



## Long Key Natural Area Opens March 14

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Broward County Mayor Lois Wexler will join city and county officials at the celebrated opening of the Long Key Natural Area in Davie.

The opening ceremony will take place beginning at 4 p.m. on Friday, March 14. The Long Key Natural Area is located at 3501 S.W. 130th Ave. (west of Flamingo Road, between Griffin Road and I-595) in Davie. The public is invited to attend.

"Long Key's 165 acres encompass some of the most significant archaeological, historical, and ecological resources in Broward County," said Mayor Wexler. "I have monitored the tremendous effort that went into preserving this property and I am most proud to be here as we celebrate opening day."

Long Key Natural Area is one of the largest of the natural areas managed by the Parks and Recreation Division. As recently as 100 years ago, this elevated oak hammock was part of a series of islands surrounded by Everglades marshes. The Long Key area served as a habitation site for the ancient Tequesta Indians and the more modern Seminole Indians.

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, theater and restrooms.

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 a slice of it was saved and carved into a magnificent bench by Broward County park employee Michael Langdon.

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. A visual interpretation, measuring approximately 120 feet long and 88 feet wide titled The Island Garden, 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. The total cost of the project is approximately \$6.8 million from the 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.

For more information please call Broward County Parks and Recreation at 954-357-8100.

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