



APRIL 2016

Birch Bulletin

An Evening by the Sea: A Showcase for Terramar



Left to right: Friends of Birch State Park Executive Director Gale Butler, Commissioner Chip LaMarca, Friends President Jim Ellis of Ellis Diversified Inc., and event co-chairs Suzanne Watson and Janet Buhl. Commissioner Chip LaMarca (and the Broward County Commission) announced a \$25,000 donation to help launch our project to clear non-indigenous vegetation from our mile-long freshwater coastal dune lake. Thank you Broward County Commissioners!

On January 22nd, during what seemed like a monsoon, we held our first major fundraising event on the lawn of Terramar with tents and umbrellas protecting almost 200 guests from the storm. We honored Commissioner Chip LaMarca with The Sandman Award for his efforts to bring beach re-nourishment to our beach; Marti Huizenga with The Believer's Award for her early-on belief in our Bring Birch Back campaign; and, finally, we honored Jim Ellis with the Hugh Taylor Birch Visionary Award as President of the Board of Directors for his gift of time, talent and treasure.

Thank you to our co-chairs Suzanne Watson and Janet Buhl who, along with the Seagull Committee, worked to make the evening a success with wonderful silent and live auction items (thank you to auctioneer Gordon Latz) that raised much-needed dollars. In all, more than \$90,000 net was raised to help fund park projects for 2016. Our major sponsors included AutoNation, Hudson Family Foundation, JM Family Enterprises, Southern Wine & Spirits, Nova Southeastern University, Paramount Refreshments and FB Marine Group.

Volunteer Spotlight

Gene Benko is one of our favorite Hugh Taylor Birch State Park volunteers because he's always quick with compliments, sports a lady-killer smile and drives his tram with the utmost professionalism. He has even nicknamed the park's most prominent gopher tortoises Gunther and Ravina. His favorite part about volunteering at the park? "I enjoy meeting people from all over the country and the world and helping to answer their questions about this beautiful park."

THANKS, GENE! YOU ARE APPRECIATED!



Gene Benko, Volunteer



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GButler@BirchStatePark.org

Trudy Reilly, Director of Memberships,
Programs and Development

TReilly@BirchStatePark.org

Executive Director's Message: Gale M. Butler

First of all, thank you to all our "Friends" who have continued to support us by signing up for another year of membership. We appreciate your support and hope you are enjoying your experiences in the park. There are a number of upgrades to the park including new water fountains, benches, restrooms (coming soon) that are ADA accessible, and fresh wood chips for our playgrounds. All that is paid for by your memberships, so we hope you notice each time something new is added or updated and feel good about your involvement.



Gale M. Butler

Secondly, we are delighted to introduce Trudy Reilly who joined us as Director of Memberships, Programs and Development and who has an extensive background working with the Broward Public Library Foundation, The Pantry of Broward, and numerous other area charities in those capacities. Welcome Trudy!

Remember, the Friends' office is located on the ground floor of Terramar and we invite you to stop in and say "hi" the next time you're in the park.

Bring Birch Back Campaign Returns!

We have
wonderful plans
for the
re-opening of
Terramar as a
visitor and
education center
that will include
a gift shop,
but we will need
your support to
move forward.

Now that the holidays and our Evening by the Sea event have passed, we are returning to our capital campaign. We will meet with our friends in the corporate and private community and offer opportunities to join in our effort to Bring Birch Back. After 30 years of neglect, our beautiful park is in need of some TLC in the form of new playgrounds, walkway bridges over the Long Lake trestle, new small picnic pavilions on the Intracoastal Waterway and so much more.

People have asked, "Why should we donate to a state park?" and the answer is, "Because it's our state park and our precious green space". The answer also is that state budgets have been cut every year leaving only funds to repair whatever breaks and keep the park safe for our visitors.

If you would like a VIP golf cart tour in the coming months, please contact us at 954-566-0660. We usually run them every Tuesday and Thursday at 4:00 p.m. or 5:00 p.m.

PLEASE JOIN US!

Message from Our Park Manager: *David Dearth*

Springtime at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park is busier than ever for park staff and volunteers. We're enjoying our customary influx of spring break visitors and day campers as well as our "regulars" who take advantage of our park for daily walks, bike rides, fishing, boating, picnicking and beach-going. Our gopher tortoises continue to attract nature fans; it's fun watching them sunbathe or cross the road in search of edible delights. This is mating season so they're out and about more than usual, so you have a good chance of seeing them on your next visit.

