

Matecumbe Neighbors



Newsletter of the Lower Matecumbe Key Association

May 2013

A regular newsletter will be provided later, but there are several Lower Matecumbe issues that have been generating news stories and emails of interest that the Association Board members would like to pass on to its membership.

We encourage you to forward our newsletters to neighbors. Encourage them to join the association.

Sea Oats Beach and the Public Boat Ramp on the Fill

Letter from LMKA President, Donna Gleason, May 10, with later updates on page 2

May 10, 2013

Greetings! Claire Johnson, past LMKA President and local Real Estate Broker, White Marlin Beach resident, and generally concerned Isla citizen, called me the other day to discuss LMKA's position on the two above vital areas. Sea Oats Beach has become far too "public", with cars parked on the Sea Oats covered berm that is there to protect our highway from possible storm surge...overflow here could cause 74.5 miles South of here to be totally cut off. This restoration was done several years ago to replace the previously trampled down Sea Oats covered berm. Foot traffic on the berm, as well as the increasing numbers of beach goers endanger nesting Sea Turtles,(if there really are any) and shorebirds that stop on their migration route, and well as create a negative appearance to our otherwise pristine oceanfront.

The "public boat ramp" and increased use of the areas adjacent to the Highway at Tea Table Relief, just North of Robbie's, is an eyesore to say the least. There are several reasons that cause this to be an area of concern. The first is safety, with traffic suddenly slowing down in order to take all the sights in.... Scantly clad pedestrians, makeshift tents, large gatherings, as well as the beautiful water. There was what appeared to be a water jet powered contraption that the owner was selling "rides" on for a few weekends. Add to this, the sometimes "standing room only" parked trucks and boats on and off trailers, launched presumably for day fishing from a "ramp" in the "parking area". I understand that trash removal from this area is done at the expense of the Village, with a small allowance chipped in by the State. Yet there is no revenue taken in... This waterfront opportunity is totally cost free to any and everyone who can manage to squeeze in.

I have been told that the areas in question fall totally under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation. I refuse to believe that we are held captive by that statement, and that our voice is mute in this increasingly problematic situation. I believe our Village Council must get involved here to help bring about some relief to these ever growing hot spots.

-Donna Gleason, President, Lower Matecumbe Key Association

May 15, 2013

Greetings, a short while ago, I received a phone call from John Sutter, Islamorada Director of Parks and Recreation. He wanted to let me know that he agrees 100% with the concerns I addressed in my letter to the Council and Staff last week. He described this issue as his "mission" and vowed to leave no stone unturned in getting some positive action in these two areas. He is a former Lower Mat resident and remembers how Sea Oats beach was before the influx of visitors who are taking advantage of this piece of pristine shoreline.

John has promised to keep me in the loop on this, as I will all of you.

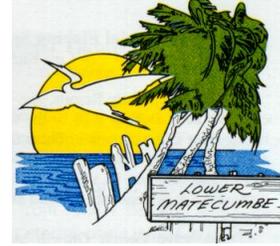
-Donna Gleason
President, LMKA

May 16, 2013

Greetings!

Park and Rec Director John Sutter called me this morning to let me know that because of voicing our concern about the shenanigans going on at Sea Oats Beach, FDOT has come on board much quicker than he expected! He said they're "emergency plan" won't look pretty, but it will only be temporary to immediately discourage potential beach goers from using Sea Oats... This will be done tomorrow: barricades, No parking signs, etc... Please bear with what promises to be an eyesore, but will have a positive end result! Remember this is a temporary bureaucratic response within days of awareness... Practically unheard of! Our voice is loud enough to get results!

Donna Gleason
President, LMKA



Membership Application/Renewal

First Name(s): _____

Last Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Local Address: _____

Phone (local): _____

Other phone: _____

Email: _____

Provide your email please!

Get your newsletter faster and save LMKA printing/postage costs! We only use the email address to send newsletters, information and reminders about Lower Matecumbe.

**Make check payable to
LMKA P. O. Box 911, Islamorada, FL 33036
Family \$20; Single \$12**

**Enclose a note if you will serve on the Board,
volunteer with projects or newsletter or if you
have ideas for making our community better.**

Blue Number 9, Toll Gate Shores Crocodile

Published: May 16, 2013 at 2:30 PM

dgoodhue@keysreporter.com

Posted - Wednesday, May 15, 2013 01:07 PM EDT

A female crocodile that set up house in front of a Lower Matecumbe Key home last month was found dead in the mangroves near where she was removed by state wildlife officers.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission spokeswoman Carli Segelson said a person may have killed the federally protected reptile.

It's safe to say it [the crocodile's death] appears to be suspicious, Segelson said Wednesday. That's why we are investigating this.

Killing a crocodile is a third-degree felony, Segelson said.

Officer Robert Dube with the FWC in the Keys said the crocodile's body has been sent to a lab to determine how it was killed.

The carcass of the crocodile, named Blue No. 9 by scientists who tagged and identified the 9-foot animal a few years ago, was found by residents of the Toll Gate Shores subdivision Saturday.

