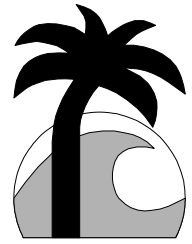


Island Parks Insider



April 2006

Volume 5, Issue 2

What a Year!

Whether looking back on 2005 or looking ahead to 2006, "What a year!" is equally apt. True to the nature of barrier islands, things are always changing. Going in to the New Year we have a new park manager, new Friends president, a new newsletter editor, a new concept for Island Fest (see below) and a whole new lease on life for the Nature Center. This edition is focused on 2005 accomplishments and 2006 plans. We hope something we did last year or something we plan to do this catches your fancy and prompts you to get out and get more involved! And if you are still feeling guilty about not having made any New Year's resolutions, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has some ideas for you that are printed below.

President's Message

Dear Friends,

I hope you had a safe and relaxing holiday. There are new officers on the Friends board so this is my farewell letter as president. We gave the organization a great start and are kicking off the **Rotary Centennial Nature Center**. Our new officers and board will be busy growing our membership and developing a vibrant schedule of programs for the nature center.

We have hired a replacement for Stephanie Bergeron for the tour training coordinator position. I'd like to welcome Tim Marshall – one of our own members – and wish him the best in continuing Stephanie's great work!

Pete and I have signed the contract for the interior construction of the Nature Center. You will soon start to see activity there – the contractor believes it will take him less than 180 days to complete.

We are moving full speed ahead on Island Fest 2006 (check out the website, islandparks.org or celebratewithfriends.org) but it is not too late to join the committee if you are interested. We still have some key positions to fill so if you have the time and interest, please call me. We are also looking for EVERYONE to sell raffle tickets this year. Our goal is to sell out before the event! We need ideas for possible sponsors so if you know of a company who is looking for a good cause or just think one would be a good fit for us, please let us know.

I hope you all know how much I have appreciated your support over the past four years – it has been a "celebration" of working and playing with friends to make our parks an even greater resource to all. Let's continue to "celebrate with friends" now and in future years. From the islands,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sally'.

Sally

Phone: 727-733-7762

E-mail: slhess731@mac.com

Park Manager's Report

At the beginning of the New Year a lot of folks take time to reflect on the year that was. I personally like to keep looking forward at things to come. In the upcoming year we have a lot to look forward to at both Honeymoon Island and Caladesi Island.

The contracts have been signed and construction is ready to begin on the Nature Center. The initial phases will be demolition of parts of the old building and then the new construction of much of the building's interior. We will be completing the last parts of the

design phase for the exhibits and soon Wilderness Graphics will start the construction of exhibits so that they will be ready to install once the building is complete. We look forward to completion by mid-summer.

The Friends have decided to tackle the Island Fest event on their own. Committees are forming and plans are being made for the event, which will take place on May 6th and 7th. One of the highlights of the event will be a larger Osprey Village. We plan to showcase many of the recreational opportunities available in the area and also many of the environmental organizations that work to preserve the "Real Florida."

Much help will be needed to make this event a success, so please contact some of the other members of the Friends and lend a hand. Remember that all profits for this event will go towards work being done at both of our parks.

Caladesi Island staff will be starting to plan this year's Golf Tournament. Jason and Shawn will be heading up this event. I am learning how to golf so that I can take part in the tournament (everyone near me should consider helmets).

Remember as always there are tons of volunteer opportunities available at both parks, so contact Shawn or Karen to see what you can do.

For all you do...
THANK YOU!



Pete Krulder
Park Manager

Volunteer News

Being a volunteer in Florida State Parks has many advantages! One of them is that volunteers are covered under Workers Compensation. I have always volunteered somewhere and when I first started my job here, I was pleasantly surprised to hear of this policy. This was the first time I had heard of volunteers being compensated if they were to get hurt on the job. It really makes sense and I think that it makes volunteers feel even more

valued and part of the staff. How does that apply to CSO members? An example might be that you are working a special event and get injured; you would be eligible for compensation as long as you were working within the guidelines of the volunteer program. Also, since many CSO members are also regular volunteers in the park, they may come in contact with hazards such as poison ivy or hand tools. If you do get hurt while in your volunteer role with the park there are some basic things to remember:

- Be sure to have a staff member or designated volunteer "check you out" on equipment before use. (Just because you have used similar equipment elsewhere does not mean you should not be checked out on equipment. Different models can vary in operation methods.)
- If you are uncomfortable or have never used certain equipment, say so and get training and become familiar with the owner's manual
- Wear the required Personal Protection Equipment and follow all safety guidelines
- If you do happen to get injured, notify a staff member immediately and document the incident so that you can be covered for doctor's visits or medications.

Finally, always work safely and smartly and you will not have to take advantage of this benefit! If you have further questions about this policy, please don't hesitate to contact me. You can also refer to the *Volunteer Handbook*. Thank you for all that you do to support our parks!

