

**The Holidays are Upon Us—Let Us Remember What We’re Doing Here and Acknowledge Our Gifts**

Bryan Kaczmarek, Park Ranger

It’s that time of year when we begin looking for just the right gift for those we care about. We run from shop to shop, looking for gizmos and gadgets. Sparkling, shiny things to fill stockings with. Something to warm a heart, open a mind, inspire a memory. We rush around in hopes of finding a gift that will bring joy for years to come.

The other day, while on a beach patrol, I saw a family near the tide line. Mom and Dad relaxing in the sun, while two young kids picked at seashells in the surf. It reminded me of what an old Ranger told me when I first started in the Park Service: "Always keep in mind what you're doing here," he said. "On days when the garbage stinks, the toilets are backing up, and somebody has scratched some foul poetry onto a wall, remember what you are doing here. You are the protector for those without a voice, without a vote. You are all that stands between a meadow of sea oats and the march of the condominiums. Every day you are going to pass—often without knowing it—somebody in the park who has never seen the sea before. Somebody has scrimped and saved, all year long, in hopes of bringing their kids to Florida for the first, and maybe only time. To you this will sometimes just be a job, to others, to many, this is a lifetime of planning. Sunset may mean quitting time for you, but for many it is the final scene of the best vacation they'll ever have. Do what you do with pride and dignity. Remember, your park is somebody's church."

That advice has stuck with me. I replay it to myself often. My fellow Rangers feel the same way.

We Rangers work hard trying to give only the best memories as gifts. A beautiful park, clean facilities, assistance to those in need, and friendly helpful information.

We also remember the ones who get very few gifts anymore. A safe place for the least tern to roost, a clean beach for sea turtles to nest on, and plenty of natural places for the gopher tortoise, bobcat and marsh rabbit to make a home. We give the manatee a place to lounge, and the osprey plenty of fishing.

We Park Rangers are not alone in what we do. We have a fine collection of Volunteers who work very hard to keep our park as beautiful as it is. I consider them a gift to me. They toil through the heat (and recent cold!), the bugs, the dirt... all for the love of the environment and Lovers Key. Volunteering is one of the most noble gifts. Thank you all, for what you give to me and our visitors.

Our FOLKS are another gift. Our park would not be as successful or beautiful without the Friends of Lovers Key. They arrange wonderfully enjoyable events that put the shine on the jewel that is Lovers Key. Without the donations brought in by FOLKS, our tool shed would be a sad shadow of what it is, so I thank all the donors, whether they give money, time, or services. Your gifts are shared, in some way, by every person to come through our gates.



And speaking of gifts... a FOLKS membership is the perfect holiday gift for your loved ones who enjoy Lovers Key. 12 free entries to the park annually to be enjoyed by your friends and family: what more could you ask for?

So, the holidays are upon us. If I don't see you, my best to you and yours. I hope your holidays are full of wonder and joy.

Friends of Lovers Key  
8700 Estero Blvd.  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931  
239-463-3588  
www.FriendsOfLoversKey.com



Protecting...  
Preserving...  
Supporting...  
Lovers Key State Park

**Board of Directors:**

- Don Brown  
*President*
- Pamela Jones-Morton  
*Vice President*
- Neeley Murphy  
*Secretary*
- Joe Maccarone  
*Treasurer*
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- Ray Murphy  
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- Bob Lindner  
*Director*
- Rich Donnelly  
*Director*
- Gina Palanzi  
*Director*

**Park Staff:**

- Park Manager*  
Gloria Beauchamp
- Assistant Park Manager*  
Matt Kruse
- Administrative Assistant*  
Catherine Bowron
- Park Services Specialist*  
Brie Ochoa
- Toll Collectors*  
Judy Cleary  
Peggy Wood
- Park Rangers*  
Robert Hughes  
Bryan Kaczmarek  
Scott Murray  
Joe Dappen  
Sonya Schryver  
Mark Benzenberg
- Tram Driver*  
Bill Hallet

**Lovers Key Welcomes New Park Manager**

Brie Ochoa

She may be new to Lovers Key, but Gloria Beauchamp has been a member of the Florida Park Service Family for nearly ten years. A graduate of the University of Florida, Gloria earned a degree in conservation and wildlife ecology, beginning her career shortly after graduation at Hillsborough River State Park.

Gloria has served as a Park Ranger, Park Services Specialist, and Assistant Park Manager. In addition to Hillsborough River, she has worked at Lake Manatee State Park and Gamble Plantation State Historical Site. She comes to Lovers Key from her most recent position as the Assistant Park Manager of Honeymoon Island State Park, a barrier island park hosting 1.2 million visitors annually.

"I am very excited to be here," Gloria commented on her promotion, "this park is so beautiful and so different than any park I have worked at. I can see why the staff and volunteers are so dedicated and happy to be here. I'm looking forward to meeting and working with everyone. I truly enjoy the dynamics of barrier islands; they change day to day giving you an opportunity to discover something new every time."



Above: Gloria Beauchamp, the recently appointed manager of Lovers Key State Park, poses with Smokey Bear. Gloria has replaced Mike Hensley, who recently accepted a Program Director position with the Nature Conservancy in Kentucky.

