

Oral History Program
Audubon
University of South Florida, Tampa Library

Digital Object Identifier: A68-00003
Interviewee: Sally Stein (SS)
Interview by: Ann Hodgson (AH)
Interview date: September 30th, 2021
Interview location: Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary
Transcribed by: Abigail Moncus
Transcription date: December 3rd, 2021 to December 10th, 2021
Audit Edit by: Abigail Moncus
Audit Edit date: December 10th, 2021
Final Edit by: Dahlia Thomas/Richard Schmidt
Final Edit date: March 24th, 2022

Ann Hodgson (AH): Good morning, this is Dr. Ann Hodgson with the University of South Florida Libraries, Special Collections. I'm here at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary this morning with Sally Stein. Sally is the director of volunteer operations?

Sally Stein (SS): Public programs.

AH: Of public programs. Well, Sally, thank you so much. It's so nice to be here with you.

SS: It's nice to be here with you, also. Thank you for coming all the way over here.

AH: I want to start today's interview by just asking you, where did you grow up and how did you get interested in nature?

SS: I grew up mostly in the Carolina's, and I was always outside. I've always been an outdoor girl. Hiking, kayaking. But I really got interested in birds when I was small. My aunt, who lived in Cleveland, Ohio, was really into birding. And she always came down to visit and we'd always go on a walk around the farm where I lived and look for birds. And I still remember the first bird I saw was a Tufted Titmouse, that I really noticed what it was, anyway. And I thought they were just so cute. And she's the one that really got me into birding, but I've always loved being outside and just being in nature is always just a refreshing scene from all the craziness in the world, and I've just always loved it.

AH: So where did you go to school? And then how did you get down here to Corkscrew?

SS: I went to the University of South Carolina and Clemson University for two different degrees. But I came down here to Florida mostly because my parents had retired down here. But I had spent a lot of time in Florida as a youth because my grandparents lived in Fort Myers. And as a

young person, I came here to Corkscrew back in the early 1980s, I believe it was, and just loved it. I remember seeing my first pileated woodpecker here and I remember my mom saying to me basically, “Sally, wouldn’t you love to work here someday?” And so here I am. I finally made it. But I started working here in October of 2000, right before this building was built, the Visitor Center. That was twenty-one years ago. Yeah, so I came here first to the Naples area and worked for the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. And then when they were hiring new people for the new center is when I applied for the job here and came over and started working here.

AH: So, what was your first position at Corkscrew Swamp?

SS: My first position, the title was Adult Education and Volunteer Coordinator, so I was in charge of all the programs we did for adults as well as the volunteers. And I did that for many, many years. And not only did I do that, but back then when Ed Carlson was the sanctuary director, he and Andrew Mackie, who is my original boss here, he was the assistant director, made sure that we all were cross-trained and helping with everything so we knew what was going on so we could talk about it, especially the education stuff. So, I got to help with prescribed fire, I continue doing that to this day because I love it. I just love what it does to the ecosystem and all the new fresh growth and flowers that happen afterwards and all the animals that benefit from it. So, I always enjoy helping with the prescribed fires as well. And then this past year we needed more help in the Visitor Center, so I’ve been helping in there as well. So now I have a pretty complete understanding of the whole operation.

AH: So, tell us a little bit about your first position and maybe just flow into how your position has morphed over time. You know, what does it involve and what kind of effort is required?

SS: Okay. Well, when I first started working here, we had more education staff. We had about, we had a youth education coordinator. Andrew Mackie, who was the sanctuary assistant director, but he was also really into environmental education, so he had helped as well. We had three part-time people, as well as four interns that mostly helped with everything, but they helped a lot with the education programs. And over time the intern funding got cut, the part-time people got cut. And it was just basically me and the youth education coordinator left over to manage everything. And with having to do volunteers and programs, it was a non-stop job. I worked eighty plus hours a week, usually, trying to keep up with everything. But it was a lot of fun, we had so much fun back then with Ed as our director. He was really supportive of everything we were doing and understood the time constraints and all the work we had to do, because he had the same thing, I guess. So basically, we had all kinds of programs back then. We had, like, bird banding programs with Dr. Jerry Jackson, we had people coming in to do specific programming. We did a lot of nighttime programming, like astronomy programs as well as night walks and trying to get people out here and understanding the benefit of the night sky for various birds and other creatures that use the nighttime. And we still do those today, but every time our programs were kind of cut back, as far as ones we offer to the public, and we were focusing more on volunteers and training them.