Karen Le Blanc
Park Services Specialist
Phone: 727-638-2334

2005 Overview

Events

- In March the park hosted the **13th Annual Mutt Strut** sponsored by the Humane Society of Pinellas. It drew 1100 people and 475 dogs and raised \$75,000 for the Humane Society. The park benefits from the entrance fees!
- On a very, very windy April 7, 2005, the bath house was moved from its original location near the sand spit to its new home as the **Nature Center**. For a fantastic photographic montage of this and related events go to www.islandparks.org.
- **Island Fest** was held April 29 through May 1.
- Also in March came the **2nd Annual Kayak Race**.
- In June the **Mini Triathlon** was held.
- The **First Annual Caladesi Open Golf Tournament** took place in August with 61 players. Though not played at the park, the park benefited from all net proceeds.
- Finally in October there was the annual **Halloween** bash which just keeps getting bigger and better.

Membership Meetings

Most of the Friends membership meetings include brief, informative presentations on a variety of topics of interest to our members. The following is a list of last year's, presented here to both whet your appetite for what is to come and say "Thank You" to the presenters and to Stephanie who organized the programs last year.

- January: **Honeymoon Island Tidal Pools: Life on the Rocks** by *Stephanie Bergeron*
- February: **Florida's Estuaries** video
- March: **Owls and Ospreys on Honeymoon** by *Lynn and Ray M. Marro, Jr.*

- April: **Gopher Turtles** by Ranger *Andy Schiro*
- May: a film entitled **Honeymoon**, from a nature scene television program out of South Carolina
- June: **Florida's Nearshore Environment** video
- July: **Hurricane and Tornado Preparedness** by *Chris Bengivengo*, Dunedin Fire Marshall
- August: Park Services Specialist *Karen Le Blanc* talked about the volunteers and environmental activities at the park. Bob Meadows gave a boat-building presentation.
- September: Social to meet new Park Manager *Pete Krulder* and his wife *Debbie*
- October: **Water Dance** video by *Donald Tipton*
- November: Sea turtle rescue and the effects of red tide on the turtles by *Joe Malo* of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium
- December: Holiday social

Friends News

2006 Board and Officers

We are glad to announce that Linda Taylor and Stephanie Bergeron will continue on the Board. We would like to extend a hearty thank you to Bill Gray who has been a wonderful member of the Board. We will miss his help.

Elections were held for officer positions at the January 2006 Board meeting. Please welcome your new officers:

President:	Jacques Marion
Vice President:	George Skalkeas
Treasurer:	Sam Martin
Secretary:	Sallie Parks

Welcome New Members

The following people joined the Friends since October 2005. Please welcome them!

- Clearwater Audubon Society

- Pepi Bruno
- Pete and Debbie Krulder
- Lisa Pruiett
- Bill and Sue Waddell

Friends Items for Sale

Be sure to check the website (www.islandparks.org) for the catalog of high quality Friends merchandise including shirts, caps, visors, and tote bags.

Friends Membership

You can join **Friends of the Island Parks** with one of several membership options:

- General: \$25.00
- Non-Profit: \$50.00
- Corporate Bronze: \$100.00
- Silver: \$250.00
- Gold: \$500.00
- Platinum: \$1,000.00

Benefits include voting rights, a quarterly newsletter, and free admission to Honeymoon and Caladesi islands on the second Saturday of each month.

Green Resolutions

(This article is reprinted from the Florida State DEP web site:
http://www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/news/2005/12/1230_01.htm.)

“Preserving and protecting the state’s natural resources takes great commitment,” said DEP Secretary Colleen M. Castille. “Florida’s citizens can help make a positive impact in 2006 by adopting environmentally-friendly practices.” To help you get started, here are ten simple resolutions that will make 2006 cleaner and greener.

Conserve energy. Conduct an energy audit on your home to determine areas for improvement. Energy specialists can identify areas where you can save energy at little or no cost.

Bike, walk, bus or carpool at least one day a week. Explore alternative means for transportation to protect Florida’s air quality. Clean air is important to our health and our environment.

Recycle wisely. Buying products made of recycled content helps maintain the market value of recyclable materials. To learn more about recycling visit www.floridadep.org/waste.

Build it green. Reduce impact from remodeling or building a new home by recycling your construction waste, using re-claimed building materials, using less toxic materials, paints and finishes, and designing your project to conserve energy.

Compost leftover food. Composting is an easy way to reduce the amount of garbage produced per household.

Conserve water. Check bathroom fixtures for leaks and plan for a more efficient summer irrigation.

Handle hazardous waste properly. Reduce or eliminate use of chemicals and pesticides to fertilize lawns and gardens. Garden naturally and take leftover hazardous waste to County household collection centers free of charge.

Volunteer in your community. The tireless efforts of volunteers play a vital role in protecting and conserving Florida’s natural resources. Help maintain and preserve the state’s greenways and trails, parks and coastal areas.

