



Island Parks Insider

Quarterly Newsletter for the Friends of the Island Parks

www.islandparks.org

April 2004

Join us for Island Fest

Join us Saturday, May 1 from 10 to 8 p.m. and Sunday, May 2 from 10 to 6 p.m. for Island Fest on Honeymoon Island. You'll enjoy food, music, arts & crafts and outdoor recreation—all beachside.

Music will include steel drums, reggae and classic rock and roll. Food will feature something for everyone, including seafood and all kinds of delicious treats. There will be boats, RVs, outdoor recreation equipment, a bungee ride, climbing wall and more.

Osprey Village will expand its menu of environmental exhibits, seminars and hands-on fun.

A new feature is a Bike Rodeo with bike course, safety rules and fun for kids of all ages.

For a \$5 donation, you may enter a drawing for a Carnival Cruise or a trip to Las Vegas (pick

one, \$1000 value), courtesy of **Bill and Kris Gray** at Ships N Trips.

The Carnival Cruise is for two people, either 4 or 5 nights with an ocean view stateroom. It includes port charges and government fees on any Carnival ship.

The Las Vegas trip is for two people, three nights with a round trip flight and fun book. It includes tax and government fees.

Only 3000 drawing tickets will be available. Get your ticket during the event or at the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, Café Honeymoon or the Honeymoon Island Ranger Station.

Proceeds from the event support the Friends of the Island Parks and the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce.

Activities of Interest

On Honeymoon & Caladesi Islands

- ◆ **Island Fest:** May 1 (10 a.m. to 8 p.m.) & May 2 (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Volunteers needed.
- ◆ **Wall Bashing Party:** May 12 at Bathhouse 3. We'll begin demolition for the Visitor Center.
- ◆ **Dunedin Beach Sprint Triathlon:** June 6. Swim, bike and run to benefit the Visitor Center. Volunteers needed.
- ◆ **Rotary Beach Bash:** July 4. Volunteers needed.
- ◆ **Beach Clean Up:** July 5. Volunteers needed.
- ◆ **Ranger's Choice** every Satur-

day from 11 a.m. to noon. Park Rangers guide visitors in a tour.

- ◆ For more information about volunteering, call (727) 469-5942.

Future Dates to Note:

- ◆ Great American Clean Up: September 18
- ◆ Halloween in the Park: October 29 & 30
- ◆ Seafood Fest: Thanksgiving Weekend
- ◆ Grand Opening of Visitor Center: February 2005

From the President:

Dear Friends,

It's been an exciting spring on the islands! We held the first Caladesi Kayak Challenge and I want to thank **Rob and Karen Mirlenbrink** and **Mike Moran** for all of their efforts to ensure success.

We're also getting ready for the first Island Fest on May 1st and 2nd. For this event, we will need almost as many volunteers as we do for the fall Seafood Festival. Call me to sign up if you can give us 3 or 4 hours of your weekend. Proceeds benefit the Visitors Center.

I just returned from the Friends of Florida State Parks Legislative Day in Tallahassee. Friends from all over the state were there to make our senators and representatives aware of issues that will impact the parks in the coming year. We were delighted to hear that both the House and the Senate's budget recommendations for the Department of Parks and Recreation include funding for the Partnership in Parks program. This is the program that will provide 40% of the total needed to transform Bath House 3 and to build the exhibits. Matters of concern, though, were two bills currently in committee that if passed as written would:

1. Force the state parks to compete for a significant portion of their budget with many other divisions who are funded through general revenues. (Currently, the parks are funded largely by the Land Acquisition Trust Fund.)
2. Force the parks to send out for bid any contracts with concessionaires and all restaurant and gift shop purchasing for resale. This could impact the revenue-generating abilities of the parks themselves.

So, if you have the ear of a legislator, I encourage you to make them aware of these issues.

From the islands,
Sally

Phone: 727-733-7762

E-mail: slhess731@mac.com

Visitor Center Construction to Begin

Join us May 12 at 10 a.m. for a Wall Bashing Party. We'll begin taking apart Bath House #3 so it can be transformed into the Rotary Centennial Visitor Center, which is set to open in February 2005.

As you know, the two Dunedin Rotary Clubs (Dunedin and Dunedin North) have adopted the Visitor Center as a fundraising project to honor the Rotary centennial.

Bath House #3 will become the Visitor Center which will house exhibits, a media room and environmental displays.

