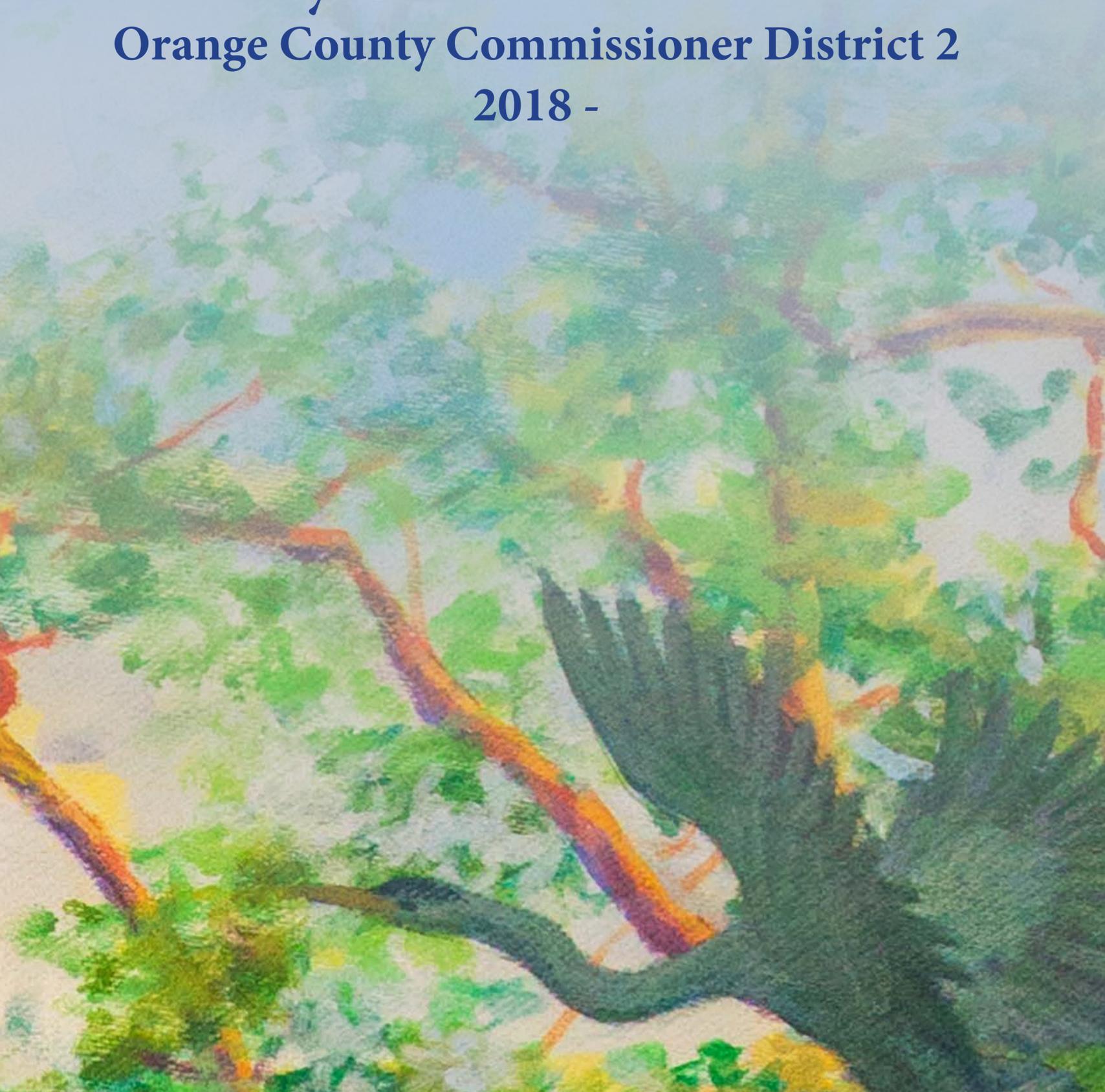


A Driving Tour of Eastern Apopka

Piedmont, Wekiwa Springs, and Rock Springs

By Christine Moore

**Orange County Commissioner District 2
2018 -**



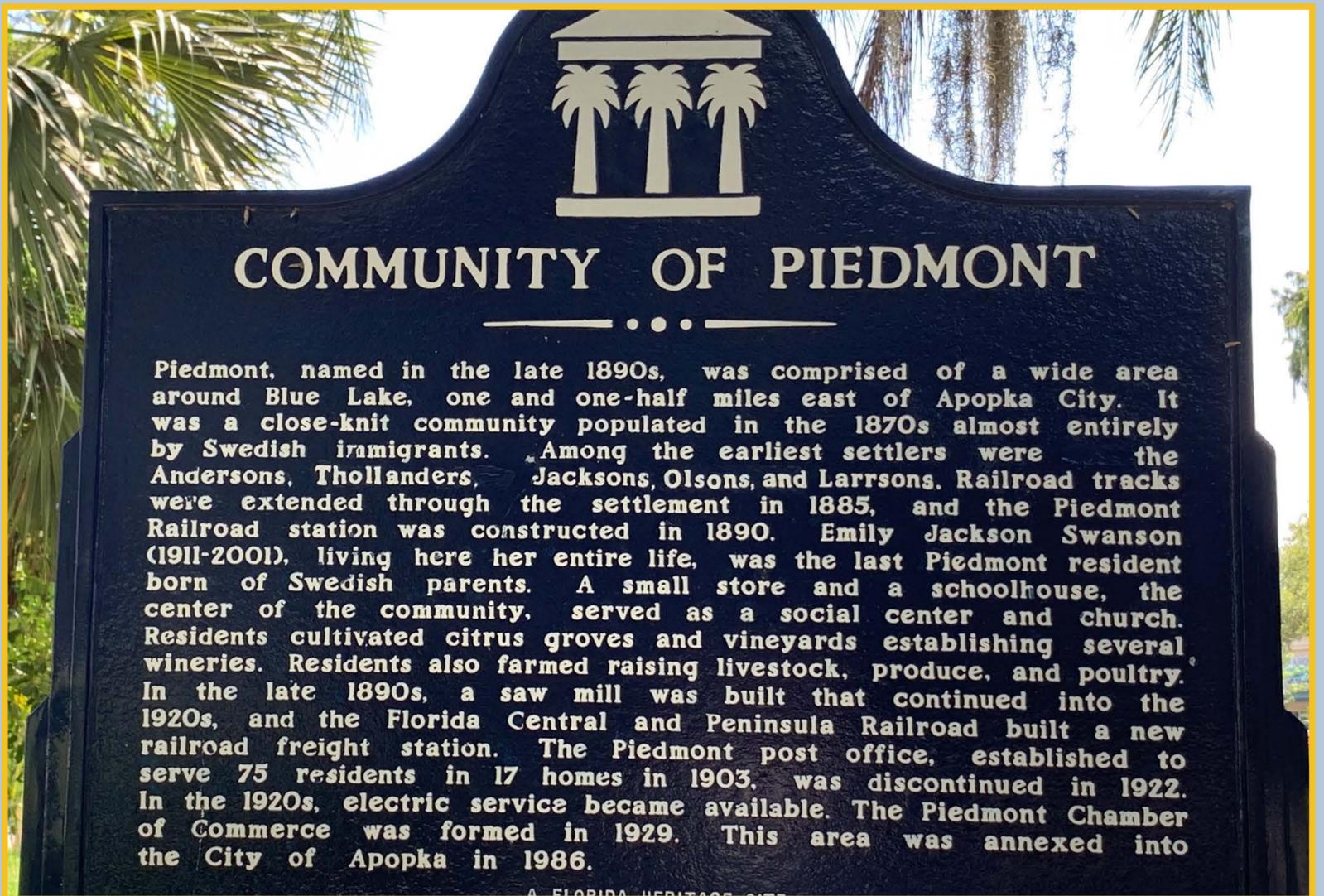
Piedmont

The Piedmont community was a close-knit, citrus-growing community of mostly Swedish immigrants founded on Christmas Eve 1877. The center of the Piedmont community was a small store and schoolhouse which served as the social center and church. By 1941, Piedmont was no longer on the map and is now considered part of Apopka.

1. Piedmont Historical Marker

1700 S. Orange Blossom Trail, Apopka, FL 32703

The marker placed by the Apopka Historical Society commemorates the industrious Swedes who survived in the Central Florida wilderness.



ACTIVITY: Consider how children entertained themselves during these pioneer days without any electronics, transportation, or internet.

2. Lake Page Drainage Well

1106 Piedmont Wekiwa Road, Apopka, FL 32703

The Lake Page Drainage Well allows excess water from Lake Page and Blue Lake to drain into the Floridan Aquifer.





ACTIVITY: Discuss where all the rain water would go without a well after a hurricane?

3. Historic Swedish House

1250 Piedmont Wekiwa Road, Apopka, FL 32703

The architecture or style of this house reflects the Swedish influence on the Piedmont area. It is a classic simple design with a typical steep roof and in this case, a defining X-shape is seen across the front of the home.



