

The Coastal Stewards Announce Expanded Focus on Marine Life Conservation at ‘Winter Wishes Celebration’

Event Held at Manatee Lagoon in West Palm Beach and Featured Conservation Experts, ‘Coastal Stewards of the Year’ Awards Presentation, and LEGO Competition

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, UNITED STATES, December 22, 2023 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Coastal Stewards](#), a nonprofit conservation organization formerly known as the Gumbo Limbo Coastal Stewards, held a Winter Wishes Celebration last night (December 21, 2023) at Manatee Lagoon in West Palm Beach. The event, which was attended by 200 guests, featured presentations by esteemed marine life conservation experts, an awards presentation recognizing the Coastal Stewards of the Year, the inaugural Coastal Stewardship LEGO Challenge, and much more.



“

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John Holloway, CEO & President of The Coastal Stewards

During the event, the organization also announced its rebranding, which includes a name change – the nonprofit is now officially known as The Coastal Stewards, and the expansion of the organization’s conservation efforts to include the preservation, rescue, rehabilitation, research and release of manatees, beaked whales, and dolphins, as well as sea turtles. Going forward, The Coastal Stewards will also focus on the preservation of marine ecosystems as a whole, including the conservation of sea grass beds,

which are crucial to the survival of marine life.

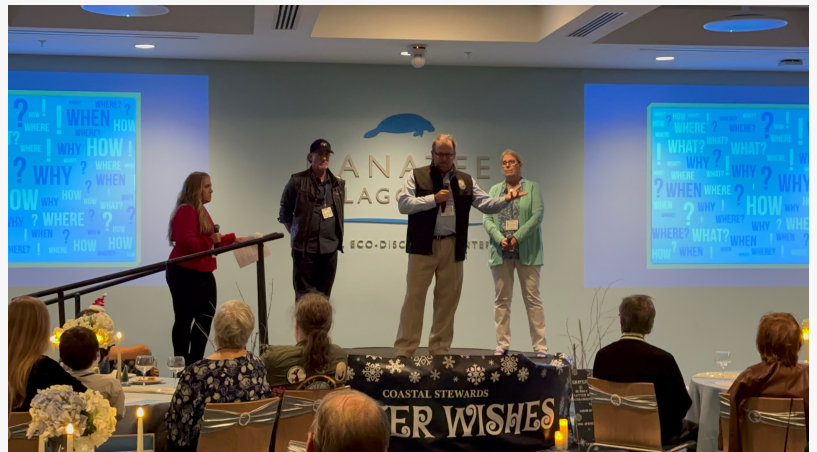
“For over forty years, we've been at the forefront of marine life appreciation and conservation,”

said John Holloway, CEO & President of The Coastal Stewards. "We've since evolved into a cornerstone of our community, steadfast behind the scenes in our dedication to environmental stewardship. Facing challenges head-on, we've remained resilient. Now, we're set to amplify our impact."

The Winter Wishes event featured presentations by marine life conservation experts, dubbed "Experts in the Round," that explored the various components of marine life conservation, including critical issues such as habitat preservation, species protection, and sustainable management practices. Participating panelists included biologist and Director of the FAU Marine Lab, Dr. Jeanette Wyneken, Stephen McCulloch, who has four decades of working with both the marine mammal zoological industry and the global conservation research communities, and Dr. Thomas Reinert, the South Regional Director for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the state's fish and wildlife agency.



John Holloway, President and CEO of The Coastal Stewards



Coastal Stewards Expert Panel

The Coastal Stewards also honored the unsung heroes of coastal conservation during its inaugural "Coastal Stewards of the Year" awards presentation. Individuals and organizations whose tireless efforts have made a significant impact on the preservation and promotion of ecosystems and marine life were celebrated. Honorees included: Gabi Castillo, recipient of the Robyn Morigerato Fellowes Scholarship; Anya Gupta and Caleb Caponera, recipients of The Coastal Stewards Youth Conservationist of the Year Awards; and Dr. Jeannette Wyneken, recipient of The Coastal Stewards Lifetime Achievement Award.

Finally, the evening was also host to the "Brick by Brick: Coastal Stewardship LEGO Challenge," which featured LEGO creations from builders ages 5-16 years. The competition ranked contestants on who best embodied the spirit of coastal stewardship in their build. The winners of the competition were Ariel and Xander, who showcased the lifecycle of sea turtles flourishing

within the marine system. Second place went to Anya, who illustrated what our beaches look like now, versus what they may look like in the future if we continue to treat our planet the way we do.

“Our roots are in education, so one of our top priorities remains The Coastal Stewards Youth Leadership Council,” added Holloway. “Our mission is to inspire young minds by connecting them directly with the wonders of our coastal ecosystems and to create the next generation of passionate professionals dedicated to solving the environmental challenges we’ll continue to face in the years to come.”



The Coastal Stewards - Winter Wishes Event

About The Coastal Stewards

The Coastal Stewards was established in 2012 as Friends of Gumbo Limbo and is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that sponsors marine life conservation. The mission of Coastal Stewards is to inspire people to support the stewardship and research of coastal and marine ecosystems. In 2023, The Coastal Stewards expanded its focus on the rescue, rehabilitation, research and release of sea turtles to incorporate marine life including seagrass, dolphins, manatees and whales. Learn more at www.thecoastalstewards.org.

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