



# Nota De Soto

■ SUMMER 2025 ■

## Who Are We?

Friends of De Soto National Memorial, Inc. was founded in 2008 with the purpose of supporting the National Park Service's De Soto National Memorial. We are a private non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Florida.

Our purpose and mission statement: ***"To initiate, promote, and support the educational, historical, interpretive, and scientific activities of the De Soto National Memorial."***

Board of Directors: Margo Belaga, Mary Hawk, Ann Marie Shields, Kel Roth, Matt Woodside

## Be a Member... Be a Friend!

Through your membership or direct donation, you can personally impact the status of De Soto National Memorial. Thank you for your support!

If you are interested in a more active volunteering role or joining the Friends of De Soto National Memorial board, please contact us at [info@friendsofdesotomemorial.org](mailto:info@friendsofdesotomemorial.org).

P.O. Box 14422,  
Bradenton, FL 34280-4422

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[www.FriendsofDeSotoMemorial.org](http://www.FriendsofDeSotoMemorial.org)

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## B.A.R.K. Rangers 🐾

Isn't it about time your dog earned its stripes? Well, look no further than De Soto National Memorial's "B.A.R.K." Ranger program. De Soto National Memorial was one of the first in the National Park System to initiate the B.A.R.K. Ranger program.



**Pictured: (Left)** Mimsy proudly wears her B.A.R.K. Ranger tag! **Pictured (Below)** Mimsy's DeSoto National Memorial B.A.R.K. Ranger dog tag.

This interactive course for your pooch consists of 5 easy steps:

1. Stop by the Visitor's Tent to pick-up a B.A.R.K. Ranger pamphlet.
2. Grab a poop bag from one of the Park's bag stations.
3. Take a picture of your dog on leash.
4. Say hello to another Park visitor.
5. Make sure your dog gets plenty of water. Bring your own water bottle/bowl to keep your dog hydrated on the Park's beautiful trails.

Once you complete these tasks, bring your dog to the Visitor's Tent to obtain a B.A.R.K. Ranger dog tag. Attach the tag to your dog's collar and voila! Your dog is now an official B.A.R.K. Ranger!

**Just remember to follow the B.A.R.K. rules:**

- Bag Your Dog's Poop
- Always use a Leash
- Respect the Wildlife
- Know Where You Can Go



Parking is available at our "barking lot" located by the picnic area. Stop by the Visitor's Tent with your furry friend for more information.





## Preparing for 250 years of American History

Starting this year the National Park Service is commemorating the birth of America with America 250. This celebration kicked off last month with the 250th commemoration of the battles of Lexington and Concord at Minute Man National Historic site in Boston. Over the next six years National Park sites will hold 250th commemorations ending with the 250th of the battle of Yorktown in 2031.

De Soto National Memorial is hosting three A250 lectures at the Anna Maria Library September 3, 10, and 17th with Lead Park Ranger Dan Stephens. Ranger Stephens has already given several guest lectures with the Manatee and De Soto chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

If you are interested in attending the lectures at the Anna Maria Library please visit [www.mymanatee.org](http://www.mymanatee.org).

If you are interested in scheduling a A250 lecture, please email [Daniel\\_Stephens@nps.gov](mailto:Daniel_Stephens@nps.gov).



***Pictured Above:** A250 reenactment of British troops firing on Lexington Minute Men during the Battle of Lexington. Photo credit: The Enterprise*

## Meet Marielle!

## A Journey from Volunteer to an NPS Career



With degrees in Architectural Studies and Historic Preservation, Marielle Lumang brings her deep love of history to De Soto National Memorial. While working in the private sector as a consultant, Ranger Marielle volunteered at De Soto on the weekends. The connection of history and her love of the outdoors led

her to choose to join the National Park Service eleven years ago. Since then Ranger Marielle has worked to develop and present interpretive programs on the De Soto expedition, Florida's rich fishing history and kayak tours on the Manatee River. She hopes to reintroduce the Night Sky program at the Park. Ranger Marielle says that she loves her work at the Park because everyday is different. While researching material for Park wayside signs or interacting with Park visitors at fishing clinics and kayak tours, Ranger Marielle's day is filled with exciting challenges. A veteran of the Appalachian Trail hike, making her way from Florida, Ranger Marielle completed her walk by summiting Mount Katahdin in Maine. She camps, she hikes, she fishes and she continues to search for connections between the history of both people and buildings in her travels. From volunteer to career, Ranger Marielle brings her multifaceted talent to De Soto National Memorial.





## Beyond the Historical Landing: Exploring De Soto's Thriving Wildlife

The De Soto National Memorial's origins were based on celebrating the 1539 arrival of Spanish conquistador Hernando De Soto along with over 600 people and a menagerie of horses, mules, cattle, swine and dogs.