Enjoy the great outdoors. Visit Florida’s award winning State Parks. Ask about activities and special nature programs. For more information about Florida State Parks, visit www.FloridaStateParks.org.

Learn about your environment. Visit one of the education centers at Florida’s Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (CAMA). Learning about the state’s coastal treasures increases understanding for the need to protect its waters and important wildlife. For more information visit www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/

Looking Ahead to 2006

3rd Annual Caladesi Kayak Challenge

Join us Saturday, March 25, 2006 for the **3rd Annual Caladesi Kayak Challenge**. This is a great event for paddlers of all ages and abilities. The last two years we have had good weather, close races, and lots of fun.



There are two race routes: one is 4 miles and the other is 8 miles. Each race includes quite a few boat, age, and men's/women's divisions.

Register early (by March 16) to take advantage of the \$20 per paddler fee. All registrations from March 17 until the race are \$25 per paddler. Register by mail by visiting the Friends web site at www.islandparks.org to print a form, or register online at www.active.com. Day of race registration begins at 8:00 a.m. All paddlers must attend the race meeting at 9:15 a.m. The race begins at 9:30 a.m.

So come on out to find out how fast and how far you can paddle or to cheer on the racers. We hope to see you there.

Island Fest 2006

Island Fest is by far the biggest undertaking by the Friends and park staff. It is our principal fund raiser and has become a local area favorite event. In previous years this event was co-sponsored by the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce (which also shared in the proceeds). The Chamber has decided not to participate this year so the Friends will be the exclusive "party planners" for this year's bash. This change necessitates some differences in the event but the overall look will be the same as in past successful editions. We have a new theme – "Celebrate with Friends", and new hours: Saturday, May 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The emphasis this year will be more "eco-friendly" with an infusion of environmental vendors to complement the regular food and craft vendors. Osprey Village will take on a more prominent role with a bigger and more centrally located presence.

The beauty and benefits of the whole park will be emphasized with guided tours and transportation to key park features outside of the festival area.



For more information contact us by phone at 727-738-2903, by mail at Friends of the Island Parks c/o Honeymoon Island State Park 1 Causeway Blvd. Dunedin, Florida 34698, or by e-mail at islandfestinfo@islandparks.org.

Nature Center Wins First Grant

The Pinellas County Community Foundation makes an environmental field of interest grant in the name of Cathleen Wells Grant available annually. With a good bit of last minute work, Friends members answered and submitted the grant.

In December we were delighted to find that \$2,000 had been awarded to us. The funds are being used to purchase trail signs for Nature Center and park use. The signs will be completed and delivered by Wilderness Graphics at the beginning of March.

Island Calendar

Jan	29	Caladesi Breakfast with a Ranger
Feb	12	Caladesi Breakfast with a Ranger / Meet Friends President Jacques Marion
	19	Honeymoon Osprey Trail Walk
	21	Friends meeting
Mar	5	Honeymoon Osprey Trail Walk
	18	Spring Cleanup with Keep Pinellas Beautiful
	19	Honeymoon Osprey Trail Walk
	25	3 rd Annual Caladesi Kayak Race
Apr	2	Honeymoon Osprey Trail Walk
	2	Caladesi Breakfast with a Ranger / Meet Park Manager Pete Krulder
	18	Friends meeting

Island Amenities

Be sure to visit Cafe Honeymoon and Cafe Caladesi when on the islands for food, gifts and beach supplies. In addition, check with them about special occasions on Honeymoon Island.

Honeymoon Island
The perfect setting for any occasion!

- Weddings
- Birthdays
- Breath Taking Views
- Receptions
- Fundraisers
- Unlimited Guests
- Anniversaries
- Corporate Events
- Catering by Cafe Honeymoon

www.bonappetit-restaurant.com
For More Information Contact: Shane Bittaker
727 • 736 • 2132
1 Causeway Blvd.
Dunedin, FL

Friends Board and Member Meetings

The Board of Directors meets at 6:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month for approximately one hour. That meeting is followed by the general member meeting that begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Osprey Center on Honeymoon Island. You are welcome to attend the Board meeting and highly encouraged to come to the member meetings!



Friends of the Island Parks

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

Members of the Board

Officers

President: Jacques Marion
Vice President: George Skalkeas
Treasurer: Sam Martin
Secretary: Sallie Parks

Board Members

Stephanie Bergeron
Shane Bittaker
Megan Cagle
Sally Hess
Scott Hood
Pat Linn
Jacques Marion
Captain Sam Marshall
Sam Martin
Gabriella Mullins
Sallie Parks
George Skalkeas
Linda Taylor

Contact Us

Gulf Island State Parks

Honeymoon Island: 727-469-5942
Caladesi Island: 727-469-5918
Volunteer Hotline 727-298-2305

Friends of the Island Parks

Membership

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Newsletter

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