

SUMMER
2023



DEDICATED TO BRINGING BIRCH BACK FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

BIRCH BULLETIN

Long Lake Clean Out Update



Clean Out Team: Marcus Tscapek, Ken Shelley, Ed Blouin, Alma Ubilla, Park Service Specialist HeatherAnn Lamberto and Dan Sesto

Thanks to the Community Foundation of Broward and Bank of America, Friends received a generous grant to launch Phase 3 of the clean-out of our 1-mile-long fresh water coastal dune lake. Phase 3 addressed the northern-most end of the lake which was clogged by invasive cattails and hydrilla.

Mechanical clean out kicked off April 1 when crews from Organic Sediment Removal arrived. A crane was brought in from the Elks' Youth Camp to launch a pontoon boat and 5,000 lb. barge to support the pump. Crews were able to pump nearly 1,900 feet of the lake and clear a 10ft wide channel in that section. They were deliberate in their location, removing sediment from sections to prevent further growth of cattails and hydrilla. The result was creating full access to the 1.2-mile lake for recreational use.

Two large muck bags (90"x100" and 45"x100") were set up at the north end of the park. Each muck bag was filled to the top, three times before being sealed. Experts project a total of 3,000 cubic yards of sediment were removed. The muck bags will stay in place as the soil dries. The sediment will then be tested. Based on the results it will either remain in the park or be removed to an appropriate facility.

May 1, 2023:
Muck Bags at capacity



June 15, 2023:
Muck Bags drying out

We are a 501c(3) non-profit organization formed to help preserve, conserve, enhance, and promote Hugh Taylor Birch State Park through community support.

(954) 566-0660 birchstatepark.org



Gopher Tortoise Day

April 10th is National Gopher Tortoise Day, where we recognize this keystone species and its many benefits to our ecosystem. Due to April thunderstorms, we celebrated Gopher Tortoise Day on May 20th. Park attendees enjoyed snow cones, crafts, games, educational materials and of course meeting our resident gopher tortoise, Cinnamon!



The highlight was receiving an official proclamation from Representative Chip LaMarca and the Florida House of Representatives recognizing the day and urging all citizens to protect and learn about this amazing species. Thank you to park staff and volunteers who helped us celebrate our favorite reptile.

**NATIONAL
PLAY OUTSIDE DAY**

October 7, 2023

10am - 12pm – Terramar lawn

SPONSORED BY



**FRIENDS OF
BIRCH STATE PARK, INC.**

We hope you will join us for our next pop-up event on **October 7th** to celebrate **National Play Outside Day!**



FRIENDS OF
BIRCH STATE PARK, INC.

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Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michelle Schmitz

MSchmitz@BirchStatePark.org

954-566-0660

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Bridget Marron

BMarron@BirchStatePark.org

President's Message

What a wonderful spring season we've had here at Birch State Park, the park has been full swing with folks out and about enjoying the beautiful weather. In February we hosted one of our annual fundraisers, Camp Birch Family Fun Day. Our youngest park-goers enjoyed a rubber-tire train, pony rides, trampolines, crafts, and a delicious lunch catered by Park & Ocean. It's so fun watching families grow each year as we raise funds and support the park.

Our annual golf tournament, Birdies for Birch, was postponed to May 15 due to April's rainy weather. This year we welcomed 112 golfers to enjoy a day of great food, drinks, course contests, and Friends! Thank you to Stephen Botek, Whitt Markum, and the entire event committee for their hard work. May concluded with our new pop-up event, "Gopher Tortoise Day." This event was included with daily park admission and celebrated the mascot of our park, the gopher tortoise. We look forward to hosting more events like these for park-goers to enjoy.

This season we said "so long" to two important women to the park. Long-time board member Mari Mennel-Bell stepped off our board in March to pursue other interests. Mari's passion for the park and preserving the nature of Fort Lauderdale is contagious and her enthusiasm for the Friends Board is missed. Our Park Manager LeAnn Hinson moved to Cape San Blas, Florida where she began her new role as Park Manager of William J. "Billy Joe" Rish Recreational Area; we wish her all the best in her new endeavor and thank her for her many contributions to Hugh Taylor Birch State Park!



