



ISLAND PARKS INSIDER

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Winter 2010

Park Manager's Report

by Pete Krulder, Park Manager

I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. Things never slowed down here at the park, and the new year will bring on even more at Caladesi and Honeymoon Island State Parks. Here is just a quick recap of just some of the things that have been happening since the last newsletter.

The extended cold weather that we experienced had a huge impact on some of the wildlife in the waters surrounding the parks. We recovered 63 sea turtles from the beaches at Caladesi, Honeymoon and Anclote Key State Parks. The turtles were taken to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium to be checked out and rehabilitated. Of the 63 turtles taken to the aquarium 45 survived. On January 21st the staff of the aquarium released 47 turtles back to the waters behind Honeymoon Island. Caladesi Island also had many dead fish wash up in the marina.

Many people have asked why we are mowing a large area at the start of the Nature Trail. The mechanical treatment that we are doing in that area is being done to prepare the area for a prescribed fire and to give us some access to treat the many exotic plants in that zone. We have been unable to burn in that area for over seven years due to several reasons. The preferred interval to burn is once every three years. Much of the understory has grown very large and has provided an excessive amount of fuel. If we were burn it how it stood, we run the risk of doing more harm than good to the pine flatwoods habitat. Now that the fuel is on the ground we are allowing it to dry for awhile and then we will burn the area. While we have easy access we are getting into that area to treat exotic plants. Earlier in the month we had a district level workday and 20 people, both staff and volunteers from here and several other parks in the district work to treat the exotic plants in that area.

In one day the team was able to treat over 3000 exotic plants. Although it looks pretty rough right now, by next year at this time that area will be in very good shape.

Hopefully many of you have had the opportunity to get out and see our newest additions to the park. Just prior to the Christmas holiday our baby eaglets hatched. I am receiving several pictures a week of the fuzzy little guys. The area of the trail around the nest will remain closed until at least the time when the eaglets are up and flying. So if you have not gotten out to see them, get out there before they fly the coop.

Work on bathhouse three is moving along as scheduled. We anticipate the building be back open by the end of February beginning of March. The view from the deck of the bathhouse is incredible. The bathhouse will have all new fixtures in it and will be a safe distance from the water. A project to shore up the area where the parking lot has been washing away will begin in a couple of weeks. This will hopefully protect that lot from further damage, until the next round of beach nourishment takes place.

As you can see, there is always something going on here at our parks. People often ask me how we do everything we do here at the parks, whether taking care of visitors, maintaining equipment and facilities, or taking care of our precious natural resources, it takes a combined effort. It takes staff, volunteers, our friends at the aquarium, Audubon and the seabird sanctuary and so many other that make us a success. In the words of the late great John Lennon "I get by with a little help from my Friends"

See you around the park.

Pete

President's Message

by Barry Metcalfe, President
Friends of the Island Parks

As always at this time of year we get the chance to look back at last year and forward to the coming 12 months. Based on the 2009 goals set out in our annual Accomplishments and Goals submission we can all feel justly proud of our achievements during the past year. Once again our Parks were the most visited within the Florida Park Service (FPS), possibly helped by Caladesi being the #1 beach for 2008, however I prefer to think that it is the dedication of staff and volunteers who, throughout the year, continue the constant care, maintenance and improvements to the Parks. During these hard economic times the Parks remain one of the best value days out for the whole family and the events we support act as focal points at different times of the year for people to renew their acquaintance with the Parks.

Financially 2009 was a moderate success with Halloween and Island EarthDays both returning record profits and our retail outlet within the Rotary Centennial Nature Center continues to increase sales. However we are very cognizant of the need not to allow the retail to overshadow the primary purpose of the Nature Center, which is to provide a glimpse of the essence of 'the real Florida'.

Our memorial bench program has been a stalwart fundraiser for several years, providing the opportunity for memorial benches, swings and picnic tables to be placed around the Parks for a set donation. However, the Parks are now practically full with few places left to place new memorials thus we will need to look elsewhere for the funds that this program has produced in the past years.

