



Lovers Key State Park
8700 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

CALENDAR ANNOUNCEMENT SENT: 1 November 2023

CONTACT: Trish Schranck, Park Services Specialist

PHONE: 239-689-9282

STATE PARK TO OFFER GUIDED NATURE PROGRAMS FOR 2023-2024 SEASON

-Lovers Key State Park to host wildlife programs and recreational activities-

FORT MYERS BEACH – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Lovers Key State Park will present weekly programs on park history and wildlife throughout the **December 2023 to April 2024 season**. All programs will take place at Lovers Key State Park.

Space is limited for all events; reservations are required. To register, visit the Friends of Lovers Key’s Eventbrite page: <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>

The park offers many recreational opportunities for visitors with disabilities. For assistance with accommodations, please contact the park office at 239-707-6328.

Recurring Events:

Beach and Estuary Walk

1st Friday of December 2023 through April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park ranger for a leisurely hike along the beach and estuary shorelines of Lovers Key.

Discover the natural beauty of both ecosystems as you encounter the seashells, crustaceans, birds, and other creatures that reside amongst these waterways.

Space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 1

January 5

February 2

March 1

April 5

Recurring Events continued:

Beach Cleanup

1st Saturday of December 2023 through April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Park entrance fee is waived for participants.

Join a park ranger for a beach cleanup at South Beach. Enjoy a lovely hour on the beach as you do your part to keep our state park (and planet!) clean. Participants will record the types of trash they collect, and the findings will help inform park messaging. Gloves, buckets, pickers, pencils, and data sheets will be provided.

Space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 2

January 6

February 3

March 2

April 6

Fishing Clinic

2nd Tuesday of December 2023 through March 2024 and 3rd Tuesday of April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join two park naturalists to learn more about fishing in Southwest Florida. You'll discuss a variety of tackle and fresh bait rigs, discover the best places to drop a line at the park, and learn the rules and regulations for fishing in Southwest Florida.

Space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 12

January 9

February 13

March 12

April 16

Recurring Events continued:

Walk on the Wild Side

3rd Friday of December 2023 through April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park ranger for a guided hike along our Black Island Trail. Learn about the fascinating vegetation and wildlife that reside in our maritime hammock ecosystem and enjoy a little local history along the way. Closed-toe shoes, sunscreen, bug spray, and water bottles are highly recommended.

Space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 15

January 19

February 16

March 15

April 19

Junior Ranger Day

3rd Saturday of December 2023 through April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join park staff for a Junior Ranger educational program and accompanying activity. Each day will explore one of the four components of the Florida Park Service's Junior Ranger program: natural resources, cultural resources, recreation, and service. Participants will be eligible for Junior Ranger passport stamps with the successful completion of the program.

Space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 16

January 20

February 17

March 16

April 20 (encompassed in our Earth Day Celebration)

All About Alligators

Select Wednesdays in December 2023, January 2024, and March 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park naturalist to learn more about our local alligators. Learn why alligators are integral members of our Southwest Florida ecosystems, what you can do to safely co-exist with them, and how you can help protect our state reptile.

Space is limited; reservations are required. *To register*, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 6

January 3

March 6

Recurring Events continued:

Sensational Sharks

Select Wednesdays in December 2023, January 2024, and March 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park ranger for an interesting and informative lecture on sharks, the ocean's most sensational residents. Discover why these awe-inspiring elasmobranchs are often misunderstood by the public, what crucial roles they play in our ecosystems, and how you can help protect them. Space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 13

January 10

March 13

Munchin' Manatees

Select Wednesdays in December 2023, January 2024, and March 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park naturalist for an interesting and informative lecture on our local, loveable manatees. Learn what these magnificent mammals are all about, and how you can help protect them. Live manatees are not included in this lecture. Space is limited; reservations are required. *To register*, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

December 20

January 17

March 20

Great Gopher Tortoises

Select Wednesdays in February 2024 and April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park naturalist to learn more about our resident gopher tortoises. Discover the differences between a turtle and a tortoise, why gopher tortoises are so important to the health of their ecosystem, and what you can do to help mitigate the current threats they face.

Space is limited; reservations are required. *To register*, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

February 7

April 10 (encompassed in our Gopher Tortoise Day celebration)

Recurring Events continued:

Magnificent Mangroves

Select Wednesdays in February 2024 and April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park ranger to discover the magnificence of mangroves, Florida's most vital intercoastal plants. Learn how to identify each of the three true mangroves native to Florida, what special adaptations allow them to thrive in saltwater environments, and how Florida law protects these critical coastal dwellers.

Space is limited; reservations are required. *To register*, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

February 14

April 3

Delightful Dolphins

Select Wednesdays in February 2024 and April 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Program is free with paid park entry.

Join a park naturalist to learn more about our local dolphins. Discover the unique anatomy of these marine mammals, how they help maintain balance in the food web, and what you can do to keep them safe.

Space is limited; reservations are required. *To register*, visit <https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

February 21

April 17

Special Events:

Gopher Tortoise Day Festival

Wednesday, April 10, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Join us for Gopher Tortoise Day at Lovers Key State Park! From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., a myriad of guided and unguided gopher tortoise activities will take place at the Welcome and Discovery Center.

For guided activities, space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit

<https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 20, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

All festival programs are free with paid park entry

Join us for a fun day of earthy activities to celebrate Earth Day at Lovers Key! From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., a myriad of guided and unguided Earth Day activities will be available for the whole family to enjoy at the Welcome and Discovery Center.

For guided activities, space is limited; reservations are required. To register, visit

<https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>.

Additional events are still being scheduled for January 2024 through April 2024. Keep an eye on our monthly press releases for more information.

Event registration can be accessed with the following QR code:



The Friends of Lovers Key's Eventbrite Page:

<https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>

About Lovers Key State Park

Once a collection of secluded barrier islands, Lovers Key has become a premiere destination for wildlife viewing and outdoor recreation in Southwest Florida. Previously destined to become the site of luxury condominiums, Lovers Key State Park was purchased for the people of Florida so the park's natural features could be enjoyed for generations to come. The two-mile stretch of beach is popular for shelling, picnicking, fishing, and swimming, while the Black Island and Eagle trails collectively offer five miles for hiking, bicycling, and wildlife viewing. Additionally, the Welcome and Discovery Center is an educational hub for curious park goers to learn more about the wildlife, history, activities, and ecosystems of Lovers Key. Open 365 days a year, there's no better place to enjoy a slice of the real Florida than Lovers Key State Park.