

Freedom Park
Website: <https://www.collierparks.com/>
Where: 1515 Golden Gate Pkwy, Naples. Just east of the intersection of Golden Gate Parkway and Goodlette-Frank Road.
When: Daily 7am to sunset. Education Center 9am to 10pm Mon-Sat.
Admission: Free.

What: 50 acre wetlands.

- 3,500-foot boardwalk over the eastern side of the park.
- Plus trails and six lookout pavilions around the lakes in the western side of the park.
- 2,500 square foot Education Center.
- Freedom Memorial – tribute to the lives lost on 9/11/01 in the terrorist attacks and to the heroes of past and present wars.

Wildlife I have seen there include:

- **Birds:** Anhingas, egrets, various kinds of herons, gallinules, woodpeckers, limpkins.
- **Reptiles:** Alligators, turtles, frogs, iguanas, snakes.
- **Others:** Blue crabs, marsh rabbits, raccoons.

Park website also claims:

- Armadillos, otters.





Part of Freedom Park's water filtration system



Western side of the park has 4 lakes and 6 lookouts like this one.



One of the four lakes in Freedom Park



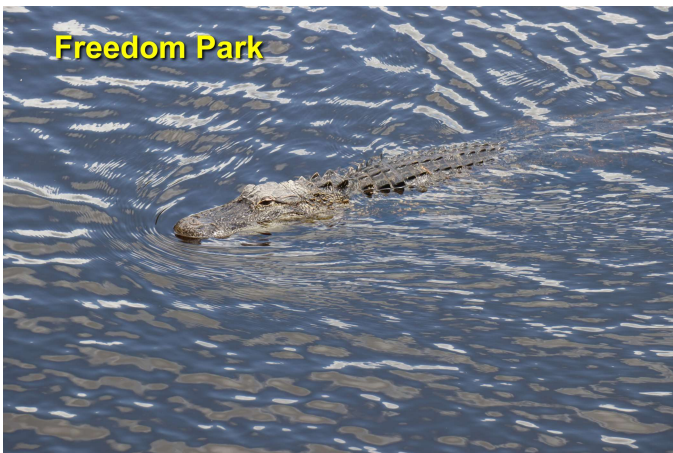
Freedom Park



Less than 1/4 mile from Coastland Shopping Mall!



Freedom Park



Freedom Park



Birds in Freedom Park - 1

Limpkin

Common Gallinule

Freedom Park Birds - 2



Mottled Mallard Duck



Great Blue Heron

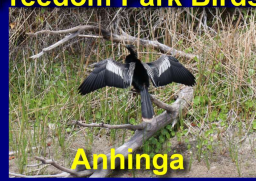


Ibis



Tricolored Heron

Freedom Park Birds - 3



Anhinga



Heron Caught a Fish



Egret (White Heron)



Mama Muscovy Duck and 12 Ducklings



Freedom Park
All trails are smooth
pavement or boardwalk.

Freedom Park Misc Fauna - 1



Marsh Rabbit



Green Iguana



Tilapia



Suwannee Bass

Freedom Park Misc Fauna - 2



Red-Bellied Cooter Turtle



Cooter Turtle Swimming



Cooter Turtles and Hatchling



Brown Anole (Cuban Highly Invasive)
Green Anole (FL Native)



Eastern Lubber Grasshopper
Large (Up to 3 Inches)

Do Not Bite
Cannot Fly
Invasive

Very poisonous to birds and small mammals



8 explanatory signs along the trails.

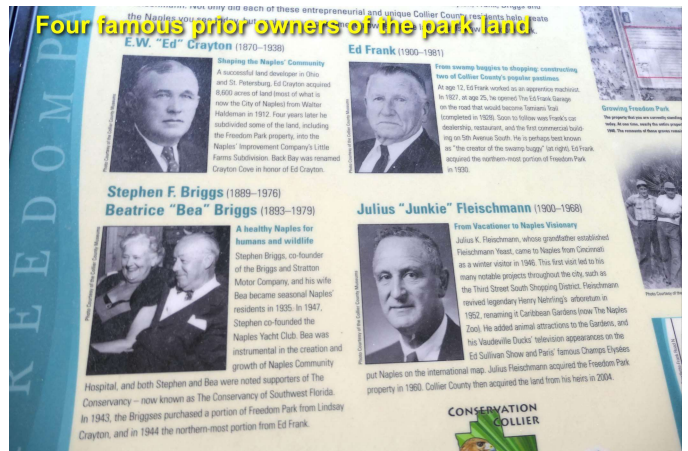
Wetlands: Same Process, Different Look

Look for the same processes at work in both wetlands and in the adjacent upland areas. Both wetlands and the adjacent upland areas are part of the same ecosystem. The difference between the two is the amount of water that is present. In wetlands, the water is present for a longer period of time than in the adjacent upland areas.

How do wetland plants (like starflowers) grow?
Wetland plants have adapted to grow in water-saturated soil. They have long roots that can reach down to the water table. This allows them to take up water and nutrients from the water table. The long roots also help to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.

Water Quality Monitoring: Tracking our Success
Water quality monitoring is an important part of wetland management. It helps us to track the health of the wetland and to identify any problems. We use a variety of methods to monitor water quality, including water sampling and biological monitoring.

