

Virginia Key Beach Park Trust Operations - State of the Park

Parking Lot Improvements - A major transformation is taking place at Historic Virginia Key Beach Park through the steady progression of the historic beach park's circulation road and parking lot improvement construction project. The project consist of a storm water drainage system, a 37 acre parking lot that will accommodate more than 450 vehicles, lighting, hundreds of native trees, newly paved circulation roads and a pedestrian walking path.

Historic Virginia Key Beach Park is 82 ½ acres. When completed, this state-of-the-art parking lot project will have upgraded nearly half of the acreage on the park. The project will make the beach park more pedestrian friendly, more visually appealing with the addition of native trees and vegetation and generally more inviting to visitors.

Exotic Vegetation Removal - The second major phase of the beach park's restoration includes 36 acres that have been targeted for selective exotic vegetation removal. This project slated to begin in the Spring 2007 will positively impact the historic beach park's natural ecosystems by selectively removing invasive exotic trees and plants from the park's coastal strand, ponds, wetlands and hardwood hammocks. Exotic vegetation will be identified for removal by consultants, Department of Environmental Resource Management (DERM) staff and knowledgeable professionals.

The selective clearing will restore lost ecosystem structure and function while providing natural, native beauty to the environment.

Plant Nursery - In conjunction with the removal of exotic vegetation is the construction of a new plant nursery on Historic Virginia Key Beach Park. Using lessons learn by the City of Miami's Department of Parks and Recreation, the Trust is developing an on-site plant nursery that will provide native species of plants to replace exotics that will be removed. Seedlings gathered from Virginia Key, Key Biscayne and other local South Florida locations will provide native genetic species to replenish native vegetative growth lost to exotics. Much of the exotic removal, plant nursery construction and native plant care, maintenance and installation will be done by volunteers.