

Governor declares Florida Lighthouse Day



On June 2, 2006 Gov. Jeb Bush extended his greetings and best wishes to all by proclaiming September 16, 2006 as Florida Lighthouse Day. This is the second year that the Florida Lighthouse Association (www.floridalighthouses.org) has petitioned the governor's office for this proclamation.

In honor of his proclamation, Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park and Friends of Cape Florida will open the historic Cape Florida Lighthouse from 10 a.m. thru 2 p.m., with Park Rangers and Volunteers on hand to lead tours and answer your questions. Historic lighthouse related items will be on display and the winning raffle ticket for "Railroad to Freedom" will be drawn.

The Girl Scouts of Key Biscayne and Greater Miami-Dade County will also be participating in an environmental education hike from the restored mangrove wetlands to the Lighthouse. The girl scouts will learn about our native

view from cape florida



from the president's desk..

Greetings and Welcome to the premier edition of the *View from Cape Florida!* This quarterly newsletter is brought to you by the Friends of Cape Florida, a citizen support organization ("CSO"), to keep you informed about your park at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park.

First, I thought you would like to get to know me, your president, a little better. My name is Sarah Ballinger, and I moved to Miami from a little town in Western New York called Castile in 1994. I grew up volunteering and learning the local history of our area and yearned for the same here in the big city. I began volunteering at Cape Florida with the American Littoral Society performing native plant restoration but quickly switched to lighthouse tours after discovering the lighthouse. Can you believe I worked in the park two or three summers before I even saw the lighthouse? We were always in the hammocks! It was love at first sight, and I haven't regretted the last eight years of Saturday tours! You meet the most interesting people, and sometimes I learn more from the tourists than vice versa.

As president, I'm proud to tell you that the board of directors has worked hard over the last year to reorganize and update your CSO as we continue to support Cape Florida State Park. We have a new brochure and displays, and we are looking into sev-

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Upcoming Events

- 9/16/06**-Florida Lighthouse Day
- 12/5/06**—The Reclamation Project Reception during Art Basel 2006
- March**—Dade Heritage Days
- May**—Annual Member Meeting & Volunteer Recognition Party

Board Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of every month

2006-2007 Board Members

- Sarah Ballinger, President*
- (Vacant), Secretary*
- Robert "Bob" Skinner, Past-President*
- Ted Couillard, Treasurer*
- Ken Llewellyn, Director*
- Blanca Mesa, Director*
- Gary Milano, Director*
- Maria-Elena Navarro, Director*

Cape Florida needs YOU!



Volunteers are at the heart of the Florida State Park system where 6,000 volunteers have amazingly provided over 1 million hours of service. Bill Baggs Cape Florida State offers many opportunities for volunteers of all ages. Whether you need a few hours for a school community service requirement or you can commit to a weekly volunteer project, your park needs you! Volunteers are currently needed to work in our native plant nursery, remove exotics, help keep the beaches clean or lead lighthouse tours. Volunteers receive appropriate training and uniforms as well as recognition at our annual volunteer parties. Please see www.floridastateparks.org/capeflorida/volunteer.cfm for more information.

The Native Flora and Fauna of Cape Florida

Serenoa repens or saw palmetto is a shrubby palm that grows extensively throughout Florida. It is the major constituent of pine flatwoods ecosystems as well as the coastal strand habitat that makes up the majority of the restored lands at Bill Baggs State Park/Cape Florida. The genus name “Serenoa” was named for the Harvard botanist Sereno Watson (1826-1892), and the species name “repens” is latin for creeping which refers to the trunk’s habit of growing along the ground. The common name, saw palmetto, refers to the spiny margins of the petiole or leaf stem. The plant is fairly easy to identify using that characteristic and the shrubby habit. A nice description of the plant can be found



at: www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/sereno_repens.htm.

It is distinguished from sapling cabbage palms by the way the leaf stem abruptly ends in a square shape where it meets the leaf blade as opposed the costa-palmate petiole in cabbage palm. The stems and leaves are typically green, but can be found in blue/green-silver varieties, the reflective color imparted by a waxy coat on the surface of the plant. Those of you who frequent health food stores may recognize the scientific name as it is a popular herbal/supplement taken primarily for prostate health. As with most pineland species, this plant is highly adapted to frequent fire and forms large underground rhizomes to enhance survival when fire sweeps through an area where it is growing. Often, only the fronds (not the trunk) are burned off and the plants recover to full stature in a year or two.

— Ted Couillard

Cape Florida State Park Wish List

Every year, Friends of Cape Florida and Cape Florida State Park work together to develop a plan or “wish list” where we can work together to continue to support Cape Florida reach their annual goals through fundraisers and educational events.

