

**CLARK'S GUIDE TO BLUEWATER KEY RV RESORT & KEY WEST
PRE-ARRIVAL PLANNING: GETTING HERE & THINGS TO RESERVE AHEAD**

www.bluewaterkey.net

Updated December 1, 2011

305-744-0999

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WELCOME! We're delighted that you will spend some time at our "Little Piece of Paradise!"

Clarks' Bluewater Rentals welcomes you to our luxury sites at Bluewater Key. These notes offer information that may help you plan your trip and your stay. Please – drop us a note or an email with any suggested changes to these notes!

bluewaterkey@gmail.com Bluewater Rentals, P O Box 420846, Summerland Key, FL 33042
Street, NOT Mailing, Address 2950 US Hwy 1, Key West FL 33040

WARNING - Please do NOT use this address on your GPS - It will NOT find us!!!! See more below ...

Please read this paragraph: We want you to have a wonderful stay in Paradise at Clarks' RV lots in Bluewater Key. We are an ownership RV park. There are some deed restrictions we must observe. Sites are individually owned. Each owner arranges for the rental of his site(s). To quote directly, *"...It is the specific intent of these restrictive covenants to maintain the RV Park as an exclusive luxury resort to be used **solely for recreational vehicles having their own bath, toilet and kitchen facilities...The following uses and activities shall be prohibited....any on the ground camping or outdoor overnight sleeping in a tent or pop up trailer that is not a self contained recreational vehicle capable of and ready to be hooked up to the existing lot electric, water, and sewer facilities.**"* There is also a requirement that your rig be clean and in good repair, and a **limit of two household pets** per RV. Arrivals in daylight only.

Equally important ... GET A SUNPASS!!! See www.sunpass.com for information and to order online. As of Feb. 18, 2011, the last 40+ miles of the Florida Turnpike no longer accept cash for tolls. If you do not have a Sunpass, they will photograph your plates and send you a bill + a surcharge. Sunpass saves you 25% on some tolls, also! You can buy one online, or at a Publix or CVS in Florida, but there is a 24 hr wait before it is active. The paper sticker ones are basically free - You pay \$4.99 and get \$5.00 in toll credit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

I. HOW TO FIND THE PARK

Lot Number and Arrival Dates: Please review your attached bill and confirm your arrival and check out dates. Please look carefully – there can be misunderstandings if people mix up the terms ***last night & check out date.***

We will plan to meet you at the gate upon arrival. We will ask you to call us as you approach Bluewater so that we can be at the gate when you arrive. It is **very important that you print out these directions** as our resort is difficult to spot from the road. Please note - **plan to arrive BEFORE dark.** We **cannot** park you after dusk.

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GETTING HERE

Address: Bluewater Key RV Resort, Lot _____, 2950 US Hwy 1, Key West 33040 (near MM 14) **IMPORTANT: PLEASE do not use** a computerized program or navigation system to reach us. They seem to place us down near the Key West airport, in a neighborhood where you **CANNOT** turn around in a big rig. If you simply cannot live without your GPS, try keying in 1 Park Drive, Key West, FL 33040. Google Earth finds us with that address. But Mile Markers are the key to the Keys! US Highway 1, also known as the Overseas Highway, is our "Main Street". The best way to get around is to know the Mile Marker (MM) of your destination. The little green signs that dot our highway every mile begin in Key West at MM 0 (zero) and end in Florida City with MM 120, so you will "work your way down" to us at Mile Marker 14.3 (**14 point 3 – not one hundred forty three**).

Getting to Bluewater Key from the North - The Florida Turnpike Extension ends in Florida City (near Homestead), where it flows onto US Highway 1 Southbound. From here, you have 113 miles to go. Do **not** count on making 113 miles in two hours. RE: Speed Limits. We have more troopers per square mile than anywhere in the US! Watch out! There is a stretch on Big Pine Key, about MM 29 - 34, where "Key Deer" are protected. The speed limit there is **strictly enforced**. Plan on 3+ hours for the trip from Florida City to Bluewater Key.

