

Friends of Lovers Key hosts new Nature Program Series

The Friends of Lovers Key Inc. presents a unique new series of seven first-time events designed to enhance the public's understanding of the natural and recreational resources found at Lovers Key State Park. Pre-registration is required. Call 463-4588 to register. All events will take place at Lovers Key State Park, 8700 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach.



COURTESY PHOTO

Least tern

Meet the Least Terns of Lovers Key July 15, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Fee: \$25

Join park naturalist Pamela Jones-Morton, Ph.D., for an in-depth look at this fascinating bird, which makes its nests on Florida's beaches. The first part of this session consists of a presentation outlining the least terns' summer visit to Lovers Key. Participants will learn about migration patterns, mating behavior and other key notes specific to this species. Field experience will follow classroom discussion. Participants will observe the nesting area for an up-close experience of the behaviors discussed. Suitable for beginner bird watchers. Bring binoculars, camera, hat, sunscreen and water.

Sea Turtles on the Shoreline

Aug. 12, 9 p.m. to midnight

Fee: \$25



COURTESY PHOTO

Sea turtle

Sea turtles are one of the most beloved and most mysterious creatures that visit Florida's coasts. A park naturalist will introduce participants to the sea turtles that visit the Gulf Coast. Learn about life cycle, nesting behavior and about the conservation activities that protect the nests. After covering the basics, the group will move onto the beach to complete the turtle monitoring experience by excavating a simulated sea turtle nest, uncovering "eggs" and completing an inventory to collect important nesting data. Bring a hat, sunscreen, bug spray, and water.



COURTESY PHOTO

Carl E. Johnson State Park at Lovers Key on Estero Boulevard covers 712 acres and features canals and tidal lagoons fringed with mangroves.



COURTESY PHOTO

Recreational activities offered at Carl E. Johnson State Park include boating, fishing, swimming and shelling

Island Under the Stars

Sept. 18, 7-9 p.m.

Fee: \$15

The Everglades Astronomical Society will offer participants a unique glimpse at the stars above Southwest Florida. Learn about the night sky and all the wonders of the universe. Powerful telescopes will allow for once in a lifetime observation of constellations and planets. Suitable for all ages. Bring bug spray or wear long sleeves and come prepared for a short walk to the beach.

Artist Workshop—Painting Paradise

Oct. 15-16, 9 a.m. to noon

Fee: \$50 for both days

Suitable for individuals that have basic painting skills. Neil Walling (www.Neil-Walling.com) of The Fort Myers Beach Art Association will teach the two half-day classes beginning with a demonstration of plein air painting. Students will learn techniques, composition, color and other factors related to painting outdoors. Each student will need water color or oil painting supplies and may want to bring a snack, water and bug spray. The classes will be held in the beach pavilion.

Moonlight Kayak Tour

Nov. 2, 5-8 p.m.

Limited to 15 participants

Fees: \$25 (for those supplying own paddle craft); \$55 (includes rental of a single kayak); and \$70 (includes rental of a tandem kayak)

Join park naturalist Terri Krass for a kayak adventure under the full moon. This two-hour paddle through the estuary and back bays will allow paddlers to enjoy the sights and sounds of the park not experienced by other visitors. Paddlers will enjoy the sunset and observe the creatures that come to life on a barrier island at night. Participants may bring their own kayaks or rent one from the park. Rented kayaks will include life vest and paddle. A short safety demonstration will be held for all paddlers prior to launch. Bring a headlamp, water, bug spray, and a long sleeved shirt. Be prepared to get splashed and wear appropriate water shoes.

Nature Photography Workshop

Jan. 20, 9 a.m. to noon

Fee: \$25

Learn to capture the best wildlife shots, land and seascapes, and make even plant photos exciting. Joe Moran, an instructor with the Fort Myers Camera Club, and a nature photographer for 30 years, will lead the workshop. The workshop will include a traverse through Lovers Key State Park to explore some of the most photogenic areas of Southwest Florida's natural coastline and photograph the wildlife that Lovers Key is known for. Participants should bring their own digital camera, camera manuals, hat, sunscreen and bug spray.

Love at Lovers Key — A Special

Valentine's Day event

Feb. 14, 4:30-7 p.m.

Fee \$30 per couple (pre-registration required by Feb. 5, 2010)

Love is always in the air at Lovers Key, but even more so on Valentine's Day. Couples are invited to come to the park for a special vow renewal ceremony at the gazebo on the beach. Each couple will receive a photo taken at sunset. Champagne and sweet treats will be served to music as everyone enjoys the sunset and quiet walk on the beach. All couples will be entered into a drawing for a free Valentine's night stay at Lovers Key Resort. The drawing will be held on Feb. 6 so the winning couple can make plans to spend the night at this full-facility resort. ■