Improvements at the Lighthouse waiting area are already in the works. Friends has recently recieved a grant from the Key Biscayne Foundation to fund new benches. Funds from our current quilt raffle will be used to repaint the old metal lighthouse top and Friends will be working with Dade Heritage Trust to renew the memorial brick program. Other projects will also be implemented in the

Just a few of the wished for items now include the following:

1. Purchasing plants to continue restoration
2. Improvements at the Youth Camp
3. Continue exotic removal, including removing large clumps of Green Buttonwood from coastal strand areas
4. Implement recycling stations for aluminum cans
5. Improve the Cape Florida Lighthouse waiting area.

future to further enhance the waiting area for our many visitors.

As always, Friends will continue to support exotic removal and native plantings. Anyone wishing to donate funds or sweat and labor individually or with a church, family or civic group should contact the park office at 305-361-8779 to make arrangements.

More information on these and other wish list items will be featured in our next newsletter. As always, you can check our Web site, www.capeflorida.org, for other wish list items as they are

“Railroad to Freedom”

For centuries, symbols, colors and patterns have been used to pass information from one generation or person to another. Whether to record history or designate the path to freedom, these symbols can be obvious or hidden right under our noses.

While there is currently much controversy over the issue, quilts were and still are used to record history as well as hold clues for escaped slaves to venture to freedom. Specific quilt blocks were used to prepare the slaves for their eventual escape, while other blocks directed the slaves to safe houses and conductors along the Underground Railroad. While slaves most often traveled north toward Canada, others traveled south, through Florida, to the Bahamas.

Traveling in either direction, slaves would look for quilts hung out to “air” on split rail fences. *Basket* patterns told slaves to pack provisions, *Bow Ties* meant to dress nicely instead of obvious slave clothing, *Shoofly* was a person or conductor on the Railroad and *Crossroads* indicated a safe town to hide in. Quilting patterns could indicate distance and unusual colors may have actually been in the shape of an arrow pointing toward freedom.

Long before Cape Florida Lighthouse was built at the southern tip of Key Biscayne, escaped slaves came to this desolate island where they lived with and

became Seminole Indians or sought boat rides to Andros Island in the Bahamas. Unfortunately, removal of the Seminole Indians to build the lighthouse abruptly stopped the escape route.

Park Services Specialist Art Levey and Joan Gill Blank, local author, completed countless hours of research to connect the park to the Underground Railroad. Cape Florida became a designated site on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom on September 15, 2004. This year, Sarah Ballinger, current CSO president, has created a commemorative quilt, titled “Railroad to Freedom,” depicting 8 blocks that may have lead slaves to freedom in the south, as well as an original block depicting the Lighthouse. Tickets are available through board members and



at the Cape Florida State Park tollbooth. Tickets are one for \$2, three tickets for \$5 and seven tickets for \$10. Proceeds support Friends of Cape Florida in their support of Park projects with a portion of proceeds being dedicated to repainting the old metal lighthouse top. The winning ticket will be drawn during Florida Lighthouse Day activities on Saturday, September 16.

More information on quilts and the Underground Railroad can be found in “Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad” by J. Tobin and R. Dobard or “Underground Railroad Sampler” by E. Burns and S. Bouchard.

From the President... (Continued from page 1)

eral fundraising items for the near future. We continue to support native planting within the park as well as a long-term bird-banding program. Last year, we also purchased a new “gator” for the early morning turtle patrols and sponsored Elinor DeWire, a prominent lighthouse author from Washington State as she debuted several new books.

I’m also proud to announce we have added many new members recently, and we look forward to having you become an active member by attending events or volunteering with any of the opportunities available at Cape Florida. Please contact the park office or one of the board members if you are interested in volunteering in the park, working on planning upcoming events and fundraisers, or have a skill to offer. We have many events planned in the future, and we look forward to seeing you there! Look for more information in future newsletters as well as on our Web site at www.capeflorida.org.

Let's give a warm welcome to our new members...

Family memberships

Jorge Blanco
Susan Boyer
Stanley & Monika Burg
Vycki Goldenberg-Minstein
Joseph & Karen Inverso
William Lindner

John & Carlyn McCaffrey
Altamira McCarthy
M. Southam
Michael Scordilis
Margaret Snider
Nancy & Tunch Togar

Individual memberships

Eliette Flores
Joel Garcia, MD
Carolyn Gonzalez
Elisabeth Kaminsky, MD
Tom Moscoe
Allene Nicholson
Catherine Pendlebury
Thomas Vega

Membership Application:

Name _____

New Renewal

Corporation _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Membership Category (Annual)

- Student \$10
- Individual \$15
- Family \$45
- Silver Corporation \$250
- Gold Corporation \$500

Give a thoughtful gift—gift memberships are available at all levels
Make checks payable to Friends of Cape Florida, 1200 S Crandon Blvd, Key Biscayne, Florida 33149
www.capecolorida.org



c/o Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park
1200 S Crandon Blvd
Key Biscayne, FL 33149