Freedom Park Sign Locations



Four famous prior owners of the park land

E.W. "Ed" Crayton (1870-1936)
Shaping the Naples Community
A successful land developer in Ohio and St. Petersburg, Ed Crayton acquired 8,000 acres of land known as what is now the City of Naples from Walter Hildreth in 1912. Four years later he subdivided some of the land, including the Freedom Park property, into the Naples Improvement Company's Little Farms Subdivision. Back Bay was named Crayton Cove in honor of Ed Crayton.

Ed Frank (1900-1981)
From vacationing to Naples, Wisconsin Julius K. Fleischmann, whose grandfather established Fleischmann Yeast, came to Naples from Cincinnati as a winter visitor in 1946. This first visit led to his many notable projects throughout the city, such as the Third Street South Shopping District. Fleischmann revived legendary Henry Neffling's artorium in 1952, renaming it Caribbean Gardens (now The Naples Zoo). He added animal attractions to the Gardens, and his Vauclaville Ducks' television appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show and Paris' famous Chateau Elysees put Naples on the international map. Julius Fleischmann acquired the Freedom Park property in 1950. Collier County then acquired the land from his heirs in 2004.

Stephen F. Briggs (1889-1976)
Beatrice "Bea" Briggs (1893-1979)
A healthy Naples for business and wildlife
Stephen Briggs, co-founder of the Briggs and Stratton Motor Company, and his wife Bea became seasonal Naples residents in 1925. In 1947, Stephen co-founded the Naples Yacht Club. Bea was instrumental in the creation and growth of Naples Community Hospital, and both Stephen and Bea were noted supporters of The Conservancy - now known as The Conservancy of Southwest Florida. In 1943, the Briggses purchased a portion of Freedom Park from Lindsay Crayton, and in 1944 the northern-most portion from Ed Frank.

Julius "Junkie" Fleischmann (1900-1968)
From vacationing to Naples, Wisconsin Julius K. Fleischmann, whose grandfather established Fleischmann Yeast, came to Naples from Cincinnati as a winter visitor in 1946. This first visit led to his many notable projects throughout the city, such as the Third Street South Shopping District. Fleischmann revived legendary Henry Neffling's artorium in 1952, renaming it Caribbean Gardens (now The Naples Zoo). He added animal attractions to the Gardens, and his Vauclaville Ducks' television appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show and Paris' famous Chateau Elysees put Naples on the international map. Julius Fleischmann acquired the Freedom Park property in 1950. Collier County then acquired the land from his heirs in 2004.

Growing Freedom Park

The property that you are currently standing on once looked much different from the way it does today. **Former owner Ed Frank started Naples' first garage and built the first swamp buggy**

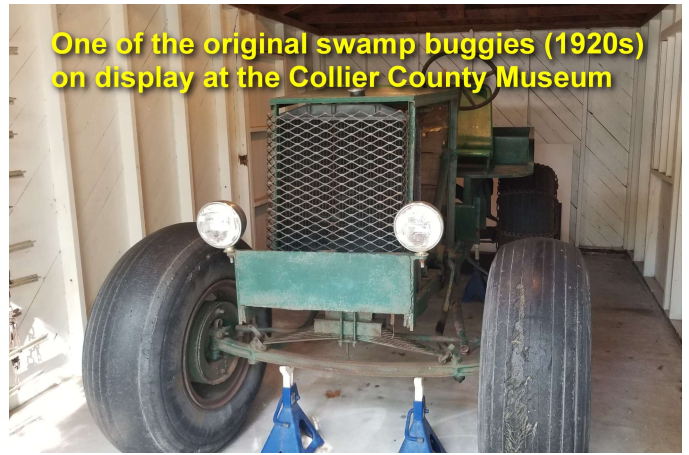
Swamp Buggy

In 1918-1919, combining parts from a Model-T Ford and a bucket seat from a WW I airplane, Ed Frank created the first swamp buggy. Over the years, he improved his design using airplane tires and incorporating four-wheel drive with interlocking front and rear wheels.

This photo appeared on the front page of the Collier County News in 1948 and signified the birth of the Swamp Buggy Races. Left to right: Paul Frank (Ed's son), Henry Espenlah (Ed's brother-in-law), Ed Frank & Roy W. Smith (Naples longest serving mayor from 1946 to 1960).

Photo Courtesy of the Naples Historical Society

Freedom Park Sign Locations



Florida Blue Crabs

Most common Florida crab. Edible. Found throughout Florida. Coasts, rivers, back waters. Both salt and fresh water.

Season: Year round.

Limit: Roughly 20 a day. Some restrictions. Free on-line license.



Flora of Freedom Park - 1



Powderpuff Plant (Calliandra)



American Beautyberry



Muhly Grass



Prickly Pear Cactus

Flora of Freedom Park - 2



May 18, 2022 March 20, 2022
Coral Beans



Swamp Sunflower



Firebush



Yellow Lily Pad





Freedom Memorial: Tribute to the lives lost on 9/11/01 in the terrorist attacks and to the heroes of past and present wars.



Steel from the World Trade Center. Dedicated to innocent civilians and first responders who died in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

THE WORLD TRADE CENTER STEEL IS DEDICATED TO THE POLICE OFFICERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS WHO FEARLESSLY BRANG THE BEST OF THEMSELVES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001.