

MacArthur Beach State Park

Fall - Winter 2009

Dune News

A quarterly newsletter sponsored by the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park, Inc.

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John D. MacArthur Beach

STATE PARK

10900 Jack Nicklaus Drive
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

Park Office:

561.624.6950

Nature Center:

561.624.6952

Fax:

561.624.6954

Friends Office:

561.776.7449

Websites:

www.macarthurbeach.org

www.floridastateparks.org/macarthurbeach

The Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park

is a non-profit corporation with a mission of generating supplemental resources to preserve, restore, and interpret the natural and cultural assets of the Park for present and future generations

Celebrating 20 Years of John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park was established to safeguard a diverse and undisturbed subtropical coastal habitat from development, a protected area where children and adults can experience Florida's natural beauty.

The Park is named for John D. MacArthur, whose generosity allowed the State of Florida to secure the land. Developed in part with funds donated by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Park opened to the public in late 1989.

Widely known as a nesting ground for sea turtles, including the endangered loggerhead and the exceedingly rare leatherback, MacArthur Beach State Park also offers protection to 7 species of plants and 22 species of animals designated by state and global ranking as endangered and/or threatened. The 438-acre preserve, extending from Lake Worth Lagoon to

the beach, is the only State Park in Palm Beach County.

More than 119,000 visitors come each year to enjoy the beach, spend time with family and friends and participate in the natural science education programs, special events, and recreation courses conducted by Park staff and our wonderful volunteers.

In this edition some of the staff will share their love of the Park and each of the four ecosystems which make up this piece of paradise; the Maritime or Hardwood Hammock, the Estuary, Beach and Dunes and the Ocean Reef.

I love the Park; to me it is magic, a haven of peace, an unspoiled slice of nature and a big part of what helps to keep my life balanced. The staff, volunteers, wildlife and plants, the wonderful programs and special events, and of course the estuary, my most favorite place. There is no place on earth better than our Park!

Leni Bane, Former Park Ranger, current Board Member and Volunteer



Original Park Staff 1989

Left to Right standing: Mike Watts, Chuck Halladin, Leni Bane, Ron Long, Pam Ingram, Mary Welsch, John Fillyaw, Jon Robinson, Tom Renna, Shirley Norwood, Heather Benedict, Bill Potter, Maria Velez, Bob Galbraith. *Kneeling:* Willie Brown, Tim Small.

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Kathryn Rothenburg

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Scott Duncan
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Rob Matriscono
Mike Watts
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Lynn Desy
David Gelb
Eric Ludwig
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...Invite YOU to attend *Bark in the Park* and An evening of Ragtime, Special Events To Benefit the *Nature Education Endowment Fund*

The **Nature Education Endowment Fund** was founded in 2002 by the Friends to ensure ongoing support of supplemental personnel and innovative programming such as:

The *Natural Science Education Programs*, which provide a wonderful outdoor learning experience, in an environment that exists no where else in Palm Beach County. The Park offers programs for all grades:



3rd
4th-5th
6th-12th

K-2nd *Habits and Habitats*
Plants Plus
The Florida Environment
Beach and Dune Dynamics
or
Estuary Exploration

BARK IN THE PARK

December 6, Noon to 4:00pm

Free Pet Photo with Park Admission

Fun for the Whole Family

• Demonstrations • Pet Games • Vendor Area • Silent Auction •
• Children's Activities • Music • Food •



SAVE THE DATE!!!

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

10900 Jack Nicklaus Drive (A1A) North Palm Beach, FL 33408
(North End of Singer Island) 561-624-6950 www.macarthurbeach.org



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Animals101.org

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www.macarthurbeach.org

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A not-for-profit Citizens Support Organization

☐ Benefactor...\$500+ ☐ Patron...\$499-\$100 ☐ Family...\$75 ☐ Individual...\$40

Name(s): M _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

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Please send this application along with your check or credit card information to:

Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park, Inc.

10900 Jack Nicklaus Drive

North Palm Beach, FL 33408

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For more information regarding the "Friends" please call 561.776.7449.



