



ECO EVENTS

April 7, 8 & 9 – The Jacksonville Arboretum and Gardens presents “A Brush with Nature.” During this fundraiser, 37 local plein air artists will be painting their favorite scenes. There will be music, food and workshops, and all art will be for sale. The event is free to the public; the culminating gala and sale is \$50 per person. More information, including a schedule of events, can be found at www.abrushwithnature.org.

April 2, 9 & 16 – Don't miss **Family Saturdays** at Tree Hill. Bring the kids out to see the animals, get some fresh air on Tree Hill's beautiful trails and participate in fun activities. The featured activity on April 2 is a tour, April 9 is a leaf mask-making craft activity, and April 16 is all about coloring eggs. Programs begin at 10 am. Cost is \$5 per family, members free. Details can be found at www.treehill.org.

April 8 – This is the deadline for submissions for the **Wild Amelia Nature Festival Photography Contest**. Winners will be announced on the Saturday of the festival, which takes place May 20-22. During the Wild Amelia Nature Festival you can explore the local ecosystem by foot, kayak, boat and bicycle with local naturalists. The tours highlight the natural areas in Northeast Florida from Talbot Island State Park to Fort Clinch State Park. The Eco-Expo on Saturday will include a Kids Niche with nature activities for all ages, critters from the Jacksonville Zoo, a silent auction, green- and nature-related exhibitors and nature photography classes. Fees vary for tours and entry to certain locations, so check out www.wildamelia.com and click on “view complete online program.”

April 10 - Combine a river cruise, a waterside dinner, and conservation in one day of fun! Depart Fernandina Harbor Marina at 9:30 am with **Amelia River Cruises'** owner, Captain Kevin McCarthy, for a narrated historical and wildlife sightseeing tour. Arrive at **White Oak Conservation Center**, one of the world's premiere wildlife breeding, research and training facilities, at 1 pm for the chance to see a cheetah run full speed right in front of you! Follow that up with a special tour of WOCC's 600-acre facility. Guests will then be treated to a gourmet dinner at 5 pm along the St. Marys River. There will be a silent auction with such fabulous items as a keeper-for-day experience and more. Guests will then be returned by trolley. White Oak Conservation Center leads professional efforts to improve veterinary care, develop holistic animal management techniques, and better understand the biology of critically endangered species. All-inclusive tickets are \$260, \$100 of which is a tax-deductible

contribution. Tickets must be purchased in advance, so contact Dena Doehler at denamelia@yahoo.com or 904-261-9972.

April 10 – Do NOT miss Slow Food First Coast's **Tour de Farm!** If you've ever wondered where to get fresh local foods or where the yummy ingredients that you've tasted at restaurants like Chew and Bistro Aix come from, wonder no more. Twenty-four farms open their gates for farm tours, workshops, talks by the farmers that include questions and answer sessions, animal encounters, tastings, prize drawings and much, much more. EU readers will be familiar with participating farms such as Twinn Bridges (see how they use recycled vegetable oil for fuel, among other ingenious examples of sustainability); Cognito (they have new baby turkeys); and KYV (see how hoop houses work and meet Valencia the hen). Also participating are a goat farm, a potato farm, a hog farm, community gardens, a winery and vineyard, a sustainable retreat, First Coast Technical College and so much more. Most locations will feature a “farm partner” - a chef, artisan or another farm, for example - and will have products for sampling and/or sale. The event runs from 1-5 pm, but check the schedule for specific farm tours. Admission to all farms is free, but there are farm meals prepared by local restaurants available by reservation. Bring a cooler and cash for all the products that will be available for sale. For map, schedule, how to reserve a farm meal, description of each of the locations and to find out what Slow Food First Coast is all about, visit www.slowfoodfirstcoast.com/tourde-farm.html.

April 16 – The fourth annual **Shell-a-brate Earth Day** at The Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island is from 11 am to 3 pm. There will be craft making with recycled materials and other children's activities plus eco-entertainment for all. Award-winning Jacksonville children's author Jane Wood, who features the Center in her book *Trouble on the St. Johns River*, will be there along with many other vendors. All activities are free with general admission to the Center: \$6 for adults; \$4 for children; children three and under free. Find out more at www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org.

April 30 – The **Joseph A. Strasser Butterfly Festival** at Tree Hill's Joseph A. Strasser Amphitheater is always a blast of a family event. Favorite features like the butterfly tent and release, vendors, kids' activities and music will still be a part of it. New this year will be ponies, animal encounters, prize drawings and more! The fun lasts from 10 am to 4 pm and tickets, which can be purchased at the gate, are \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for children. Check out the details at www.treehill.org.



April – The Sierra Club of Northeast Florida has all kinds of exciting events going on in April. Walk Castaway Island Preserve on April 9 or Washington Oaks Gardens State Park on April 15. Give back by participating in a Heckscher Road cleanup on April 9. Learn about the Timucuan Preserve or landscape photography at the regular Jacksonville or Ponte Vedra meetings on April 11 and 12. Cruise the St. Johns River on April 22. Visit Sun Harvest Eco-Village in Hampton on April 16. Enjoy a beach fire, s'mores and good company on Atlantic Beach April 30. Visit the Sierra Club's site at www.florida.sierraclub.org/northeast/ or their Meetup page at www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group/ for all the details.

Please email listings for consideration to anna@eujacksonville.com by the 15th of each month.