ACTIVITY: Compare the features of this simple home with your home.

Wekiwa (Clay) Spring

The Wekiwa Springs area was known as Clay Springs until 1906. Creeks, later called Seminoles, are the most recent Native Americans to have lived here. Wekiwa means “spring of water” and Wekiva means “flowing water” in the Creek language. Since its discovery in the 1890s, Wekiwa Springs was the first tourist attraction in Central Florida, complete with a hotel, slide, and bathhouse.

4. Wekiwa Springs State Park

1800 Wekiwa Circle, Apopka, FL 32703

The Apopka Sportsmen’s Club later acquired the land for hunting and fishing. In 1969, to protect the water resource from excessive growth, they sold the land to the State of Florida.

The National Wild and Scenic River System was created by Congress in 1968, and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values. The Wekiva is part of his system.



ACTIVITY: Hike one of the trails, swim in the lagoon, or canoe down the river. This park is a treasure and we hope you will work to protect it throughout your life.

5. Camp Thunderbird

909 East Welch Road, Apopka, FL 32703

Since 1969, Quest's Camp Thunderbird has been dedicated to providing summer camp experiences for children and adults with special needs.



ACTIVITY: Discuss why it would be encouraging for special needs individuals to attend a summer camp on the Wekiwa River.

6. Champneys House on Ustler Road

1432 Ustler Road, Apopka, FL 32703

The Champneys family owned a dry goods store, fernery, and innovated greenhouse technology. Their home was first located in the Clarcona area. It was moved to Apopka across from City Hall around 1915. Then, in 1993, the house was moved once again to its location on Ustler Road. (This road is named after the Ustler family who brought the fern industry to Apopka.)



ACTIVITY: Discuss the similarities and differences between modern housing construction and the wooden Champneys House and why this would have made it worth moving the structure to a new location.

Rock Spring

The area known as Rock Springs was first settled in the mid-1800s by the Joseph Delk family. There is a 248-acre Orange County Park there now known as Kelly Park. The focal point of the park remains the free flowing natural spring. Fossils of sloths, camels, mastodons, wolves, and bears, dating from the Miocene epoch, have been found at Rock Springs.

7. West Orange Trail

1495 Rock Springs Road, Apopka, FL 32703

This 22.26 miles of multipurpose recreational greenway is enjoyed by walkers, joggers, hikers, bikers, and skaters. The trail picks up near Welch Road and heads south through South Apopka, Clarcona, Ocoee, and Winter Garden.

Welcome to the West Orange Trail

No Motorized Vehicles • Stay Right • No Racing • Keep Pets Leashed • No Alcohol
Sunrise to Sunset



Orange County Parks & Recreation Division • "It Starts in Parks!"



ACTIVITY: Discuss how your family could enjoy using this trail.

8. Dr. Howard A. Kelly Historical Marker & Park 400 East Kelly Park Road (Rock Spring)

Dr. Howard A. Kelly generously donated 260 acres of property to Orange County in 1927. He stipulated that the land be held as a preserve, sanctuary for wildlife, and uplands.

DR. HOWARD A. KELLY PARK

Rock Springs is the source of the Rock Springs Run, a swift running stream with an average flow of 26,000 gallons per minute and a constant temperature of 68 degrees. The spring flows from limestone containing fossils that date back 17 million years. In 1855, the State of Florida, wanting to encourage settlement in the state's interior, awarded land near Rock Springs to William S. Delk, a veteran of the Second Seminole War. Delk later became the owner of the area's largest plantation. He used the Rock Springs Run to power his grist mill, sawmill, and cotton gin. Delk's heirs sold the land to lumber companies. In 1910, New Jersey doctor, Howard A. Kelly visited Rock Springs. Kelly, one of the founders of Johns Hopkins Hospital and an internationally recognized gynecologist, was an avid naturalist. Taken with the "sweet" spring water from the "mysterious cave," he purchased 200 acres around Rock Springs in 1921 for use as a wildlife preserve and bird sanctuary. Kelly and his wife gifted the land to Orange County in 1927 with the understanding that it would remain a public park open to every citizen. Orange County named the park Dr. Howard A. Kelly Park.

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AND THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE



ACTIVITY: Get out of the car and read the marker. Additionally, enter the park to hike, swim, or tube in the run.

