



Protecting...  
Preserving...  
Supporting  
Lovers Key State Park

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**Park Manager's Message**  
*By Gloria Beauchamp*

The season has wound down and spring break has come to an end. Many have packed up and started heading north. Hopefully, all of you had a chance to enjoy some fantastic weather at the Park. Though the winter started off mild, it ended with some colder than normal fronts passing through.

Fortunately, the colder weather made for some great birding and manatee viewing. Although red tide was an issue, there were only a few days where our beaches were affected.

Our programs were in full swing with lots of participation. We also added a new program this year: "Butterflies of Lovers Key". This was quite popular and gave visitors an opportunity to learn how to plant their own butterfly gardens.

At our Annual Meeting in January, the Head Curator of the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum gave a very informative presentation about the shells in our area. And, in spite of the weather, the Valentine's Day Vow Renewal was a great success. In March, the Astronomical Society presented a star gazing program on the beach.

The FOLKS have established a Design Committee for our new Visitor Center while the Fundraising Committee sought out



applications for a Development Director.

**There are always plenty of ongoing activities at the Park and we look forward to you joining us in our future adventures.**

**Mark Your Calendars:**

For more information on any events, please visit [www.friendsofloversonkey.org](http://www.friendsofloversonkey.org)

**8th ANNUAL TURTLE TROT 5K**

- Saturday, May 11th -

Put on your running shoes and start training for the annual 5K Run/Walk. Help support FOLKS by registering to participate in this year's Turtle Trot! For more information visit the FOLKS website: [www.friendsofloversonkey.org](http://www.friendsofloversonkey.org)

**NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY**

- Saturday, September 28th -

Mark your calendars to participate in the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy. During this yearly event, volunteers work together to restore and connect with public lands through service projects. The efforts of hundreds of thousands of volunteers results in meaningful, positive impacts on lands around the nation.

**GREAT OUTDOOR ADVENTURE DAY**

- Saturday, December 7th -

Enjoy all the activities the park has to offer. Try something new and explore an area of the park you may have never been to before. Vendors, Non-profits, music, food, guided tours, kids activities, and more!

## Love Was in the Air

By Judy Greenwood

Valentine's Day 2013 is now just a memory....a cold, wet, windy memory... but a cherished memory for 57 couples renewing their wedding vows at Lovers Key State Park.

Included among our shivering attendees, were our longest married couple, Ray and Rosalee McKinley of Naples who were celebrating 62 years of wedded bliss; and Michael and Keri Weeg of Ft. Myers Beach, married only four months and just beginning their wonderful journey.

A great group of volunteers and Rangers from the Park braved the weather and worked tirelessly to help these couples enjoy their special event. It was truly awesome listening to Revered Dick Tafel's heartfelt and spiritual words, and the couples recitation of their vows to one another as the rain blew sideways through the Gazebo. It was a testament to the love, devotion, strength, determination, and the belief in the institution of marriage.

Lovers Key Resort once again graciously donated the Grand Prize: a night's stay at their elegant Resort and a \$25.00 Gift Certificate to the famous Flipper's Restaurant. This gift package was won by Frank and Mary Porter of North Ft. Myers who were celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

This is the fourth year that FOLKS has sponsored this event helping couples from all over the world celebrate their love in a unique and special way. For all you love birds out there, keep the Lovers Key Vow Renewal Ceremony in mind for 2014!



## A Beautiful Place to Work

By Tony Mauriello



While working at Lovers Key State Park, it is easy to take for granted the surrounding beauty. I guess that's human nature.

However, while driving the tram to the beach, I am often reminded by first time visitors of how special the Park really is! Especially, when crossing the bridge to the south beach area. I often hear exclamations of "WOW, "Quick, give me the camera", How beautiful, "What a view", and many more such praises.

The Park's diversity offers breathtaking views which make for great photo shots. We have the mangrove tunnel to the fishing pier which is a popular spot for artists; the trails and canals where you may be lucky enough to see a breaching dolphin or playful manatee; the passes at both ends of the Park where boaters and wave runners whiz by; and, of course, the beaches. No wonder we see so many visitors capturing the unique beauty on film.

