



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

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15th Anniversary Birthday Bash By Pam Jones-Morton

March 23rd was a great day! FOLKS celebrated their 15th year as a chartered Citizen Support Organization that protects, preserves, and supports Lovers Key State Park. What a milestone!!!



The evening began with FOLKS and guests arriving at the beach to a beautiful blue sky and turquoise water. Then guests were given a short presentation of FOLKS history and images of the future Visitors Center. This marked the Official Kick Off of the Five Year Fundraising Campaign which will be our major initiative! Anyone interested in joining the journey or supporting the cause, please contact FOLKS or visit the website www.friendsofloversonkey.org.

The Bash started with wine and appetizers served in the gazebo followed by a light meal and birthday cake for all to enjoy! All very generously donated by Sweetbay Supermarket on Coconut Road, Bonita Springs.



There were approximately 80 guests including some of those who were instrumental in the formation of the Park who came "home" to visit and celebrate. Special guests included Fran Mainella; Elaine McLaughlin; Barbara Manzo; Ray Judah, Lee County Commissioner; Terry Stewart, Fort Myers Beach Town Manager; Larry Kiker, Mayor of Fort Myers Beach; and Bob Raymond and Alan Mandel, Fort Myers Beach Councilmen.

A wonderful celebration came to an end with an amazing sunset after which guests were afforded the opportunity to view the stars and planets through telescopes set up by the Everglades Astronomical Society (EAS). EAS shared their insight and knowledge of the night sky and many of us were fortunate enough to see Saturn!

Mark Your Calendars:

GREAT OUTDOOR ADVENTURE DAY

- Saturday December 8th, 10 AM to 3 PM-
Join us for an exciting day full of outdoor adventures! Participate in an array of programs, demo gear from local outdoor adventure vendors, explore the park, enjoy tasty food, and listen to some great music.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

-Tuesday, October 2, 2:00PM-
-Tuesday, November 6, 2:00PM-
-Tuesday, December 4, 2:00PM-

All members are encouraged to attend! Meetings are held in the park's meeting room. Please call 463-4588 for more information.

7th Annual Turtle Trot A Huge Success!

By Pam Jones-Morton



Whole Foods Staff.... In the Spirit

May 12th was the date of the 7th Annual Turtle Trot at Lovers Key. Open to all, this year we set a new attendance record....417 registered runners! What a great turn out!

Participants trekked over a path along Black Island Trail, ran up a 38 foot hill and crossed three bridges as they raced toward the finish line at the beach. After the race, we all enjoyed breakfast supplied by our Signature Sponsor, Whole Foods. They also spread smiles and lots of enthusiasm by having "running fruits and veggies"! Yes, they had kale, grapes, a banana and a carrot all participating in the 5K!



Rangers: Robert, Catherine, Matt, Bryan, Gloria & Katie

On the pavilion were Foot Solutions, Vitamin Shoppe, SNAP Fitness, and Bonita Community Health Center. Each had something interesting to offer the runners. In addition, the Turtle Trot received support from Everglades Shirt Factory, Sprint Printing, Trek Bikes, Edible Arrangements, Road ID and Angel Memorial Animal Hospital. We are very grateful to all the sponsors who help make the race great each year!



Thanks Incredible Volunteers

We are also very grateful to our dedicated volunteers whose hard work assures all goes smoothly and successfully. Thank you all!

Within 17 minutes of the start, the first runner crossed the finish line. Ace Brown, of Ft Myers was the over all male winner of the race. Two minutes later, Keri Grasso of Naples finished and she was the over all female winner. Congratulations to them both! But more exciting than that, we had 7 Park Rangers representing Lovers Key. Each one completed the event in stellar fashion!!!

The Turtle Trot benefits FOLKS and supports wildlife conservation and the future Visitor Center. FOLKS is able to

meet our goal of keeping Lovers Key a paradise for both people and wildlife because of the continued support received for the Annual Turtle Trot. See you all on May 11th, 2013. Start training now!

Park Manager's Message

By Gloria Beauchamp

Our cool and busy season has wound down and, since January, we have welcomed over 400,000 visitors to the park. We are now heading into the warm days of summer. Make sure when you come out to visit you are bringing plenty of water, sun protection, and some bug spray. Don't forget that, even though it's warmer out now, the park is still open every day of the year. The fish are biting, the gopher tortoises are active on the trails and the shorebirds are nesting on the beach. Come out and enjoy them with us! If your bored at home come on out and help us out; there's plenty to do like

trimming trails, clearing the beach of trash or even talking to visitors about the Park and the area. How about helping us to start planning for this year's Great Outdoor Adventure Day set for December 8, 2012? Also, as you may know, we are raising money a Visitor Center. All help would be truly appreciated from organizing fundraisers to getting the word out into the community. Whatever your expertise, we welcome your help. Don't forget as a FOLKS member you get 12 free entries into the park during your annual membership.

Volunteers Make A Difference

By Katie Moses

The park has an incredible support team of dedicated volunteers. From July 2011 to March 2012, an incredible 70 volunteers have donated an outstanding 12,621+ hours of their time!