**Mark your Calendars:**

- Annual Members Meeting—January 5th (election ballots and details inside)
- Nature Photography Workshop—January 12th
- Sea Grass Wading Trip—January 25th
- Love at Lovers Key—February 14th

**Call  
463-4588  
to register**

**Or visit [friendsofloversonkey.com](http://friendsofloversonkey.com)**

**You are Invited!**  
**Friends of Lovers Key 2011 Annual Members' Meeting and Board Elections... Vote Now!**



*Your Presence is Requested  
at the 2010*

**FRIENDS OF LOVERS KEY  
ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5TH  
2:00PM**

**BOARD ELECTIONS &  
BUSINESS MEETING**

*Agenda items include a 2010  
summary of accomplishments  
and update on the*

*Visitor Center Capital Campaign.*

*Please see ballots and voting instructions below.*

*If unable to attend the meeting,  
ballot may be submitted by mail to:*

**FRIENDS OF LOVERS KEY  
8700 ESTERO BLVD  
FORT MYERS BEACH, FL 33931**

*RSVP's Appreciated  
(239) 463-4588*

**BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS**

The listed candidates for the Board of Directors of the Friends of Lovers Key (FOLKS) have been placed in nomination in accordance with the by-laws of FOLKS. If you wish to nominate a member for election to the board, please print their name and telephone number in the "Write In" space at the bottom of the ballot.

Term expiration dates are stated next to the candidates' names. Check "yes" or "no" to vote for or against the candidates.

**PRIOR TO JANUARY 5TH**

Ballots may be returned by mail, or hand-delivered to:  
Friends of Lovers Key, 8700 Estero Blvd  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

**ON JANUARY 5TH**

Ballots may be submitted at the Annual Meeting where votes will be tallied.

**2010 BOARD NOMINEES**

TERRI KRASS - <i>January, 2014</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
JERRY HRINIK - <i>January, 2014</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
RAY MURPHY - <i>January, 2014</i> <i>(3 year term extention)</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
PAM JONES-MORTON - <i>January, 2014</i> <i>(3 year term extention)</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
RICH DONNELLY - <i>January, 2013</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
NEELEY MURPHY - <i>January, 2013</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
ROBERT LINDNER - <i>January, 2013</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
CHERYL HOHMANN - <i>January, 2012</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
JOE MACCARONE - <i>January, 2012</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

WRITE IN: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE NO: \_\_\_\_\_

**Why Climate Change May Not be the Biggest Threat to Coastal Birds**

Contributed by Casey Lott, Coastal & Waterways Program Coordinator, American Bird Conservancy

The recent State of the Birds 2010 report was on target in pointing out a variety of factors that will increasingly affect bird species as a result of global warming—including rising ocean levels and habitat loss. But as we continue to gain an understanding of climate change impacts, we must be careful not to lose sight of more immediate threats to birds. For example, coastal birds face a phenomenon known as "coastal squeeze", which threatens to make global warming a moot point for many of them. Coastal squeeze occurs when habitat erosion from a seaward direction occurs in tandem with inland development. Development not only causes direct habitat loss or degradation on beaches, dunes, mudflats, and marshes, but also prevents the inland migration of coastal habitats in response to the natural erosion process. The net result is the loss of bird habitat.

As human populations expand on our coasts, their cumulative negative impacts on coastal birds are being intensified. For example, in the Florida Panhandle, Snowy Plovers and Piping Plovers remain on only a small number of public beaches which are interspersed with heavily developed shorelines. In response to the increase in recreational use of these beaches, some public land managers have developed infrastructure such as roads, campgrounds, and other facilities. This infrastructure often requires the protection of coastal engineering projects that further degrade bird habitat. Over time, fewer and fewer properties are managed in ways that allow natural processes to renew habitat for beach-nesting birds.

The combination of coastal development and heavy recreational use has already led to significant population declines for many beach-nesting and other shoreline-dependent birds. Five North American beach-nesting bird species, as well as many species that nest in marshes or have large coastal concentrations during migration and winter are already on the U.S. WatchList of birds of conservation concern (see [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org) for the full WatchList).

Massive development of barrier islands (e.g., New Jersey and Florida's Atlantic Coast) that does not carefully consider bird habitat requirements may already limit the viability of regional nesting populations, despite intensive management for birds. Global climate change may intensify that effect, with rising sea-levels and increased storm frequencies that could eat up bird habitat, but even without it, the progression is clear and accelerating at a rate fast enough to result in species extinctions.

Increasingly, coastal habitats require regular and intensive on-the-ground management to facilitate compatible beach use by both birds and people. While Endangered Species Act listings of beach-nesting bird have resulted in the formations of partnerships to support this type of management for some species, they are generally severely under-staffed and under-funded. Given projections of continued growth of both coastal housing and tourism industries, successful coastal bird conservation will require increased habitat protection. Specifically, more key coastal areas, such as barrier islands, need to be made off-limits to further development. Where populations of beach-nesting birds are unprotected – for example on public beaches – measures such as seasonal beach closures and fencing of nesting areas to keep out predators such as cats, dogs, and rodents need to be implemented. A commensurate increase in on-the-ground law enforcement is also required to ensure that such measures are adequately executed.

But where will the money come to pay for it all? Ultimately, those who profit from development should foot the bill. Levying corporations or local jurisdictions that initiate coastal development projects would result in an immediate source of mitigation revenue. When those same entities inevitably later go to the federal government requesting engineering measures to protect their development, that federal assistance should only be forthcoming if those communities make additional contributions to conservation costs.

There is no doubt that climate change is a real and burgeoning global threat with the capacity to significantly impact a wide range of bird species. Nevertheless, it is crucial that in our efforts to halt its advance, we don't let other existing and immediate threats such as coastal squeeze slip through the cracks.



As sea levels rise and development along coastlines grows, the portion of beach available to wildlife that relies on this habitat becomes "squeezed" as seen in this photo of Fort Myers Beach.