



## **South Florida National Parks Newsletter**

Fall 2007

### **New Grants benefit South Florida's National Parks**

The South Florida National Parks Trust has approved \$160,000 in new funding to support South Florida's national parks.

The new grants will support coral reef restoration in Biscayne National Park, educational programs at Dry Tortugas National Park, and the development of a "greenway" linking Everglades and Biscayne National Parks with a bike path through South Miami-Dade County.

The Trust also agreed to fund new visitor exhibits at Big Cypress National Preserve and the publication of an Everglades National Park brochure in Spanish.

"South Florida's national parks belong to all of us," Trust Chairman Carlos Arazoza said. "These grants will give more people - especially children - an opportunity to explore these parks and learn about the history of South Florida and the natural world that surrounds us."

The Trust approved the 10 grants at its annual meeting on September 28. The Trust's annual grant program is supported through community service payments and outside contributions. For a complete list of approved grant projects, please see Page Four (4).

For more information about the South Florida National Parks Trust and the work we do to support South Florida's national parks, please visit our website:

[www.southfloridaparks.org](http://www.southfloridaparks.org)



### **New Trust Logo captures look of South Florida's national parks**

The South Florida National Parks Trust has adopted a new logo that better reflects its identity as a South Florida non-profit organization. The Trust was established in 2002 by the National Park Foundation and, until now, has used the foundation's logo (the distinctive flat hat worn by National Park Service rangers) as its own. The new logo, created by the South Florida firm Inkbyte Design, features the silhouette of a mangrove above the name of the organization. The Trust is now at work on a new web site, again with the help of Inkbyte Design. The new web site will debut in December.

## Recent Donations support key projects in South Florida's parks:

Florida Rock Industries has agreed to support restoration efforts in Everglades NP through a donation to the Trust. The money will restore two properties in the East Everglades near Chekika - the former site of a radio tower and a former homestead. The park will remove structures and debris and then scrape the properties to establish natural elevations and vegetation.

National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and the Trust have secured additional funding from an anonymous donor to support the Florida Bay Resource Protection Program launched in 2005. The funding will support community outreach and education efforts at Everglades NP.

Mr. Tim Taylor made a donation to the Trust to support trail restoration work in the Flamingo District of Everglades NP. The money will be used to purchase chain saws and a Gator utility truck to support park efforts to clear and maintain hiking paths and paddling trails in the park.

Everglades Bicycle Club is supporting a new season of bike programs in Everglades National Park with a donation to the Trust. The club raised the money during the Snowbird Century Ride in March that brought riders to the park.

The Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs has approved a grant to support the Community Artist Program at Biscayne NP. Two companies also signed on as sponsors for the season: 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank of South Florida and Sedano's Supermarkets are supporting the program this year with contributions.



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The South Florida National Parks Trust was established in 2002 to improve the quality of life in South Florida by supporting the national parks that define our landscape and enrich our culture – Everglades, Biscayne and Dry Tortugas National Parks and Big Cypress National Preserve. The Trust is working to ensure that more people – especially children – have an opportunity to experience and enjoy these remarkable parks by funding education programs, volunteer activities and visitor services within each park. To learn more about the Trust or to make a contribution, contact us at:

**South Florida National Parks Trust  
1390 South Dixie Highway #2203  
Coral Gables, Florida 33146**

**Phone: 305.665.4769**

[www.southfloridaparks.org](http://www.southfloridaparks.org)



### **Summer Fun: Parks as Classrooms in South Florida**

A group of kids from Notre Dame D'Haiti Catholic Church in Little Haiti and their families toured Shark Valley on July 28 at the invitation of Everglades National Park and the South Florida National Parks Trust. Ranger Allyson Gantt (pictured above with the group) led the tram tour while the Trust helped to organize the outing and provided lunch. The tour was part of an outreach effort designed to promote the park's new Junior Ranger guides in Spanish and Haitian Creole. The kids received Junior Ranger books and badges during the tour. Special thanks to Ranger Allyson for putting together a great summer program in the park!

And speaking of summer fun... another group of kids from West Miami visited Everglades National Park on July 18 for a tram tour and bike ride through Shark Valley sponsored by the Trust. Fifty-six kids and eight adults boarded the 9:30 a.m. tram for a tour of the Everglades. Another 15 kids and chaperones took off on a bike tour led by Ranger Maria Thomson. This is the second year that West Miami has offered the Shark Valley program, and this year it was over-subscribed. Special thanks to West Miami Recreation Director Jim Gestwicki, Ranger Maria Thomson and Everglades National Park for helping to make the summer outing a great success. Most of the kids who visited Shark Valley that day had never been to the park before.

## **South Florida Trust Approves 10 Grants for its Partner Parks**

The Trust agreed in September to fund the following park projects:

**Coral Reef Nursery Program (\$25,000):** Biscayne NP will hire a graduate student to work with park staff and volunteers to locate and salvage coral fragments for cultivation in its coral reef nurseries. The park established the nurseries to grow coral for reef repair. The grant is funded with a community service payment from Carib Sea obtained by the U.S. Attorney's Office to settle a criminal case involving the illegal importation of 42,000 pounds of protected coral rock from Haiti.

**Welcome Center (\$25,000):** Big Cypress NP is seeking to raise \$400,000 to buy exhibits for a new visitor center on Tamiami Trail. Construction of the facility is set to begin next year. Funding for construction is in hand but the preserve lacks money for exhibits. The Trust is contributing \$25,000 in seed money.

**Eco-Discovery Center (\$26,592):** Dry Tortugas NP will hire a student intern to work at the Eco-Discovery Center in Key West. The student will staff the center, provide programming to school groups and arrange educational trips to the park.

