

# Outlook

"Your project. Our passion."

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Spring 2019

In This Issue:

## BREAKING GROUND ON LOVERS KEY WELCOME & DISCOVERY CENTER

*Ten years in the making, the park's vision is finally becoming a reality as they break ground on the new Lovers Key Welcome & Discovery Center*

For the park staff and the Friends of Lovers Key (FOLKS) support organization, this new Welcome & Discovery Center was always something they longed for, envisioning a space that would not only draw in park visitors, but also educate guests about its history and the many things that make the park unique.



Johnson Engineering's founder Carl E. Johnson's legacy plaque still remains on display at Lovers Key State Park today.

*"In appreciation for the untiring efforts, personal sacrifice and dedication interest towards the acquisition and development of the Bonita-Ft Myers Beaches causeway, this plaque is erected and this recreational area named in honor of Carl E. Johnson."*

Lovers Key/Carl E. Johnson State Park is a 1,442-acre area made up of four barrier islands between Fort Myers Beach and Bonita Beach, nestled amidst the Gulf of Mexico and Estero Bay.

The park has a long interesting history, filled with stories of romance, Indians, pirates, treasure, and trade, however most aren't aware of this rich history, nor all the things the park has to offer.

The park was once only accessible by boat, until Lee County decided to build a causeway connecting the islands. Johnson Engineering's founder, Carl E. Johnson, was hired by Lee County in the early 1960s to survey the land and determine property boundaries. Back then, most of the landowners didn't actually know the true borders of their property. He was able to persuade landowners to give portions of their land to the County and State, in return for providing them with modern deeds to clarify exactly what they owned. They used this land to build the causeway and established Carl E. Johnson County

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Lovers Key New Welcome & Discovery Center



Neighborhood Plan Helps Create a Sense of Place by Design



Small County Outreach & Assistance Programs (SCOP/SCRAP)



Johnson Engineering Receives Corporate Excellence Award



## PEOPLE & PROJECTS: ON THE MOVE



**Rick Daniels, PSM**

in the company's survey market group, has successfully earned his Professional Surveying & Mapping license from the Florida Board of Professional Surveyors and Mappers.



**David Isley**

environmental technician, has recently obtained his FAA remote pilot license. We can now offer drone services including aerial photography, videography, mapping & data collection.





Park. The rest of the island was slated for development, and even possibly for a golf course. Years later the land owner made the decision to donate it to the state in the hopes of preserving it for future generations. In 1983, the state ended up buying Carl E. Johnson County Park, forming what we know today as Lovers Key/Carl E. Johnson State Park.

Today the park is a world-famous destination, best known for its tranquil secluded white sand beaches and signature beach pavilion. It's among the top four most visited state parks in the State of Florida and attracts nearly one million visitors per year. As visitors take a short tram ride down to the beach, they observe the park's various ecosystems, yet few truly comprehend its vast uniqueness. They can explore and enjoy a multitude of habitats from the Gulf beach and dunes up through the maritime hammocks and back down to the mangrove forests along the estuary.

This diverse park has two miles of beach and over five miles of trails. In one day, you may have the opportunity to spot dolphins, manatees, alligators, sharks, turtles, as well as egrets, herons, and osprey. Visitors can go to the beach, swim, kayak, paddle board, fish, bird watch, hike, and now go geocaching.

For more than 10 years, the park staff and volunteers hoped for a central visitor's center that would allow park guests a place to gather and learn about all the park has to offer and learn about its long rich history.

The time has finally arrived as the new nearly 4,000 sq. ft. Welcome & Discovery Center is slated to open in 2020. It will provide a place to share this invaluable information. The tales from the past can finally be told in a historical display in the center. The main exhibit hall will feature environmental exhibits signifying the four ecosystems that exist at Lovers Key State Park (LKSP) which include: Coastal Strand, Estuary, Sand Dunes, and Maritime Hammock. Each exhibit will educate visitors how each ecosystem works, why they are important, what flora and fauna they can find there, and how to get there, so they can explore this fascinating world themselves.

This center will be such a benefit to the park, bringing together history and education for future generations for the continued preservation of Lovers Key/Carl E. Johnson State Park. As the civil engineer for this project, Johnson Engineering is proud to be part of both the history and now the future of the park.

To learn more about the park visit: [www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/lovers-key-state-park](http://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/lovers-key-state-park) or if you'd like to be a part of history and support the new Welcome & Discovery Center visit: [www.friendsofloversonkey.org/center.html](http://www.friendsofloversonkey.org/center.html). For more information, contact Juli Kern at (239) 334-0046 or [mkt@johnsoneng.com](mailto:mkt@johnsoneng.com). ■



A special thanks to LKSP staff and Friends of Lovers Key (FOLKS).  
Building renderings courtesy of Sweet Sparkman Architects.  
Exhibit artwork by Split Rock Studios.

