



# The Carr Companion

The newsletter of the  
Friends of the Carr Refuge

## Winter 2005

The **Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge** authorized by an act of Congress in 1989, is a twenty and one half mile stretch of beach, on the Southeast coast of Florida. This refuge hosts the largest concentration of nesting loggerhead and green sea turtles in the United States. It is the second most important nesting site in the world for loggerhead turtles. The **Refuge** protects animal species by preserving the coastal habitat on which they depend; and is also a place for public recreation and education. The **Refuge**, named for the late Dr. Archie Carr, honors his lifetime commitment to conservation and research.

### **Refuge Reports: *Refuge Benefits From Land Donations***

In December 2004, a significant land transfer was made to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute by the Richard King Mellon Foundation. The last 12 properties in RKM Foundation ownership in Brevard County were transferred to public or non-profit ownership to complete the historic land acquisition efforts of the Richard King Mellon Foundation American Land Conservation Program at the **Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge**. Nine properties were transferred into USFWS ownership and three properties were donated to Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (a non-profit public charity). As part of these donations, USFWS and Hubbs entered into formal agreements to work together to achieve the long-term goals of the **ACNWR**. One property that was donated to Hubbs at Coconut Point will continue to support the sea turtle research of Dr. Llew Ehrhart, who was leasing the property from the RKM Foundation. Dr. Ehrhart is now a Senior Research Fellow at Hubbs and is busy preparing for the 2005 sea turtle nesting season. According to Dr. Duane De Freese, Hubbs vice president of Florida Research, "*Now that these last donations have been completed, the institute will contract with an architect and engineering firm to begin planning for the new Hubbs research and education facilities and initiate a capital construction fund-raising campaign*". Thanks to a Congressional appropriation secured by Congressman Dave Weldon in 2004, Hubbs has funding to begin this next step towards building a center for research, conservation and education at the **ACNWR**.

Between 1988 and 2004, the Richard King Mellon Foundation acquired and *gave* to the American people over one million acres of land in 50 states. Without their consistent land acquisition leadership and vision, many hard to acquire properties of natural and historic value might not have been protected. We all owe the Richard King Mellon Foundation a sincere "Thank You" for their leadership in acquiring lands in the **ACNWR** and throughout America. The **ACNWR** partnership represents one of the great American land conservation success stories.

### ***Turnover in Refuge Staff***

The ACNWR has lost three outstanding staff members within the past few months. **Mark Graham**, a **Refuge** biologist, left on December 5<sup>th</sup> for Colorado, where he will work at the Ft. Collins National Park, researching the effects and spread of chronic wasting disease in large hoofed mammals like elk, big horn sheep, and mule deer. While at the **ACNWR** he supervised the bio techs and contractors who were working on the major restoration projects, and participated in the turtle surveys, exotics control and bird surveys. Mark had been with the **Refuge** since March, 2001.

**Tommie True**, an Office Administration Assistant, left on February 5<sup>th</sup> transferring to a position at the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery. Tommie had started with the **Refuge** in December of 2002, and was immediately embroiled in the massive planning and preparation for the USF&WS Centennial Celebration held in Sebastian. After the Celebration, she was kept busy with the challenges of managing staff, and budgets at the **Refuge**.

**Mark Ploski**, a Biological Science Technician, also left on February 5<sup>th</sup> transferring to the Ocala National Forest where he will work in their fire program. Mark was the 'jack of all trades' at the **Refuge**, performing a lot of the required maintenance in addition to the turtle and bird counts and exotics control. Mark had been with the **Refuge** since February 2001.

We wish them well, they will be greatly missed.

### ***Refuge Beach Restoration is Underway***

There are 94 miles of shoreline in Brevard and Indian River Counties. Of this, 34.1 miles are considered critically eroded. These 34.1 miles excludes undeveloped beaches, which are estimated to be one half of the length of developed beaches. Dune restoration has already begun in the **Refuge** with sand being trucked in from upland sources. However, dune restoration will be limited only to developed properties and county parks and will not be done for undeveloped properties, or beaches that will be renourished this Spring. Sand Renourishment from offshore sources will begin shortly for those beaches that had been recently renourished prior to the hurricanes, with the intent of bringing them back to their status after the original renourishment. Beaches that had not been recently renourished will not be renourished as part of this program, but may be at a future date. All Renourishment this Spring must be completed by May 1, prior to the start of the sea turtle nesting season. A study is currently being conducted to determine the most turtle friendly beach design.

### ***Beach Armoring***

Brevard County has determined that for protection of upland properties, sand bags (tubes) are preferable to vertical sea walls providing the required amount of sand is maintained on top. The property owners will be responsible for maintaining a minimum of five feet of sand on top at the start of the nesting season and three feet by the end. Responsibility for sand maintenance will transfer with the ownership of the property. If required sand depth is not maintained for three consecutive years, the project could be considered a failure and removal could be required. It is estimated that there are 46 projects possible, covering 2500 feet of shoreline, with eight projects planning to start by May 1, 2005.

### **Who to call for Information:**

Friends of the Carr Refuge: 1-321-676-1701

Archie Carr NWR: 1-772-562-3909 ext. 258

Web Site: <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/fcr>