Tom Kavney, an Islamorada real estate agent and Toll Gate Shores resident, was one of the people who found her.

A friend of mine called me Saturday and said he had seen it. I went down there the next day to see if it looked like the one that had been hanging around our neighborhood, and it was, Kavney said.

Toll Gate Shores is on the north side of Lower Matecumbe on the bayside at mile marker 73.

When Blue No. 9 laid 27 eggs in front of Elaine and Peter Vlaun's house in late April, FWC scientists moved her a few miles north in Florida Bay. Her eggs were not yet fertile. But crocodiles are known to have a keen ability to find their way back home no matter how far they've been relocated. It appears Blue No. 9 was no exception.

Despite one high-profile attack when a crocodile killed a 65-pound dog in a Key Largo canal in March 2012, American saltwater crocodiles have a reputation for being docile - especially compared with their cousins in Africa and Australia. There has never been a recorded instance of an American crocodile attacking a human, according to the FWC.

Their numbers have grown dramatically since the 1970s. Forty years ago, they were a rare site in Keys canals. Scientists say there numbers were in the hundreds. Now there are anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 saltwater crocs, which live mostly in South Miami-Dade county to Islamorada.

Most Toll Gate Shores residents got used to seeing Blue No. 9 around and Kavney said she will be missed. She was like a neighborhood pet, this animal. I hope they catch whoever did this and put them in jail, Kavney said. I'm so disgusted.

Kavney said he was so used to her being around that he felt perfectly safe getting in his canal to change the oil in the lower unit of his boat engine.

The oil takes about a half an hour to drain. She would swim by me and look at me, but still stay about 30 to 40 feet away, he said. She was never even close to being aggressive. It didn't care about me. This is heartbreaking.

Blue Number 9, Toll Gate Shores Crocodile Celebration of Life

From: Laura Kennedy
Sent: Thu, May 16, 2013 6:01 pm
Subject: FRIENDS OF BLUE NO.9 (Please forward)

Hello, Everyone!

This email may be a partial repeat to some of you, but there's an update here too so read on...

Friends of Blue No. 9 invite you to join us
on Sunday, May 19th at the Port Antigua Beach
from 6pm to Sunset for a "Celebration of Life" gathering in remembrance of our beloved, Ol' Girl (yes,
we are celebrating a crocodile.)

BYOB/please bring a dish to share/and wear something "blue".
A collection will be taken for the reward fund. This is a 3rd degree felony and somebody out there
knows who did it!

Here's the update:

Today contact was made with Tim O'Hara of the Key West Citizen. Tim is responsible for the
Environmental Issues articles in that periodical. He says there will be an article about the savage
slaying of this creature that had captivated so many of us over the past few months. Tim is aware of our
"Celebration of Life" festivity and plans on placing it in the paper before Sunday. It may or may not
make tomorrow's article as the paper was heading to print. Tim also shared that in his article, he writes
that the FWC has a \$6,000 reward for the capture of the person or persons responsible for her death.

(I didn't know about the reward that Tim O'Hara speaks of, but I sure hope it's true!) Please forward
this email. I've posted it to my FaceBook page, too! Thank you, Friends of Blue No. 9 for rallying in
support of this--we are outraged that she was killed in this manner. There is a protocol to follow if you
needed her removed from your property, shooting her dead was not the answer. Not to mention, quite
a few of us were learning from her! Please let's stop the ignorance and try educating ourselves in the
future!

-Laura Lynne

Sea Turtles: The Goal is RESCUE-REHABILITATE-RELEASE

By Dennie Zettwoch

Some of our most beloved citizens in the Florida Keys are our sea turtles. At the March 7, 2013 meeting of the LMKA, we had the pleasure of hearing Liz+Miska speak on sea turtles and how the Turtle Hospital in Marathon, its founder and staff are making a difference for our reptilian friends. Liz is their Educational Specialist. She likes to share the importance of sea turtles and the role they play in the environment. There are 7 sea turtle species worldwide, 5 in the United States, and 4 found in the Keys. Here we have mostly Green and Loggerhead with some Hawksbill and Kemp's Ridley. All are covered under the endangered species act and have been protected since 1973, yet they have inhabited our oceans for over 200 million years.

Liz had planned to include slides with her presentation, but technical difficulties prevented that. It didn't matter. Liz is passionate and eloquent about sea turtles and the work that is being done at the Turtle Hospital. She was able to paint a vivid verbal picture for us beginning her story in 1981 when the Hospital's founder, Richie Moretti, wanted to settle in the Keys and bought the Hidden Harbor Motel. It wasn't until several years later, in 1986, when he became involved with an injured sea turtle that he realized there was no specific local help for it. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles were popular then and had created a positive public awareness about turtles. He decided to get permits and create ways to rehabilitate our sea turtles himself.

In 1987 the first surgery was performed in one of his motel rooms, and subsequently the first patient was successfully released back to the sea.