## HISTORY OF LOVERS KEY STATE PARK



## NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN HELPS CREATE A SENSE OF PLACE BY DESIGN

Habitat for Humanity of Collier County is dedicated to raising the bar for workforce housing. They are advancing the cause with a thoughtfully designed new community in East Naples. Our planners and engineers helped rezone 23 acres to expand the Regal Acres neighborhood with an innovative plan for 116 single family homes priced for working families.

Regal Acres II introduces the popular trend of pocket neighborhoods to Collier County, featuring front porch homes that face common greens with alleys to the rear, walking paths, and ample park and recreation space. The community combines livable neighborhood design, traffic calming on-street parking, and homes with a lasting Florida Vernacular architectural style and a variety of exterior finishes for three or four bedroom and two bath floor plans.

We worked with Habitat for Humanity's development team to collaborate extensively with three neighboring communities. The result is an infill project that is compatible with its surroundings through enhanced buffers, context sensitive positioning of preserves and lakes, and management strategies for common areas.

At the rezoning hearing in October 2018, Collier County Commission Chairman Andy Solis described the site design as a great example of how a landowner can work with the adjoining property owners to come up with the best fit for everyone. He added that he commends Habitat for Humanity on the project and stated, "This is the way it should work." Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Residential Planned Unit Development.

For more information, contact Laura DeJohn, AICP at (239) 280-4331 or [ldejohn@johnsoneng.com](mailto:ldejohn@johnsoneng.com). ■



(Renderings courtesy of 3DAS)

3DAS

## SMALL COUNTY OUTREACH & ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (SCOP/SCRAP)

There are roughly 271,000 lane miles of roadway in Florida, only 44,000 of which are located on the State Highway System. The remaining 84% of roadways fall under local jurisdiction for operation and maintenance. In rural counties, limited budgets often mean reduced or no roadway maintenance, unfortunately resulting in an increased rate of deterioration.

To offer assistance to rural counties with infrastructure improvements, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) created the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) and Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP) in 2000. These grant funding programs allow qualifying local municipalities to prioritize their need and seek funding for roadway resurfacing and associated safety improvements.

Supporting the surrounding agricultural demand, maintaining rural "farm to market" roadways is vital to local commerce. These projects are more than just "making the roadway black again". They require understanding of local needs and being cognizant of the allotted budget. Well planned and executed roadway rehabilitation extends the life of the facility, reduces future maintenance costs to the local municipality, while enhancing the safety of the traveling public.

Johnson Engineering has provided these services for several local municipalities, providing design and construction inspection services for more than 70 lane miles of roadway rehabilitation in the last five years. We are able to bridge the gap between the needs of the rural municipality and the expectations and design requirements of FDOT, so that all taxpayers see a benefit.

For more information contact Ryan Bell, PE, PTOE at (239) 334-0046 or [rbell@johnsoneng.com](mailto:rbell@johnsoneng.com). ■





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## JOHNSON ENGINEERING RECEIVES FLORIDA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION 2018 CORPORATE EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Florida State Parks Foundation recognized Johnson Engineering as the recipient of their 2018 Corporate Excellence Award. The award recognized our employees for their outstanding volunteerism to ensure the preservation and wellbeing of Lovers Key State Park.

For 15 consecutive years, Johnson Engineering employees have volunteered their time for the company's annual cleaning and fixing up of Lovers Key/Carl E. Johnson State Park, the park which bears our founder's name. This is an opportunity for our employees to make a difference in the community, while also paying tribute to our company founder, Carl E. Johnson.

Johnson Engineering's Coastal Cleanup began in 2003 in honor of Carl E. Johnson, whose efforts in the late 1960s played a major role in making this popular recreational area a reality. He helped get most of the land donated from several large landowners, surveyed, and designed the road connecting the islands with a causeway from the south end of Fort Myers Beach to Bonita Beach. Today, Lovers Key/Carl E. Johnson State Park has become a world-famous tourist destination and is ranked second for having the greatest economic impact on the local community, bringing in \$75.5 million per year. It was also once voted as one of Florida's Best Beaches by the Travel Channel.

The volunteer efforts help keep the park looking its best for the visitors it attracts worldwide. Teams dedicate a Saturday morning to cleaning and fixing up numerous areas throughout the park including replacing shell walkways, replacing wheelchair ramps with composite boards, painting, constructing rope fencing, building trash receptacles, removing exotic plants, and trail trimming.

This annual event's volunteer efforts were previously recognized by The Friends of Florida State Parks with the Outstanding Volunteer Team of the Year Award for exceptional service and support.

For more information, contact Juli Kern at (239) 461-2424 or [mkt@johnsoneng.com](mailto:mkt@johnsoneng.com). ■



2018 Corporate Excellence Award presentation (L to R) Chuck Hatcher, FL Park Service Assistant Director; Eric Draper, FL Park Service Director; Dana Hume, Johnson Engineering Director; Juli Kern, Johnson Engineering, Marketing Director; Matt Kruse, Lovers Key Assistant Park Manager; Katie Moses, Lovers Key Park Manager; and Valinda Subic, FL Park Service District 4 Bureau Chief.