At first, we didn't have guided tours that we did for visitors, but probably about ten years ago we started doing those. So, we trained our volunteers to guide visitors on the boardwalk on short tours, like an introductory tour. People loved it so much they often came back and did it over and over again, they sometimes made sure that their favorite guide was going to be there on the day they were coming. So, the volunteers really took ownership of that and really did a good job with the guided walks. Of course, that all came to a standstill when COVID happened because all our programming was cut back at that point. And probably about eight years ago, we also took away the volunteer coordination aspect of my job, and actually hired another person as a volunteer coordinator to really focus on that because we had so many volunteers, and it was just really hard to do that and my other job. We also had increased programming with a lot of private groups coming, a lot of outside programming as well as stuff that we did for the volunteers as far as training them to help with different things and ongoing education and things like that.

AH: So, when you talk about programming, that's kind of a sweeping term. At Corkscrew, what does that mean? What does that entail?

SS: Programming is where we have a group, either youths or adults, it could be a college group, it could be a visiting Zero Club chapter or Audubon chapter, but they all want to come here to learn about the sanctuary and the importance of the sanctuary. We try to impart the importance of the sanctuary to wildlife and also to humans. So, a lot of what we talk about in our programs is the history of the protection of the sanctuary, why people back in the 1950s thought it was important to protect, why it's important nowadays to protect for various reasons, but basically for groundwater recharge, you know, all the things to do with water and hydration too, and the different hydroperiods for the different ecosystems as well. So, we try to impart basically how important it is to protect places like this and wetlands in general. And we also try to encourage them to conserve water in their own communities as well as planting native plants to help benefit birds and insects, and so we try to teach them how to live more environmentally conscious. But we also get the people out here who just want to see an alligator, or just want to see a Painted Bunting, so we have to, you know, kind of go off on those tangents, but then also explain that these things wouldn't be here if we didn't have places like this. So, it's basically a chance to really reach out to different groups, especially the youth, to try and get them to understand the importance of places like this. And protecting wetlands and other natural areas.

AH: So, over time, how has the behavior or the sentiment or the knowledge or the understanding changed with the folks that you work with?

SS: Well, the volunteers really understand the importance and can impart that in the programs that they deliver as well. That's where we see the most, I mean if you take someone who's new down here from New York or something, they don't know anything about Florida, and then a year later they're like, leading a program, able to answer the questions people have, and everybody really enjoys the program. So, it's really easy to see with the volunteers, but with visitors, also, whenever we get program participants, it's really—a lot of times we have some that come back and become volunteers, or became donors or things like that. But seeing people

return, just coming back to programs to learn more and just seeing their enthusiasm. But there's a lot more that could be done, there's only, it's just me, basically, and the volunteers that help with my program. We did, a couple years ago, have a public programs person that helped out, she was part-time and she helped for three years, but then the funding got cut after COVID. So, hopefully we'll get that person back in the future.

AH: So, when you give programs are you presenting outside of the sanctuary as well? Do you reach out to schools or other civic organizations?

SS: Yes. Usually, we're so busy here that we don't have that much time to go solicit things like that, but we'll get requests from the community, that they want a program to learn more about the sanctuary. Like there's, well, I don't usually work with the school groups, it's Debbie Lauter that does that, but she works, and most of the time they come here. But she'll go to schools, especially in summer when we don't have that many programs here, she'll go to the schools and the summer camps and do programs for them off-site. But myself, I mostly just wait until I get a request from various community groups, and the past year, I've been doing them virtually, but before that I would go in person to do the program. And we've had some pretty unique programming, it's not just you talk or something, but sometimes we've had golf course birding trips, where we all go around in a row of golf carts and stop at various places and go birding and see what people have in their own communities as well. There was one community that had a bunch of bluebird boxes up, so they were trying to attract birds and help birds in their community. So, it was pretty neat to see.

AH: That sounds like a lot of fun.

SS: It was fun.

AH: So, most of the folks come here, most of the visitors come here, and you deliver most of your programs at the sanctuary?

SS: Yes. Most, probably ninety to ninety-five percent of the programs are done here. But we do sometimes go to events to set up educational booths at various events, or we have in the past, anyway. Hopefully we can do that again. And then we go to a lot of places to do specific programming, like on native plants, the value of native plants in your community and things like that. And then some people just want general programs about the sanctuary and kind of what we're doing out here, and usually we try and weave that into every program we do, just so they have an understanding of what we're all about out here. And it's pretty amazing, like some people, one the ladies on the walk last night that we had had never been here before. She's lived here for forty years, had never been here, so she was just in awe the whole time. It's really neat to see that.