An Evening of
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Bob Milne's endless enthusiasm, enchanting ease of playing, his engaging manner while telling stories about the music, and his warmth and humor all come together to make him, as he has been described by a member of the U.S. State Dept., "a musical ambassador."

Bob has performed and taught Ragtime through-out the world; Japan, Ireland, Canada and Okinawa.

Bob has produced 11 solo piano recordings to date, which cover his wide range of playing styles, from the sweet and melodic to the highly rhythmic.

Visit Bob on line – www.bobmilne.com

Manager Matters



This year John D. MacArthur Beach State Park celebrates its 20th anniversary, having opened to the public in 1989. It's amazing to see

what twenty years of dedication and hard work by Park staff and volunteers has accomplished. These efforts have helped to ensure this magnificent remnant of old Florida, The Real Florida, will be preserved for all time.

The history of MacArthur Beach State Park certainly does not begin in 1989. With prehistoric Indian middens, the ruins of the lavish Hygeia Hotel on Munyon Island, and the Park's namesake John D. MacArthur, the park has clearly enjoyed a rich history. In the Park's more recent history, since opening to the public, there have been dramatic improvements. The Park now boasts a

Nature Center, theater, amphitheater, picnic facilities, boardwalk, and gift shop. Programs such as kayak tours and nature walks are presented daily and special events are held throughout the year. Thanks in large part to Palm Beach County's Division of Environmental Resource Management (ERM), Munyon Island has undergone extensive environmental restoration. Kayakers and other boaters visiting Munyon Island now enjoy walking paths under a canopy of native trees, kayaking through a thriving mangrove swamp, and picnicking at one of five pavilions.

Just as the Park's history did not begin twenty years ago, history continues to be written at MacArthur Beach State Park. Thanks to the passion and commitment of the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park, the long sought after goal of developing a natural science education center is about to be realized. Following the Friends' successful capital campaign which raised \$2.1 million, construction

of the Pew Family Natural Science Education Center is expected to begin shortly. This new facility will house a natural science education classroom with a wet lab as well as a new, larger gift shop. Along with the new facility will be improvements to the existing Nature Center which will include new exhibits and aquariums, a new audio-video system for the theater, and much more.

There are many ways to measure a Park's success; the quality of its natural resources, community support, the number of visitors, programming, and well maintained facilities are just a few. Judging by the comments I regularly receive from our visitors, there is no doubt that by any measure the first twenty years of John D. MacArthur Beach State Park have been a resounding success.

Don Bergeron
 Park Manager

The Beach and Dune System

by Rob Matriscino, Park Ranger

Have you ever wondered how beach dunes develop? The answer is a combination of wind, waves and vegetation. When the ocean is calm, the gentle wave action brings in sand from the near-shore sand bars, which accumulates along the shoreline. Onshore winds blow the dry sand toward the land where vegetation capture and collect the sand. Over many years this develops a tall dune system and begins to stabilize the barrier island.

The dunes at MacArthur Beach State Park are some of the tallest dunes you will find in Southeast Florida. These tall dunes help protect everything that lies west of the dune from storm winds and storm surges.

One of the main stabilizers of the primary dune system is the sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*). This species is protected by law and has a complex root system that keeps sand from blowing away. With a good contiguous system of sea oats above that, you begin to see taller plants such as Spanish bayonet; the plant that really fills in the gaps is the Sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*). The Sea grape has large paddle-shaped leaves, which shields those plants from winds and salt spray.

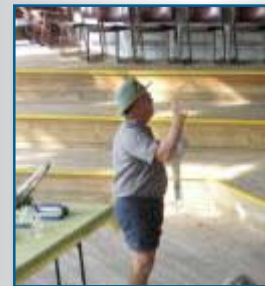
The Sea grapes grow tall, producing copious amounts of leaf litter that decomposes and creates fertile soil matter. Sea grapes protect the top of the primary dune and allow a whole host of other native dune plants to survive on the backside of the dune, which is where our maritime hammock begins.