Warning: If dark is approaching, plan to stop. We are **not** able to park rigs after dark. Plan to drive and arrive in daylight! Sunset in winter can be as early as 5:30pm. If you are not past Miami by 2 pm in winter, and 3pm in summer, it could be dark when you arrive and we will NOT be able to put you on your spot.

Please see the section **III. WHERE TO STOP OVERNIGHT EN ROUTE on Page 6** for suggested Stopping Spots between Orlando and Bluewater.

Bluewater Key RV Resort is between MM 15 & 14, at **MM 14.3** Approaching from "up" the Keys, please follow these directions carefully:

1. **Leaving the mainland:** Please phone 305-744-0999 as you leave the "mainland". That is, when you get off the turnpike and pass through Florida City's last three blocks of fast food, gas stations, etc., call us - we will then have an idea you will arrive in about 3 hours. (Please let us know if there are holdups - we meet you out front to lead you in.)
2. **Middle Keys:** Please call 305-744-0999 again when you have crossed the Seven Mile Bridge – you cannot miss that! When you get off the bridge, you will see Sunshine Key, another RV park ... which will make you appreciate even more the privacy and luxury of Bluewater Key! When you call us from the end of the Seven Mile Bridge we will remind you of the following landmarks to note on your way to meet us.

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3. IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS FROM MM 17:

- a. **MILE MARKER 17** - "Heads up" at the blinking light at the Sugarloaf Lodge. You have 2-⁷/₁₀ miles to go!
- b. **MILE MARKER 15** - At MM 15 exactly, you will pass Baby's Coffee on your left . **Stay on US1 - You still have 7/10th of a mile to go! Cross one short bridge. Turn on your left turn blinker as you get onto the short** bridge. This will alert folks following you to stay back and will let us know you are our arriving guest. Watch the left side for Bluewater Key sign (blue letters on white background). **It is NOT easy to spot the sign.**
- c. **Turn left** onto Bluewater Drive. If you have called us, we will meet you in a blue golf cart at the corner of Bluewater & US 1.
- d. **We will lead you to pull OFF to the side of our small road** so you can unhook towed vehicle, or plan to take towed dolly/boat/toy hauler to storage. Only RV's and trucks/cars can be on your RV Lot. Storage is extra unless you elsewhere.

Warning: If you miss your left turn onto Bluewater Drive, you have to go a few miles to turn around. The closest left side turn around that will easily accommodate RV's with car in tow is the Circle K Market on the left at MM 11. If you do turn around, you are approaching from the Key West direction. Come 3 miles back from the Circle K, and make a right turn onto Bluewater Drive.

Check out is 11 am, and check in is 1 pm. Occasionally you may arrive earlier if the prior guest has left and lot prep is completed. **Call ahead if you hope to arrive before 1 pm.**

The office that you see to the left of the gate is an Association office. Your rental is through Rita Clark's Bluewater Rentals. Your hosts will greet you outside the gate. You can find your hosts throughout your stay inside the park on Lot #1. They can be reached by phone at 305-744-0999 for anything you need. We LOVE to help you find local restaurants, recommend fishing guides, and help you in any way that will make your vacation wonderful.

II. YOU FOUND THE PARK – NOW WHAT?

Pets: Two household pets per RV are welcome. Dogs must be leashed. Clean up properly after your pet. Owners must insure that pets don't bother others, and pet owners assume full responsibility for pets. If your dog barks and bothers others, you may be asked to leave.

PARKING ON OUR LOTS

We are here to help you safely pull in or back in to your site. The luxurious landscaping and tikis that make our sites so beautiful also make it a bit tricky to get situated on the lots. We have been credited with "saving a few relationships" by lending a hand with the parking. Turn a potentially stressful experience into a good beginning of your vacation!

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Assistance with Hookups - Once you are settled on your site, we are here to help in any way with setting up your RV.

