

## South Florida National Parks Newsletter

Winter 2008

### **1<sup>st</sup> Lady Laura Bush visits Everglades National Park**

First Lady Laura Bush and Florida City Elementary School students planted native trees in Everglades National Park on February 7 to kick off a national park essay contest for kids. "Planting native species is a great way to help our environment," the first lady said. The contest, open to kids 9-12, asks, "What can you do now to turn over a new leaf for the environment and help preserve our national parks?" The winner will travel to Everglades National Park on Earth Day to star in an electronic field trip. The contest deadline is March 14. For details go to [www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org)

INSIDE This Issue: A winter calendar of ranger-led activities at Everglades and Biscayne National Parks and Big Cypress National Preserve.



### **Blazing the Trail: The new Biscayne Everglades Greenway**

Plans for a proposed "greenway" linking Everglades and Biscayne National Parks got a major boost on Saturday February 2 when three dozen supporters turned out for an inaugural ride along the 42-mile route. The Trust is contributing \$10,000 to install signs at key points along the route. Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, Homestead City Councilwomen Judy Waldman and Wendy Lobos and Florida City Mayor Otis Wallace were on hand for the event, which was organized and led by members of the Everglades Bicycle Club. The club has contributed \$2,000 for signs along the greenway.



## Students tour Dry Tortugas as part of Keys Education Program

Three dozen students from Key West High School toured Dry Tortugas National Park in October at the invitation of the Trust as part of our education program in the Florida Keys. Park Ranger Billy Strasser met the Sunny Days ferry at the dock and led the students on a tour of Fort Jefferson. The students had lunch and then snorkeled in the afternoon before returning to Key West. The school trip - one of two last year sponsored by the Trust - was underwritten by the Rotary Club of Key West.



Ranger Billy Strasser leads Key West students on a tour of Fort Jefferson.

## The Schooner Windfall returns to Flamingo for daily sailings

The Schooner Windfall has returned to Everglades National Park for the season, with daily sailings from Flamingo Marina. The 57-foot schooner sails twice a day, with an afternoon outing and a sunset cruise on Florida Bay. (Times vary based on wind and tide conditions.) In addition to the Windfall sailings, the marina books daily boat tours of the backcountry and canoe, kayak and motorboat rentals. For information and reservations call the marina at 239-695-3101.



### Trustees of the South Florida National Parks Trust

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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 these parks by funding education programs, volunteer activities and visitor services within each park. To learn more, please contact us at:

**South Florida National Parks Trust**  
**1390 South Dixie Highway #2203**  
**Coral Gables, Florida 33146**  
**Phone: 305.665.4769**

To learn more about the Trust and the work we do on behalf of South Florida's national parks, please visit our Web site at:

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

## **Join Us for Two Upcoming Events celebrating South Florida's national parks**

**Saturday March 22**

**"Everglades Awareness Day" at the Rain Barrel Artisan Village in Islamorada (MM 86.7), with art exhibitions, kids activities, family programs and a silent auction benefiting the South Florida National Parks Trust. 10 AM to 6 PM**

**Saturday March 29**

**The 6<sup>th</sup> annual March for Parks event at Biscayne National Park in Homestead with kids activities, family programs, food and free transportation to the park. Call the Trust at 305-665-4769 for details. 10 AM to 2 PM.**

## **Everglades After Dark raises \$2,900 for National Parks**

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Everglades After Dark event on Saturday November 24 at Shark Valley raised \$2,900 to support South Florida's national parks. Sixty-five people attended the sold-out event this year, including many families with kids. Participants boarded the Shark Valley tram at 5:30 p.m. for an after-hours adventure in the Everglades, complete with a ranger-guided tour and buffet supper at the Shark Valley observation tower. Everglades National Park Ranger Maria Thomson and her staff put together a memorable program. Thanks to all who participated in this year's event.

## **Mud Lake Canal declared a National Historic Landmark as Everglades National Park celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

Everglades National Park celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the park's dedication in December with a week-long series of events focused on the park's early history. One highlight: The designation of Mud Lake Canal as a National Historic Landmark. Mud Lake Canal represents a prehistoric engineering marvel - a 4-mile canoe trail on Cape Sable dug by Tequesta Indians, linking Bear Lake and Florida Bay.

President Harry Truman dedicated the park on Dec. 6, 1947 in Everglades City, culminating a campaign that began with the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs and the creation of Royal Palm State Park in 1916. The park became the nucleus of today's national park. "For conservation of the human spirit, we need places such as Everglades National Park," Truman said.



