



Volunteers Jim Walter and Dennis Heally of Jupiter Construction with a camper who was kind enough to lend a hand (right to left)

Volunteer work At Dupuis Wildlife Management Area

- The wildlife management area now known to campers and hunters simply as “Dupuis' ” was developed by an obstetrician from Dallas Texas who arrived in South Florida in 1898. John G. and Susan H. Dupuis developed the White Belt Dairy Farm, named for their herd of Dutch White Belt cattle. The 21875 acre ranch was donated to the Nature Conservancy in 1985 by the Dupuis family and sold to the South Florida Water Management District in 1987. The mission of the S.F.W.M.D., established in 1949, is restoration of S. Florida’s water resources and ecosystems, flood protection, water needs of S.F. and lastly public use of the large tracts of land under their management (now over 1 million acres in 16 counties). The big barn in the Dupuis equestrian campground still remains as does the sheep shearing shack . The original White Belt Dairy barn is still

maintained and used today by equestrian campers from all over the U.S.A. The S.F.W.M.D. has a volunteer camp host program at the equestrian campground and Jeanette Henderson author of The Best (and Worst) Campgrounds Across America is the current host. After visiting nearly 300 campgrounds across the U.S.A Jeanette rates Dupuis near the top. Anyone who has a wood barn or a fence on their property knows it becomes unusable and dangerous over time without maintenance and the 18 paddocks and 2 barns in Dupuis are no exception..The S.F.W.M.D does not charge a fee to use the property because to do so would generate a barnful of regulations and liability. The District is budgeted for materials to make repairs but not for any repair crews .It is up to volunteers. Volunteer work at Dupuis has a long history going back to about 2004 when the Florida Sportsman Conservation Association and the Dupuis Horsemen's

Association {active 1999-2005) met with David Schiller from S.F.W.M.D.The horse club president Joe Brader refused to attend because the District would not allow horses in Dupuis. Joe was a force to be reckoned with and he asked Mark Dombroski from F.S.C.A. to take his place and negotiate with Schiller.The result was equestrians would be allowed if there were paddocks, a barn and marked trails. A huge success! The original Whitebelt Dairy Farm barn was repaired, paddocks were built, trails cleared and marked all accomplished by volunteers from the two clubs (including the late Steve Hinkle) and Dupuis became a top horse camping destination. The small barn is named the Joe Brader Barn commemorating his efforts and successful creation of the Dupuis equestrian camp.Users of District properties still meet regularly with managers to discuss land availability and progress toward environmental goals. Recently volunteers from the Florida Horsemen's Club built manure bins and installed a new detailed trail marking system on the horse trails .There are 40 miles of trails and people do get lost! The District Recreational Land Resources Planner,James Harbaugh, is quick to respond to groups wanting to volunteer or just visit the property. James came out on a Saturday to make sure we had access through all the gates on the last leg of the Ocean to Lake Event. If you love Florida wide open spaces and want to help call James (561) 682-2713

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Florida Horsemen's Club