Site Configurations: Motorhomes of any size, with any number of slides, can fit on any of our lots. Bay front sites that will accommodate fifth wheels and travel trailers are sites 54, 78, and 80. All other bay front sites are set up for "pull in" only.

More Information About our RV Lots

Bugs & ants: We naturally treat all properties for bugs, but, yes, this IS Florida! We do have assorted creatures that might "invade" your rig. Some people never have a problem; others find an ant the first day. If you want to bring a product you like, feel free.

Tree/plant and tiki hut trimming: If you feel a palm frond or plant must be cut, please ask for help. These may look like they just grow naturally, but they are really quite sensitive, and we handle all trimming. The "fringe" of fronds on the tiki huts is natural and tikis should **NEVER** be trimmed.

Sewer - State law and park rules require that you use a sewer connector that screws in or, in the absence of a screw in connector, you must add a "doughnut" to avoid spillage. Doughnuts are rubber circles and fit tightly around the hard plastic end piece of your sewer hose connector. Monroe County can inspect, and **will** fine you, if you don't have either a "doughnut" or a screw in connector.

Boats – Important - study charts of the area for information about shallow draft boats. Although our canal and bayfront is deep, the water between Bluewater Key and the ocean/back country is **very shallow**, and lots of people, **even locals, end up with prop or boat damage.** You can put a boat in at:

- MM 11 - Shark Cut - free boat ramp
- MM 17 - Sugarloaf Marina 305-745-3135
<http://marinefuel.com/e-marina/florida/summerland-key/sugarloaf-lodge--marina>
- MM 21 - Cudjoe Marina - 305-745-2352. <http://cudjoegardensmarina.com>

Both marinas will rent you places to tie up the boat if they have space available. **BOOK THIS AHEAD!** Boat rental/charters change regularly. Call us if you want most current information and recommendations.

Boats, II - If you lack experience with getting around in very shallow waters of the Keys, you might prefer to charter through a local captain. Consider leaving that deep V boat at home and chartering, perhaps?

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Barbecues -- You will need to provide your own barbeque on all lots except Lot 81. If you are a long term guest and wish to have a BBQ, local stores carry grills. DO NOT assume these stores will stock exactly what you see in stores elsewhere. If it is important to you to have a specific BBQ, bring it or ship it ahead. Please **do not use any barbeque underneath a tiki hut**. The grease can ruin the palm frond ceiling, and the roofs of the tikis are HIGHLY flammable.

Cable TV - Located on the utilities post on each lot. Please bring your own cable. Please read/bring the manual for your TV, if you are new to RV use. The TV will have to be "re-set" to recognize the local channels.

Phone hookups - If you want a land line, you may order one on most lots. Bellsouth is the main carrier in the area and can be reached at 800-757-6500 or www.bellsouth.com

Internet Access: Wi-fi (not secure and not within my control) is available for free but it is **NOT** perfect. There is a decent signal in the clubhouse, which is repeated throughout the park. Some folks receive adequately inside their coaches; others on same lot cannot get any signal. During a recent test of the system (Sept 2011), I personally found it slower than dial up internet, and could not even see it on many lots. If you **MUST** have fast or secure or "guaranteed" internet access, bring your own air card or plan to rent a private modem from Comcast. **12/1/2011 update: We are testing a private shared network for ONLY our lots, which seems to be much better than the free wifi.** Again, if you **MUST** have fast or secure wifi, make alternate arrangements.

