



BARRIER ISLAND PARKS SOCIETY TIDELINES

Vol. 15, Issue 3

Spring 2015

2015 Calendar

Educational Programs

Please visit www.barrierislandparkssociety.org, or call the Lighthouse at 964.0060 to obtain the entire educational programs calendar!

Cayo Costa State Park

April 21 11:00 am Wading Adventure

Gasparilla Island State Park

Port Boca Grande Lighthouse & Museum
Docent-led Tours: Tuesday 11:00 am
* Customized tours upon request

Don Pedro Land Base

May 23 9:30 am Wading Adventure

Stump Pass State Park

May 16 9:30am Wading Adventure

Educational Programs: FREE to BIPS members, \$5 per person. Park vehicle fee: \$3 per vehicle (not included in program fee). Dates and times are subject to change. Please call (941)964-0060 for reservations or more information.



Sea Hare photo taken at a Wading Adventure!

We hope to see you soon!

Sea Turtle Season Has Arrived!



Loggerhead Sea Turtle Hatchling
Caretta caretta

The loggerhead sea turtle obtained its name due to its oversized head. Its carapace or outer shell is considered heart shaped and is 2.5 to 3.5 feet in length. The carapace is reddish-brown in color as an adult and dark-brown when it is a hatchling. Flippers which give it the ability to swim well distinguish the sea turtle from a land turtle. Typically, adults weigh between 155 and 375 pounds.

Primarily carnivorous, it feeds mostly on shellfish that live on the bottom of the ocean which includes horseshoe crabs, clams, and muscles. Its powerful jaw muscles help them to easily crush the shellfish. They also eat jellyfish and other invertebrates. The loggerhead prefers to feed in shallow waters in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans as well as coastal bays and estuaries.

The female loggerhead normally returns to the beach or area where she was hatched from to lay her eggs. She nests at intervals of 2 to 4 years, laying 3 to 6 nests per season approximately 14 days apart and lays an average of 100 to 126 eggs per nest. The eggs incubate for about 60 days. While many survive the nest to return to the sea, thanks to groups like the Boca Grande Turtle Conservancy and other volunteer turtle patrol groups, only a few from each nest survive into adulthood.

Nesting Season runs from April through October. Please do your part—Keep lights out along the beach at night which mimics the moon to hatchlings. Please do not leave chairs, sand toys and other items on the beach that female sea turtles can get caught in. And please, please pick up your litter. Sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jellyfish and it only takes one to kill a sea turtle.

Loggerhead sea turtles are listed as threatened and are likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

Information for this article was obtained from myfwc.com/research/wildlife/sea-turtles and www.conserveturtles.org.



Female Loggerhead Tracks

The President's Letter Winter 2015

As I wrap up my first term as president of BIPS I've taken some time to reflect on this year's season. The fact that my wife Linda is out of town and my dog needs approximately a 2 ½ hour walk a day helps me with the time to reflect on things.

This season is full of successes and accomplishments but a few stand out in my mind. Our beloved Range Lighthouse (the coast guard renamed it Gasparilla Island Light) is being turned over to BIPS for its restoration and painting. There are letters in our files dating back 15 years to the Department of Defense trying to get this project finalized. When you return this fall you will see the start of a formal fund raising campaign. Although we are in the process of receiving final bids we anticipate this to be approximately a 2 million dollar project. Some of these monies will be set aside to help keep both of our island's lighthouses in good condition and in working order in perpetuity.

Another major accomplishment this season was our Green Gala at the Boca Bay Pass Club. This year's interest in supporting BIPS and the Florida State Parks was at an all-time high and so we had to double our tent capacity. The theme was "Light up the Night" and with the help of the "Crashers" music, we did just that. The money from this year's gala will go towards the Florida State Parks on Gasparilla Island, Cayo Costa Island, Don Pedro Island, and Manasota Key's Stump Pass. It's good to remember that these parks encompass 12 miles of beaches, gulf waters and clean air. The support that BIPS gives these park rangers allows them to do the extra work that makes our local beaches, water, and air the finest in all of Florida.

This year Linda, I, and four other board members and spouses stayed at the Tarpon Lodge on Pine Island to attend the Friends of Cayo Costa evening event and dinner. The folks from FOCC work hand in hand with BIPS to make Cayo Costa Island one of the most pristine, beautiful tropical locations in our area. Talk about old Florida. Take a hike or kayak ride through its wilderness and you will never forget the beauty. Thanks to the Friends of Cayo Costa for their hospitality and for opening my eyes to the island secret called Cayo Costa. Also, many thanks to our park rangers for keeping it that way.