9. Lake Lucie Conservation Area

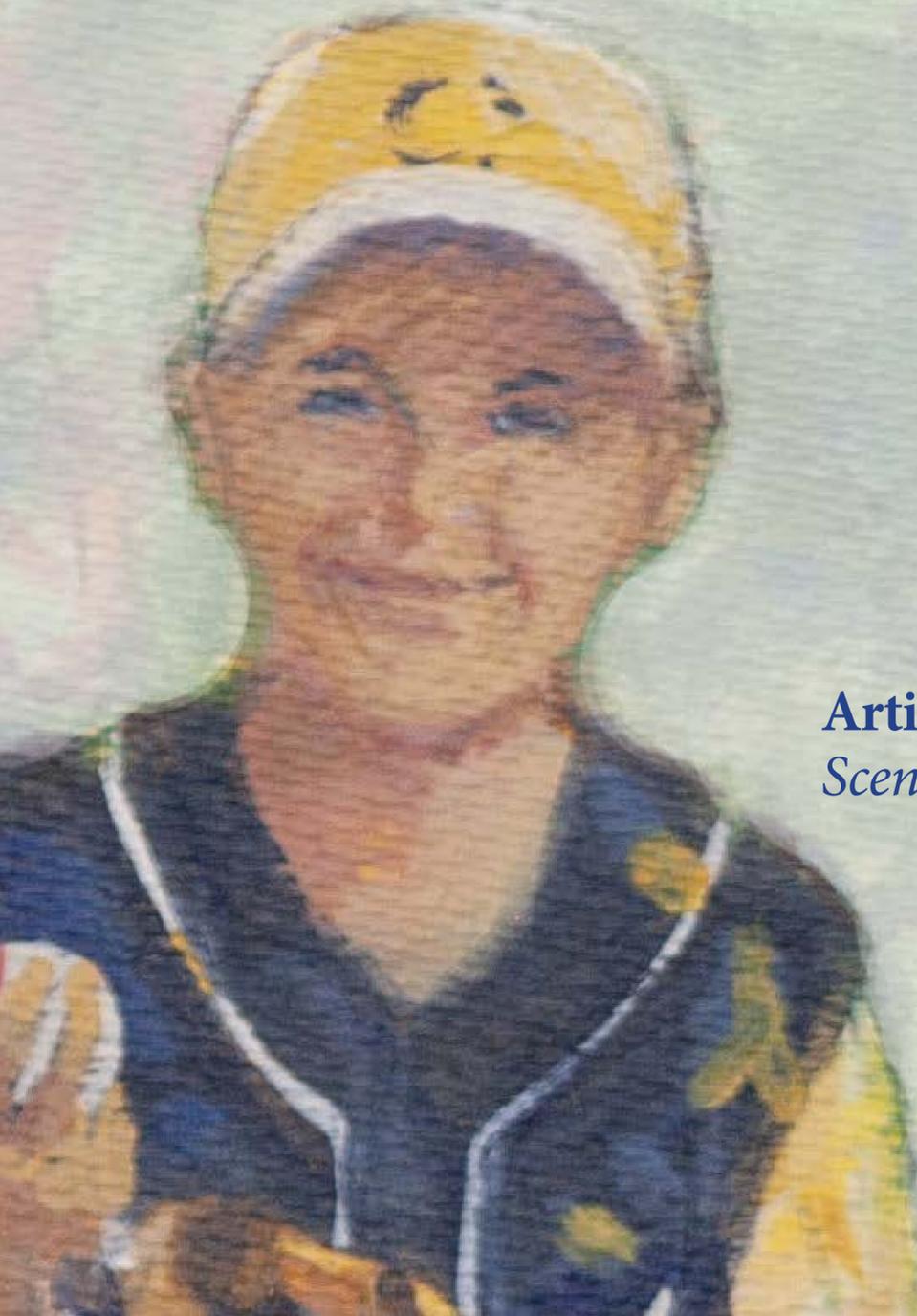
43 Rainey Road (Sorrento), Apopka, FL 32776

The Lake Lucie Conservation Area is managed by the Orange County Environmental Protection Division.

The parcel is 166 acres in size and equestrian users and hikers wind their way along The Green Trail through Oak Hammock and the rolling hills of the site. Catch a glimpse of Lake Lucie and the wildflowers that bloom from springtime until fall, while hiking on the Blue Trail.



ACTIVITY: Pack a lunch, and picnic along one of the trails.



Artist: Lisa Mikler

Scene from Community of People



Christine Moore
 Orange County
 Commissioner District 2
 2018 -



The driving tour requires ninety minutes of time and covers about seven miles.

For more information:

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YouTube: Christine Moore or FB: Ahapopka
Digital version available at: www.ocfl.net/District2

It is recommended students read *Ahapopka* prior to taking the Eastern Driving Tour. The entire series of driving tours is available at the North Orange Library and Canon Coffee.