AH: What do you think motivated her this time to come to a program?

SS: I think she was waiting for us to start doing programs again, and the nighttime program really intrigued her. And she didn't even know how to use a pair of binoculars, so the first thing I did, she was the first one here, so I spent ten minutes with her trying to get her to understand how to use the binoculars, and she was like, "Oh my gosh, I can actually see something." It was so funny. But she was like, "Oh my gosh." So, she was just thrilled the whole time. But I think her sister-in-law was really a big birder, and she left her a pair of binoculars which had just been sitting on her shelf, and so she just decided, I guess, to come out. I don't really know what motivated her, but I think she just wanted to do something. A lot of people have been pent up and not been able to do too much in the past year. I think she'll be back, she said she's definitely coming back, so that'll be fun. It's always neat to see people that don't venture out much and then they come out here for the very first time and then they start coming back more and more.

AH: So, let's draw back for a minute. The sanctuary was established in what year, again?

SS: Nineteen fifty-four as an Audubon sanctuary. But we had a warden here back in the 1910s. So, we've had a presence here since the early 1900s. And it wasn't until 1954 when the local community were like, "Hey, this is the last remaining Cypress Swamp". Because it was in the 1940s, they started logging Big Cypress and Fakahatchee and had started logging the Corkscrew strand, which used to be twenty miles long, that's what I read anyway. And they started logging that and the local citizens were the ones that noticed and were like, "Hey, we need to do something to protect these areas". And we still meet people who were youth back then and they said they used to go hunting and stuff in this area and fishing. And they used this area a lot, so they knew it and wanted to protect it. Of course, once it became an Audubon sanctuary that was no longer allowed. But it's still interesting to hear the perspective of some of the people who were alive back then.

AH: And then the facilities here at the sanctuary were planned and built around what year?

SS: Yeah. Well next year, it's not protected. We didn't raise the funds until December of 1954, so that next year, they began building the first boardwalk because they wanted to provide access. They had a group of visitors come, and back then there was no Immokalee Road, I don't even think there was a sanctuary road, they just got here by jeep, by driving over land to get here. And there were pictures of that first group where you can see where they basically did a swamp walkout to the lakes and then the warden that was here at the time was in the water, dragging the boat along with them in it throughout the North Lake. So, it was soon after that that they decided to build the boardwalk because people had raised the funds, or provided money to purchase it. Plus, Audubon really wanted people to learn about the value of such an ecosystem, so they wanted to make it easier for people to visit. So, they decided to build the first boardwalk, which was basically a one-way kind of thing, it wasn't a loop.

But in 1960, Hurricane Donna hit and messed up the boardwalk, so then the next boardwalk they built was a loop boardwalk. And that's when Ed Carlson, who eventually became the director, was a teenager over in Miami, and he came over to help build that first loop boardwalk. So, it

was interesting having him as the director when I first started here, because he had all kinds of fun stories about it back then. So, the current boardwalk was built in 1995 and 1996, it took them two years to build it, but they only worked on it for a few months in the summer, basically, when we didn't have that many visitors. So, they worked on it from like June through October or something for two years. And they finished it by 1996, so that's the current boardwalk we have now. The center was built in, I don't know exactly when they started building it, but it was finished by December of 2000, so right after I started working here. I helped put a few finishing touches on the building, so that was kind of fun. But at that point I didn't really know the whole history. But it was neat to be here at that time, it was really exciting.

AH: Now the sanctuary building itself is really unique because you manage, you know, with so many visitors, of course, they need to have someplace to go to the restroom, and you manage with, is it called the Living Machine?

SS: Yes. So that was put in after our visitation started getting up in the eighties to a hundred thousand people a year, well, before that actually. They saw the visitors were increasing and so they had to do something. All they had before were septic tanks, they didn't want to put in, there's no big facility out here for treating wastewater. So, they didn't want to put in a traditional wastewater thing because it would be kind of gross, I guess. And there was the alternative, this was a new company that was doing the Living Machines. And they came here a few years ago and they were all amazed that we still had one of the original ones that they had built because I guess they're more sophisticated now or something.

