

An Unbelievable Task is a Big Project for Beach Friends

20,000 Pounds of Garbage Took 4,000 People to Move it Over the Last Three Years and It's Not Over Yet

JUPITER -- Since August of 2006, more than 4,000 Friends of Jupiter Beach volunteers have joined the monthly effort to remove trash of all kinds from a two and one-half mile stretch of dog-friendly beach here. The weight is estimated each month, and during the October 3 beach cleanup it surpassed the 20,000 pound mark.

An average of 150 volunteers per month remove an average of 500 pounds of garbage and recyclables per month during the two hour event. Volunteers come from all walks of life and from 15 different zip codes.

The volunteers gather the first Saturday of each month at Ocean Cay Park, Marcinski Road and A1A and scour the beach from the Juno beach Pier to the southern edge of Carlin Park, making good on a pledge to the Town of Jupiter 15 years ago

In 1994, the threat of closing the beach to dogs rallied a small group of concerned citizens who mobilized quickly and began organizing beach cleanups and providing dog waste bags at beach crossovers. Since then, the growth of the group exploded, as individuals and businesses rallied to the effort which repeatedly demonstrates care for our marine environment and the privilege of taking four-footed friends to one of the last dog beaches in the area.

The group was named Friends of Jupiter Beach and as a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit corporation, the group relies on donations and sponsorships to assume all costs for the operations, saving taxpayers of Jupiter and Palm Beach County significantly.

Why is August 2006 the magic date? Prior to that time, the volume of garbage picked up at monthly cleanups wasn't recorded by measure of weight, but by counting the number of trash bags. At that August 2006 beach cleanup bathroom scales were brought from homes to fine tune the estimates. The idea came from long-time cleanup captain Maida Remmer, who said, "Why don't we give people a concrete number, a total weight so they can really understand the importance of what we do every month." Now, all 10 team captains turn in a weight estimate every month.

Just last August 8, Friends of Jupiter Beach held its biggest fundraiser to date. In an all day dog wash, silent auction and vendor booth sale, the benefit was held at the Square Grouper on A1A, along the Jupiter Inlet. A total of \$8,000 was raised to help defray expenses of cleaning up the beach. Lyne Gibbons, managing director of the non-profit organization, said afterwards, "the event

was over the top. For our first big outing, a grand slam homerun could not have been better."

Friends of Jupiter Beach recognized the 20,000 pound milestone October 3 as they once again gathered to clean up the beach. Once the clean-up was finished, the teams met for a complimentary Continental breakfast at the Anita Lankier Pavilion in Ocean Cay Park.

The next beach cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, November 7, Sam, weather permitting, and the task will begin all over again. Volunteers are welcome. For more information, call Joan Ross, president, 744-8621, or Pat Melleby, director, 747-2362. The cleanup guidelines and code of safety are outlined in detail on the website: www.friendsofjupiterbeach.com

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