**Park Brochure in Spanish (\$18,000):** Everglades National Park will produce 25,000 copies of the park's popular brochure and map in Spanish in an effort to increase outreach to Hispanic visitors.

**RV Pad for Park Volunteers (\$6,431):** Everglades NP will create a permanent RV pad to house park volunteers in the Gulf Coast district. The RV pad will allow the park to expand its volunteer ranks.

**South Dade Greenway (\$10,000):** Everglades NP will install 10 signs at key points along the proposed "greenway" for pedestrians and bicyclists that will link Biscayne and Everglades NPs with Homestead and Florida City. The first stretches of the 42-mile greenway are expected to open next year.

**Junior Ranger Program (\$10,000):** The National Park Service will print additional copies of the popular Junior Ranger guide book that introduces children and their families to South Florida's national parks. The free guide books challenge children to learn about the habitat and wildlife of the park they are visiting. This grant is funded with generous contributions from the Ocean Reef Rod & Gun Club and the Ocean Reef Foundation.

**Park Podcasts (\$11,000):** Everglades NP will produce a series of podcasts about the park that can be downloaded from its web site, [www.nps.gov/ever](http://www.nps.gov/ever)

**March for Parks (\$2,950):** March for Parks has introduced thousands of inner city children to South Florida's national parks. This year's event will be held at Biscayne NP on March 30. Funding will pay for transportation to the park and boat tours. The event is organized in tandem with South Florida Community Partners.

**Biscayne Volunteer-in-Parks Program (\$24,950):** Biscayne National Park will hire a seasonal ranger for six months to help build the park's successful Alternative Spring Break program through the recruitment of new students from local colleges and universities. The grant also will pay for transportation costs (boat fuel and maintenance), recruitment materials and the removal of beach debris (a popular volunteer activity).

**Student Architects from DASH share their vision  
for Flamingo in new exhibit at Everglades National Park**

Architecture students from Miami-Dade County's Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH) sketch the future of Flamingo in a new exhibit of student work on display during October at Everglades National Park. The students toured Flamingo earlier this year at the invitation of the South Florida National Parks Trust as part of a class project on rebuilding the historic destination inside the park. Flamingo Lodge and other park facilities on Florida Bay were battered by back-to-back hurricanes in 2005. Much of the damage has been repaired, but Flamingo Lodge and the park's collection of rental cabins remain closed, as do the park gift shop and restaurant. Everglades National Park is preparing a commercial services plan to guide future development in Flamingo. DASH students were invited to participate in the process by creating their own designs for Flamingo. The project began in late February with a class trip to the park. Park Ranger Maureen McGee-Ballinger and Park Planner Fred Herling led the students and their teacher Eric Hankin on a tour of the park, beginning on the Anhinga Trail and concluding in Flamingo, where the students inspected Flamingo Lodge. The exhibit opened on Saturday October 6 with a reception for participating students and their families at the Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center. The show continues daily through Saturday October 27. The visitor center, located on State Road 9336 southwest of Florida City, is open daily to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 305-242-7700 or log onto [www.nps.gov/ever](http://www.nps.gov/ever)

Flamingo Cottages, as envisioned by DASH Student Ana Dominguez:

South Florida National Parks Trust presents

**Everglades After Dark**

**Saturday November 24, 2007**

**Ever wonder what alligators do at night after all the park rangers go home?**

Join us for a moonlight tour of Everglades National Park to welcome the return of winter weather in South Florida. The tour features a ranger-led tram ride to the observation tower at Shark Valley, a buffet supper and star-gazing. Ticket sales benefit Everglades National Park and the South Florida Trust.

Minimum donation: \$50 for adults; \$25 for children.

For information and reservations, call 305-665-4769

### America's Best Idea: New Photo Exhibit Showcases 58 National Parks



A new photo exhibit on America's national parks opens in December with receptions at two of South Florida's national parks. Called *America's Best Idea*, the exhibit features panoramic images of America's fifty-eight national parks by photographer Stan Jorstad. The exhibit title is taken from a quote by author Wallace Stegner who wrote: "National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst." The photos will be on display at both parks until February 2, with public receptions on Saturday December 1 at Everglades National Park and Sunday December 2 at Biscayne National Park. Both receptions will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. and are free and open to the public. For details, call 305-242-7700 or 305-230-7275.

### Everglades NP Celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in December with week-long series of events

Everglades National Park celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday with a week-long series of events beginning Saturday 12/1 at the park's main visitor center with a film festival, a photography exhibit (see the description of *America's Best Idea* on this page) and a public reception with Park Superintendent Dan Kimball and U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart. The celebration moves to Shark Valley on Sunday 12/2 for a bike ride and walk through the Everglades, and on to Everglades City on Thursday 12/6 for an evening "rededication" event to commemorate the original dedication speech by President Harry Truman on December 6, 1947. The celebration concludes on Saturday 12/8 with a birthday party from 1 to 3 p.m. on the Anhinga Trail, inside the park's main entrance. For details on all the events, including times and locations, call the Trust office at 305-665-4769.

### The Trust thanks all those who made recent donations



### TRUST DONATIONS

Robin Brisebois  
Caribbean Conservation  
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John and Patricia Case  
Everglades Bicycle Club  
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Alejo Vada  
Robert Wolfarth

### **How You Can Help**

Support South Florida's national parks by donating online at [www.southfloridaparks.org](http://www.southfloridaparks.org) or by completing the form below and mailing it with a check made payable to the South Florida National Parks Trust to the address below. Thank you!

**South Florida National Parks Trust  
1390 South Dixie Highway Suite 2203  
Coral Gables, FL 33146**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

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