We hope to re-open the Park's visitor center later this month complete with educational components and a gift shop.

We hope you've noticed park improvements underway, such as new trash and recycling receptacles to new dog waste stations and ADA bathroom updates (coming soon). Soon we'll begin thinning out the vegetation that has become overgrown in Long Lake, which will enable boaters and paddle-boarders to venture the full length of our one-mile freshwater lake. You'll also notice improvements to Terramar, the home Hugh Taylor Birch built for himself in 1940.



David Dearth

To volunteer: visit our website at: <http://birchstatepark.org/volunteer>

Terramar Dinner Features Author Liz Cunningham **Dinner Hosted by "Friends" Raises Support for Park**

On Saturday, March 5th the Friends of Birch State Park hosted Liz Cunningham, author of *Ocean Country*, as one of the Broward Public Library Foundation's Night of Literary Feasts dinners. We had a full house with 30 guests who enjoyed touring Terramar and listening to Liz describe her mangrove tour in Birch Park with Park Specialist Mark Foley as well as her golf cart tour with Park Manager David Dearth. She loved the park and plans to return when she can. You can purchase her book online at Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com. It's a passionate and informative story about her journey after recovering from a near-death experience traveling the world to learn how and why our oceans are in danger. Read her delightful blog post about her visit to our park by visiting this link: <http://bit.ly/1VRSx3j>



Author Liz Cunningham (left) with Friends of Birch State Park Executive Director Gale Butler



Park Manager David Dearth welcomes guests at Literary Feast dinner.

Thirty guests enjoyed A Night of Literary Feasts dinner at Terramar featuring author Liz Cunningham.



Photo: David Stone

Vet Donates Time and Talent

Dr. Jonathan Klarsfeld graduated from Cornell University with a concentration in animal science and went on to obtain his veterinary degree from Louisiana State University. He has been practicing veterinary medicine in South Florida for 12 years and is the consulting veterinarian for the region's large public and private exotic animal collections.



Dr. Jonathan Klarsfeld

Dr. Klarsfeld has also authored numerous articles and lectured on exotic animal care and medicine. Affectionately known as Dr. Jon by park volunteers and employees, he has always been there to make sure our animals are in medically tip-top shape so that they can serve as ambassadors for their species.

Living Well Program Continues

You're invited to take part in Tai Chi & Qigong in the park Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. through the end of May. Relax, rejuvenate, regenerate and revitalize in nature as instructor Kathryn Keating-Kay guides you through ancient gentle movements that enhance your balance, focus, strength and flexibility. Just \$5 for Friends' members and \$10 for non-members.



Kathy Keating-Kay, Instructor Tai Chi MRA

Amazon Smile



It's easy (and free!) to support the Friends of Birch State Park while shopping on Amazon.com. Simply visit smile.amazon.com and designate us as your charity of choice; then Amazon will donate .5% of your eligible purchases to Friends of Birch State Park.

THANK YOU!

Board of Directors Committee Meetings Update:

PROJECT COMMITTEE: Jim Ellis, Chair

Those who participate on this committee ensure that the dozens of projects underway at the park stay on track. Major projects expected to get underway this year include Long Lake clean-out, loop road widening, seawall replacement and a floating public boat dock.

MARKETING COMMITTEE: Ina Lee, Chair

The committee focuses on social media, designing and placing Birch Park awareness print ads promoting the need for volunteers in Gold Coast and Travel Host magazines as well a 15-second video ad showing on all ten movie screens during the previews in the AMC Coral Ridge Movie Theaters for three months through May.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Chris Madsen, Chair

The members of the Education Committee have met and agreed to focus on three main areas: recruiting high school students who need community service hours as volunteers for "Done in a Day" projects in the park; communicating with contacts at corporations and businesses who may want to use the park for a team building/community outreach day; and, offering adult education talks on environmental concerns and/or classes on history, arts and crafts using nature as a back drop.

Leadership Broward Tours Park



Leadership Broward Class XXXIV included a tour of Birch State Park during Culture and Environment Day of their year long learning experience. Park Manager David Dearth led the park tour.