The total cost of the renovation and exhibits is estimated to cost \$350,000. The two Dunedin Rotary Clubs are raising \$45,000 each and raising additional funds to build the exhibits. Friends of the Island Parks are raising funds also. The Partnership in Parks

program will match the funds with a 40% contribution.

Displays will be professionally designed to highlight the environment of Honeymoon Island and surrounding areas. Exhibit sponsorships are available.

For information on supporting the Visitor Center please contact one of the following:

- ◆ **Sally Hess**
Friends of the Island Parks
(727) 733-7762
- ◆ **Dave Kaufman**
Rotary Club of Dunedin
(727) 459-4339
- ◆ **Sonny Thornton**
Rotary Club of Dunedin North
(727) 734-0886

The leadership of the Friends of the Island Parks appreciates the assistance of the two Rotary Clubs and wants to thank all their members for their tireless support.

Park Manager's Report

Dear Friends,

On March 30, **State Representative Tom Anderson** offered a proclamation that was read on the House Floor to recognize the Rotary Centennial project and their contribution to the Visitor Center on Honeymoon Island.

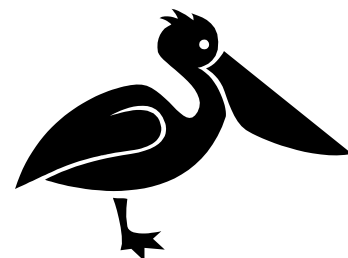
Over the next eleven months we'll watch Bath House #3 become the Rotary Centennial Visitor Center. I'm pleased that the two Rotary Clubs of Dunedin have worked closely with the Friends of the Island Parks to make this dream come true.

On March 29 & 30, Friends President **Sally Hess** attended a statewide Annual Friends meeting for CSO presidents. There, a petition circulated encouraging our legislators to fund the Partnership in Parks program that allows for the 40% match of funds raised locally.

During the spring and summer, many visitors from around the world will experience the nature on Honeymoon and Caladesi Islands. It is my hope that they will respect the nesting and resting birds that frequent the islands. They depend upon this habitat for their successful reproduction and migration.

Regards,

Scott Robinson
Park Manager
Gulf Islands State Parks



Caladesi Challenge Kayak Race a Quick Success

On March 20, Friends of the Island Parks hosted the first ever Caladesi Kayak Challenge. Thirty-five racers paddled 4 miles from Bath House #1, across Hurricane Pass along Caladesi Island and back. Some racers doubled the course for an 8 mile race. Complete results are listed on www.islandparks.org.

Many thanks to the event sponsors. Mad Paddlers donated a kayak for a drawing. Other sponsors included Energy Conservatory, Florida State Parks, Hungry Howies, Kelly's, Logopro.com and Osprey Bay Kayaks.

Special thanks to **Rob and Karen Mirlenbrink** and **Mike Moran** for organizing the event. Thanks to **Stephanie Bergeron** for providing technical support. Many volunteers helped during the event.



Andy Gerber, First Place Winner, completes the 8-mile course with a running finish.



Kayaks, all in a row, waiting for the Caladesi Kayak Challenge race to begin. Thirty-five racers participated.

Things to Remember During Sea Turtle Nesting Season

Help protect Florida's sea turtles and their coastal habitats. Nesting season is from March through October on the Gulf coast. While visiting the beach during the nesting season, please remember a few simple things:

1. It is against the law to touch or disturb nesting sea turtles, hatchlings or their nests. Sea turtles are protected by Federal and State laws.
2. Do not walk on the beach with a flashlight or shine lights at sea turtles.
3. Do not take pictures at night using a flash.
4. Turn off outside patio lights from shining directly onto the beach by closing the drapes at night.
5. Avoid disturbing marked sea turtle nests while enjoying the beaches during the day.
6. Dispose of trash when you leave the beach.
7. When crossing a dune, please use designated cross overs and walk ways.
8. If you see an injured or dead sea turtle, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-888-404-FWCC.

Triathlon Scheduled for June 6

Honeymoon Island will host the Dunedin Beach Sprint Triathlon / 2004 Race through Xanadu on June 6. The event will feature a 1/4-mile swim, a 12-mile bike ride and a 3.1-mile run. The race will begin at 7:15 a.m. The Dunedin Causeway will be used for the bike portion of the race but the rest will happen on Honeymoon Island.