So, they decided to put in the Living Machine. It was a Canadian company that was starting to do those in various places so it uses the, basically two huge septic tanks, which is underneath our pollinator garden, to initially treat the water and then the water comes up into an artificial swamp where we have a big, I don't know if you saw them, the big blue barrels that have critters in there, they have various trees and plants growing in there, it's like a mimic to a swamp, and that helps clean up the water. Then it goes through an artificial marsh which is lined with plastic to prevent groundwater intrusion, I guess. And the water goes through that and there's marsh plants to clean up the water, so much that at that point we used to have an aquarium there that all that water went into or some of the water went in to. And it just showed how clear it was and how the fish and things we had in the aquarium were doing fine. So, it cleaned up the water really well.

But before, one of the things that Ed said, when he was here, he said, "If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't have reused the water". So right now, and basically how that system is designed, is the water that goes through the whole system gets used back through the toilets basically. So, it's recycled. And because of that, we have to chlorinate the water and then dechlorinate it, because it would mess up the system if we had chlorine going through it. So, there's chemicals involved and we have to have an inspector come, almost on a daily basis. So, we have someone under contract to do that, and he's actually the one that has been here ever since the Living Machine has been here. So, he's a neat one to talk to about that. Yeah, but

basically, we had to do something because visitation was going up, we had to do something about the wastewater.

AH: What has been that trajectory for visitation? You know, from the start through the present, how many visitors do you have?

SS: Well, in the, I guess in the 1950s and 60s, it was pretty low. Maybe eight to fifteen thousand people a year. Especially after Immokalee Road was built, I think it was 1960, where people could get here. And then it gradually just crept up and up through the 1970s and 1980s to the late 1990s where we were starting to get close to a hundred thousand visitors a year. And then you'll see, there's dips in it after the economic downturn in 2008 and various things, there's little dips in the visitation if you look at a chart of it. But we're still up around a hundred thousand visitors a year, which seems to be mostly from October through April, and the summer is really quiet. So, we have days where we only have ten people or forty people or whatever, but less than a hundred people a day this time of year, especially in September. And that's always been like that.

AH: What are some of your favorite programs to give?

SS: My favorite programs are things that get people out, off the boardwalk, into nature, like really into nature. Like, we have done swamp walks before, so a beginner swamp walk where you don't get barely above your knees in the water, and some that you're up to your neck in the water. So basically, it's just amazing to see people, like they're terrified at first and then by the end of the program, or even a few minutes into the program, they're really into it. And just getting out there is just so cool for people to see that, even though there's snakes and alligators and things like that, they're not out to just get you, at least if someone's not fed them before. So, it's kind of neat to just see people's reaction and how they understand some of the wildlife a little bit better after a program like that. Another one of my favorite programs, one of the programs we teach here is the Florida Master Naturalist program, which is a University of Florida extension program where we teach people to learn how to be interpreters and guides and things like that. So, we teach that and it's a forty-hour class, and a lot of the people who take that are volunteers at other organizations, maybe they're new to the area and just want to learn more about Florida and find somewhere to volunteer. But we've gotten a lot of volunteers from that program. Some of our really dedicated, really amazing volunteers have come through that program.

But every single one of our volunteers is dedicated and amazing, so I don't know, but I mean, we just love all of our volunteers, they're just so dedicated, so into everything that we're trying to do here. And they give selflessly and they come, like we have a couple that comes from England and they volunteer almost full time while they're here. And we've become, I mean, just family, basically with everybody that's here. But it's funny, like, some of the boardwalk naturalists, they're on certain days of the week, like we have our Monday volunteers, our Tuesday volunteers, and some of them don't even know each other. So, it's really interesting when we have a program where we all get together, like various field trips or a program here in the

classroom or lunch and learns, and it's just amazing. Like we've known these people for a long time, but they don't know each other sometimes, so it's kind of funny. But they basically, they all get along, they're all really great people.

AH: I'm sure. You've spent a lot of time out in the sanctuary giving these programs. Can you tell us what some of your interesting, unique observations of the plants and wildlife have been?

SS: Sure. Well, I have seen twenty panthers while I've been here. One of them was off-site, but all the other ones have been here at Corkscrew. One day, we were all in the office and we heard a panther calling from right behind our office, and so we all ran out there just hoping to see it, and sure enough, it was a male chasing a female panther around. And you could hear all these fighting noises, and it was just really crazy to hear right across the little waterway back there. And that was just crazy that day, and so many people got to see the panther that day. So, that was really neat. I think that was the year where we had so much rain in January that everything got flooded and every mammal, like large cat at least, was up around the visitor center, because it was the only dry spot around. That was probably four or five years ago, where we had nine inches of rain one day and the water levels just came up kind of crazy.

