

Our mission is to carry forward the vision for the development and use of Virginia Key Beach Park, promoting and maintaining absolute public ownership and access, fostering its perpetuation as a passive open green-space that includes nature trails, recreational facilities and museum structures appropriate and compatible with the nature of Virginia Key; preserving it as a valuable resource to be enjoyed for posterity, and to honor the rich historical legacy of the social and civil rights history of South Florida.

VIRGINIA KEY BEACH PARK TRUST

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It's been more than Sixty years since historic Virginia Key Beach was declared Miami-Dade County's "Colored Only" beach, one of the few in the entire state of Florida open to African Americans. In 1979, Dade County bequeathed the island to the City of Miami. After the park was closed in 1982 there were several attempts made at commercial development, but they were, fortunately, thwarted in favor of saving this historic landmark and opening it again to the public.

In 2001 the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust was established, its mission to develop an 82-acre park, maintaining absolute public ownership and access, in perpetuity, and "fostering. . . a passive open green-space that includes nature trails, recreational facilities, and museum structures appropriate and compatible with the nature of Virginia Key; preserving it as a valuable resource to be enjoyed for posterity."

Since 2004, the Trust has completed several capital construction projects, including:

- An Army Corps of Engineers shoreline stabilization project and ecosystem restoration project
- Restoration of circulation roads and parking lot improvements
- Reconstruction of the Beach Park's historic 16-gauge mini train railroad with station and tunnel
- A YMCA Junior marine biology summer camp (voted Miami's "best summer camp" by the Miami Dade Children's Trust)
- Removal of exotic vegetation, and replanting of native vegetation by 1,000s of volunteers covering more than 50 acres
- Two new children's play areas; the "Boundless Playground" and "Mini Train" play area
- Three historic picnic pavilions upgraded and the addition of a new picnic pavilion
- Restoration of the park's historic seaside carousel building and addition of a historic Allan Herschell carousel
- Restoration and upgrades to historic restroom and shower facilities
- Restoration of the park's historic concession stand building
- Creation of a new native plant nursery and spice garden



At this point, two additional projects are proposed:

- a museum and interpretive center, planned by the Trust, and dedicated to honoring the rich historical legacy of the social and civil rights history of South Florida. The first phase cost of design, construction, and exhibit production is estimated at \$5,000,000.
- The GrassRoots Festival Organization proposes to coordinate an annual multi-day festival featuring world music and dance, a sustainability fair, yoga, movement workshops, dance workshops, kids' area, foods, arts, crafts and camping. The proceeds of the festival to support the operation of the Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Museum. Secondly the festival organization proposes to assist in coordinating community volunteer building projects for the enhancement of the park and its facilities.

The two proposed projects will support one another, each bringing visitors to the Historic Virginia Key Beach Park to enjoy both the lessons of its history, its beauty, and the multicultural music, dance and arts festival.

They need a principal sponsor, not only to provide funds, but to serve as a major figure in promoting the park nationally and internationally, both as a tourist destination, and as an educational venue.

Enclosed are mission statements and background information from both the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust and the Grassroots Festival of Music and Dance. We would be happy to provide any additional information you'd like.

Warmest regards,

Gene S. Tinnie
Chair
Virginia Key Beach Park Trust

Jordan Puryear
Director
Grassroots Festivals
of Music and Dance