Capturing the Beauty of Birch



We love having artists in our park and invite anyone with this special gift to make their next venue Birch Park.

*I*s there a more stunning setting for an artist to paint in than beneath Helen's Tree – our beautiful 100-year-old Banyan? According to the members of Atlier de la Mer artist's group the answer is no! These artists formed their group in 2002 and share a studio on Oakland Park Boulevard near Bayview Drive. The instructor on the day of this photo was Ty Hodanish who gave them palette knives instead of brushes to teach them oil painting. Stay tuned for future art events in the park.



Left to right: Melanie Camp, Mimi Bauer, Cheryl Parker, Anne Joyner, Barbara Castell, Glenda Abbate (not pictured: Una Murphy, Monica Maroone, Lucille Fannin and Beth Simigran) and Ty Hodanish, instructor.

Birch Park Stars in St. Paddy's Day Parade

Thanks to the upbeat sound of the 25-member Gold Coast Banjo Band, our Park Manager David Dearth and his life-sized replicas of a crocodile and sea turtle, the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park entry into the St. Patrick's

Day Parade stole the show! Our musical float brought smiles to old and young alike lining the mile-long parade route down Las Olas Boulevard, across Andrews Avenue and past the judging station on Brickell.



State Park service participates in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade along Las Olas Boulevard.



Banjo band music fun for all.

Birch Hosts College Habitat Volunteers



During the recent Spring Break, more than 40 college students from various colleges, volunteered for Habitat for Humanity. They stayed in our Elks Youth Camp cabins for a week of hard work mixed with fun. A bus picked the students up each morning and brought them back after lunch which allowed them to enjoy our sun, sand, and ocean before returning to the cold weather back home.



Cardinal Gibbons Visits Park



Julia Kornbluh, a senior, enjoys Mango, our Rat Snake

About 30 Cardinal Gibbons junior and senior students visited Birch Park for a field day that included a Live Animal Show with Ranger Mark Caruhel. The students were led by Environmental Science teacher Susan Quailey and Marci Eickorn who teaches Marine Biology, and given educational talks by Park Specialist Mark Foley.

Thank you Marble of the World



Chase Urso (left) of Marble of the World with Hugh Taylor Birch State Park Manager David Dearth.

Marble of the World made an in-kind donation to Hugh Taylor Birch State Park of 2 slabs of Botanic Emerald Green Quartzite valued at \$10,000 for a conference table in Hugh Taylor Birch's home: Terramar. Marble of the World sells only natural stones such as onyx, quartzite and granite.

"We wanted to help the park in some way and the donation of Quartzite for their conference table seemed like the ticket," said Charles Urso, who founded the company in 1985. Charles' son, Chase Urso, visited Hugh Taylor Birch State Park for the unveiling.

"Marble of the World gave us the most beautiful conference table we could imagine," said Park Manager David Dearth. "The emerald green invokes the natural green flora growing in Birch State Park". We would also like to thank: Bill Bruce, Florida Rigging & Crane Co. and Stonework South (Mike Marino, Curt, Tyler and Bill Oliver).

Thank You, Terramar Society Members

BANYAN LEVEL (\$5,000/YEAR)

Jim Ellis
Steve & Jeannie Hudson
Par & Louise Sanda

MANATEE LEVEL (\$2,000/YEAR)

John & Fran Custer
Marc & Sharon Friedman
Peggy Fucci
Huizenga Family Foundation, Inc.
Dominick & Meike Miniaci
Moss Foundation
Carlos & Lisa Rodriguez
Robert & Jennifer Roselli
James & Shari Sawran
Marshall & Suzanne Watson

SEA TURTLE LEVEL

(\$1,000/YEAR)
Jon Bell
Peter & Janet Buhl
Gale Butler
Tyler & Sarah Chappell
Michael & Mary Ellen Coen
Bob Swindell & John Cotter
Frithiof Mikus
Ken Evans/Camp Live Oak
Paul & Jennifer Kroncke

Jon & Elaine Krupnick

The Mastroiana Family
Lee McDonald
Mari Mennel-Bell
Terry & Jamie Stiles
Randy & Kim Sweers
Andrew & Lori Taubman
Bill & Nancy Theis
E.C. Traver

