



BREVARD *County*

Parks & Recreation
Central Mainland

Public Information Release

Brandon Smith
Environmental Education Coordinator
Office:321.433.4490
brandon.smith@brevardparks.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2010

Project Sea-LIFE Educates Students About Lagoon

ROCKLEDGE, Fla. -- The Central Area of Brevard County Parks and Recreation's Riverwalk – A Family Park is teaming up with staff from Brevard County Natural Resources, the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, Florida Tech's InSTEP program, and Dolphin Girl Cruises & Eco-tours to offer a unique educational opportunity for Brevard students.

The program, Project Sea-LIFE (Lagoon Investigations & Field Education), is a cooperative effort between academia, government, and local small business for the purpose of educating middle and high school students about the Indian River Lagoon. It provides a multidisciplinary approach in which students explore the diversity of the Indian River Lagoon using scientific research, observation, and hands-on experiences.

The program is in the pilot stages and has already received great response. The first group of 58 children and 39 adults began at POW/MIA Park in Melbourne on February 6. In spite of cool weather and strong winds, the group had a great time and plans to participate again next year. Many other school groups have already expressed an interest in scheduling future Project Sea-LIFE programs.

The program itself grew out of cooperative programs between Riverwalk – A Family Park and Dolphin Girl Cruises & Eco-tours.

(more)

“Dolphin Girl had contacted us a few years ago to see if we would do an educational program for a large group that wanted to take an eco-boat cruise,” stated Brandon Smith, Environmental Program Coordinator at Riverwalk – A Family Park. “Due to limited space on the boat, we divided the group between Dolphin Girl and Riverwalk. This way Dolphin Girl didn’t have to turn away interested groups, and Riverwalk could expand the audience for our environmental programs.”

Soon other organizations expressed an interest with partnering, and Project Sea-LIFE grew from there.

When the Brevard Zoo’s 8th grade SEINE Program was phased out last year, Project Sea-LIFE saw this as a way to fill the void and launch the pilot for their formal program.

“With tight budgets all around, our local informal education organizations are trying to do more with less. We saw this as an opportunity to pool our resources and staff in order to still produce quality educational programs for our local children,” said Smith.

Project Sea-LIFE is currently pursuing grant funding in order to reduce or completely cover the cost to the school children.

For additional information, call the Nature Center at 321.433.4490.

###