



SPRING 2022

Birch Bulletin

New Projects Launch!

Phase 3 of Long Lake Cleanout

Thanks to the Community Foundation of Broward, Friends has received a generous grant to launch Phase 3 of the clean-out of our one-mile-long fresh water coastal dune lake. The clean-out will address the very north end of the lake where a fallen tree and numerous non-indigenous cat tails and plants now clog the water and limit canoe and kayak access. Project to begin in the fall of 2022.



Long Lake clean-out

A1A Tunnel and "Under the Sea" Mural Renovation

Work to locate a leak in an underground sprinkler system for the median on A1A north of Sunrise Boulevard has launched. Once the leak is stopped, contractors will commence the renovation of the tunnel that will be followed by the restoration of the mural by artist Todd Hannah. Funds for the mural came from individual funds at the Community Foundation of Broward.



Beach access tunnel repair

New South Playground

We thank The Stephan Family for funding the renovation of the South Playground that had been closed for almost two years due to rusted and broken equipment. The project will begin in the summer of 2022 and will include ADA compliant equipment. This playground is near the great banyan tree and two pavilions, perfect for family outings!



Building new South Playground

Message from Gale



Gale Butler, Park Manager LeAnn Hinson, Michelle Schmitz, Bridget Marron

After almost eight years as Executive Director of the Friends of Birch State Park, I am retiring to travel and see family and friends. Thank you to all our supporters and friends who have helped us re-introduce the community to this amazing 180-acre green space left to us by Hugh Taylor Birch. I was blessed to come into Terramar every day and work to bring this neglected park back to life with the guidance and help of our longtime board president Jim Ellis and the past and

current board of directors and park staff. Thank you all for taking my phone calls, for coming on golf cart tours and attending our events. You helped Bring Birch Back and I hope you will continue to support our new team: Michelle Schmitz and Bridget Marron. They are ready, willing and able to take it from here! Thank you again and I'll see you in the Park...



Upcoming Events

Garden Party
November 4, 2022

Camp Birch BBQ
February 2023

Birdies for Birch
April 2023



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

Executive Committee

PRESIDENT

Ashley Sawyer Smith

PAST PRESIDENT

Christine Madsen

VICE-PRESIDENT

Jim Ellis

SECRETARY

Nancy Thies

TREASURER

Tom Byrne

AT LARGE

Stephen Botek
Andrew Caldwell

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John Barranco

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Tyler Chappell

Christie Caliendo

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Dawn Read Diehl

Laura Elmore

George Fussell, Sr.

Peggy Gehl

Heather Geronemus

Erica Gomer

Katherine Koenig

Ina Lee

Sarah Leonardi

Dan Lindblade

John Magee

Whitt Markum

Mari Mennel-Bell

Peggy Olin

Robert Roselli

Julie Saumsiegle

Shea Smith

Steve Tilbrook

William Walker

Paul Weinberg

HONORARY COUNCIL

Joe and Wini Amatore

Dominick & Meiki Miniaci

Robert Roselli

Phil Thornburg

Carlos Suarez

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Michelle Schmitz

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954-566-0660

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Bridget Marron

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We are a 501(c)(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



Board President's Message

It's a true joy to step into the role of President of the Board of Friends of Birch State Park. My family and I are avid Birch enjoyers; our daughter loves the playgrounds and magical trails, my husband runs and bikes the park, often meditating on a quiet bench, and I, personally, am enthralled with every corner of this Fort Lauderdale gem. Especially in the morning when the birds are at their chattiest!

As we enter Summer, the Friends Board says goodbye to its Executive Director of almost eight years, Gale Butler. We thank you, Gale, for your dedication, vision, and leadership; I am beyond fortunate to have served with and learned from you. We look forward to time together in Marti's Meditation Garden. Looking at our bright future ahead, we continue the clean-out of Long Lake, we're installing a new South Playground, and we forge ahead to improve Terramar and build the long-awaited trestle bridge over Long Lake.

Thank you to all who participated in our Second Annual Camp Birch BBQ in February and Birdies for Birch Golf Tournament in April. Your support is tantamount to our success.

We look forward to seeing you soon!



Ashley Sawyer Smith, husband Shea Smith and daughter Ruby looking for manatees near the Meditation Garden.

Friends' Message



Michelle Schmitz

It is truly an honor to serve as Executive Director for the Friends of Birch State Park. I am humbled and grateful to be given this opportunity by our Board of Directors. I will forever be indebted to Gale Butler, who has not only set up the Friends with a strong foundation, but has always believed in, mentored and appreciated my work. From our very first meeting, Gale has embraced me as a working mom and has seen my family as my greatest strength and the reason I work so hard. Thank you, Gale, for making the Friends what it is today and for believing in me to continue your legacy!



Bridget Marron

Please join me in welcoming Bridget Marron as the Friends of Birch State Park's new Director of Membership and Community Relations. Come visit Bridget and me in Terramar Visitor Center or call us to arrange a golf cart tour of the park. We look forward to showing you what has been done and what is still left to do in our hidden oasis in Fort Lauderdale!

Michelle and Bridget

Welcome to our New Board Members!



Christie Caliendo serves as Public Relations, Social Media and Integrated Marketing Director for JM Family Enterprises. She is a Fort Lauderdale native, a UCF and UF School of

Journalism & Communications graduate. Christie has been an involved member of the community through the Junior League of Greater Fort Lauderdale, Jack & Jill Children's Center, Kids in Distress, the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and the Museum of Art. She has one son, Cannon, age 6, and enjoys travel, the ocean and the outdoors.