Ashley Sawyer Smith,
husband Shea and
daughter Ruby enjoying
Camp Birch Family Fun
Day 2023.

Executive Director's Message



Michelle Schmitz

I always know it's summer at Birch State Park when there is no line at the Ranger Station! In addition, my commute to Terramar is lengthened as I circumvent the puddles and stop to let Camp Live Oak campers cross the road. It certainly is a welcome change to the hustle of season here in Ft. Lauderdale.

Springtime was full of fundraisers, events, and service projects. It was so fun to see many of you enjoying and helping at the park. A highlight of our Spring was completing phase 3 of the Long Lake Restoration project. We're so grateful to the Community Foundation of Broward, Bank of America, and Friends of Birch donors for supporting this effort. We hope you'll make the time this summer to hop on a kayak and explore Long Lake in its entirety.



Bridget Marron

Please take a moment to review our new Friends of Birch State Park Membership categories and benefits. One new benefit is a member's only event, "Breakfast under the Banyan" on Saturday, October 21. Membership is the backbone of the Friends of Birch State Park. It provides you with great perks and, most importantly, the satisfaction of directly supporting the park with your donation. Please feel free to call or stop by Terramar Visitor Center anytime. Bridget and I would love to provide you with a tour!

BREAKFAST
AT THE
BANYAN

EXCLUSIVELY FOR FRIEND'S MEMBERS
October 21, 2023 at the Banyan Pavilion
9:30am – 11:00am
Breakfast, Camaraderie, Park Updates and More



FRIENDS OF BIRCH STATE PARK CAMP BIRCH FAMILY FUN DAY

Saturday, February 25, 2023

The 3rd annual Camp Birch Family Fun Day presented by JM Family Enterprises was enjoyed by nearly 300 individuals. Adults and children alike enjoyed the festive music, crafts, a rubber tire train, pony rides, family games hosted by Camp Live Oak, balloon animals and burgers and hotdogs catered by Park & Ocean. New this year, was a trampoline, soft playground for the toddlers and air brush tattoos. To beat the heat, guests stopped in Terramar for a reading of "Tabitha and Fritz Trade Places" read by author, Katie Frawley. The committee (Ashley Sawyer Smith, Laura Elmore, Erica Gomer, Mari Mennel-Bell, Christie Caliendo and Carolyn Frawley) really out did themselves as the event netted nearly \$25,000 for the Friends!



Cannon Caliendo leading the team in tug-a-war

Thank you to all of our event sponsors!



BROOMFIELD -
EVERSON FAMILY
LINDA ABRAMS



Event chairs Laura Elmore and Ashley Sawyer Smith



Logan Williams loving the pony ride



Mari Mennel-Bell
and Maggie



Jumping high on the
trampolines



Volunteers from Florida Girls Giving Back



Eric & Erica Gomer, daughter Leah and
Ashley Sawyer-Smith



The soft playground was a huge hit



Leilani Del Rosario and Yamille Mercedes



3-legged races hosted by Camp Live Oak



The Frawley Family enjoying the train

SAVE
THE DATE!

Camp Birch
Family Fun Day

**Saturday,
February 24, 2024**

at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Birdies for Birch Monday, May 15, 2023

Birdies for Birch presented by UKG was postponed to May 15th due to the unprecedented rain Fort Lauderdale Country Club received in April. Despite the new date, the golfers enjoyed the same level of fun! Players were greeted with lunch from Georgia Pig, tee gifts, a putting contest and plenty of on-course beverages. The day started off with a brief lightning delay, however sunny skies were quick to follow. Festivities were concluded inside the clubhouse, where golfers enjoyed a cocktail reception and dinner buffet sponsored by SAFCO. A special thank you to our army of volunteers and golf committee (Stephen Botek, Whitt Markum, John Barranco, Tyler Chappell, Dawn Diehl, George Fussell and Katherine Koenig) whose efforts generated over \$48,000 in funds for Friends of Birch State Park!



Thank you to all of our event sponsors!

