,” added Rebecca Brown of FWC.

“Hernando County offers so many outdoor recreation opportunities. Tourists, and new residents flock to this region because of the vast resources that our local public lands provide,” said Sue Rupe, Hernando County Tourist Development Council Director.

Given the use of our public lands, land managers always need a helping hand to keep access and opportunities available for the public. Hernando National Public Lands Day is a way for the public to give back and ensure these treasured places are available to people and to wildlife.

To sign up for a work site please contact Becky Brown, National Public Lands Day local coordinator at 352-754-6722 or [Rebecca.Brown@MyFWC.com](mailto:Rebecca.Brown@MyFWC.com). Also visit [www.publiclandsday.org](http://www.publiclandsday.org) for details and directions to local worksites.

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