

Florida State Parks Foundation partners with Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation to provide accessible pool lift

Grant of more than \$15,000 will support pool-users at William J. 'Billy Joe' Rish Recreation Area

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- The Florida State Parks Foundation and the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation today celebrated the purchase and installation of an accessible pool lift for use in this Olympic-sized swimming pool at William J. "Billy Joe" Rish Recreation Area in Port Saint Joe.

The pool lift, which is the latest in a broad effort to update Rish Recreation Area after its reopening in 2022, were secured through a grant of more than \$15,000 from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation.

Rish Recreation Area is designated for people with disabilities, their families and their caregivers. The 100-acre park provides access to the beachfront along the Gulf of Mexico, recreational opportunities in the St. Joseph Bay, a swimming pool and nature trail.

"Supporting access for all is one of the Foundation's core values, and Rish Recreation Area is an amazing place that allows people of all abilities to experience Florida's natural wonders," said Julia Gill Woodward, CEO of the Florida State Parks Foundation. "We are grateful to the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation for their generous contribution, which will allow people who use mobility devices to more easily enter and exit the beautiful pool at Rish Recreation Area."

The Florida State Parks Foundation has recently collaborated with community partners for several accessibility projects in state parks, including:



A pool lift at William J. 'Billy Joe' Rish Recreation Area, provided through a grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation.

- The first ever accessible glass-bottom boat at Silver Springs State Park.
- An accessible river tour boat at Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park.
- An accessible fishing pier at Oscar Scherer State Park.
- Beach wheelchairs made available at every coastal state park.

“We are proud of the work we have done to enhance accessibility in our state parks. We constantly look for projects that will allow everyone to enjoy the beaches, trails, springs, tours and other experiences,” said Kathleen Brennan, board president of the Florida State Parks Foundation. “Rish Recreation Area is unique among Florida’s state parks, and it is an honor to support its mission.”

The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation was founded in 1982 and is dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by advancing innovative research and improving the quality of life for individuals and families impacted by paralysis.

The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy. The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests. This project was completed through the Florida State Parks Foundation Services LLC, which is a limited liability company affiliate of the Foundation.

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