



JANUARY 2019

Birch Bulletin

So Long 2018... Hello 2019!

While time seems to be flying by in our personal lives, it tends to drag when you're trying to accomplish projects in the park. Could be red tape or just the fact that all good things take time.

Speaking of good, we have launched Marti's Meditation Garden with the installation of the labyrinth, sponsored by our loyal friend, Lorraine Thomas. It's fitting that one woman who has done so much for our community funds a tribute to another woman whose legacy is one of giving back to Fort Lauderdale in so many ways.

Thank you, Marti, and thank you, Lorraine.

While we want to thank the following sponsors of benches and stepping stones, please know there are still benches and stones to sponsor (\$5,000 and \$1,000 respectively). **Join us and be a part of this very special garden.**

The following have sponsored **benches** in the garden: Tom Byrne, Jim Ellis, Steve and Jeanie Hudson, Moss Construction, Lee McDonald and James and Shari Sawran. **Stepping stone** sponsors are: Linda Von Allmen, Walter and Debbie Banks, Scott and Pamela Baynes, Daniel and Liz Caldwell, Mary Ellen Coen, Dorian and Pat Damoorgian, Katherine Koenig, Ted and Kathy Drum, Gary and Kathryn Glenewinkel, Bonnie Muxo and Anne Scherer.

Stay tuned for the grand opening celebration of Marti's Meditation Garden this spring.

Marti's Meditation Garden



The labyrinth at Marti's Meditation Garden is now under construction. Landscaping and stone benches coming soon.

Kyle Easley Named New Park Manager



New Park Manager Kyle Easley for Hugh Taylor Birch State Park with Sebastian Inlet State Park Manager Jennifer Roberts.

Congratulations to former Assistant Park Manager, Kyle Easley, on his promotion to Park Manager of Hugh Taylor Birch State Park. While we will miss Jennifer Roberts, our past park manager, we welcome Kyle to his new position and look forward to working closely with him to "Bring Birch Back!"

"Kyle is the McGuyver of our park as no matter what challenge he faces, he just finds a way to get it done!" said Jim Ellis, Friends of Birch State Park Board Chair. "We still have several important projects in the works and he has been a great partner in bringing these to fruition."

Kyle grew up in Sarasota, Florida, in a circus family that travelled the world throughout his youth. Learning the technical side of the entertainment industry, Kyle toured with several Off-Broadway and national tours as a sound designer and an arena rigger, finally launching his own business designing and installing audio/visual systems. His Florida Park Service career began in 2012 at Honeymoon Island Park, where he became a ranger before joining the Hugh Taylor Birch team in 2016 as assistant park manager. Kyle and his wife, Jill, have two children and enjoy camping and visiting other state parks.



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

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Executive Director's Message



Gale M. Butler

Thank you to all our Friends' members, our board members and our Terramar Society members. You are the backbone of our organization and we appreciate your loyalty and enthusiasm for both the park and Friends. It's been an exciting year with the opening of our floating boat dock and welcome pavilion not to mention our soon-to-be-finished 1.2-mile seawall renovation and our four-foot widening of the 2-mile loop road.

Our projects are moving along with the launch of Marti's Meditation Garden, the 200-foot walkway over Long Lake, playground expansion, and exercise equipment which should all take place in the first half of 2019. These four projects are very visible, user-friendly and will enhance Birch Park.

Finally, we want to thank Friends' Board Chair, Jim Ellis, for his leadership and support over the past five years. If you run into Jim anytime soon, please say, "Thank you!"

Del Frisco's Funds Live Animal Program

Thank you to Del Frisco's Restaurant, newly opened on Las Olas Boulevard, which gave Friends the opportunity to host a lunch and dinner at a discount for our members. We had almost 100 at lunch and over 250 for dinner resulting in funding for two years of our live animal program. Live animal shows are held at 1:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

Del Frisco's
DOUBLE EAGLE
STEAKHOUSE

Under the Sea Mural Soon to Open

Thanks to Community Foundation of Broward

Our 50-year-old, 80' long, under-AIA- tunnel has been transformed to an "Under the Sea" experience thanks to the Community Foundation of Broward's recent grant to the Friends of Birch State Park.

Mosaic artist and muralist Todd Michael sketched the mural on the sides and ceiling of the hereto-fore blandly painted tunnel. He then enlisted art students from University School and Bank of America staffers to help fill in here and there. The result is stunning. As you enter the tunnel from the park side, you walk down steps into a sand dune depiction to the sounds of sea gulls and waves. As you go deeper into the tunnel you venture further into the ocean and hear sounds of dolphin, whales and fish gurgles.



Tunnel under the sea mural

Thank you to the Community Foundation of Broward and the following Community Foundation fund holders: the Katz Family Fund, the Harold D. Franks Fund and the Mary and Alex Mackenzie Community Impact Fund. We applaud them for believing in the magic of art to turn what was basically a safe way to cross from the park to the beach and back into a beautiful, fun experience for adults and children alike.

