



The Cuscowilla Chronicle

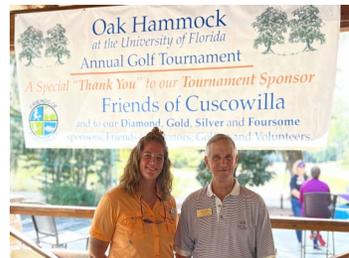
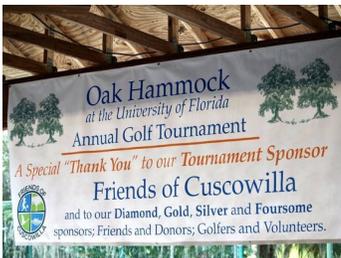
What's Happening with the Friends of Cuscowilla?

A Year in Retrospect

2021 was an outstanding year for Friends of Cuscowilla (FoC). The “campership” fundraiser raised enough to fund 237 youth at the Cuscowilla day camp. These youth experienced swimming, archery, arts and crafts, STEM activities, games, and other cultural events. These memories will be carried with them their entire life.



On October 11, 2021, through a generous donation, FoC was named as a corporate sponsor for the Oak Hammock Benevolent Golf Tournament. This event provided the opportunity to expand visibility of FoC and Cuscowilla into the community. Lexi Green, Cuscowilla Manager, gave a presentation highlighting the Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center and all it offers. FOC provided promotional gifts for all golfers and sponsored a team.



In the Fall of 2021, new partnerships were established with Alachua County, Matheson Museum, Santa Fe College, and Florida Museum of Natural History. These partners will assist us pro bono with historical accuracy and presentations of our educational and historical materials.

March 2022

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What the Kids are Saying:

“I’ve never been to a camp before, but I’m pretty sure this is the best one.”

“I like spending time with my new friends and playing in the pool.”

“My favorite part of camp is beating Lexi in Capture the Flag!”



RENOVATIONS

The county began renovations at Cuscowilla in the fall of 2021. The parking lot was environmentally redesigned and paved. The dining hall and south pool building are currently being renovated. A new climbing wall was added and work on the nature walk and dock is underway.



GRANTS

FoC has received three grants: Duke Energy (\$9,000), Clay Electric (\$2,500), and Felburn Foundation (\$26,000). The grants will be used for outdoor signage on the nature walk, indoor exhibits, restoration of the Bradbury Scout Cabin, and signage for the Butterfly Garden. We have several other grants in progress designed to support our goals. If you would like to make a donation to any of the other projects listed below, please contact Cynthia Holland (President) or E. Jane Luzar (Vice-President). Donations can be made through our website as well.

FRIENDS OF CUSCOWILLA GOALS FOR 2022

Our primary goal for 2022 is supporting free day camp and overnight camp “camperships” at Cuscowilla for youth. These scholarships enable youth to attend a week-long day camp at no cost to them. Emphasis will be on providing an equitable opportunity for nearly 250 low income, diverse youth in Alachua and surrounding counties. Campership donations of \$100 will send a child to day camp for a week. Campership donations of \$445 will send a child to overnight camp for a week. Please consider making a donation that will enrich a child’s life.



A second goal is the development of the new Cuscowilla Exploration Center. This interactive nature and history center will be designed around interpretive audio and visual displays. The exhibits will showcase local historic land use, the history of the Seminole Tribe in the region, a nature walk, a butterfly garden, George’s Pond, and other environmental areas within Cuscowilla. The FoC Historical Committee is designing, in conjunction with our partners, exhibits for the Center.

A third goal is to establish a butterfly garden with an emphasis on native plants that provide butterflies food and habitats. Campers will take part in establishing this garden at the beginning of the summer and help maintain it throughout the summer. Curriculum provided by the Florida Museum of Natural History will guide campers and visitors through hands-on learning activities. **Funding and donations have been received for this project.**





A fourth goal is the renovation of the historic Bradbury Boy Scout Cabin, built in 1938. It was relocated to Cuscowilla in 1998 from downtown Gainesville. This historic building is located adjacent to the primitive camping facilities at Cuscowilla. Friends of Cuscowilla is working to restore this facility for use as a meeting place for scouts, local 4-H clubs, and other youth groups. The building will also include historical information on the site, the building, and the former YMCA Camp McConnell. **Funding and donations have been received for this project.**



A fifth goal is to provide six fire pits for the overnight camping cabins. The fire pits will be constructed of pavers and will include seating areas and patios designed to promote interaction and team building among campers and overnight guests. Currently, there are no fire pits at Cuscowilla for youth to enjoy time honored camp traditions of roasting hotdogs and making s'mores.

A sixth goal is to add interpretive signage featuring local flora and fauna. The Nature Boardwalk will feature a viewing deck overlooking the wetland eco-system. Audio and visual educational materials will be developed which correlate to the various species and eco-systems encountered. This Nature Boardwalk will be used by Cuscowilla hikers and will be incorporated into the curriculum for campers. **Funding and donations have been received for this project.**



A seventh goal is the restoration of the existing amphitheater overlooking George's Pond. The hardscape will be expanded to include additional seating space for a variety of ceremonies and events. This location will be appropriate for weddings and music events and will provide an outdoor space for presentations and lectures. It will also provide additional outdoor seating for camp related presentations.





How You Can Get Involved

Join Friends of Cuscowilla

With a \$10 membership donation annually, you can make a positive change in the lives of children.

Interested in helping out even more? You can volunteer to serve on one of our committees.

Our **Fundraising Committee** writes grants and coordinates fundraising to support our goals.

Our **History Committee** coordinates materials and programming for our planned Exploration Center.

Our **Membership Committee** coordinates our membership drives and organizes volunteers for special events.

Stay in touch with Friends of Cuscowilla

On our Facebook Page: Friends of Cuscowilla
On our website: www.cuscowilla.org
By email: friendsofcuscowilla.org



About Us

Friends of Cuscowilla is a 501(c)3 non-profit group whose mission is to support and preserve Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center as a nature-based and cultural resource for all. We work closely with local schools, universities, and governments to bring the opportunity to have memorable, enhancing experiences to all citizens, especially our youth.

Mailing Address:

Friends of Cuscowilla
P.O. Box 141523
Gainesville, FL 32614

Upcoming Event

	<i>Date</i>
<i>Tree planting and butterfly garden planting</i>	<i>April 23</i>