General Park Information: Please feel free to enjoy the park's facilities: the pool, clubhouse, & laundry near the south end of the park; the 100-foot dock in the common area; the central dog walk; and the boat ramp in the storage area. Unlike "KOA-type" parks you may have visited, **every lot in Bluewater Key is privately owned**, "freehold" land. Each owner makes his own improvements, and the only shared facilities are those listed here. You should use and enjoy the lot and tiki you rent, but please treat the other lots, tikis, and docks as someone else's private home. **PLEASE DO NOT ENTER ANOTHER LOT UNLESS INVITED BY OWNER OR GUEST WHO IS RENTING THAT SPECIFIC LOT.**

III. WHERE TO STOP OVERNIGHT EN ROUTE

RV Stopping Spots 3 - 8 hours away- Warning - This section is in the midst of re-writing, and we cannot make any firm statements about current conditions at any of these parks. However, if you are "dead heading" to Bluewater Key and simply want a safe stopping spot en route, here are a few that guests have recommended, listed "north to south":

1. **Turnpike rest stops** – I personally have overnighted numerous times in the truckers' section of the turnpike rest stops. It ain't the Ritz, but if all you want is a place to park, I have found it adequate. Certainly easy to get back on the road in the a.m.!!! I do

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NOT like the stop at Ft. Pierce, Mile 144. I prefer West Palm, Mile 94, or Pompano, Mile 65. Be aware that Miami/Ft. Lauderdale runs about Mile 10 - 55, and rush hour traffic is about 7am to 9:15 am

2. **Greater Orlando area – Clermont/Leesburg - Turnpike Exit 285 - Leesburg South**
We have two recommendations from guests, with caveats about each. This area is about **8 hours away** via turnpike. **Clerbrook Resort, 20005 US Highway 27, Clermont, FL 34715**, is near Turnpike Exit 285 and has some pull through spaces if you don't want to disconnect. <http://www.clerbrook.com> Reserve ahead for the pull through 352-394-6165 Our guest who recommended this said that the plus was close to turnpike, lots of grassy area to walk dog, and some pull through spaces if you do not want to disconnect tow vehicle. Minus was that they felt they got ants here. Another guest recommends **Rolling Ridge RV, 20285 US Highway 27, Clermont, Florida 34715** is even closer to the turnpike exit, and has been recommended by some for overnighting. Back in spaces only here, not much shade on my last visit. But for overnight - fine. As of this writing their web site link seems to be broken. Phone listed as 877-429-3796 or 352-429-3796 - but we could not get an answer on either when we called to verify.
3. **Kissimmee: _Turnpike Exits 240 - 244 - about 7 hours away** via turnpike.
Numerous RV parks here to serve the Disney market. People highly recommend Disney's Fort Wilderness if you are making Disney the main event. If just passing through, it is a bit out of the way.
4. **Port St. Lucie- Turnpike Exit 152 - About 5-1/2 hours away.** Big rig friendly Outdoor Resort here at 800 NW Peacock Blvd, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986. However, Class A only, I think. VERY golf oriented resort. NOTE - This is in that strange place where the Turnpike is EAST, not West, of I-95. These directions are copied from the Outdoor resort website and I find them confusing. But ... here they are: From southbound Turnpike, Exit 152, Ft. Pierce. Turn right and follow signs to I-95 South. Turn left on St. Lucie Boulevard. Drive east 0.3 miles to traffic light, Turn left on North West Peacock Boulevard. Continue 1.3 miles to the Outdoor Resorts entrance on the left. <http://www.outdoor-resorts.com/stlucie/>
5. **Jonathan Dickinson State Park - Turnpike Exit 116 (Jupiter), about 5 hours away**, has been recommended by several guests. Located at 16450 S.E. Federal Highway, Hobe Sound, Florida 33455 Reservations: Reservations may be made up to 11 months in advance through ReserveAmerica. Book Online or call (800) 326-3521.. Directions from park website say: From Florida Turnpike - take Exit 116 (Jupiter). Go east on Indiantown Road to US 1. Turn left (north) on US 1. Jonathan Dickinson is 5 miles on your left. <http://www.floridastateparks.org/jonathandickinson/>
6. **Miccosukee Indian Reservation - Miami - Turnpike Exit 25A - Westbound**

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Tamiami Trail/SW 8th - - About 3-1/2 hours away- allows overnight **dry camping**.