DEDICATED TO BRINGING BIRCH BACK FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Terramar Society Holiday Reception at DUNE

The Friends of Birch State Park hosted our annual Terramar Society Holiday Reception at the new beach restaurant, DUNE, in Auberge, a residential upscale building that replaced the famous Ireland's Inn – long a favorite among local residents and tourists alike. We updated our loyal Terramar Society members on our progress in the park.



Sally and Dick O'Loughlin



Dev Motwani, Summer and John Barranco



Nancy and Bill Theis



Trudy Reilly, Sarah and Tyler Chappell



Joanne and Mark Sneed



Shari and Jim Sawran



Raye Ann and Tim Elmes



Mari Mennell-Bell and Ken Evans



Rudy and Louise Dill



Jon and Elaine Krupnick



Dorian and Pat Damorrgian, Gale Butler, Ed and Sherry Meehan



Olya and Nikita Salehi with Jim Ellis

Thank You!

Terramar Society Members

BANYAN LEVEL (\$5,000 per year)

Jim Ellis
Steve & Jeannie Hudson
Carlos & Lisa Rodriguez
S. Donald Sussman

MANATEE LEVEL (\$3,000 per year)

Peggy Olin Fucci
Ed & Sherry Meehan
Dominick & Meike Miniaci

SEA TURTLE LEVEL (\$1,000 per year)

John & Summer Barranco
Stephen & Kari Botek
Gale Butler
Andrew & Connie Caldwell
Tyler & Sarah Chappell
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Keith Costello/First Green Bank
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Steve Walker & Karen Hooks

UPCOMING EVENTS

An Evening by the Sea – Friday, March 29, 2019,
Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach, 6-9 p.m. \$175 pp

Birdies for Birch – Tuesday, May 7, 2019, Lago
Mar Country Club, 12:30 p.m. \$250 pp

DEDICATED TO BRINGING BIRCH BACK FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

New Venue for Garden Party a Hit!



Thanks to the fabulous view from the top floor of the Sonesta Beach Resort located at the corner of East Sunrise Boulevard and AIA, our 2018 Garden Party was even more enjoyable than last year. The view helped attendees realize what a beautiful asset Hugh Taylor Birch State Park is as well as how lucky we are to have three-miles of open beach with no development to block our view.

How did Fort Lauderdale get so lucky when other towns along the seaboard didn't? You have Hugh Taylor Birch to thank for that. Not only did he donate his 180-acre estate to Florida for a nature park, he also gave the three-miles of beach he owned to the city of Fort Lauderdale with the stipulation that it be kept open, visible and accessible to the public forever. Finally, we still have Bonnet House, the 35-acre estate Birch gave his daughter, Helen, upon her marriage to Frederick Bartlett. Those gifts and that foresight show how much Hugh Taylor Birch cared about Fort Lauderdale and its residents.



Presenting sponsor Lorraine Thomas with Friends' Executive Director Gale Butler



Presenting sponsor Lorraine Thomas, Mary Riedel, Wini and Joe Amatore; (standing, left to right): Stacy Weisman, Karola Woodworth, Chip and Eileen LaMarca and Diana Metcalf



The hostess team for "A Garden Party" included (front row, left to right) Heather Geronemus, Tracy Dunn, Peggy Olin Fucci, Meghan Leckey, Nancy Thies, Janet Jordan (back row, left to right) Ashley Sawyer Smith, Dawn Read, Alice Jackson, Julie Saumsiegle and Jane Smith



Sporting Friends of Birch State Park sunglasses are (left to right) Michelle Gumbel, Michelle Matak and Meghan Leckey



(left to right): Maggie Gunther, Jenny Wharton, Heather Geronemus and Diann Geronemus



Event sponsors (left to right): Lisa Frucht, Daoud's Fine Jewelry, Lilia Ciciolla, Bank of America, Peggy Olin Fucci, One World Properties, Heather Geronemus, Ultimate Software and Julie Saumsiegle, Morgan Stanley



(seated, left to right): Michelle Howland, Marie Hansen, Ann Burris and Mary Mullen (standing, left to right) Lisa Kitei, Kim Butler and Alice Jackson

We thank our Presenting Sponsor, I. Lorraine Thomas, for her ongoing loyalty to us and the Fort Lauderdale community. Other major sponsors were: Ellis Diversified, ACURE and the Hudson Family Foundation, Moss Construction Company, The Las Olas Company, Ultimate Software, Morgan Stanley, OneWorld Properties, LaCroix, Daoud's Fine Jewelry and Bank of America.

We had a wonderful Hostess Committee: Tracy Dunn, Peggy Fucci, Heather Geronemus, Alice Jackson, Janet Jordan, Meghan Leckey, Dawn Read, Julie Saumsiegle, Ashley Sawyer Smith, Jane Smith, Nancy Thies and I. Lorraine Thomas.



Sponsor Michael Weymouth (left), The Las Olas Company, and Friends' board chair, Jim Ellis, Ellis Diversified



"A Garden Party" guests Peggy and Gray Marker