



Island Parks Insider

Quarterly Newsletter for the Friends of the Island Parks

www.islandparks.org

July 2004

Friends Celebrate Nature Center with Groundbreaking Ceremony

On June 8, Rotarians, friends and elected officials met at the new site of the Rotary Centennial Nature Center to celebrate and hold a groundbreaking ceremony.

To celebrate the occasion, Rotary leaders Sallie Parks, Jack Carson, District Governor Keith Kurber and former International President Herb Brown spoke of partnerships and opportunities. A "big" check was presented to Friends President Sally Hess.

The two Rotary Clubs (Dunedin and Dunedin North) have officially raised the promised \$90,000 for their part in the renovation of the building.

The two Rotary Clubs also went to other Rotary chapters and supporters to raise additional funds for the exhibits, which will be professionally designed and will highlight the environment of

Honeymoon Island and surrounding areas.

The two Rotary Clubs adopted the Nature Center as a fundraising project to honor the Rotary centennial, which will occur in February 2005.

A Bath House will become the Nature Center which will house exhibits, a media room and environmental displays. The building will be moved to the south side of the island on St. Joseph Sound.

The total cost of the renovation and exhibits is estimated to cost \$350,000. Friends of the Island Parks are raising funds also. The Partnership in Parks program will match the funds with a 40% contribution.

The leadership of the Friends of the Island Parks appreciates the partnership with the two Rotary Clubs of Dunedin.

Activities of Interest

On Honeymoon & Caladesi Islands

- ♦ **Caladesi Coffee** for Boaters, July 3, 17 & 31, 8 to 9:30 a.m. Call for dates in August and September.
- ♦ **Great American Clean Up:** September 18
- ♦ **Halloween in the Park:** October 29 & 30
- ♦ **Seafood Fest & Boat Show:** November 26-28

- ♦ **Grand Opening of Rotary Centennial Nature Center:** February 2005
- ♦ **Ranger's Choice** every Saturday from 11 a.m. to noon. Park Rangers guide visitors in a tour.
- ♦ For more information about volunteering, call (727) 469-5942.

From the President:

Dear Friends,

On June 8th we held the groundbreaking ceremony for the Rotary Centennial Nature Center at Honeymoon Island State Park. Stage One fundraising is complete and a Bath House will soon be moved to its new permanent location on the east side of the island.

Stage Two of our fundraising efforts will target funding the start-up and development of programming utilizing the Nature Center and island assets. A major part of this will be a tour program staffed by volunteer guides who will receive an in-depth course on touring and Gulf barrier island ecology. We plan to hold the initial class to train guides beginning the first week of January 2005. The guides in this class will be ready to give tours when the Nature Center opens at the end of February. If you are interested in this educational aspect of the parks, call me or e-mail me to get on the prospective class list.

Thanks again to all who volunteered and participated in Island Fest and the Race through Xanadu mini-triathlon. Both events were successful and you'll have another chance to participate next year!

From the islands,

Sally
Phone: 727-733-7762
E-mail: slhess731@mac.com

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

4th of July Celebrated At the Beach Bash on Honeymoon Island

The 4th of July was celebrated by many at Rotary's Beach Bash on Honeymoon Island. Despite thunder and threatening skies, many turned out to enjoy the event and the park.

The event featured entertainment, arts and crafts, children's games, food, fun, sand and sun. Good family fun was had by all.

The event featured a Kids Beach Biathlon for youths aged 7 to 15. Each participant received a

ribbon or medal and a t-shirt. The Biathlon was sponsored by the American Running Company on Main Street.

The Beach Bash was presented by the Rotary Club of Dunedin and cosponsored by the City of Dunedin, Florida State Parks and Friends of the Island Parks.

Thanks to the volunteers who helped with the event and to the vendors who participated.

Race thru Xanadu a Great Success

On June 6th, Honeymoon Island hosted its first Sprint Triathlon with more than 475 athletes. The race featured a 1/4-mile ocean swim, a 12-mile bike ride across the Dunedin Causeway and 5-K run through the park.

Thanks to Race Director and Rotarian **Suzanne Hensley** and her team of volunteers, the race went off with very few challenges.

Racers picked up their race packets at the Dunedin Community Center on the evening before the race. They were treated to a

carb dinner and a lot of encouragement.

The event was sponsored by the American Running Company, Michelob Ultra, the Dunedin Brewery, PowerAde and many other companies that support local athletes.

The race was videotaped. Proceeds from the Sprint Triathlon benefit the Dunedin Rotary Club and the Friends of Island Parks.

Visit www.dunedintrathlon.com for race results.

Island Fest a Wonderful Time

On May 2 and 3, the first ever Island Fest was successful thanks to many volunteers. The event featured food, crafts, boats and RV's and great music. Osprey Village, the environmental focus of the event, featured exhibits, workshops and hikes on Osprey Trail. There were kiddie rides and a bike rodeo.

More than 20,000 people at-

tended the event.

Thanks to chairman **Bill Gray** for all his hard work. Thanks to **Ships-N-Trips** for donating the trip for the drawing.

The Friends of the Island Parks appreciates its partnership with the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce on this event.