When I am asked by our visitors, "Hey, How can I get your Job?", its just another reminder of the Park's spectacular beauty!

## Thank You Volunteers, You Make A Difference!

By Katie Moses

Lovers Key State Park is a truly beautiful and welcoming park to visit, and this is possible due to the thousands of hours volunteers serve at the park! On March 13<sup>th</sup>, the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic was held to celebrate the countless hours, smiles, and yes even sweat these amazing folks have dedicated to Lovers Key State Park. At the picnic, a few remarkable volunteers were recognized for their outstanding service.



The Volunteer of the Year nominations were tied between **Tim & Denise Law** and **Mark & Maryann Dahl**. Both couples are incredible resident volunteers who spend 4 months here at Lovers Key donating more than the required 32 hours per week cleaning restrooms, driving the tram, and completing

various maintenance projects throughout the park.



The park staff and volunteers nominated **Park Ranger Bryan Kaczmarek** as Employee of the Year for Lovers Key State Park for his positive enthusiasm and

hard work. Bryan is always willing to lend a hand no matter what the project and goes above and beyond his job description.



Congratulations to all of our volunteers who helped in redecking the mid-beach pedestrian bridge last winter. The project was selected as the **Small Project of**

**the Year** by the Friends of Florida Parks!

**The park's incredible team of 80 dedicated volunteers donated an outstanding 12,886+ hours from July 2012 to March 2013!**

## 8th Annual Turtle Trot 5K- May 11th at 8:00 AM

By Pamela Jones-Morton



Friends of Lovers Key, Inc. are setting the pace for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Turtle Trot Race coming up on May 11, 2013. Everyone is invited...runners, joggers, and walkers alike can join the fun and experience the beauty of our Park.

Participants will trek over a path along Black Island Trail, run up a 38 foot hill, and cross two bridges as they race toward the finish line at the beach. Awards will be presented at the Lovers Key Pavilion at the end of the race.

Breakfast will be supplied by the Race's Signature

Sponsor, Whole Foods. Sponsors are critical to the success of the Turtle Trot and the 2013 Support Sponsor is Vitamin Shoppe. Community Contributing Sponsors include Angel Animal Hospital, Bonita Community Health Center, Everglades Shirt Factory and Outfitters, Road ID, and Trek Bikes. Our thanks and appreciation to all.

So come, have fun, and support a great cause. Register online by going to the website or stop by the Park and pick up a registration form. Before May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the registration fee is \$25 for adults and \$15 for those 18 and under. The week before the race the fee is \$30 for all levels and \$35 for all levels on the day of the race. Register early and save!!



## FOLKS Family Fantastic Food Fest!

*By Judy Greenwood*

Did that get your attention? FOLKS Members, I need your help....all of you. If each of you sent me just one recipe, we could produce a FANTASTIC cookbook! And that is my goal. This is going to be our first cookbook and we want it to be GREAT!

We need to fill all categories from soup to desserts, from old family favorites to new discoveries. As long as you know its good, put your name on it and send it my way. We want all our cooks to be acknowledged for their great taste!

We will be searching for the perfect title and design for the cover.

The FOLKS logo would be ideal but I am open to all ideas. This cookbook could bring in some much needed revenue for our Visitor's Center Fund.

For those who do not know me, I joined FOLKS last year and their Board of Directors this year. I am very enthusiastic about belonging to and working for such a fine organization.

As Event Coordinator, I am always seeking new volunteers and ideas. If you are interested in volunteering, no matter to what extent, or have any suggestions for new events, I would love to hear from you. Please call me at (708) 359-0466 or email me at: [fjgreenwood@gmail.com](mailto:fjgreenwood@gmail.com).

We have such a good time planning and attending our events. If you are not participating, you're really missing out on Great Food, Great Fun, and Great FOLKS!



**Flippers on the Bay Restaurant**, located at Lovers Key Resort, is offering FOLKS Members a **15% discount**. Please present your membership card to the server upon arrival. *Alcoholic beverages are not covered by this discount*. The food is great, atmosphere is fun, and the view cannot be beat! So head to Flippers on the Bay and have a wonderful time.

See you there!

- Or Current Resident-

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