The beach and the primary beach dune is an incredibly harsh environment with the constant sun, sand, surf and salt spray. I focused on plants in this article, but one can not overlook the food source and habitat that many of these plants provide. The beloved sea turtles need healthy beaches such as ours for suitable nesting habitat. The various shorebirds, crabs, butterflies and countless things we often don't see need these areas for their survival.

What can we all do to help keep these beach and dune systems healthy? Always use dune crossovers and don't walk on emerging vegetation. Participate in beach cleanups to not only make the beach look better, but prevent litter from being mistaken for food by various animals, mainly birds. We are all so fortunate to have such a wonderful resource as our playground.



Volunteer Spotlight



Get to Know –
Bill McDermott

Volunteer Full Name:
William F. McDermott

Job Assignments:
Marine Biology Summer Camp & Junior Ranger Summer Camp, Directed MB for 5 yrs, School Groups, Original Reef Tour Developer

Occupation:
Tennis Programmer in Palm Beach Gardens

Special Interest:
Botany & History

Birth Place:
Hartford, Connecticut

Years in Florida:
51 years

How long have you been here at MacArthur:
Since Feb. 1993

Favorite part of MacArthur:
Estuary & Dune Trail

Looking forward to:
“Whatever nature turns up next.”

Our Very Active Estuary

by Kathryn Rothenburg, Park Services Specialist

I invite you to take a walk on the Park boardwalk toward the ocean; be certain to notice the sun's warmth, welcome the cool breeze, and listen for a chirping osprey overhead.

No matter what time of year you take this walk, you will see shallow waters with mangrove trees skirting the edges of what seems to be a constant and calm environment. Looks are deceiving; what seems to be calm is actually very dynamic, productive and fluctuating. The expanse of water you are crossing is a salt-water estuary, a semi-enclosed system fed by incoming ocean tides and fresh water draining from the land.

The mangrove trees surrounding the cove continuously drop their waxy leaves, giving life to the estuary. The waxy leaves crack in the water, allowing bacteria and fungus to feed the grazers and shredders such as snails, amphipods and crabs.

In the changing tides and temperatures of the estuary, sea grasses thrive; these submerged plants stabilize the sandy bottom and provide shelter and food to many invertebrates, from small fish and juvenile green turtles to the Florida Manatee.

As you walk across the boardwalk, you will probably glimpse fish leaping from the water. Mullet acquire nutrients from the sand and muck on the estuary floor. If you are lucky, you may see an osprey diving down to catch a mullet or other fish.

Reaching the east side of your trek, you may hear oysters scrape shut as the tide retreats. Vital to the estuary, oyster colonies filter the water while they are consuming plankton and nitrogen.

Most fish and invertebrates (oysters, shrimp, crabs) that we eat have relied on an estuary at some point in their life cycle. This productive and varying environment is as it should be, protected for the folks who admire it and the plants and animals that depend upon it. How fortunate we are that we can take a walk experiencing Florida in its natural state right here at John D MacArthur Beach State Park.



Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DONORS AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2009

MAJOR GIFTS \$500,000 - \$1,000,000

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Florida Partnership in Parks Program

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What Type of Reef is That?

by Pat Rash, Assistant Park Manager

Ask five people familiar with the ocean reef at MacArthur Beach State Park this question and you will get five different answers. Here is my interpretation: the reef is made of Anastasia formation outcroppings that are exposed and covered by the shifting sands of the beach. Parts of the formation seldom covered by sand are covered with living organisms such as invertebrates, sponges, and coral.

Anastasia formation of this area is a sandy coquinooid limestone, sedimentary in nature and formed in the Pleistocene period about 100,000 years ago. This limestone, also called coquina, is a mixture of sand and shells cemented together by calcite. It occurs along the east coast of Florida from St. Johns through Palm Beach counties and was named by E H Sellards in 1912 for Anastasia Island. Early in the history of our state, the Spanish quarried the rock to build Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine.

Sabellariid worms can dominate areas of these reefs and form a unique reef type known as worm reef. Phragmatopoma caudata, the species most common in our area, attach to the limestone and build tubes of sand and other particles for protection. Millions of worms build on top of and beside their neighbors forming masses tiny tubes. Walking or standing on the reef crushes the tubes and kills the worms. In fact, impact to the reef by any means can damage or kill various types of organisms so please don't touch it with your hands, feet, or anchors.