Today many visitors come to celebrate the peaceful natural features of the park, taking in the sweeping views of the mouth of the Manatee River out to the glistening waters of Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

The natural environment around the Memorial includes four distinct ecosystems showcasing the area's subtropical estuary. Wandering along the trails, visitors will encounter salt-tolerant plants of the mangrove swamp with its forest of red and black mangroves, sea grapes, and maybe a mangrove crab will wave hello. Observant walkers may notice upland trees—pines, oaks and palmetto--along with gopher tortoises and black racer snakes, or the salt water tidal zone with its sea grass beds filled with crabs, shrimp, seahorses, whelks, conchs, and many species of juvenile fish. On occasion one might even encounter a slow grazing near-shore manatee or a group of resident dolphins on the hunt for mullet or sea trout.



***Pictured (Left):** A black racer snake in the park.*

Most prevalent at the park are the variety of birds present, each adapted to the resources of these diverse habitats. Within a few minutes, you may see birds ranging from bald eagles, osprey, red-tailed hawks, falcons and egrets to herons, white ibis, pelicans, gulls, jays, woodpeckers, and cardinals. Perhaps you'll see the ubiquitous mockingbird (Florida's state bird), the amazing roseate spoonbill or if you're lucky, a great blue heron will wade into view.



***Pictured (Above):** A snowy egret in the mangroves at DeSoto National Memorial.*

Birders will delight as the memorial also hosts a number of true snowbirds: palm, yellow-rumped, and black-and-white warblers and cedar waxwings from Canada, American white pelicans, many types of ducks and a variety of small song birds. Bring your binoculars, camera and tripod and don't forget your life-list as you never know what unexpected bird might decide to visit on the same day you do. Happy birding!



## Park Update

- Portable toilets are now available on Park grounds.
- Extensive Visitor Center renovations are under discussion with exterior repair and painting to begin in Fall 2025.
- Rangers and Park volunteers staff a reception tent at the Palisades entrance. Park brochures and maps are available at all times in weather protected boxes.
- Kayak tours and fishing camps are listed at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov)





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FRIENDS OF DE SOTO  
NATIONAL MEMORIAL, INC.

## Things to do:

### Walk The Nature Trails

The nature trail winds along the shoreline and through several Florida ecosystems, including a mangrove forest like the one De Soto's men would have encountered when they landed. Trails include interpretive signage and waysides that tell the story of the De Soto expedition and the natural history of the area. Bicycling is allowed in the parking lot, but not on the trails.

### Picnic Area

A picnic area located adjacent to the parking lot is available for visitors on a first come, first served basis. Large groups and schools should call ahead to reserve seating. Grills and alcohol are not allowed in the park.

### Fishing

Fishing with a rod and reel is allowed in the park with a valid Florida drivers license and a valid State of Florida fishing license. Fisherman are not allowed to stand on rip rap or to clear brush from any area in order to gain access to the water. For questions of licensure and eligibility, please visit [www.myfwc.com/license](http://www.myfwc.com/license).

### Boating

The cove is a popular temporary anchorage for small pleasure boats. Canoes and kayaks may be launched and carried to the water by hand. They can be launched from the park beaches provided that vegetation, terrain, and wildlife are not disturbed. Loud motors and the creation of excessive wave action is prohibited.

See more details and upcoming park events at [www.nps.gov/deso](http://www.nps.gov/deso) or [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).



***Pictured Above:** Paddlers kayak in the waters surrounding De Soto National Memorial.*

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## Become a member!

Yes, I would like to support my National Park by becoming a member of the Friends of De Soto National Memorial, Inc.

Memberships are tax deductible. (Check one.)

☐ Individual.....\$25.00  
☐ Family.....\$40.00  
☐ Business.....\$75.00  
☐ Senior (65+).....\$20.00  
☐ Sponsor.....\$100.00 + \$\_\_\_\_\_

My check for \$\_\_\_\_\_, (membership plus an additional donation if desired) made out to "Friends of De Soto NM" is enclosed. Please send membership materials to the name and address below:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to help!** (Check all that apply.)

☐ Membership Committee  
☐ Publicity Committee  
☐ Fundraising/Special Event Committee

**How did you hear about us?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Detach and mail to:**

Friends of De Soto National Memorial  
P.O. Box 14422, Bradenton, FL, 34280-4422

**Or join online at:**

[www.friendsofdesotomemorial.org](http://www.friendsofdesotomemorial.org)

**Thank you!**

*The Friends of De Soto National Memorial, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization.*

