



Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway Newsletter

Having traveled so far into darkness, it is now time to return to the light. Rob Butler

April Synopsis

- Corporate sponsorship – tabled that till January of 2021.
- Kiosks – Spreadsheet was developed to see what kiosks needed to be worked on, and which ones were already inspected. Board has copy.
- Newsletter –6 people will do six articles.
- Partnership – Leave no trace, Trout Lake nature center and St. Johns River Keeper.
- Leave no trace – Might be worth while to pursue for general public.
- St Johns RiverKeepers said they would give a talk at one of our meetings.



Silver River - In the 1820s, the springs became a tourist attraction for adventurous visitors who poled their way along the narrow stream through overhanging cypress and Spanish moss. With the invention of the paddlewheel, Silver River and Springs became a distribution center for Central Florida.

Glass Bottom Boats -Around 1878, Hullam Jones invented the first glass bottom boat in Silver Springs, Florida by building a row-boat with a glass bottom. Jones supposedly used his glass bottom boat for personal use, yet it wasn't much later that the first commercial glass bottom boats were developed in Silver Springs, Florida and Catalina Island, California.

Ocala National Forest - is the world's largest contiguous sand pine scrub forest at nearly 383,000 acres. That means that a sand ridge of dunes, which were once a chain of islands before the sea retreated 25 million years ago, runs through an area primarily populated by sand pines.

In the Know Cool Facts

Sebastian the Ibis

Folklore maintains that the Ibis, a symbol of knowledge found in the Everglades and Egypt, is the last sign of wildlife to take shelter before a hurricane and the first to reappear after the storm. The local marsh bird was considered University of Miami's first unofficial mascot when the school yearbook adopted the name "Ibis" in 1926. Its popularity grew among the students during the 50's. In 1957 San Sebastian Hall, a residence hall on campus, sponsored an Ibis entry in the homecoming celebration. The next year, student John Stormont performed at games in an Ibis costume that was glued, sewn and pinned together and was the forerunner of today's bird. Through the years, the Ibis has become one of the most recognizable college mascots in the United States.



Hidden Pond ONF



Ibis Silver Springs



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World upside down

In a world tip upside down and sideways, we humans have to learn a new concept. A concept that has been around for eons but never practiced by humans till now. A term called "Social Distancing", something certain animals in their kingdom have already practiced, such as many species of birds, insects, and amphibians.

It is also interesting to note that animals will often force members to social distance themselves as a way of keeping an ill member from being around others. Animals have an instinct that recognizes when other members of the group have a disease that could be passed on to other members, and will direct those members to separate from the group.

There is one species in particular that is often called "the most antisocial animal on earth." When we look at social distancing in the animal world Florida black bears love solitude. They will spend the majority of their day in complete solitude. When they do interact with other members of their group it is usually for a specific reason like finding food. They spend most of their day doing their own thing, and rarely bother other bears. Life is good in the Florida black bear world.

As a result, Florida black bears do not have natural enemies. They might get into a fight with other species when it comes to family, territory or food, but this tends to be situational. They do not seem to be bothered by being by themselves, and if needed they will seek others to get specific tasks done.

When you look at all the nature shows that feature bears you typically see them moving slowly. Florida black bears can move 30 mph if they choose to do so, but most choose not to. When you spend a good time by yourself, you are just not necessarily in a hurry. There are some practical advantages of not being in a hurry, like food will not be scared away, and will not cause other animals to see bears as a threat. Being by yourself and being comfortable by yourself, goes hand in hand with not needing to



be in a hurry.

Of course social systems in any species are complex and this certainly applies to Florida black bears. Family units tend to be small but are just as important to bears as to other animals. But it is interesting to consider how some species such as Florida black bear can be so content spending most of their time alone. On the other hand we humans have become such "social animals" that the idea of preferring solitude is often viewed as being a problem. But animals like Florida black bears show us humans there is another way to look at social interaction. Being with others of your species is good but the alternative might not be bad either.



"Every day, the images, sounds, and smells of the so-called real world literally surround us and assail our senses. Yet we tend to go about our lives consumed by day-to-day struggles and routines, oblivious to the marvels that abound. But then an artist comes along and interprets this very same world - through images, music, a story, a performance - and suddenly we are moved. Engaged. Really powerful art can change lives."