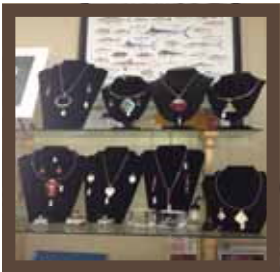
As many of you may know I am a year rounder in Boca Grande. It's the end of another season and it saddens me a bit to see many of my friends go north. Today on my walk there were fewer folks to wave and say hello, fewer golf carts to dodge and fewer bicycle riders. I've also noticed that there are no more lines at the post office, the Pink Pony, Miller's and Hudson's. Yes folks, it seems the season is coming to a close. But ya know what? That's not so bad either; I get to hang out with the locals or take time for a vacation.

Pete



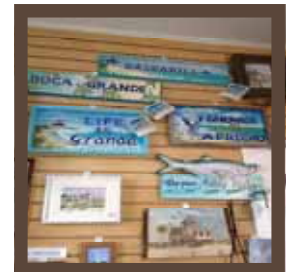
Pete Roberts

Preservation ~ Education ~ Conservation ~ History



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Located in historic
Port Boca Grande Lighthouse & Museum
880 Belcher Road, Boca Grande



The Barrier Island Parks Society's mission is to preserve, conserve, and support the natural assets, lighthouses, and history of our affiliated state parks through education and collaboration.

**Our affiliated state parks are:
Cayo Costa • Don Pedro • Gasparilla • Stump Pass**

From the Lighthouse Loft

by Sharon McKenzie - Executive Director



Sharon McKenzie

Photo by Max Kelly

Season has come to an end and what a season it was! This year we hosted 12 educational programs, 5 events, 16 school and group tours. We also gained 67 new members plus 15 new volunteers. Things kicked off with our Annual Lighting of the Lighthouse which brought in over 300 guests. Later there was a record number of attendance at our signature fundraiser of the year, the Annual Green Gala (see page 7-8 for photos and thanks). Followed by almost 300 visitors at Port Boca Grande Lighthouse & Museum during Florida Lighthouse Day. Our busy schedule wrapped up with the Englewood Earth Day Sunday Festival (co-hosted by BIPS) this past month, an event attended by approximately 1500 visitors. As an environmentally sensitive organization, this was a great fit for BIPS. We look forward to enhancing and expanding it even more next year. Thank you for your amazing support in helping to make these events and programs so successful!

Although my staff and I are looking forward to a little down time, we are also excited about what the future

holds. Over the summer, we will be developing some wonderful programs and projects that will be unveiled in the fall. Our new website will be launched over the summer, and our beloved range light (a.k.a. Gasparilla Island Light) will turn from rust to glory once our fall fundraising campaign succeeds. “Succeeds” may sound brazen, but I have seen our community when everyone’s hearts and minds are focused into action—things happen—positive, fabulous things!

Now is the time for you to enjoy your summer homes or Florida’s quieter (albeit hot) summer. Be safe, be healthy and enjoy your local flora and fauna wherever you are. We will take care of this “little piece” of paradise for you until you return.

Until next time,
Sharon



Jack Lyons always had a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye and was always up to something! He was a great volunteer who shared years of great stories, considerate counsel and much laughter with all of us. It is still hard to believe he is gone. When Florida Lighthouse Day rolled around, Jack’s job had been cutting the cake and we thought, how could we go through this day without Jack? Luckily for us, the only person we thought of who could take his place was Bette, Jack’s wonderful wife, and she happily agreed. Bette, as Jack would often say, is a real trooper. And we agree.

That same day, we dedicated a bench to Jack. It was purchased by The Boca Grande Historical Society, Boca Grande Pass Yacht Club, the Boca Grande Art Alliance and BIPS. The bench contains thoughtful plaques from all the organizations and we hope you will visit it at Port Boca Grande Lighthouse & Museum by the elevator lift on the ground level. What stands out most on the bench is the engraving below Jack’s name that says, “a friend to all.” We will miss Jack Lyons dearly. He was a remarkable man....he was a friend to all.

We Need Volunteers!

At BIPS we believe all people have gifts to share! For 3 hours a week, YOU can make a difference! We offer our volunteers—training, a lot of TLC, a thank you party, a bridge pass if you live off-island and a beautiful view. Or if you prefer to work a day a week at Cayo Costa, free transportation from Jug creek, training, a lot of TLC and a thank you party.

Here are a few ideas in areas we need help in:

Interpretive program presenter (Any of our Parks or Museum)

Docents

Marketing Assistant

Tidelines newsletter editor

Greeters

Gift Shop Clerks (Museum or Cayo Costa)

Researcher

Please call 941.964.0060



From the Park Manager Gasparilla Island Administration



Chad Lach

I think it is safe to say we survived the Winter of 2015 (February 19th -20th). Now that those cold days are behind us we are looking forward to this wonderful weather that we are currently having.

I think each year that I have been here I say “this has been one of the busier seasons” and this year it is true yet again. This is the first time in the history of Gasparilla Island State Park that we closed the gates in the month of February, due to the large amounts of people visiting the park. Even with the crowds we were still able to keep up with the park and conduct a lot of interpretive programs.



