

Florida State Parks Foundation, partners provide new sea turtle-friendly lighting at Sebastian Inlet State Park

Three grants totaling \$28,000 enhance visitor experiences and support turtle nesting

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The Florida State Parks Foundation today announced the purchase and installation of new, sea turtle-friendly lighting fixtures in the parking lot at Sebastian Inlet State Park in Melbourne Beach, the latest milestone in a season-long celebration of sea turtle nesting support for Florida's state parks.



New sea turtle-friendly lighting is in place at Sebastian Inlet State Park thanks to a grant from the Florida State Parks Foundation and three community partners.

Three grants — one each from the Albert E. and Birdie W. Einstein Fund, the Indian River Community Foundation and the Community Foundation for Brevard — combined to provide \$28,000 for the new fixtures, which feature long wavelength lights and will face downward so as not to disrupt nesting activity.

Earlier this month, the Foundation announced the purchase of an all-terrain vehicle to assist sea turtle care at Sebastian Inlet, as well as GPS tracking units to monitor nesting activity at Sebastian Inlet and nine additional state parks.

Since 2020, the Foundation and generous community partners have contributed more than \$150,000 to sea turtle stewardship in Florida's state parks.

"We relish every opportunity to support Florida's sea turtles and the amazing work our park rangers and staff do to care for them," said Julia Gill Woodward, CEO of the Florida State Parks Foundation. "Thanks to our generous partners, this new lighting will provide an upgraded experience for park visitors while also serving as a reminder of the important habitat that Sebastian Inlet State Park provides for nesting sea turtles."

About 20 miles south of Melbourne on Florida's Atlantic coast, Sebastian Inlet State Park is a critical haven for sea turtles, primarily loggerhead, leatherback and green sea turtles.

The park is home to approximately 1,000 nests along its 3 miles of beaches each year and is one of 13 state parks to participate in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Index Nesting Beach Survey.

In 2023, Sebastian Inlet received interpretive signage and turtle-friendly lighting along paths and sidewalks through the Foundation's partnership with the Sea Turtle License Plate Grants program.

"Providing outstanding visitor experiences while managing our natural resources is at the heart of what we do every day," Florida State Parks Director Chuck Hatcher said. "The new turtle-friendly lighting at Sebastian Inlet helps do both, and we appreciate the Florida State Parks Foundation and community support in providing it."

Tim Linafelt
Florida State Parks Foundation
+1 8505598914
[email us here](#)



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