You may wonder why I concentrate so much on the financial elements of our achievements. The answer is in our mission; The Friends of the Island Parks (FIP) is there to primarily provide a fundraising capability and a conduit for money to directly support Caladesi and Honeymoon State Parks. That should not inhibit us from enjoying the comradeship and all the Parks have to offer but it does provide a focus for our efforts.

In 2009 I am pleased to advise that we were once again able to provide over \$40,000 in direct support to the Parks for ongoing service and improvements. We were also able to put aside a further \$10,000 for the update and renewal of exhibits in the Nature Center when that becomes necessary.

Membership has continued to grow and at year end was over 200 and at several of our monthly members meetings we exceeded our seating capacity. Although in some ways a nice problem to have we are looking at solutions. Please continue to come and enjoy the meetings and make us solve the seating problem!

Looking ahead I am pleased that membership is growing as we will need all the help we can get to achieve our goals for 2010 (these will be published in the next newsletter) and our very ambitious 5 year plan.

We have 3 capital projects lined up:

1. 2010 -2012 a large exhibit facility on Caladesi Island. The working group will need to agree a conceptual design, secure the necessary architectural detailed drawings and permits etc., agree the cost, arrange the fundraising and manage the completion of the building and exhibits.

2. 2011 – 2013 Replace the Children's Playground on Honeymoon Island.

3. 2011-2014 Extend the bike trail from the end of the causeway through Honeymoon separating pedestrians and cyclists from motor vehicles.

As you can imagine there is a lot of work involved and a lot of fundraising needed and I will be looking to all members to get involved.

I extend my thanks to the Park management and staff who continue to support us, The Friends, as we try to help them. Above all, my thanks to all members of the FIP who make this organization such a joy to be part of.

I leave you with a final thought. A program we have just launched, 'Wills, Trusts and Bequests', although not an easy subject to discuss is one that I am hoping will find a chord among those that love the Parks and who may be thinking about planning for the disbursement of their estate.

I will be pleased to discuss this or any other issue raised in this column.

Volunteer Spotlight

by Karen Malo, Park Services Specialist

Well the New Year has started off very cold and very busy with our returning winter volunteers as well as new volunteers. Welcome to new volunteers and welcome back to returning volunteers. We have had many changes since last year and with those changes bring challenges and more ways for volunteers to support the park staff to maintain a high level of service to our visitors while preserving and protecting the *Real Florida*.

Each year the Friends of Florida State Parks asks us to nominate volunteers for our annual Volunteer Appreciation awards. We of course, try to let all of our volunteers know that we appreciate them but we have been asked to submit just one nomination per park per category for this award. **Tom Hogan** has been nominated for the Volunteer of the Year here at Honeymoon Island. Tom can be seen supporting staff in countless ways including helping the rangers to close the park on busy summer nights (pictured below), seeking donations for events and projects or helping with events such as Halloween in the Park and Island EarthDays. **George Skalkeas** and **George Fischer** were nominated for a Team award for their carpentry talents on the New Café boardwalk as well as their efforts on building memorial benches for the Friends. Caladesi nominated volunteer **Alan Hall**, who is a Park Host in the marina. Please congratulate these deserving volunteers the next time you see them in the park.

The nominees will be given a certificate at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic at Hillsborough River State Park on Saturday, March 6 from 9 Am to 3 PM. If you plan on attending this event please RSVP to Karen Malo by Feb. 1st.



Tom Hogan patrolling the beach with Ranger Robbin



George & George (AKA "George Squared")



Alan Hall and Pete Krulder

We would like to welcome **Laura McLaughlin**, who is our AmeriCorps Member which is different from being a volunteer or intern. AmeriCorps is a federal program which places members in the community to address local needs, much like the Peace Corps but serving here in America! Laura's primary role will be Environmental Education/Interpretation and she will be assisting with our LIFE (Learning in Florida's Environment) program and with Osprey Village for Island EarthDays. She will also be recruiting volunteers for these programs and events. Pictured below, Laura was able to get some hands on learning as she assisted with transporting some cold stunned sea turtles to Clearwater Marine Aquarium so she is learning already. Please give Laura a warm welcome if you do have the pleasure of meeting her.