Zack Lozano

Gasparilla Island State Park has seen some changes and I wanted to let you all know that Park Service Specialist Zachary Lozano has been promoted to the Assistant Park Manager at Sebastian Inlet State Park. Zack started off his career as a OPS working at Charlotte Harbor State Park and then became and OPS Park Ranger at Cayo Costa, a Park Ranger at Cayo Costa, a resident Park Ranger at Cayo Costa, then the Park Service Specialist for Gasparilla island Administration. Zack did a great job for us and he will be missed.

At Stump Pass we will also be replacing Park Ranger Betty Baust. Betty is well known for her nature walks she gave each Wednesday through season. Betty is retiring and will spending her summers in North Carolina with her husband John and their Boston Terrier. Betty has done so much for Stump Pass and is considered the parks historian. She even has notebooks from each year and knows exactly when and where those shore birds are going to nest next. Betty is not only a Park Ranger, but a great person and I am proud to call her my friend.

Don Pedro Island State Park has a new face at the Land Base. Rand Smith started working for us in March and has been a huge asset. He is fully committed to making the park “the best it can be” and the park has never looked better. On the island this summer we will be working hard to make some more improvements to the pavilion and replace a whole lot of the deck boards. Last year was the dock and this year is the pavilion. We are ready for the work.

Cayo Costa also has a new face. Park Ranger Matt Rownd started with us in Early April . He is a quick learner and like Rand, is also fully committed to his park . We are happy to have him.

All of our parks: Stump Pass, Don Pedro, Gasparilla and Cayo Costa are true gems. Please take the time and get out to these parks this summer. Every time you go you will see something different. I encourage everyone to do so. I only ask—take only pictures and leave only foot prints.

Thanks to all of our parks staff and volunteers this season, as I have said before the parks would not be the same without you.

Enjoy, Chad

Visit our beautiful barrier island parks...



Cayo Costa



Don Pedro



Gasparilla



Stump Pass

Stump Pass Stories



Betty Baust giving one of her

Betty Baust, the Head Ranger for Stump Pass after thirteen years of park service, eleven of those at Stump Pass State Park, will be retiring on May 31st. Betty started with the Park Service at Mike Ross Gold Head Branch State Park in Keystone Heights, Florida. She has many fond memories of the park service including meeting her husband while on the job. When asked what was her favorite memory over the years, she replied, "A few years back a Great Horned Owl nested in an Osprey's old nest at Stump Pass about 30 yards off the trail. I was able to watch the fledglings grow and then leave the nest. The two owlets even stuck around for a few years." Despite that thrill, she said she will really miss the people the most. She has very

warmhearted memories of many and will miss the interaction with them. However, she is also eager to make the park that she fondly calls "Stumpy," her playground in the future. She lives within two miles of the park and plans on visiting often.



Great Horned Owlets at Stump Pass Beach State Park

Florida Lighthouse Day



It was a wonderful day with almost 300 visitors enjoying free cake, lemonade, crafts, visiting authors, special docent programs and best of all, a climb to the top of Port Boca Grande's lantern room. If you missed this annual Florida Lighthouse Day celebration, save the date for the next which will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2016. It is a lot of fun, besides, how can you pass on free cake?



Pictured clockwise from lower left: Volunteers Bette Lyons, Gina Riddiford and Hildegard Messenbaugh, USCG Auxiliary Martin Craemer, Volunteer Frank Koffend, Volunteers Kathe Ehlert and son, Nate, and visiting author, Les Berry.



EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

BIPS along with Open Studio and Mango's Bistro co-hosted Englewood Earth Day 2015 and what an "Earth" Day it was! With 55 earth-friendly vendors, 6 presenters and 1500 in attendance, many walked away with increased knowledge on how to be kinder to our planet and preserve the precious parks in our community. Thank you to everyone who made Earth Day 2015 a success! See below some of the festivities of the day~



Great
Family-Fun



2015



Green Gala 2015

"WE LIT UP THE NIGHT!"



With over 300 in attendance and The Crasher's band playing everyone's favorite dance numbers, our 19th Annual Green Gala certainly did "Light Up the Night!" If you were not there, you missed a fun and memorable party.

Many thanks to the BIPS Green Gala Committee, Pam Pierce, BIPS Staff, Florida Park Service Staff, High School Volunteers, The Pass Club, The Crashers and the BIPS Board of Directors for making this Green Gala one of our best ever! .



Special thanks to Heidimarie Burke for these lovely photos!



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Tidelines
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Wading Adventure

Calendar

Gasparilla

March 26
 April 2
 April 9
 April 23

Don Pedro

April 11
 May 23

Stump Pass

May 16

Cayo Costa

April 21

BIPS QR CODES



Website



Facebook

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Monday-Saturday ~ 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.
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Closed on Major Holidays

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