Over 50% of the current surgeries are done to remove fibropapilloma tumors. Fibropapilloma, a herpes like virus that causes large warty growths on soft tissue both externally and internally, began showing up on local turtles in the mid 1900's. Left untreated, blindness and death is the likely result. The disease afflicts sea turtles worldwide. The Turtle Hospital began to do research on papilloma affected turtles in 1989, and now actively works with the University of Florida and Albert Einstein College of Medicine in NY to find answers regarding prevention, better treatments and cure. Currently surgical removal of the tumors is the only treatment.

By 1991 more surgical space was needed than the motel could provide, so a Marathon nightclub called Mannies was purchased to house the hospital. In 1994 the Turtle Hospital became the first state certified facility in the world for treating sea turtles, with Dr. Doug Mader of the Marathon Veterinary Clinic being the vet of record. Hurricane Wilma in 2005 illustrated the need for the organization to be on a more sound financial foundation, so it became a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (Hidden Harbor Marine Environmental Project, Inc). The motel no longer functions as a motel, unless you are a turtle! Its buildings and space are used solely for turtle care. By 2007, all of the turtle tanks were made hurricane proof. Today the Turtle Hospital is still going strong.

After our Turtle Hospital history lesson, Liz went on to the important part - how we all can help turtles. Water pollution and even poaching are issues affecting turtles. Like all reptiles, turtles cannot generate their own body heat, so when the temperature drops, they become cold stunned, float on top of the water and move slowly. Boat strikes become more of a problem and so we must be more careful not to hit turtles during cold snaps.

Floating trash is a MAJOR issue for turtles because they are opportunistic feeders and try to eat whatever they come across. Their eyesight is poor so they often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, which, in their digestive systems causes a slow death. Ingested fish hooks, styrofoam, cardboard, plastic bottles, balloons, are all bad news inside a turtle because they do not break down and lead to intestinal blockage. Fishing lines, rope and nets can cause entanglements causing lost flippers or drowning. Don't splash your Trash and kindly pick up and dispose of properly what someone else has left to float. You just might be saving the life of one of our gentle sea creatures.

Since opening its doors in 1986, the Turtle Hospital has successfully rehabilitated and released over 1200 turtles back to their home in the sea. They impact the future by educating the public, conducting and assisting in research to improve turtle medical care, and working toward environmental legislation to keep beaches and waters clean and safe for all marine life. They are definitely making a difference for sea turtles.

For more information on the Turtle Hospital in Marathon, FL, please go to <http://www.turtlehospital.org/> The website is actually quite amazing and an education in itself. I would recommend you have a look and take the tour online before you go. Admission is \$15 for adults and \$7.50 for children 4-12. Hours are 9 AM-6 PM with educational programs on the hour from 10 - 4. Reservations are suggested by calling 305-743-2552.

The Turtle Hospital
2396 Overseas Highway
Marathon, FL 33050
Phone: (305) 743-2552
E-mail: theturtlehospital@yahoo.com

Email Islamorada Village Council.... They are working for us.

If you have questions, ideas, or complaints you'd like to share with our local elected officials, email Village Clerk, Ariana Lawson, at ariana.lawson@islamorada.fl.us and ask her to distribute the email to council. Or send an email to individual members

Ken.Philipson@islamorada.fl.us

Deb.Gillis@islamorada.fl.us

Ted.Blackburn@islamorada.fl.us

Mike.Forster@islamorada.fl.us

Dave.Purdo@islamorada.fl.us

Links you should check out

- www.islamorada.fl.us - the Village government website, including information about meetings, agendas, minutes, staff, and council
- www.keysnet.com - for recent stories from the Reporter and Keynoter
- Keysnews.com - Key West Citizen website. Click on the Free Press logo half way down the home page on the left hand side to download the current Islamorada Free Press.
- www.reynoldswaterislamorada.com - This website provides information from Reynolds Water Islamorada - the company providing the Village wastewater collection and transmission system.
- klwtd.com - Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District - the organization that will be treating wastewater piped from Islamorada

Lower Matecumbe Key Association Statement of Purpose

The Lower Matecumbe Key Association, Inc. shall actively work to preserve and enhance the quality of life and environment through participation and democratic process by the residents.

Goals shall include:

- 1. Monitoring activities such as zoning and construction.**
- 2. Communicating with all members to alert them to potential problems or opportunities.**
- 3. Coordinating the efforts of the individual neighborhood associations on common objectives.**
- 4. Providing an open forum for presentation and discussion of issues.**
- 5. Taking appropriate action on behalf of the membership.**

Board of Directors:

President Donna Gleason

Vice Pres and Treasurer—Hermine Zavar

Secretary Dennie Zetwoch

Board members: Dave Elbaum, Dick Wilson, Ann Haber, George Young , Krissy Gustinger , Rosemary Duke, Laura Lynne Kennedy

Newsletter: Sue Miller, editor

The opinions in this newsletter are not necessarily the opinions of the Board of Directors of LMKA.