PRESENTING
SPONSOR



Carlos Gonzalez and John Barranco



Kona Gray and Gregg Sutton

1st Place Team Botek Thurlow Engineering

Stephen Botek
Josh Blacksten
Gary Bogen
Randy Bogen



Kristen Lawler & Paul Weinberg



The Moorman Family providing
lunch from Georgia Pig



The Botek Family

Contest Winners:

David Celentano
Closest to the Pin -
Men

Lisa Sheehan
Closest to the Pin -
Women

Chris Rotella
Longest Drive -
Men

Lisa Sheehan
Longest Drive -
Women



Some of the many volunteers who
made the day a success!



Whitt Markum, Gale Butler and
Randy Pohlman



SAFCO Volunteers

SAVE
THE DATE!

Monday,
May 6, 2024

Jacaranda
Golf Club



The crew from the Parrot



The Moriarty Team showing off their
Gopher Tortoise award for being
slowest team on the course



Julie Morrell, Pat Damoorgian,
Gale Butler, Jane Brand-Eagon
and Sharon O'Connor



JM Family Honors World Ocean Day

On June 8th, a dedicated group of professionals from Southeast Toyota Distributors and a group of JM Family Enterprises' influencers partners came out to Hugh Taylor Birch State Park. They wanted to give back to their community and celebrate "World Ocean Day", by participating in a beach cleanup. Their host began the day by talking about the importance of sea turtle conservation and the impact microplastics have on their livelihood; the group then got right to it, cleaning the beach. Over a period of two hours, they were able to come back with several buckets full of trash, removing everything from the tiniest of microplastics to one very large suitcase. Hugh Taylor Birch cannot begin to thank them enough for the positive impact that you have made on our delicate beach and dune ecosystem!

Support the Friends of Birch State Park with your very own personalized bench

Congratulate, commemorate or
celebrate someone special with a
custom park bench.

Visit birchstatepark.org/benches



District 5 Volunteer Appreciation Day

On February 22, 2023, Hugh Taylor Birch State Park hosted the Volunteer Appreciation Day for District 5. Nearly 200 volunteers, park managers and staff gathered on Terramar Lawn to be recognized for their efforts. Volunteers are an integral part of the park's workforce. They contribute time, energy and skills to park management and visitor experiences. We are so grateful to be able to help recognize them in this way!



THANK YOU!

Terramar Society Members

Banyan Level - \$5,000

Joe & Wini Amatore
Jim Ellis & Olya Salehi
Pamela Braden & Admiral James
McManamon
Sherry Meehan
The Miniaci Family
Carlos & Lisa Rodriguez

Manatee Level - \$2,000

Dorian & Pat Damoorgian
Monica & Michael Maroone
Lee McDonald Family
Chris & Connie Williams

Sea Turtle Level - \$1,000

Stephen & Kari Botek
Bill Brown
Gale M. Butler
Andrew & Connie Caldwell
Tyler & Sarah Chappell
Michael & Mary Ellen Coen
Ed Cumisky & Amanda Hunt
The Dettman Family
Doug & Jane Eagon
Mark Greenberg & Judy Joseph
Martin Lesser & Linda Groene
Timothy Ingham & Julie Pabst
Gary & Roberta Karch
Mark McGuire & Craig Wilson
Don & JoAnn Medalie
Bruno Mejean & Martina Hund-Mejean
Mari Mennel-Bell & Joel Greenbaum
Parrot Lounge
Randy Pohlman
Shea & Ashley Smith
Bill & Nancy Thies
E.C. Traver

The Terramar Society and General
Members of Friends of Birch State
Park are the backbone of the
Friends' operation.

We thank these loyal annual
supporters.



FRIENDS OF
BIRCH STATE PARK, INC.

3109 E Sunrise Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304

FRIENDS OF
BIRCH STATE
PARK:
UPDATE ON
PARK
HAPPENINGS
AND EVENTS!

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, NOV. 4, 2023

WALK WITH FRIENDS

FRIENDS OF BIRCH STATE PARK

Support Birch State Park with Every Step

Registration:

6:30am – 7:15am

Walk-a-thon:

7:30am – 8:30am

After Party:

8:30am – 10:00am



**SCAN HERE
TO REGISTER!**



WALK WITH FRIENDS

FRIENDS OF BIRCH STATE PARK

Sponsored by

UKG