Miccosukee Resort & Gaming, 500 S.W. 177th Avenue, **Miami**, FL 33194

877.242.6464 or 305.925.2555 You have to go to the security desk to get an overnight parking permit. Call ahead to verify that this is still allowed. Located about 7 - 8 miles west of Turnpike via SW 8th St exit in Miami. SW 8th is also the famous Calle Ocho. The plus of this is decent access to restaurants. The minus of this is traffic - quite a bit of traffic if you go back toward Miami for restaurants.

<http://www.miccosukeeresort.com/>

7. **Turnpike Exit 13 - Miami Everglades Campground**, A good choice if you are spending some time in Miami, but a bit far off the road for a simple overnight. It is NOT easy to find, and you will NOT believe you are getting there, as you pass through residential neighborhoods and finally enter an agricultural area. The following directions were copied from their website September 29, 2011. Double check them! Address is 20675 SW 162ND AVE, MIAMI, FL 33187 Take exit 13 for FL-994 toward Eureka Dr/Quail Roost Dr; Toll road 0.3 mi. Continue straight. 0.2 mi Turn right onto FL-994 W/Quail Roost Dr. Continue to follow FL-994 W for 5.4 mi. Turn left onto SW 162nd Ave. Destination will be on the left. Summary: If you don't mind going a few miles off the turnpike, I highly recommend Miami Everglades Campground www.miamicamp.com Phone 800-917-4923.
8. **Options at the end of turnpike: Southern Comfort RV Resort**, 345 E Palm Dr, Homestead, Florida - phone (305) 248-6909 They can sometimes offer a pull through so you do not need to disconnect tow vehicles. WalMart Supercenter, reached by exiting the turnpike just BEFORE the end, at exit 1B, 33501 So. Dixie Hwy., Florida City **DID NOT** allow rigs overnight AT LAST REPORT. (305) 242-4447 to check with WalMart. Cracker Barrell, in the same parking lot, DID allow rigs at last report. This seems a contradiction, as the reason I have been told that WalMart does not allow campers is a city law.
9. (This section is still in process; feel free to suggest additions)

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IV. STOPS YOU MIGHT NEED TO MAKE AFTER YOU ENTER THE KEYS, ON HWY 1

Places to Pull Over Along US 1 - This section is in process. There are VERY few places where a 45 foot coach with a toy trailer or a car in tow can pull over along US 1 in the Keys. Watch for the few shopping centers - see Grocery Stops, below.

Gas/Diesel/Propane Stops between Homestead and Bluewater Key - The best plan is to **fill up with both on the "mainland"** – this will save you about 20 cents per gallon. But if you need fuel, since it is sometimes hard to spot gas/diesel stations that accommodate large rigs, here are ones we have used for our rigs. Let me know if you find another for the list:

1. Key Largo – Shell – On your left heading south, MM 99.8. Diesel + gas.
2. Hess – On your left, heading south, in front of a small strip mall, just past the Shell in Key Largo; about MM 99.5 or so. Diesel + gas.
3. Big Pine – MM 30 - All Keys Gas, on your left, heading south, MM 30. This store has propane, and is often the cheapest propane in the Keys.
4. Big Pine - Shell (was Paradise Petroleum), on your left, heading south, MM 30. This station has gas, diesel & propane.
5. Circle K - MM 11, on left, as you head into Key West. ***This is past the entrance to Bluewater.*** Diesel. Reasonable room to maneuver, even if you have tow car still attached, but better to have tow detached.

Grocery Stops en route – For groceries en route, some choices, in “going southward” order:

1. **WalMart** at the end of the Turnpike is one option. They generally have better fruit & veggies than we find down here, so stock up for a few days.
2. **Farmers' Market** in Florida City – corner Krome & Davis Hwy. Ask locals if not on your map. Real good option!
3. Pass by the first Winn Dixie “up the Keys”, at about MM 105. Cramped lot.
4. The **Winn Dixie** MM 91.2 has “OK” access for RV. McDonald's shares parking lot.
5. Another **Winn Dixie** is on the left, in Marathon, in a strip mall, MM 50.5. This center also has a McDonald's, drug store, and a K-Mart. Big parking lot, easy access for RV.
6. Finally, for just a few things, **Murray's Market** on Summerland, MM 24.5, is on your left, heading south. Family run market with good selection – some people say the best steaks in Keys. Parking for rigs is usually OK parallel, on southbound side of US 1, simply pulled off on service road. Or, just come back in car after parking at BWK. This is about 15 minutes away from BWK.

