Friends of Barefoot Beach Preserve

Getting There

Barefoot Beach Preserve is located along the Gulf of Mexico in the Northwest corner of Collier County. From either I-75 or Tamiami Trail (US #41) take Bonita Beach Road, West. Just before reaching the Gulf turn left (South) onto Barefoot Beach Blvd. Pass through the gate (a stop is not required except for commercial vehicles) and continue South through the residential area to the Preserve's North entrance gate. All vehicles except Collier residents displaying a County permit are required to pay a parking fee.

Next Steps

If you want to learn more stop by the Learning Center, visit www.FriendsofBarefootBeach.org or write to:Friends of Barefoot Beach Preserve, P.O. Box 564, Bonita Springs, FL 34133.

THE FRIENDS OF BAREFOOT BEACH PRESERVE REGISTRATION NUMBER IS (CH26450). "A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OR CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE."

Voted one of the top 10 beaches in the USA

Barefoot Beach Preserve

A 342 acre preserve on a barrier island separated from the mainland by mangrove swamps and tidal creeks. It is bordered on the West by almost two miles of Gulf beach terminating at Wiggins Pass to the South. One of the last stretches of undeveloped beachfront land in South Florida, it remains as natural and unspoiled as it was hundreds of years ago. Rich vegetation and wildlife abound.

Founding and Brief History

The organization is most appropriately named, as it had its origin among friends and neighbors, Leon & Naida Eisenbud and Bobbe Hickman. Walking the beach in the spring of 1990, they noted some Ospreys' valiant efforts to build nests close by, and decided to help. A team effort that soon included the utility company, and a local builder, resulted in a platform nest atop a pole that was quickly occupied by an Osprey family. They decided they could do more, the Friends was born, and has been a growing team ever since; joined by any and all who are concerned with the preservation of our precious marine and wetland environment. Today, it is a non-profit organization of several hundred members.

The Friends Purpose

- To preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment.
- To foster educational and research endeavors.
- To create and distribute literature relating to the Preserve.
- To work in concert with Collier County Parks and Recreation, and to secure volunteers to assist the County.
- To enhance the experience for all who visit Barefoot Beach Preserve.

Programs & Activities

- **Learning Center.** Located in the heart of the Preserve, this structure is full of displays and literature, including an extensive shell collection. Built and maintained through private contributions, it is staffed by volunteer docents every day during season.
- **Education.** The seasonal Saturday morning lecture series, features guest speakers who are experts on subjects ranging from shells to dolphins, eagles to tortoises, and early Florida Indian cultures. For years these popular lectures have played host to overflow crowds.
- **Nature Trail.** The mile long Saylor Trail winds through the trees to Wiggins Pass, providing the chance to view over 60 species of native vegetation all tagged and identified by the Friends.
- **Gardens.** A beautiful aquatic garden with over 40 different butterfly attracting plants was constructed and is maintained by the Friends, just North of the Learning Center. Just to the South in vivid contrast is the xeriscape (dry or cactus) garden.
- **Research.** The Friends are contributing to an ongoing study of the population and habitat of the gopher tortoise which is a protected species in the Preserve.
- **Bird Sanctuary.** In an effort to encourage growth of the bird population in the Preserve, several pole and nesting platforms have been erected for Ospreys.
- **Cleanup.** Friends regularly assist the County with beach cleanup.

Map Legend

- Start of Nature Trail
- End of Nature Trail
- Friends Trail
- Beach
- Sand Dunes
- Forests & Vegetation
- Public Parking
- Beach Access

Preservation

Ospreys, eagles, and others, often catch their fish dinner here

Gopher Tortoises, find the Preserve an ideal habitat

Recreation

The Nature Trail, find over 60 native plant species tagged and labeled here

Education

Friends Learning Center, open to all, easy to find, In the heart of the Preserve

Seasonal Saturday Lecture Series, special guests include 'gators, tortoises, bats & more

Beautification

Aquatic Butterfly Garden, diverse native plants attract equally diverse butterfly species

8,200 feet of beach provide nesting sites for sea turtles during the summer months.