Laura McLaughlin, AmeriCorps Intern



Caladesi Corner

Winter Offers Outdoor Fun at Caladesi

by Bill Gruber, Assistant Park Manager

People often suggest that things must get pretty slow at a beach park in wintertime. But they overlook the fact that there is a lot more to Caladesi Island State Park than our beautiful beach.



Manager's day off

The cooler months offer a great opportunity to explore our nature trail, which winds through several different natural communities in the island's interior. If you haven't hiked the trail, you haven't seen Caladesi. And the best time of year to do that is right now, while the air is crisp and cool – and the mosquitoes are in retreat.

And there's no better season for exploring our kayak trail, which winds through three miles of mangroves with a return on the sheltered east side of the island. Don't own a kayak? No problem. Reasonably priced rentals are available at Café Caladesi.

Speaking of the café, the staff there will be providing a delicious continental breakfast for boaters staying in the marina as we resume our seasonal "Breakfast with a Ranger" interpretive programs. The café has donated food and staff for these events for several years now, and they would not be possible without their generous support. On the third Sunday of each month through April, boaters will enjoy a free breakfast while rangers present programs on the park's natural and cultural resources.

Even in this cooler weather, the beach is by no means off limits. The shelling seems to be the best in the wintertime. And a stroll along the beach in cooler weather is always refreshing. Don't be surprised if you even see some hardy souls swimming. What seems like intolerably cold water to Floridians isn't half bad to folks visiting from North or overseas.



Zone 6 team

Visitors aren't the only ones keeping busy on the island this winter. The long-awaited re-decking of our South Boardwalk to the beach is now underway, relying largely upon volunteers. The old boardwalk had seen better days, and we've long known it needed replacement.



Chris and Ray's pea collection



Joan harvesting rosary peas

Winter also is a great time for rangers to get out and enjoy the woods. Yes, they are allowed to enjoy themselves, which they do while removing exotic plants, prepping burns zones for prescribed fire, maintaining trails and the myriad of other tasks that make up a park ranger's day.

Membership News

by Ray Dabkowski, Membership Director

Welcome to the Florida State Parks 75th Anniversary!

Are you ready for yet another year of great activities and events with the Friends of the Island Parks? You won't be disappointed. In addition to our regular favorites, like the Ice Cream Social this summer, and our artist gallery openings, we have a slate of interesting environmental and community programs.

Coming in February, our annual Chocolate Buffet! The Friends' Directors will try their best to outdo each other with chocolate concoctions that our members get to enjoy. Then in March, Ms. Sally Hess, a founder of our Friends group, will be here to speak about CSOs and the Friends of the Florida State Parks.

Be sure to visit the [Friends' Website](#) for even more events and the latest updates.

As always, thank you for your generous support. And thanks for being a Friend.

Welcome to Our New Members!

Dick Barstow - Dunedin, FL
Holly Bird - Palm Harbor, FL
Cindy Cadle - New Port Richey, FL
Rick & Dawn Cole - Dunedin, FL
Erik Frederiksen - Dunedin, FL
P. Jeanne Griffin - Dunedin, FL
Diane Prekup & Mark Hardies - New Port Richey, FL
Elizabeth Hayes - Dunedin, FL
Janet & Bob Helms - Tarpon Springs, FL
Tom Henderson - Palm Harbor, FL
Henry Ippel - Jenison, MI
Charles & Le Anne Jaeger - Safety Harbor, FL
Joan & Bill Larsen - Dunedin, FL
Joe & Betty Lombardo - Palm Harbor, FL
Alfred G. Martin - Tarpon Springs, FL
Gene & Barbara Rice - Clearwater, FL
Bob & Brenda Riggins - Dunedin, FL
Pat Shollenberger - Dunedin, FL
Mary Ann & Jerry Smith - Palm Harbor, FL
Ed & Maryalyce Steponaitis - Dunedin, FL
Paul & Lisa Suprenand - Safety Harbor, FL
Marilyn & Monte Welch - Tampa, FL

Florida State Parks 75th Anniversary

by Sally Hess

The Florida State Parks are celebrating their 75th anniversary all year long! Join the fun!

