

## **Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Primitive Camping Enhancement**

On March 15, members of the FSCA volunteered to assist the Kissimmee River Valley Sportsmen's Association (KRVSA) in enhancing the primitive campsites throughout the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. This initiative aimed to improve existing campsites and add new ones, bringing the total to 19 designated primitive camping areas.

Eight FSCA volunteers participated in the effort, bringing five airboats to support the project. The club was assigned two camping areas, one on the North Shore, located on the west side of Lake Kissimmee just north of Thomas Landing, and another at Otter Slough, also on Lake Kissimmee, near the Polluted Waters Pavilion.

The day began with a breakfast provided by the KRVSA team. Around 9:00 AM, a short Captain's Meeting was held to discuss the plan for the day. The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) supplied maps, signs, posts, and hardware for the project. Like speed limit signs, the signs consisted of 8-foot galvanized poles with pre-drilled holes secured with bolts and nuts. Thanks to the strong volunteer turnout, the installation process was efficient, allowing everyone to enjoy the camaraderie and the beauty of the lakes.

FSCA's specific task was to install two signs marking the boundaries of the designated camping areas. Each campsite will receive two fire rings and two picnic tables in the future, and FSCA members hope to contribute to that effort as well. Volunteers brought power tools to streamline the process, making securing the signs quick and easy. However, the pole driver we had planned to use wasn't compatible with the post size, so we had to rely on traditional post-hole diggers, which still got the job done.

The project was more about enjoying the experience than heavy labor. After setting up the signs, we took an airboat ride from Camp Tiger to Camp Mack, where volunteers from other camps gathered to pick up their signs and maps. Later, we headed south to Shady Oaks, where we met with conservation-minded folks, including Mike Elfenbein, to discuss the past and future of these outdoor spaces. We wrapped up the day with a scenic ride around Brahma Island before returning to Camp Tiger.

Overall, FSCA played its part in a much-needed project, and KRVSA made an essential improvement in the area. It was inspiring to see multiple clubs unite to enhance these camping areas, ensuring outdoor enthusiasts can continue to enjoy the beauty of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes for years to come.

Article by Bishop Wright