Thanks to the many volunteers who made this a success.

Park Manager's Report

Dear Friends,

Things don't always go as planned.

With a lot of attention being dedicated to raising funds to turn a Bath House into the Rotary Centennial Nature Center, we overlooked one key thing: erosion on the coastline.

With some talking and negotiating, the State of Florida has agreed to move the building to the other side of the island, so that it will overlook St. Joseph Sound.

The enormous community commitment to this project has been recognized. The building will be moved quickly so that the renovation timeline is honored.

We plan to open the Nature Center in February 2005, complete with exhibits, tours and fan fare.

As many of you know, the Rotary Club of Dunedin and the Rotary Club of Dunedin North agreed to raise \$90,000 towards this project. They went the extra mile (more like a triathlon) and raised all the money for the exhibits, as well.

It has been predicted that this Nature Center project will be one of the biggest Rotary Centennial projects. I am extremely proud of all the work of the Rotary Clubs, the Friends of Island Parks and our many friends in the community.

Our Nature Center will be a great asset to this community.

Regards,

Scott Robinson
Park Manager
Gulf Islands State Parks

Friends to Learn about Snakes

Join us for the Friends of the Island Parks meeting on Tuesday, July 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Interpretive Trailer on Honeymoon Island.

Our guest speaker will be Curt Stanford of the Suncoast Herpetological Society. He will talk about the Native Snakes of Florida, focusing on non-venomous snakes in Pinellas County.

Stanford will bring photographs of snakes and will be ready for Q&A's. He may also bring some caged snakes.

Stanford is an amateur herpetologist with eleven years field experience and has given talks at libraries and schools. Part

of his mission is letting people know that most snakes are harmless and beneficial so that people do not kill them out of fear and ignorance.

Thanks to Sam Martin for arranging this guest speaker.

Friends of the Island Parks strives to present environmental information at each monthly meeting. If you know of someone or an organization that has information that would be interesting to our Friends members, please let us know.

**Protect your skin.
Wear sunscreen!**

Anclote Key

Lighthouse Featured in New Book

Lighthouses of the South by Elinor De Wire features the story of the Anclote Key lighthouse and its renovation. It also has photos of two park employees, **Toby Brewer** and **Connie Wiesehan**. The author was in town recently to speak at a meeting of the Tampa Bay Harbour Lights Collectors Club.

Caladesi to Host Boaters' Coffee Hour

Boaters on Caladesi Island will soon be treated to coffee and pastries on select Saturday mornings. Beginning on the last Saturday in June, Asst. Manager **Shawn Yeager** invited boaters to join him to talk about the island and the Friends group. Twenty-five people attended. The Caladesi Coffee will be held on Saturdays from 8 to 9:30 a.m. on July 3, 17 and 31. Call the park for dates in August and September.

Graduate Student Conducts Research On Three Islands

Grad Student **Russell Fielding**, University of Montana, has been interviewing park visitors on Honeymoon Island, Caladesi Island and Anclote Key. In his masters dissertation, he will compare the attitudes of visitors based on their mode of transportation onto the islands. Of course, you can drive to Honeymoon but you must boat or ferry to Caladesi Island. You must boat to Anclote Key. Fielding supposed that differences will be significant from one island to the other.

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 Stephanie Bergeron at (727) 234-3587. Summer 2004 Meetings:

- ◆ Tuesday, July 20
- ◆ Tuesday, August 17
- ◆ Tuesday, September 21



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

Thank You ...

It was Delicious

The snacks for our monthly meetings are delicious and appreciated.

- ◆ Thanks to **Linda Taylor** for providing snacks during the April meeting.
- ◆ Double thanks to **Don and Stephanie Bergeron** for snacks during the May and June meetings.

Congratulations!

Shawn Yeager is the new Assistant Manager at Caladesi Island State Park. As the former Park Services Specialist at Honeymoon, we know he'll do a great job on his new island. We wish him much success.

Toby Earns a Promotion!

Congratulations to **Toby Brewer**, Assistant Park Manager at Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park in Pasco County. He's being granted his wings and will soon be the Park Manager at Salt Springs. Although not fully developed, Salt Springs has great kayak trails.

Buy Your "Friends" 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 **Chris Bengivengo**, Division Chief, Fire Marshall for the Dunedin Fire Department. He visited during our June meeting and discussed the Dunedin Volunteer Emergency Response Team (DVERT). He described volunteer opportunities during a natural emergency, such as a hurricane. The DVERT team meets the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Dunedin City Hall.

Parks Receive Awards

The **Anclote Key Alliance** has received an award for Outstanding Achievement in their efforts to restore the Anclote Key Lighthouse.

Caladesi Island State Park has received an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Award for building concrete sidewalks, providing ramps at the ferry docks, and purchasing island-friendly wheelchairs. Staff at Caladesi welcome all park visitors.

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 of the Island Parks

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

2004

Board of Directors

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V.P.	Martha Robinson
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Shane Bittaker
Bill Gray
Dave Kaufman
Gabriella Mullins
Scott Robinson
Shawn Yeager

Contact Us

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

Telephone

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



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