

Ocean Reef Conservation Association Celebrates Ten Years & Restoration Project

By Jack Salisbury, President Ocean Reef Conservation Association

In what is its oldest continuing project, the Ocean Reef Conservation Association has been working with the Ocean Reef Community Foundation to facilitate the restoration and preservation of the necklace of ponds in the community park at the Key Largo Anglers Club (KLAC).

Ten years ago, KLAC Grounds Chair Dot Williams gathered support from that club's membership and management, the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, the Ocean Reef Community Foundation, and local environmental and water quality experts. The ambitious goal was to improve the lakes' water quality and sustainability for the fish and aquatic and shoreline vegetation.

The short version of the long success story is that there are now six waterfalls with four biofilter systems, and the water is cleaner and healthier and



Thanks in part to the Ocean Reef Conservation Association's dedication over the past 10 years, the water quality and sustainability of lakes at Key Largo Anglers Club have greatly improved.

supports a greater diversity of species. The waterfalls aid in circulation and aeration, and the introduction of the correct blends of microorganisms helps naturally to balance water quality. The ponds have been home to tarpon, bonefish, snapper, redfish, mullet, snook and many other species. Some of the denizens are thought to be more than 30 years old and still going strong.

Chris Everhart, KLAC's general manager, has supported the project from the beginning.

"The lakes needed help and this project provided a vehicle whereby members and other supporters of clean water projects could help improve our local environment. Over the past ten years, hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of tax-deductible donations have enabled extraordinary results."

Lakes Committee and has been deeply involved in securing ongoing support.

As chairman of the Conservation Association, I can add that this project started around the same time the Conservation Association was being founded. This is the oldest continuing project we have been involved with and it is gratifying to see what has been accomplished in the past ten years. The lakes in that preserved green space have become a wonderful ecosystem and an excellent habitat for local wildlife, both in and out of the water.

Your support of the All Charities Weekend strengthens entities, like the Ocean Reef Conservation Association, that enhance Ocean Reef Club's Unique Way of Life and enables the Ocean Reef Community Foundation to provide for thousands in Key Largo, Homestead and Florida City. Call 305-367-5996 to learn more.

The project has had the ongoing support of the University of Miami's Broad Key Research Station, Ocean Reef Academy students, college interns from across the country, and local volunteers. **Ben Cart** currently serves as chair of Anglers' Park and



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