But just the scenery the beauty of the old-growth forests, the old trees. I got to be involved on the landmark Cypress excursion, where we basically went out through the old sanctuary looking for the largest trees. Nobody had even documented them before. We measured so many trees, hundreds of trees. But we found sixty that were seventeen feet in circumference or larger, and that's what we were trying to document, the really, really old ones. So that was really interesting, getting out there and walking across that Horseshoe Marsh to the other side and just seeing all the big trees, and then over on that side of the marsh, it's not accessible to people, there's no way to get there unless you hike the half-mile across. And nobody does that, usually.

But basically, once you're over there, it's just crazy, because you have the same forest on that side as you have on this side, where the boardwalk is, but there's so many more orchids. There's the same orchids, but there's so many more of them because we've had people swiping orchids south of the boardwalk area for years, apparently. And our volunteers are really vigilant about that, they'll notice when an orchid is missing. So, we have them report if something is missing, and we've relocated some of them before. There was a night-centered orchid that was scraped off a tree once and they found it further down on the boardwalk after they noticed it was missing, and so we were able to position that back in the trees. We also lost a lot of orchids in Hurricane Irma, but we put them back in trees. Not near the boardwalk, but somewhere else. But one thing I've noticed is that there's so many more baby orchids now starting on the trees, so I think that storm really spread the seeds around and so maybe we'll have more of them every year now. I hope to do a good job of protecting them, I guess.

So, we have the same kind of forest we have on the other side. But that's been really, really cool too. We've seen bears out here. We had one volunteer that was on the boardwalk in the summer, we didn't have any visitors for a while, and he was just standing there taking a picture of

something, and all of a sudden, he feels something right behind him sniffing his leg or something, and it was a big mother bear with two big cubs right behind her. And he just froze and she just kept going and the little cubs followed her, she didn't do anything to him. So, stories like that's really funny. And then I've heard somebody else also saw an otter that was trying to get a baby alligator, it was two otters actually, and one of the otters would go distract the mother alligator, and the other one would go try and grab one of the baby alligators. So, things like that are really neat to see or hear about as well. So, people see amazing things almost every day. We've had a lot of panther sightings, a lot of bobcats. Black bear just two days ago on the boardwalk. So, you never know what you're going to see when you're out here. A few years ago, we also had the lady who famously got the video of a panther running right past her on the boardwalk. So, we get a lot of people who come here saying, "Is this the boardwalk?" Because they recognize it from the video, it's like "Is this the boardwalk where the lady got the video of the panther running right past her?". So, that's pretty neat. I mean, I don't know how many million people have seen that video all over the world, but almost every week we get someone saying something about that. So that's pretty neat.

And then just back when I first started working here, going up to the north end, most of the marshes were marshes back then, and there were so many birds out there feeding in the marshes. And you go up there at sunset to the tower and just stand there, you'd have flocks of birds flying past you, because they go roost in the cypress trees which were on the other side of the marsh. And that gradually has dissipated over the years, probably because the marshes just weren't maintained as marshes, they weren't burned enough to keep them a marsh, the willow and cattail and things like that have kind of taken over. But that's something we've been focusing on for the past seven years. Our land managers have been going in and doing restoration to those marshes. If you get a chance to go up there while you're here, it's pretty amazing, the difference between what it used to be like and what it is now. And it's just gorgeous, I mean, I hope you get a chance to go up there, if you're here for a little while. But we try to get different people up there. We used to do buggy tours and also truck tours for people. So, we hope we can do some of those again, coming up, now that we're doing programs again, to get people up there to see all the work we're doing.

AH: Well, let's take a break for a moment and then we'll wrap up our conversation.

SS: Okay.

AH: So, we're back with Sally Stein. Sally, you were starting to tell us about your after-work activities.

SS: So, I actually used to live on site for about six years. And that was always really neat to be able to just go out on the boardwalk whenever I wanted after it was closed, and I did that for a while until an owl hit me in the head one night. I was walking toward the north lake, it was after sunset, I had gone out to the tower to see the sunset, and I was walking past the north lake, and there was a big branch that ran across the boardwalk, but the owl tried to squeeze between my

head and the branch and knocked me in the head. And then I was kind of nervous to get back out there by myself at night. But basically, back when I lived on site and back in the early days of being here, Ed Carlson, our director, often would bring us up to the north end after work. And like I said, we're all kind of like a big family, so it was a good chance to just hang out with him and the rest of us, because we're all so busy during the day. Just to go up there, relax, and he told us all kinds of stories about what it was like when he first started working here from the 1960s to the present day, he had really fun stories. I don't know if you're going to interview him, but he'd be a great one to interview.

