

YEAR IN REVIEW 2010-2011



Connecting people with Southwest Florida's dynamic estuarine environment through education, engagement and stewardship by supporting the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve



FRIENDS OF ROOKERY BAY ACTIVITIES

From June 2010 through June 2011, Friends of Rookery Bay had a bash (literally!), premiered a new mascot, built more relationships in the community with sponsors and tourism partners, and helped bring more record crowds through the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center.

What a year!



Our 2nd annual **Batfish Bash for the Bay** was held in March and honored longtime philanthropist and environmentalist Lavern N. Gaynor. Our signature fundraiser welcomed 30% more guests and raised 30% more money than the year before. Sharda J. Spahr was chairperson for the event that added a Patron Party at Hamilton Harbor Yacht Club and sunset cruises on yachts provided by MarineMax to recognize ticket buyers at the Patron level.

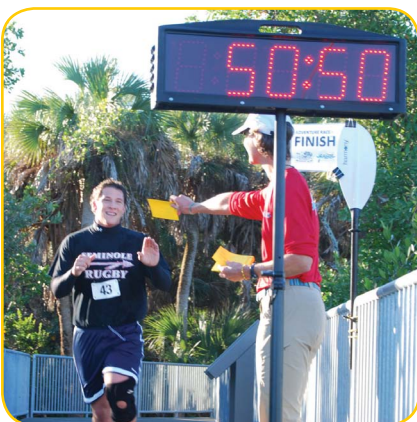
We received 155 creative entries from six states for our **“Name the Mascot” contest**. After narrowing down the list to our favorite mascot name, which was submitted by several people, Rookery Bay volunteer Joan Schwai’s entry was chosen by random drawing. We hope you have had a chance to meet Polka Dottie Batfish.



Nick Shay, Ph.D., professor of Meteorology and Physical Oceanography at the University of Miami, joined us as guest speaker for our **Annual Meeting** in April. Dr. Shay discussed the Loop Current in the Gulf of Mexico.

To recognize our all-important members, we **simplified the membership levels—and enhanced the benefits**. For example, free admission is now offered for two adults and all member children and grandchildren under 18. Plus, we added an annual Members’ Night event to thank members for their support.

One way we support Rookery Bay Reserve is by promoting its special events. The Environmental Learning Center hosted its first summer-specific programming, the **Summer of Sharks**, with the traveling Sharkabet art exhibit, Kids Free Fridays (which had record attendance), and an evening lecture series for adults. The **Lunch & Learn Lecture Series** was presented to record crowds, and **7th annual Southwest Florida Nature Festival** drew bird lovers to hear from a John James Audubon portrayer.



Friends of Rookery Bay hosted our first **Party of All Parties** to great success. And, we were honored to be a charity beneficiary of the Marco Island Marriott’s Beach Festival.

Up A Creek Kayak Tours initiated the **Rookery Bay Reserve Adventure Race**, which brought out kayakers and runners to compete.

On a sad note, less than a year after we said goodbye to longtime Reserve supporter and former Board president Lois Swaim, we lost her husband Ron, also a former Board president as well. We honored them with a plaque.

ROOKERY BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE ACTIVITIES



From water quality monitoring and fisheries research to inspiring fourth grade Estuary Explorers to understand the local environment, the Rookery Bay Reserve is an active and engaging place for science and learning. Here are just a few highlights.

The Reserve was the selected release site for more than 100 endangered **Kemp's Ridley and green sea turtles** that had been recovered from northern Gulf of Mexico waters during the Gulf oil spill. Rookery Bay staff partnered with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida to coordinate four releases. Rookery Bay Reserve waters are nationally recognized for their pristine coastal habitats, abundant wildlife and clean water quality



Rookery Bay became the centerpiece of a new initiative, the **Gulf of Mexico Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Network**, when the Friends of Rookery Bay received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and hired Ryan Young to coordinate the project. The Gulf MPA Network improves coordination, cooperation, communication and collaboration among Gulf coastal and marine protected areas such as national parks, national wildlife refuges, national marine sanctuaries, and national estuarine research reserves.

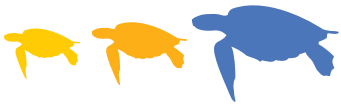


The observation bridge spanning Henderson Creek now leads to a new half-mile walking trail with surface suitable for strollers and wheelchairs, inviting visitors to explore the mysteries of mangroves and pine flatwoods. The new path, called the **"Snail Trail,"** encourages explorers to use all their senses to connect intimately with the natural world, meandering slowly like a snail, and includes a boardwalk and viewing platform at the water's edge. Two more rustic, unsurfaced walking trails also opened in 2011. Global Call, an advanced outdoor voice notification system, was installed to alert guests to severe weather or other emergency situations.



Project Greenscape began as a partnership between the City of Naples and Rookery Bay's Coastal Training Program and quickly grew to include the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Nonpoint Source Management Program, Collier County, the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Program and the South Florida Water Management District's Big Cypress Basin. Project Greenscape delivers professional training for landscapers, including the Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) training required by state law. In addition, it works to support "Florida-friendly landscaping" (FFL) projects throughout Collier County and includes many additional partners.





SPONSORS & DONORS

Friends of Rookery Bay gratefully acknowledges the support received from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. Every effort was made to include all supporters. If you note an omission, please contact us at friends@rookerybay.org or 239-417-6310 x409.

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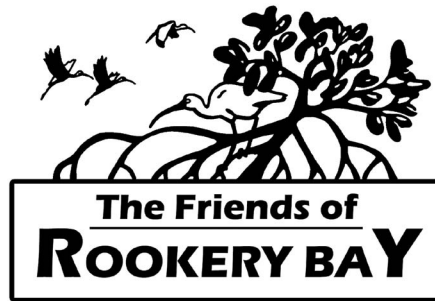
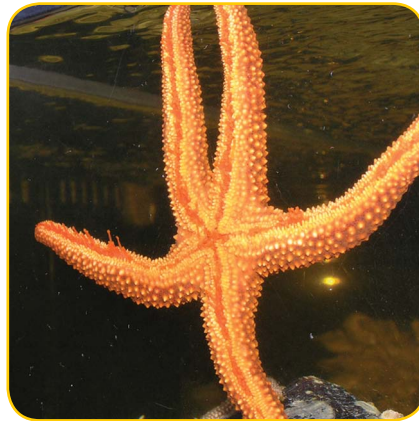
Professional Business Services

Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Administrator

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