**Enter the photo contest or
Submit your park story.**

For details see:

www.friendsoffloridastateparks.com

**Attend these signature
events around the state:**

Saturday, February 27:

Flight to Freedom at Fort Mose Historic State Park, St. Augustine.

Friday, March 5- Sunday, March 7:

Azalea Festival at Ravine Gardens State Park, Palatka.

Friday, March 19- Saturday, March 20:

Wakulla Wildlife Festival at Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park, Wakulla Springs.

Wednesday, April 7:

Florida State Parks Day at the Florida Capitol Building, Tallahassee.

Saturday, April 24:

Burial of Time Capsule at O'Leno State Park, High Springs.

Sunday, May 16:

Armed Forces Appreciation Day – Free entry to all state parks except Skyway Fishing Pier State Park.

Friday, May 28- Sunday, May 30:

Florida Folk Festival at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park, White Springs.

Thursday, June 17:

75th Anniversary Celebration at the Florida Museum of History, Tallahassee.

Monday, June 21:

Environmental Days at Ravine Gardens State Park, Palatka.

(continued)



75th Anniversary statewide events (continued)

Sunday, July 4:

Old Fashioned 4th of July Picnic at The Barnacle Historic State Park, Coconut Grove.

Saturday, July 17:

National Recreation and Parks Month – Free entry to all state parks except Skyway Fishing Pier State Park. Launch of Geocaching program at Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Southeast District.

Saturday, August 7:

National Lighthouse Day Celebration at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park, Key Biscayne.

Saturday, August 28- Sunday, August 29:

Former Mermaid Show at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, Weeki Wachee Springs.

Thursday, September 9:

State Park Literacy Month, Butterfly Story Time event at Washington Oaks Gardens State Park, Palm Coast.

Friday, September 10- Sunday, September 12:

State Park Literacy Month – Free entry to all state parks except Skyway Fishing Pier State Park.

Saturday, September 18- Sunday, September 19:

Spanish American War Event at Fort Clinch State Park, Fernandina Beach.

October (all month):

Fall Harvest Days at Dudley Farm Historic State Park, Newberry.

Saturday, October 16:

Fall Festival at Wekiwa Springs State Park, Apopka.

Saturday, November 6:

25th Annual Civilian Conservation Corps Festival at Highlands Hammock State Park, Sebring.

Thursday, November 11:

Veterans Day – Free entry to all state parks except Skyway Fishing Pier State Park.

Saturday, December 4:

Camellia Christmas celebration at Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park, Tallahassee.

Friday, December 10:

50th Anniversary Celebration of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Key Largo.,

Special Thanks to the Friends

by Gloria Beauchamp, Assistant Park Manager



The staff at Honeymoon Island would like to thank the Friends of the Island Parks for the purchase of a new mower. Park Rangers spend many hours during the hot

summer maintaining the parks' grounds and with the use of this new commercial mower the job will get done efficiently and safely. Thank you for being our Friends!

Back to the Water

by Bob Meadows,
FIP Board Member & Nature Center Volunteer



The recent, extreme cold weather “stunned” huge numbers of marine turtles in the Tampa Bay area. They were too cold to swim and move. Clearwater Marine Aquarium employees and local wildlife officials collected more than 100 turtles and took them to the aquarium.



Aquarium workers warmed them and fed them for the past several days and kept them in their rehab pools until warm weather returned to the

area. About 20 died during their stay at the aquarium; evidently, the cold weather was too much for them. Some of the surviving turtles were transported to the east coast of Florida for release.