But he'd bring us up there, and I remember one day he was sitting in the Oak Room and he was pretty good at doing owl calls, and we'd sit there and practice doing owl calls, trying to get the barn owls to come in and stuff, and it was amazing that it worked. And he taught us that you have to use your diaphragm to really make it the right sound, so we all learned to do, well, most of us learned how to do somewhat of a barn owl call. But they make different noises, like the locator call is just like (Sally Stein demonstrates a barn owl locator call), and then the regular call that they make is (Sally Stein demonstrates a regular barn owl call). So anyway, that was fun, and I've kind of demonstrated that to various volunteers and that's always kind of fun, trying to get people to learn how to do it. But we discourage that on the boardwalk because we don't want the same owls being hooted at all the time. We don't even let people play recordings of wildlife and things like that. But that was always fun, that was one of my fun memories of hanging out with Ed after hours.

AH: So, you mentioned earlier on in the conversation that you help with some of the land management activities as well.

SS: Right.

AH: How does that translate or inform the programming?

SS: Well, land management is a major part of what we do here. Both the restoration and the normal things like invasive plant removal and things like that and prescribed fires. So, I understand the value of maintaining the land because I see what happens when it doesn't get maintained. So, I try to help whenever I can. But I definitely bring that into my programming, trying to teach people what non-native, invasive plants are, the specific things, because a lot of them grow in people's yards around here too. Unfortunately, most—I guess not most, but a lot of our program participants are from other states and they don't even live here sometimes. But some of them, quite a few of them do, so it's kind of good to teach them what early identification looks like in a Brazilian pepper versus a Dahoon holly, so that they're not cutting down the good trees in their yards.

Another thing that happens around here is fire. We have, in the dry season, really bad droughts sometimes and there's natural fires or arsonist fires, I don't know how they all get started, but we've had some pretty bad fires in the area, and people just don't understand that fire's really

important to maintaining the ecosystem. So, fire itself is not a bad thing, but it's when it's been excluded for a long time that it becomes a problem. Like in Golden Gate Estates for instance, all the houses that are there, they have to kind of clear around their house so that their house is protected if there's a fire. They have to also make sure that their driveway's accessible to fire engines to get down there or brush trucks or whatever in case there is a fire. But a lot of people are afraid of fire and they don't realize that frequent fire keeps the fire intensity low and then prevents any catastrophic fire that could happen. So, it's interesting talking to people and trying to get them to understand that fire is a good thing in the right area, anyway. Maybe not in their backyard.

So, just trying to let them know. A lot of times we get questions from people like, "What is this pink think growing on the tree?", and it's the invasive apple snail eggs. So that's something I've helped with as well, getting out there in the swamp and removing those eggs. We basically have to crush them to make sure that they don't turn into snails because if that snail gets going like crazy, they not only eat algae like the native apple snail, but they eat whole plants. So, it could be very devastating to the marsh and the whole ecosystem here if their numbers get out of control. So, we actually have an invasive snail task force. Our land manager, Scott, has trained some of the volunteers to help with it as well. But usually, we have to have a sap person involved, so I help with that just to make sure that everybody stays safe and everything with the alligators and stuff out there. But on the programs, we definitely talk about the value of removing invasive species and then the prescribed fires that happen here.

Sometimes it's really neat when we can have a fire right next to the boardwalk where people can actually see it in progress, and then they come back. A lot of times members and things will come back multiple times, like once a week or twice a week. We have one person that comes almost every day. So, they really see the changes after a fire. It's amazing, all the different little new growth, flowers and grasses coming up and then the deer coming in to feed on them and then panther sightings and things like that afterwards. So, it's a neat progression if you're able to come along to see that. But if you have the one person that just comes once a year or once in their life, it's funny when they come in the winter time, because they'll see the cypress trees and they don't have leaves on them, they're like, "Why do you have all these dead trees?" or "Why are the trees all dead?". They're just trying to understand, so it's interesting for anything to explain the whole process and give the big picture of how this sanctuary is maintained and the different seasons and things like that.

AH: Well Sally, this has been a fascinating conversation. We really appreciate you spending time, sharing all these memories and information with us today. Thanks so much.

SS: Thank you. It's been fun talking to you all. And thanks for doing this.

AH: You're welcome.

SS: Alright.