



**A Message from
Broward County Mayor
Lois Wexler**

The Long Key Nature Center and Natural area recently opened in Davie. I encourage you to visit this pristine 165 acre natural area.

As recently as 100 years ago, this elevated oak hammock was part of a series of islands surrounded by Everglades marshes. Long Key encompasses some of the most significant historical and ecological resources in Broward County, as the area served as a habitation site for the ancient Tequesta Indians and the more modern Seminole Indians. It's one of the largest of the natural areas managed by the Parks and Recreation Division.

Long Key amenities include an 18,000-square foot Nature Center building and nature trails. The Nature Center building includes an exhibit hall, assembly hall, classroom, theatre and restrooms and naturalists are on hand to explain the unique features of the natural area. One of the main goals of the center is to provide an experience that is both educational and tranquil with nature, while not affecting the natural resources.

Inside the Nature Center lobby is a handcrafted bench made from an African mahogany tree that once grew in the Long Key area. The tree was downed during Hurricane Wilma and thanks to a constituent's intervention, a slice of it was saved and carved into a magnificent bench by a Broward County park employee.

Public artist Lorna Jordan designed a broad range of elements in the Long Key Natural Area site, such as pavilions, bridges, gathering spaces, towers, pathways, art elements around the site, gardens and water features.

Approximately 120 ft. long by 88 ft. wide, *Island Garden's* visual interpretation is reminiscent of patterns in nature such as spirals, branches and partitions. A bridge connecting the nature center to nature trails spans an educational pond.

Wildlife in the area includes woodpeckers, great horned owls, screech owls, ospreys, great egrets, herons, malachites, bobcats, foxes, and queen and zebra longwing butterflies.

The total cost of the project (approximately \$6,800,000) is from the voter approved, 2000 Safe Parks and Land Preservation Bond Program, which includes Public Art and Design.

Two equestrian trails run through the site in areas known not to be sensitive, connecting to the Davie multipurpose trail, and an existing parking lot that has been resurfaced. A 1940s house, known as the Baez house, has been restored to its original condition.

The Long Key Nature Center and Natural Area is a fantastic place to visit with family and friends. It's located at 3501 S.W. 130th Avenue (west of Flamingo Road, between Griffin Road and I-595) in Davie.

I know it is early but I encourage you to please mark the dates of September 9th and September 23rd on your calendar. That's when the County Commission will be holding public hearings on the 2009 Broward County budget. Developing the budget will be difficult this year and will most likely impact county programs and services that each of you currently use. Please make a note that the meetings begin at 5:01 p.m. at the Governmental Center, 115 South Andrews Avenue in the Commission Chambers, Room 422, in Fort Lauderdale. A final vote on the 2009 budget must take place after the second public hearing and discussion on September 23rd. More on the budget process will be presented in future newsletter articles.

Please don't hesitate to call with your ideas, comments or suggestions. You can call my office at (954) 357-7005 or e-mail me at lwexler@broward.org.

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