Cost to enter is \$45 per individual or \$90 per team. Athletes may register at www.active.com. Proceeds benefit the Dunedin Rotary Clubs that support the Rotary Centennial Visitor Center on Honeymoon Island.

As many as 500 athletes are expected to participate. Volunteers are needed for this event.

Shore Birds to Rest And Nest on Local Beaches



Please honor these signs posted on Honeymoon Island and Caladesi Island. They mark the habitat where shorebirds are known to nest and rest. Many of these birds are endangered and are protected by federal and state regulations. Staff will be busy in coming months counting and educating about these birds.

Join Friends of the Island Parks

Show your support of our local parks by joining the Friends of the Island Parks.

Membership levels are:

General: \$ 25

Non-Profit: \$ 50

Corporate Memberships:

Bronze: \$ 100

Silver: \$ 250

Gold: \$ 500

Platinum: \$1000

Visit www.islandparks.org to print an application.

Friends Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Interpretive Trailer on Honeymoon Island. For information, contact Shane Bittaker at (727) 736-2132.

Spring 2004 Meetings:

- ◆ Tuesday, April 20
- ◆ Tuesday, May 18
- ◆ Tuesday, June 15



Member Benefits

As a member of Friends, you will enjoy the following valuable benefits:

- ◆ Newsletter: Members receive a quarterly newsletter with interesting articles, important dates and so much more.
- ◆ Voting: Each membership entitles you to one vote.
- ◆ Dues and donations are 100% tax-deductible.
- ◆ Member picnics and socials.
- ◆ Member days: Members may visit the parks for free on the second Saturday of every month.
- ◆ The knowledge that your dues and donations will be used to directly support your favorite parks.

Friends News and Kudos

Best Wishes

Doug VanderKamp, Assistant Manager at Caladesi Island has resigned to pursue other opportunities. We wish him all the best.

Thank You ...

It was Delicious

The snacks for our monthly meetings are delicious and appreciated.

- ◆ Thanks to **Gabriella Mullins** and **Shane Bittaker** during the January meeting.
- ◆ Thanks to **Scott and Martha Robinson** during the February meeting.
- ◆ Thanks to **Sally Hess** during the March meeting and during the Annual Planning Retreat.

Remember to Log Those Hours!!

All Friends volunteers are encouraged to complete a volunteer agreement. Volunteers are also asked to track volunteer hours. Now it's super easy. Just log onto www.islandparks.org and do it on the web! Hours add up and are worth great fun and great gifts. For more information, contact **Shawn Yeager** at 469-5942. Thanks to **Stephanie Bergeron** for adding this great tool to our web site.

Friends Members Visit Weedon Island Preserve

Several Friends members took a field trip recently to Weedon Island Preserve to check out their new Visitor Center. Friends took a walk on their new 3,000 foot boardwalk, climbed their observation tower and took a look at their

exhibits.

Participants were **Don and Stephanie Bergeron** and family, **Gabriella Mullins** and family, **Sally Hess**, **Sam Martin**, **Tom Pickard** and **Linda Taylor**. The trip was great fun.

Congrats, Gabriella

The Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites at 975 Broadway, Dunedin has received the Torch Bearer Award for outstanding customer service. Only 20 of the more than 1000 Holiday Inn Express Hotels in North America received the honor at a recent conference in Atlanta. The 76-room hotel opened in 2001.

Buy Your "Friends" License Plate Today!

Show everyone that you support Honeymoon and Caladesi. Put the Friends of the Island Parks license on your car for \$5. The Friends license plate is available at the Honeymoon Island toll booth or at the Café Honeymoon gift shop. Buy yours next time you visit the park.

Many Thanks!

Thanks to **Dee Dubendorff** on her presentation on Saving Honeymoon Island. She shared information about the grassroots campaign that prevented development on the island.



Friends of the Island Parks

1 Causeway Boulevard
Dunedin, FL 34698
www.islandparks.org

2004

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President	Sally Hess
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Don Bergeron
Shane Bittaker
Bill Gray
Dave Kaufman
Gabriella Mullins
Scott Robinson

Contact Us

Please send your questions or suggestions to Stephanie Bergeron at stephsb@tampabay.rr.com.

Telephone

Gulf Island State Parks:
Scott Robinson, Park Manager
Honeymoon Island:
(727) 469-5942
Caladesi Island:
(727) 469-5918
Volunteer Hotline:
(727) 298-2305



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