Whether you call it Anastasia formation, rock reef, coquina, worm reef, or limestone reef: corals, sponges, invertebrates, crustaceans, sea turtles, and fish of all colors and sizes call it home. The near shore reef system at MacArthur Beach is an awesome place no matter who you ask. Grab a mask and flag and dive in; you are in for a treat.



New and Renewing Members

JULY 1 THRU AUGUST 31, 2009

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Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Siegel

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Ms. Ronda Sowder
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Swanson
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Friends Gift Shop

Do your Holiday Shopping and benefit Park Programs

Friends Members, Park Staff and Volunteers receive a 20% discount in the Gift Shop
Extended sale from November 15 to December 25!*

New at the Gift Shop:

T-shirts commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Park (1989-2009)

Great gifts for children and adults on your list

- Puzzles, toys, stuffed animals, books
- Clothing, decorative items
- Florida hats, shirts, sweatshirts

Colorful Women's hats and Wide brim hats

Men's gambler straw hats

And much, much more.....

Funds from the Gift Shop go directly in support of Park programs.

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE for

- Memberships
- Gift Shop
- Kayak Rentals

* MEMBERS - PLEASE HAVE MEMBERSHIP CARD AND PHOTO ID AVAILABLE AT TIME OF PURCHASE

* Does not include kayak or dive flag rentals

Appreciating Trees – The Rare Maritime Hammock

by Art Carton, Park Services Specialist

One of the most overlooked and underappreciated habitats in MacArthur Beach State Park is the maritime hammock. Hammock is a word of Indian derivation, meaning shady place. These communities occur near the coast and extend all the way to Virginia, where they are dominated by huge live oak specimens. Maritime hammocks that stretch from Palm Beach County south to Cape Florida differ from those in that they contain a larger variety of tree species. This is due to the influence of the sub-tropical climate and a different soil structure. The dominant trees at the Park are tropical species of West Indian origin, such as the Mastic, Gumbo Limbo and Paradise tree.

Within the Park, the hammock can be experienced and enjoyed by walking along the dune trail or taking a stroll on the Satinleaf Trail. This threatened habitat consists of 125 acres of land inside our boundaries; outside the Park there is little left of this once thriving habitat. By the 1950's most of the maritime hammock community in south Florida was already bulldozed and slated for development.

The next largest tract of sub-tropical maritime hammock cannot be found until one travels south to Miami-Dade County and Cape Florida State Park. Other local parks which have remnant stands of maritime hammock are Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, Ocean Hammock Park and at the Bartlett Estate, just south of Hugh Taylor Birch State Park in Fort Lauderdale.

Besides development, invasive exotic plant species are the biggest threat to the hammock. These non-native species have no natural enemies, and can quickly reduce biodiversity and take over an area almost completely. Brazilian pepper-tree or "Schinus terebinthifolius" is the major species of concern for our Park; we are currently in the process of eliminating this plant from our hammock area. From October 2008 through August 2009, 11.5 acres of Brazilian pepper have been removed from the Park, either by hand-pulling or chemical removal.



Up and Coming Activities

NOVEMBER

14	Saturday	10-4:00 p.m.	Pioneer Day
15	Sunday	12:30 p.m.	Birding at MacArthur Park
15	Sunday	1-4:00 p.m.	Bluegrass Music
19	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
21	Saturday	1:00 p.m.	Recreational Skills: Introduction to Kayak Fishing

DECEMBER

03	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
05	Saturday	11:00 a.m.	Butterfly Walk
06	Sunday	12:00-4:00p.m.	Bark in the Park
06	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Learn to Kayak by Adventure Times Kayaks
12	Saturday	11:00 a.m.	F.U.N. Program: Seaside Treasures
13	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Volunteer Orientation
13	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Recreational Skills: Introduction to Surfing
13	Sunday	1-4:00 p.m.	Bluegrass Music Jam
17	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
20	Sunday	1-4:00 p.m.	Bluegrass Music
26	Saturday	7-9:00 p.m.	MacArthur Under Moonlight Concert
27	Sunday	11:00 a.m.	Birding at MacArthur Park

