

St. Joe Community Foundation Contributes More Than \$60,000 for Accessible Amenities in Florida's State Parks

St. Joe Community Foundation has granted more than \$180,000 to Northwest Florida state parks since 2019

PANAMA CITY BEACH, FL, UNITED STATES, October 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Florida



We are proud of our beaches here in the Florida Panhandle and we are proud to help make these incredible beaches more accessible to all visitors."

April Wilkes, Executive Director of the St. Joe Community Foundation

State Parks Foundation and the St. Joe Community Foundation today announced another generous round of grant funding that will enhance accessible experiences for visitors at St. Andrews State Park, Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and Grayton Beach State Park in the Florida Panhandle.

A grant of \$62,250 will provide two Eco Rover chairs and accompanying travel trailers, two floating beach chairs for use on land or in water, and two standard beach chairs with related accessories.

The grant is part of the Foundation's "Beyond the Matting" accessibility campaign and comes just one year after the St. Joe Community Foundation donated nearly \$30,000 for accessible beach matting at St. Andrews, Topsail Hill Preserve, Grayton Beach and Deer Lake state parks.

"These new eco rovers and beach wheelchairs are perfect complements for the mobility matting that is already in place," said Julia Gill Woodward, CEO of the Florida State Parks Foundation.

"Our state parks in northwest Florida are among the best in the world, and we are thankful that the St. Joe Community Foundation has joined us in making these amazing places more accessible and inclusive."

The St. Joe Community Foundation also contributed \$60,000 toward the primitive campground at St. Andrews State Park in 2019 and \$30,000 for an accessible tram at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park in 2021, bringing their total contributions to the Florida State Parks Foundation over the last five years to \$182,500.

The three parks included in this round of grant funding are home to a combined 6 miles of beachfront along the Gulf of Mexico and hosted a total of more than 1.2 million visitors in 2023.

St. Andrews and Grayton Beach have each featured on Stephen “Dr. Beach” Leatherman’s annual rankings of the best beaches in the nation.

“We are proud of our beaches here in the Florida Panhandle and we are proud to help make these incredible beaches more accessible to all visitors,” said April Wilkes, Executive Director of the St. Joe Community Foundation. “These projects reflect the St. Joe Community Foundation’s values, and we are pleased to once again partner with the Florida State Parks Foundation to pursue them.”

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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. All projects are completed through the Florida State Parks Foundation Services LLC, which is a limited liability company affiliate of the Foundation. The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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The Florida State Parks Foundation, Florida State Parks and the St. Joe Community Foundation celebrate a grant of more than \$60,000 for accessible amenities at state parks in Northwest Florida.

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