"Bring Birch Back" Bench Campaign Donors



We are grateful to donors who have purchased a bench and supported our "Bring Birch Back" campaign. All benches are ADA accessible and weather-proof. A plaque will be placed in the center of the upper back of the bench inscribed with the donor's name. These donors help the Friends of Birch State Park fund such projects as repairs to and equipment replacement, as well as other needs not covered by the state park service's budget. Thank you to the following donors:

ATLANTIC OCEAN/
INTRACOASTAL VIEW
Anonymous

Wayne & Marti Huizenga
Wayne Jr. & Fonda Huizenga
Lansing Melbourne Group

MANGROVES/LONG LAKE/
MEDITATION GARDEN VIEW
John & Mimi Bauer
Marie Mennel Bell

PLAYGROUND VIEW
Peggy Fucci
Wayne Jr. & Fonda Huizenga

INTERIOR PARK VIEW
Ina Lee & TravelHost
Tolley Family
The World Famous Parrot

If you are interested in purchasing a bench at Birch State Park, please contact us at **954-566-0660** for more information. We will happily tour you around the park to show you a variety of available bench locations.

World Famous Parrot promotes Park

Thank you to owners of the World Famous Parrot, Tim Schiavone and Joe O'Donnell, who have purchased one of our benches in the Bring Birch Back Bench Campaign and will be the advertisers in our activities brochure going forward. The Parrot, besides having one of the best spots to watch a sports game on the many TVs or listen to music of your choice on the juke box, they also offer really good old American fare from hamburgers and steak sandwiches at lunch to mahi mahi and sushi for dinner.

WE THANK TIM AND JOE FOR THEIR SUPPORT!



Left to right: Parrot co-owner Joe O'Donnell and Tim Schiavone, with Assistant Park Manager Jennifer Roberts and Park Manager David Dearth

Park Volunteers Needed: Mechanics, Carpenters and More!

As always, volunteers play a crucial role in helping us serve our visitors. If you're interested in joining our volunteer team, please visit <http://birchstatepark.org/volunteer> where you'll find a list of volunteer opportunities and detailed instructions on how to sign-up. Whether you come to volunteer or simply to enjoy all that our beautiful 180-acre nature park has to offer, we look forward to seeing you soon at our hidden gem of a park.

To volunteer: visit our website at: <http://birchstatepark.org/volunteer>

Above and Beyond

Cowboy and Genie Giasson are volunteers here at Birch State Park, and one of their many volunteer efforts is preparing the 76-year-old Terramar house for painting. Scraping stucco, plastering, sanding and even repairing damaged soffits is all in a day's work for Cowboy and his sidekick. We are grateful to them for their time and talent. If you have a special skill (plumbing, mechanical, painting, electrical, construction, landscaping, etc.) that you would like to share with us at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park, please visit our volunteer information page at www.birchstatepark.org/volunteer for details.



Cowboy and Genie Giasson, Park Volunteers



Cowboy Giasson plasters Terramar house.

An Evening by the Sea in Pictures

Thank you to our honorees and sponsors!



David Dearth, Manager of Hugh Taylor Birch State Park (center) with co-chairs Suzanne Watson and Janet Buhl



Believer's Award winner Marti Huizenga (right) with Friends of Birch State Park Executive Director Gale Butler



Friends of Birch State Park President Jim Ellis (left) with Patrick Daoud, Daoud's Jewelry



Board member and major event sponsor John Magee, Southern Wine and Spirits (center) with co-chairs Suzanne Watson and Janet Buhl



Left to right: Lisa Kitei with Bud and Kim Bentley, JM Family Enterprises, major event sponsor



Steve and Jeannie Hudson, Hudson Family Foundation, major event sponsor



Paula Levenson (center), AutoNation, major event sponsor with co-chairs Suzanne Watson and Janet Buhl



Dominick Miniaci (center), Paramount Refreshment Solutions, major event sponsor with co-chairs Suzanne Watson and Janet Buhl



Left to right: Bill Theis, Jennifer Anderson, Nova Southeastern University, major event sponsor, Peter Anderson and Nancy Theis



Randy and Kim Sweers, FB Marine Group, major event sponsors



Birch Willie, nephew of Hugh Taylor Birch, reminisces about the park's history.



Fonda and Wayne Huizenga Jr., major friends of Birch State Park