On Thursday, January 21, aquarium workers and volunteers set up a “bucket brigade” to carry the surviving turtles, one at a time, from the truck to the water



at Honeymoon Island State Park. Forty five Green Turtles, each weighing about 20 lbs., and one large Hawksbill Turtle returned to the water. All were able to swim away to deep water.





Friends of the Island Parks

Membership Application Renewal Form

About the Friends

Friends of the Island Parks is a CSO (Citizens Support Organization). Florida Park Service CSOs are volunteer organizations that sponsor events, raise funds, and support the goals of the parks. The Friends of the Island Parks CSO's main focus is the support of Caladesi Island State Park and Honeymoon Island State Park.

501(c)(3) Status

The Friends of the Island Parks, Inc. is registered in Florida as a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide educational, interpretive, and financial assistance to Caladesi Island State Park, Honeymoon Island State Park, and the Gulf Islands GEPark. This group is recognized as a citizen support organization by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. One hundred percent of your contribution is tax deductible. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services solicitation registration number is CH14031. The Pinellas County charitable solicitation permit number is 0409075.

Important: Please print clearly. – Thanks!

Name:

Street:

City/State/Zip:

Telephone:

Email Address:

Select Your Preferred Membership Level:

\$25 **General**

\$25 **Charter/Insider Renewal***

\$50 **Non-profit**

\$100 **Bronze**

\$250 **Silver**

\$500 **Gold**

\$1000 **Platinum**

*Charter/Insider Renewals:

If you are currently a Charter or Insider member, you may renew at that level for \$25 annually. Continuous membership is required to maintain this level.

Application Process – You may apply or renew at our website, or use this form.

Please make your check payable to:

Friends of the Island Parks

Mail your application and check to:


Friends of the Island Parks
Attention: Membership
1 Causeway Blvd.
Dunedin, FL 34698

Dues:

Additional Donation:

Total:

Island Amenities



Honeymoon Island
Friday Night Fish Fry
 \$9.99+
 4:00pm-Sunset

Beer Battered Cod, Corn on the Cob, Mac -n- Cheese, Hush Puppies, Cole Slaw and Salad. Beer & Wine Specials.

Follow Us on Facebook for Updates on Future Events and Discount Coupons!

Be sure to visit *Café Honeymoon* and *Café Caladesi* when on the islands for food, gifts and beach supplies.

The new **Honeymoon Pavilion Café** is now offering a **Friday Night Fish Fry** for **\$9.99** from **4:00 pm to sunset**.

Try out the **pancake breakfasts** on Saturdays & Sundays at *Café Honeymoon*. In addition, they can help you plan your special occasions on the islands.



Friends of the Island Parks

Members of the Board

Executive Committee

President: Barry Metcalfe
 Vice President: Ron Geisheimer
 Treasurer: George Skalkeas
 Secretary: Melanie Metcalfe

Directors

Shane Bittaker
 Wayne Case
 Ray Dabkowski
 Nancy Dunne
 Cynthia Farris
 Diane Hood
 Scott Hood
 Jacques Rene
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Bob Meadows
 Sharon Meyer
 Mike Moran
 Gabriella Mullins
 Sally Naylor
 Ellen Pfau
 Linda Taylor (ex-officio)
 Toni Wise

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Volunteers:

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 727-469-5942 Ext. 6



Honeymoon Island
 The perfect setting for any occasion!

- Weddings
- Birthdays
- Breath Taking Views
- Receptions
- Fundraisers
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- Catering by Cafe Honeymoon

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

Caladesi Island Adventure

Daily excursions from Honeymoon Island depart hourly beginning at 10am - weather permitting

Round trip tickets:

Adult \$10.00 - Child 4 thru 12 \$6.00 - Under 4 Free

For information and reservations, call 727-734-1501

Island Parks Insider

Choose Your Delivery Options

Go to www.islandparks.org to view the Insider online. Now you can opt to receive it via e-mail & save a tree! Simply notify our Membership Secretary, **Ray Dabkowski**. – Thanks!