On March 1st, 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. Their attitudes and hard work are impressive and they aid in making this Park a special and unique place. At the picnic, a few remarkable volunteers were recognized for their outstanding service. The Park Staff was asked to nominate a couple, team project, and an individual volunteer of the year whom they believed had gone above and beyond expectations.



Katie, Valerie, Bob & Gloria

Individual Volunteer of the Year, Jerry

Hrinik, is a year-round volunteer who

tromps through the backwoods areas of the park seeking out and controlling the growth of exotic plants. He also volunteers as the Treasurer of FOLKS.

Volunteer Couple of the Year, Bob and Valerie Lindner, also year-round volunteers, are often teaching programs, completing special projects, and helping with beautification efforts. They also both serve on the FOLKS Board of Directors.

An amazing renovation of an outdated Park residence kitchen was chosen as the **Volunteer Team Project of the Year. Tim & Denise Law and Nial & Pam Shipp**

have saved the park thousands of dollars with their knowledge and expertise! Both couples come to the park each year as resident volunteers during the winter months.

If you see someone setting up barriers, clearing trails, pounding nails, or any of the many projects our volunteers carry out, please give them a shout out. They are all friendly FOLKS who would love to share their experience and knowledge.

New volunteers are always appreciated. Just contact us and we will gladly welcome you onto our team!



Katie, Matt, Jerry & Gloria



Pam, Katie, Nial, Gloria, Denise & Tim

Meet a FOLKS Member!

By Neeley Murphy



First I would like to say, I LOVE LOVERS KEY! I try to support the Park as best I can. I serve on the Board of Directors and help with events. I am presently in charge of the purchasing, merchandising, and sales of the tee shirts and tank tops. The sales are just one of FOLKS efforts to supplement income for the Park and to help build a Visitor Center. The Rangers and Support Staff are like a huge family who care about and

support each other and they make my time at the Park special and enjoyable. I have met people from all over the United States and the world who share my love of the beach, estuary, Black Island Trails, and the wildlife that inhabit these biomes. As a middle school science and math teacher, I always dreamed that in my retirement, I would volunteer in an ideal environment. I have my DREAM!

CONTACT US

Would you like to **volunteer** or serve on the **Board of Directors**? Please stop by the Ranger Station or contact us at 239-463-4588. We are always happy to hear from you and always happy to welcome new volunteers.

Would you like to contribute a Lovers Key related **newsletter article**, or send us your **comments** or **photos**? Please send an email to:

newsletter@friendsofroverskey.org.

We will be glad to include any appropriate articles when space allows.



Mid Beach Pedestrian Bridge Renovation *By Matt Kruse*

Despite a few setbacks and delays, the mid beach pedestrian bridge project is finally complete. The project called for re-decking the existing bridge with composite lumber. Park staff and volunteers removed nearly 1000 pressure treated boards and re-decked the 400 ft bridge in just a matter of a couple of weeks. Park Ranger Joe Dappen lead the all out bridge blitz, Volunteers contributed nearly 300 hours, while park staff contributed close to 250 hours. Funding from the Tourist Development Council made it possible to purchase the lumber necessary to complete the job. Through the combined efforts of staff and volunteers who make up the incredible Lovers Key Team, visitors will enjoy an improved walking surface as they stroll safely to their favorite beach destination along the mid beach pedestrian bridge.

Is There a Nest Among Us? *By Katie Moses*

The beach of Lovers Key offers several species natural areas in which to nest. Over the next few months, we may have nesting Loggerhead Sea Turtles, Least Terns, Wilson's Plovers, and possibly Snow Plovers coming to our shore. We want to ensure these animals can safely nest so they return each year. Next time you're out enjoying the beaches here at Lovers Key, or anywhere, please keep these few easy tips in mind:

IF YOU DIG IT, FILL IT IN. Both adult and hatchling sea turtles may become trapped inside holes causing undue stress and exhaustion.

KNOCK DOWN SAND CASTLES. They can create an obstruction which causes sea turtles to expend unnecessary energy as a nesting adult or hatchling trying to reach the sea.

AVOID DISTURBING FLOCKS OF BIRDS RESTING ON THE BEACH. Everybody needs a place to rest, even the birds! Disturbing the birds, causing them to take flight, uses precious energy which they need to make long migrations.

OBEY ALL SIGNS, STAY BACK, AND SHARE THE BEACH. Shorebirds need a secluded space and nesting is easily disturbed by the presence of visitors. If disturbed, shorebirds often leave the nest as a group to try and dive-bomb "intruder". When parents are disturbed, unprotected chicks or eggs can overheat and die or be taken by predators such as gulls.

By keeping these tips in mind while at the beach, you can help ensure a healthy year for sea turtles and shorebirds, not just here at Lovers Key but at every beach! Our 2.5 miles of beach allows plenty of room for all to enjoy.



Least Tern

- Or Current Resident-

Friends Of Lovers Key
8700 Estero Blvd
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
www.friendsofloveriskey.org