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Restaurants en route – We are not experts on this section, as we usually drive through to BWK. Here are a few good options that usually have RV parking in front or within a block:

1. **Islamorada Restaurant & Bakery - MM 81.6** – On right. 81620 Overseas Highway. Great baked goods, breakfasts & lunches. **Good luck** finding room to park a big rig, though. Sometimes room alongside US 1.
2. **Lazy Days Oceanfront Bar & Grill– MM 79.9 - Best** restaurant we know “up” the Keys. Fabulous view, great fish. Need reservation in season. Parking not easy; but worth trying to find parking on opposite side alongside road, or even worth a disconnect/reconnect. 305-664-5256

Note - we are trying to find out if RV's are allowed to park on the side road on the right at MM 79.5 that is just before Lazy Days

3. **Keys Fisheries Market and Marina - Right at 35th St (Gulf Side).** 3502 Gulfview Ave, Marathon, FL 33050 Parking lot has room for trucks towing boats. **But call 305-743-4353 BEFORE turning** onto 35th Street if you are a 45 with a tow to check on availability. Great fish sandwiches, on the water. Great fish market, too.
4. **Sugarloaf Lodge, MM 17 -** Want to eat **just** before getting to the park? This restaurant and motel is located at the blinking light, just 2 miles before you reach Bluewater Key. Sugarloaf Lodge is a great locals' “joint.” Right now (Sept 2011) the main restaurant is being renovated and expects to open next month, but a **GREAT** Tiki Bar hides out back. (Hard to see the tiki bar- you will have to park and walk out back.) Almost always room for RV w/tow car to circle through, but might be crowded in high season. Warning - as of now, there is a car show in this parking lot every month on the third Sunday. If planning to stop here in your RV on a Sunday, call 305-745-3211, push 0, and ask if there is room for an RV to park while you eat. Deli sandwiches at lunch. Dinner starts about 6 pm - always great burgers, salads, usually stone crabs and/or lobster in season. On your right when heading south, at the flashing light. **Note where this is as you pass even if you don't stop en route- it is a GREAT locals' tiki bar!!!!**

Possible Traffic Jam Warning!!! Coming to BWK on Sat. or Sun., in “high season” (Dec. to April), there is often a traffic tie up on Big Pine for the Flea Market. Worst hours are about 7 a.m to 10 am and 2 pm to 4 pm. Just relax & crawl--no way around this. Usually about 10 min. of slow traffic.

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V. CONSIDER DOING BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME OR "UPPER FLORIDA" ...

Snorkel Gear: Bring your own from home, or buy before leaving mainland. There is great snorkeling at Bluewater, and you may want to jump right in! However, gear can be bought locally by driving about 10 miles. Ask us for recommendations.

Rental Cars: If you plan to rent a car while here, it is best to reserve ahead with **Enterprise** by calling the local office at **305-292-0220**. They will pick you up, and they often let you leave the vehicle here when you depart, so you may not have to rush into Key West before you go. Call the local Key West Enterprise, and let them know you will be arriving at Bluewater as Rita Clark's guest on lot _____. They are usually very helpful to my guests. Or, plan to pick up a vehicle in Marathon, at the airport, as you pass through Marathon. The airport was designed to allow bus traffic, so RV's usually do well here. Budget, Avis, and Enterprise are in Marathon. Note: There is an **airport surcharge** in Marathon, and they usually close by 5 pm or 6 pm – earlier on weekends. Further note: Enterprise in Key Largo sometimes quotes much better rates for rentals because you pick up there en route. If you have two drivers along, you may want to compare prices. Enterprise Key West is usually quite responsive and will pick you up, however, there have been occasions lately when guests experienced a very long wait to get a car. In defense of the Key West franchise, we are only 12 miles from them, but, in season, traffic can make that a one hour round trip for the employee who must come to get you. You should understand that the Key West store has to charge more to provide valet service. Someone has to pay the employees to come get you.