George Fussell Sr. is a longtime resident of Dolphin Isles and uses the park all the time. His career began in the marine industry where he built a chain of full-service marinas and moved into the automotive

world. He was the youngest person to hold a Florida Retail Dealer's license (1973) and continued with establishing several businesses including ValuStop/AutoNation, Inc. He recently served as President of AutoNation USA. George has served on the boards of Kids in Distress and South Florida T-Ball League. He and his wife, Karen, have been married 41 years and they have two sons.

Family Day Fun for All

Friends held its 2nd Camp Birch BBQ Family Day with almost 250 in attendance. It was a mix of first-timers, long-time supporters and tons of families with young children. We began this event to attract young families who may not have used the park before and entertain those who have. Mission accomplished! Thank you to Laura Elmore and Ashley Sawyer Smith who co-chaired the event. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor JM Family, UKG, Akerman, Berkowitz, Pollack & Brant, EDI, Walmart Neighborhood Market, Dutton Real Estate, Miami Management, Elite Home Staging, Rick Case Auto, Conrad & Scherer LLP, Ashley Sawyer Smith Law, 954Design, SO FLO Shuttle Service, Camp Live Oak, Funky Buddha, & Gulf Stream Brewery.



All aboard the Catabella Express!



Camp Live Oak's team leading everyone in crafts and games!



Jordanna & Hunter Hersey



Schmitz & Oliver Families



Ashley Sawyer Smith, Erica Gomer & Leah



Kayla & Ellie Russell



Sophia & Mary Brill



Co-chair Laura Elmore and son Liam on the ponies!



Pete Kloep, Leah Peters & Peter



Having fun in the Fun Bus



Tug-a-war!



Christie & Cannon Caliendo



The Fun Bus!



Gale Butler, Jim Ellis, Olya & Nikita Salehi



Alice Celedon



The Byrne family

Thank You! Terramar Society Members

Supporting Friends of Birch State Park and their efforts to preserve and improve Hugh Taylor Birch State Park for future generations

Banyan Level - \$5,000

Joe & Wini Amaturo
Pamela Braden & Admiral James McManamon
Jim Ellis & Olya Salehi
Steve & Jeannie Hudson
Ed & Sherry Meehan
Carlos & Lisa Rodriguez
Bill & Anne Scherer
S. Donald Sussman & Michael Howland

Manatee Level - \$2,000

Monica & Michael Maroone
The Mastriana Family
The Miniaci Family

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
Dorian & Pat Damoorgian
The Dettman Family
Ted Drum & Kathy Molinet
Doug & Jane Eagon
Martin Lesser & Linda Groene
Timothy Ingham & Julie Pabst
Gary & Roberta Karch
Jon & Elaine Krupnick
Lee McDonald
Mark McGuire & Craig Wilson
Don & JoAnn Medalie
Bruno Mejean & Martina Hund-Mejean
Mari Mennel-Bell & Joel Greenbaum
Traci Miller & Troy McHatton
The Parrot Lounge
Randy Pohlman
Shea & Ashley Smith Family
Bill & Nancy Thies
E.C. Traver

Marti's Garden Club - \$1,000

Joe & Wini Amaturo	Lisa Kitei
Gale M. Butler	Monica Maroone
Rick & Rita Case	Ed & Sherry Meehan
Michael & Mary Ellen Coen	Mari Mennel-Bell & Joel Greenbaum
Dorian & Pat Damoorgian	Bill & Anne Scherer
Ted & Kathy Drum	
Jim & Janet Jordan	

DEDICATED TO BRINGING BIRCH BACK FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

5th Annual Birdies for Birch

Our 5th Annual Birdies for Birch Golf Tournament had great weather, the most players at 122 and the most female foursomes at six we've ever had. The men's winning foursome's score was 53 and the women's score was 66. Botek Thurlow not only was our Presenting Sponsor but they had the winning men's foursome! Thank you also to our major sponsors UKG and EDI. Co-Chairs Stephen Botek and Whitt Markum brought in outstanding sponsors and our volunteer committee Dawn Diehl, Katherine Koenig, George Fussell and Andy Caldwell came through with great auction items. We beat our fundraising goal and netted over \$35,000. Thank you to all who came to play and stayed to celebrate.



Co-chairs Whitt Markum and Stephen Botek with Gale Butler and Michelle Schmitz



Winning foursome - Randy Bogen, Gary Bogen, Jon Rosenthal & Roger Langer



The Parrot Lounges Foursome & Fans



Winning ladies foursome - Karen Genovese, Liz Hernandez, Monica Correll (not pictured) - Trichelle Rais



Andy Caldwell, Bill Branam, Bob Benanchetti, Steve Botkin (not pictured) The Gopher Tortoise Team "the slowest foursome"



Ann Spalding, Connie Williams, Leeanna Fatovic and Darlene Fox



Jane Eagon, Eileen Lank, Dana Mullaney and Pat Damoorgian



George Fussell & Gary Stein of SAFCO



B&M Construction Foursome



Peckar Abramson Foursome



The Chappell Group Foursome



The Moorman Family



Ranger Heather



Volunteers Ashley Sawyer Smith & Laura Elmore



Botek Thurlow Foursome



Pam Butler, Lisa Kitei, Ranger Marc, Alice Jackson, Michelle Howland



Barranco Gonzalez Architecture Foursome