Superintendent Dan Kimball joins Ranger Linda Friar, Trust Chair Carlos Arazoza and Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart to mark the dedication of Mud Lake Canal.

The Trust thanks all those who made recent donations



## TRUST DONATIONS

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### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK**  
**Activities Calendar – January to April 2008**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>Boat Trips</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Ranger Programs at 2:30 p.m.</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Family Fun Fest (once a month)</b>	X						
<b>Canoe / Kayak Trips (twice a month)</b>							X
<b>Community Artist Program</b>	See Sides – Mixed Media by artist Maya Schonenberger. Daily through May 11.						

**Activity Descriptions**

**Boat Trips and Tours (daily)** -- Guided glass bottom boat tours, snorkeling trips and scuba diving trips. For information and reservations, call 305-230-1100.

**Ranger Programs (daily thru April 20)** – From porch talks to short walks, learn about Biscayne’s resources with a park ranger. Programs range from 20 minutes to an hour. Check at the visitor center information desk for the day’s topic and location.

**Gallery Exhibits (daily)** – Artists have always played a crucial role in increasing awareness and inspiring stewardship of our national parks. Changing exhibits in the park’s visitor center gallery highlight the work of contemporary artists who continue that long tradition.

**Canoe / Kayak Trips (2/4<sup>th</sup> Saturday)** – Join a two-hour journey over seagrass meadows and along the park’s mangrove-fringed shoreline, beginning at 2:30 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month through April 26. Bring your own kayak or canoe, or reserve a rental at 305-230-1100.

**Family Fun Fest (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday)** – Three full hours of fun for kids, with lots of hands-on activities. Complete them and earn a special button. All activities take place at the Dante Fascell Visitor Center from 1 to 4 p.m.

**Sunday March 9:** Celebrate Seagrass Awareness Month and the theme “Biscayne Bay-bies” with a peek into the park’s nursery – Biscayne Bay – to discover the best daddy and the biggest baby in the bay.

**Sunday April 13:** What do you want to be when you grow up? For Biscayne pioneers, career choices were limited... and the work was hard. Experience some typical jobs from 130 years ago, including pineapple farming, fishing, wrecking and turtling.

**Sunday May 11:** Trees are terrific, but mangroves are magnificent! Paddle in to take a closer look at these “walking” trees, investigate some of their unique adaptations and discover the important role they play.

Call 305-230-7275 for details / directions.
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**Everglades National Park**  
**Shark Valley District -Ranger Led Activities**  
**December 23, 2007 to April 12, 2008**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>Shark Valley Tram Tours</b> Various times	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Shark Byte</b> 2:15 pm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Listen to See the Birds</b> 8:45 am and 3:30 pm	X						X
<b>Gator Evenings</b> 5:00 PM						X	
<b>Full Moon Bike Ride</b>	February 23 & 24 at 5:30 PM March 22 & 23 at 6:00 PM						

### Activity Descriptions

#### **Tram Tours (2 hours, fee charged)**


Travel to the heart of the Everglades and see alligators, birds and other wildlife in their habitat. Find yourself in the middle of the “River of Grass” Two hour tram tours offered daily every hour on the hour, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Narrated by a concession or park naturalist.

 Wheel chair accessible

#### **Shark Byte (20 minutes)**

Join a park ranger for a “hands on” twenty minute talk about ecology, history, environmental issues or some surprising little known aspects of the Everglades.

Meet behind the Visitor Center.

 Wheel chair accessible

#### **“Listen” to See the Birds (1 hour)**

Did you know that someone said bird watching is 90% listening? Come to Shark Valley and enjoy a nice stroll with a ranger to listen, find and learn about the many birds that make the Everglades their winter home.


Meet behind the Visitor Center.

 Wheel chair accessible

#### **Gator Evenings (1 hour)**

Come and discover the mysteries of the Everglades night. Attend an illustrated introduction and then follow a park ranger on a guided walk to learn about wildlife, habitat, history and other interesting facts that make the Everglades a special place.

Meet behind the Visitor Center.

 Wheel chair accessible

#### **Full Moon Bike Tour (3 hours)**

Listen to the Everglades symphony under the full moon. Join a ranger for a 15 mile bike ride. Climb to the observation tower to enjoy the peacefulness of the Everglades at night. Bring your own bike.

Participants 15 and under MUST wear a helmet.

Reservation required -call 305-221-8776