Swim With The Dolphins: Several recent guests have done this, and loved it. Located on Grassy Key, at MM 59. (305) 289-0002 for reservations. <http://www.dolphins.org> There is another dolphins organization farther up the Keys; I just have no knowledge of it.

Turtle Hospital: The Turtle Hospital, 2396 Overseas Highway, Marathon, FL 33050 Phone: (305) 743-2552 <http://www.turtlehospital.org> The Turtle Hospital opened its doors 1986 with four main goals: 1) rehab injured sea turtles and return them to their natural habitat, 2) educate the public through outreach programs and visit local schools, 3) conduct and assist with research aiding to sea turtles (in conjunction with state universities), and 4) work toward environmental legislation making the beaches and water safe and clean for sea turtles. A great place to visit! Reservations recommended.

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Mote Marine Laboratory: Located about MM 24, on Summerland Key. This is principally a small, private marine research facility that is a branch of the larger Mote Marine. If you have special interest in their research, especially coral reefs, sea urchins, etc., we might be able to arrange a private tour. They sponsor the Mote Living Reef Exhibit at the Florida Keys Environmental Complex, 33 East Quay Road, Key West, FL 33040. Their theme is "Conservation starts with education" and the new Center is a world-class educational facility opening its doors to visitors from around the world.

Ft. Jefferson and the Dry Tortugas: A whole chapter in itself! Too many ways to get here to cover all - just a note to plan to go if you possibly can. The Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon first discovered this island chain in 1513 and called them Las Tortugas, meaning The Turtles, for the great number of sea turtles found there. The current name, Dry Tortugas, was intended to warn seafarers that the islands contain no fresh water.

On Garden Key, the largest island in the group, you'll find historic Ft. Jefferson - once envisioned as the largest link in America's coastal defense system. Its original purpose was to control navigation into the vast Gulf of Mexico and protect the Atlantic-bound Mississippi River trade from piracy. Begun In 1846, it used 16 million bricks - making it the largest masonry structure in the Western Hemisphere - although it was never actually finished. The history of its importance in the Civil War is chilling.

Trips can be by seaplane or boat, and can include snorkeling as well.

(Check the website. We plan to add more on Tortugas - notes about (especially in winter) can be too rough to make the trip pleasant - We probably will NOT list boats as quality of trip changes with Captain changes ... Call us for info)

Flats Fishing: There are numerous flats fishing guides/flats boat charters available in the Keys. Important info about flats fishing: Guides can usually **only** take 2 guests for a true flats charter. This is a simple weight limit, as the boats must often travel in just a few inches of water. Please let me know as far ahead as possible if you would like flats charters, so I can "hook you up" with my favorite guides.

Group Dive/Snorkel Boats: Group boats that go to a protected snorkel area. Let us know if you want help with this.

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Private boat charters: If you prefer to charter privately and direct your own "tour", we know several good captains who will take you fishing, snorkeling, diving, etc.

Offshore Fishing on Group Boats: There are lots of group boats on "Charter Boat Row," near downtown, that take groups of people out. Again, we also have our favorite Offshore Boats and captains. Try to let us know ahead if possible on this.

I hope I have thought of most things you need to know. Now the "lawyer stuff": Neither Bluewater Key, the other Bluewater Key owners, nor the Clarks will be responsible for personal injuries or damage, loss, or theft of any personal property or vehicle. Guests must assume financial responsibility for any damage or injury caused by themselves, their children or their pets.

See you soon! Call or email if we can help further with your plans, and... Enjoy!