JANUARY

03	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Learn to Kayak by Adventure Times Kayaks
07	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
10	Sunday	1-4:00 p.m.	Bluegrass Music Jam
17	Saturday	3:00 p.m.	F.U.N. Program: Estuary Exploration
18	Sunday	1-4:00 p.m.	Bluegrass Music
21	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
30	Saturday	7-9:00 p.m.	MacArthur Under Moonlight Concert
31	Sunday	3:00 p.m.	Birding at MacArthur Park

- Daily Guided *Nature Walks* at 10:00 a.m.
- Every Weekend Animal Feeding in the Nature Center at 11:00 a.m.

- Every Sunday at 3:00 p.m. *Snake Talk* in the Nature Center

Activity Details

- All activities except MacArthur Under Moonlight concerts are free with Park admission -

Birding - Learn the names, characteristics and behaviors of the common and rare wading birds that browse the exposed mud flats at low tide.

Bluegrass - Music Listen to some of the best bluegrass music in South Florida; Nathan Rich and Friends will be playing bluegrass music in the amphitheater.

Bluegrass Music Jam - Join us for foot-stompin bluegrass music in the amphitheater. Acoustic musicians are welcome to join in and jam.

Butterfly Walk - Join a staff naturalist on a mile long walk identifying the butterflies that inhabit the park. Reservations recommended.

Estuary Exploration - Explore the Park's estuary up close and personal! Participants will get wet and dirty, please wear closed-toe shoes and shorts. For ages 8 years old and up, reservations required.

F.U.N. Program, Families Understanding Nature: Seaside Treasures - Explore the beach, identifying

and searching for various shells, drift seeds, plants and more. Great for children and families; reservations recommended.

Learn to Kayak - Adventure Times Kayaks teach the basic skills necessary to safely enjoy the exciting sport of kayaking; instruction on land only. Reservations required.

MacArthur Under Moonlight Concert Series - Join us for a magical night of music, gates open at 6:00 p.m. Concert 7-9:00 p.m. with a fifteen minute intermission at 8:00 with stargazing on the boardwalk. \$5.00 per person; members and children under the age of 10 are free.

Pioneer Day - Join us for a trip back to the era of Henry Flagler and the Barefoot Mailman. There will be a civil war encampment, storytelling, children's games, wood carver, old time books for sale, palm frond weaving, vendors, guest speakers, food demonstrations, music, native plants for sale and more.

Recreational Skills Lessons: Introduction to Kayak Fishing - Join Park Ranger Bill Wilson and learn the techniques and equipment needed to kayak fish in South Florida. The program is on land and reservations are recommended.

Recreational Skills Lessons: Introduction to Surfing - Park Ranger Rob Matriscino will lead you through the basics of surfing. This program is on land and in the water, good swimming skills are a must; children ages 10 and above may participate with parent supervision. Reservations required.

Volunteer Orientation - Come join our team and help visitors appreciate the importance of preserving this beautiful place by volunteering. Reservations required.

Yoga on the Beach - Certified yoga instructor, Annemarie Phelan, leads one hour yoga sessions on the beach for beginners and experienced participants. Reservations recommended.

MacArthur Beach
State Park

10900 Jack Nicklaus Drive
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

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Thank you for your membership in the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park!

All funds raised by the Friends through memberships, the Gift Shop and kayak rentals stay in the Park. YOU assist the Friends to -

- Purchase equipment and supplies for the Natural Science Education Program
- Provide funding to purchase Passenger Trams and other equipment
- Fund volunteer training and recognition
- Provide funding for Picnic Pavilions and Playground
- Purchase and maintain the kayak fleet
- Fund Park printing, supplies and technology needs
- Provide funds for Park Staff Training
- Operate the Gift Shop
- Produce the Park quarterly newsletter, The Dune News

Thanks!