

Florida State Parks Foundation Partners with Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program for ATVs, GPS tracking units

~New resources will support nest management and robust data analysis ~

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-- With the heart of sea turtle nesting season in full swing, the Florida State Parks Foundation today announced the newest milestone in a longstanding partnership with the Sea Turtle Conservancy's Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program to support turtle care and management in Florida's award-winning state parks.

Through a grant of more than \$33,000, Florida State Parks received:

— Two all-terrain vehicles and accompanying trailers to assist with nest monitoring and stewardship at Sebastian Inlet State Park.

— Ten Archer 4 GPS tracking units for use at Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park, Bald Point State Park, Amelia Island State Park, Big and Little Talbot Island state parks, Anastasia State Park, Sebastian Inlet State Park, Lovers Key State Park, Honeymoon Island State Park, John D. MacArthur Beach State Park and Fort Pierce Inlet State Park.



Through a partnership between the Florida State Parks Foundation and the Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program, Florida State Parks received new ATVs and GPS tracking units to assist sea turtle care.



“We are so grateful for the Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program’s commitment to Florida’s beloved sea turtles and the state parks that provide a safe haven for them,” said Julia Gill Woodward, CEO of the Florida State Parks Foundation. “These new resources will help maintain optimal nesting areas for sea turtles and support the dedicated staff who care for them every day.”



Forty of Florida’s coastal state parks are home to a combined 12,000 sea turtle nesting sites. Florida State Parks partners with several conservation and wildlife organizations, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), to track sea turtle populations, measure the success of conservation efforts and develop turtle management policies.

Since 2020, the Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program has contributed more than \$100,000 for vehicles, monitoring units, turtle-friendly lighting and educational materials in state parks.

“Park rangers have a role in sea turtle conservation and management, and it’s great that the Grants Program is able to provide them with the tools they need to be successful,” said Dr. Daniel Evans, research biologist and Sea Turtle License Plate Grants program administrator. “The sea turtle work of the Florida State Parks Foundation is aligned with the Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program’s goal of helping Florida’s sea turtles survive. Providing grants to groups like the Florida State Parks Foundation helps create positive outcomes for Florida’s sea turtles.”

The Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program has previously funded similar utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) at Cayo Costa State Park, Dr. Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park, Fort Pierce Inlet State Park and John D. MacArthur Beach State Park.

These rugged, versatile vehicles allow park staff and biologists to efficiently patrol nesting sites, tend to stranded turtles, transport equipment, remove litter and debris and travel across miles of beachfronts.

The Archer 4 GPS tracking unit is a durable handheld device that allows park staff to quickly and accurately record large volumes of nesting activity data. This data is then logged into an extensive database that shows emerging trends and helps inform management practices.

“Park rangers work every day to provide a safe habitat for Florida’s native wildlife, especially our sea turtles,” Florida State Parks Director Chuck Hatcher said. “We are thankful to have partners like the Sea Turtle License Plate Grants Program and the Florida State Parks Foundation supporting these efforts and are proud to have had record numbers of sea turtle nests on our

beaches in recent years.”

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