



January 8, 2017

**FRIENDS OF LONG KEY
PRESIDENT'S LETTER FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2016**

To all Friends of Long Key,

I am pleased to provide the 2016 annual summary of the Friends of Long Key (FOLK). FOLK is comprised of a group of dedicated volunteers who selflessly devote their time, talent and energy to support the Long Key Nature Center and Natural Area.

2016 was a bittersweet year for FOLK. We continued to make progress on our mission to support the park by contributing volunteer hours, expanding the park's volunteer network, hosting several fundraising events, and purchasing several needed items for the park. Sadly however, on November 25, 2016, we lost our founding President, Mr. Kevin Wilke, after a long battle with cancer. Kevin, we will miss you and your passion for life and for FOLK. You may be gone from this earth, but you will never be forgotten. Thank you for building the foundation of what FOLK is today.

FOLK volunteers directly supported a number of events in 2016. We had Board members represent FOLK at the NWF's Habitat Steward Training in January and at the Broward County Water Matters event in March. We also launched a concerted effort to expand the reach of the park to acquire additional volunteers from other sources. Namely, we began building a network with local area high schools as well as with HandsOn Broward to drive up volunteer support for the park. HandsOn Broward provided very good support for Long Key's National Public Lands and Family Volunteer Day events held in September and November, respectively.

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On the fundraising front, we once again held a successful Moth Week Plant Sale in July and an equally successful Teddy Bear Picnic in September. We also launched our first park photography contest (which will wrap up in the spring of 2017). We expect this event to drum up excitement from local amateur and professional photographers and help to further expand our reach in the Broward County Park community.

Our financial position remains strong. We began the year with more than \$14,000 in the bank and ended the year with a similar amount on hand. In 2016, we purchased a laptop (for volunteer use), a dissecting microscope and Halloween costumes and related items for the park. The Halloween items directly support the park's annual fun "Trick-or-Treat through the Trees" event. There is much more to do in terms of financial support for the park, and we intend to step up our efforts in this area in 2017.

2017 presents us with a fresh opportunity to do even more for Long Key. Our plans for the year include the launching of a FOLK newsletter, implementing a concessions strategy as another means of fundraising, ensuring we deliver on a number of items on the park's "wish list", and supporting park and county efforts to win grant funding (e.g., the Wetlands Mitigation Project). Lastly, we hope to honor our founding President Kevin Wilke with an appropriate onsite memorial.

A big "thank you" to our Board, our Members and the staff of Long Key and Broward County Parks for making the Friends of Long Key a success in 2016.

Sincerely,

John Haeflinger
President, Friends of Long Key, Inc.

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