



**FRIENDS**  
**OF ROOKERY BAY**

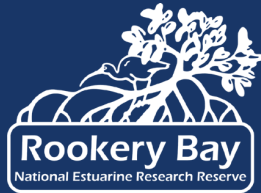
# 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Thank YOU!**

We are so appreciative of you and all of our generous supporters who made an impact at the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in 2025.

# A Public-Private Partnership

Our two organizations are tightly linked, but each has its own role. Both organizations are committed to protecting Southwest Florida's coastal environment for generations to come.



A state agency managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and Florida International University

#### Program Areas:

- RESEARCH
- EDUCATION
- CONSERVATION
- COASTAL TRAINING



A 501(c)(3) non-profit Citizen Support Organization governed by Florida statute and a board of directors to directly support Rookery Bay Research Reserve

#### Program Areas:

- ADVOCACY
- FUNDRAISING
- OUTREACH & ADVERTISING
- VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

## A National Network of 30 Reserves around the Country



NAPLES

75

## Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

# 110,000+ ACRES

MARCO  
ISLAND

41

EVERGLADES  
CITY

Protecting 40%  
of Collier County's  
Coastline For 40+ Years



## Letter from Executive Director, TJ Snopkowski



**2025** was a year of change and triumph for Friends of Rookery Bay. Our organization underwent a major transition as our longtime executive director, Athan Barkoukis, moved to a new state for an exciting new opportunity, and our board presidency changed over from Curt Witthoff to Dr. Don Tilton.

Coming in as a first-time executive director, I was admittedly a bit nervous to take the helm from such a well-respected predecessor and for such a crucial mission. I'll be honest, I didn't want to mess anything up! But the warm welcome I received from staff, volunteers, board members, and supporters like you made all those butterflies go away.

Joining an environmental organization in the face of funding cuts across the sector brought with it challenges, but together, we rose up to face them head on and experienced incredible growth as an organization.

In 2025, we connected 4,425 people to the waters of Rookery Bay via boat and kayak tours through our exclusive eco-tour partner, Rising Tide Explorers. We adopted out 130 sea turtle nests to fund needed interns and supplies for the Reserve's sea turtle monitoring program. We saw over 20,000 individuals walk through the doors of our Environmental Learning Center as visitors, program participants, and event attendees and had nearly 600 members.

We held fundraisers, hosted community events, advocated with legislators, made new community and corporate partners, and we took on exciting new projects within the Reserve.


All of these metrics worked to elevate our profile and increase support from community members like you.

When I first accepted this role, I told everyone I had "landed my dream job." With each passing day that statement gets truer. I am so excited for what our future holds and your place in it!

Thank you for being our Friend.

Timothy J. Snopkowski  
*Executive Director*  
Friends of Rookery Bay





**BEST** attendance at the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center



**BEST** engagement numbers for educating youth and adults



**BEST** number of membership purchases and renewals



**BEST** amount raised during the Give Where You Live Collier



**BEST** amount of Adopt-a-Sea-Turtle-Nest donors



You're the  
**BEST!**

Thank **YOU** for such outstanding interest and support!

# Rookery Bay Research Reserve's Impact

258,149

LEARNING CENTER  
VISITORS SINCE  
OPENING



220,663

VOLUNTEER HOURS  
DONATED



39,603

COLLIER COUNTY  
STUDENTS TAUGHT ON  
FIELD TRIPS



3,459

ACRES TREATED WITH  
PRESCRIBED FIRE



34,981

ACRES OF  
EXOTICS  
TREATED



9,682

PROFESSIONALS  
RECEIVED  
SCIENCE-BASED  
TRAINING



2,863

SEA TURTLE NESTS  
PROTECTED

84,669

HATCHLINGS  
EMERGED

496,673

SHOREBIRDS  
COUNTED  
SINCE  
2011



120

SAWFISH  
TAGGED FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
STUDY

21

RECAPTURED



28.625  
MILLION

WATER QUALITY  
READINGS TAKEN

2,673

SHARKS  
TAGGED FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY



183

RECAPTURED

# COLLEGE INTERNS

**YOU** and Friends of Rookery Bay funded 6 college interns who assisted Reserve staff with shark, fisheries, sea turtle, avian, and water quality work.

These incredible individuals provided much needed support to Rookery Bay while also gaining crucial field experience to help them in their career journeys.





## ADVOCACY

Letters to Congress

Networking with  
National Friends  
and Foundations  
Groups

Community Calls to  
Action

Educating State  
and Local Elected  
Officials

Collaborative  
Partnerships

**What does  
Friends of  
Rookery Bay  
really do with  
YOUR support to  
assist Rookery  
Bay Research  
Reserve?**



## OUTREACH

Visitor Services

Customer Service

Boat and Kayak  
Eco-tours

Website

Social Media

Press Releases

Articles

Advertising



## GENERAL SUPPORT

Fiscal Agent

Special Needs (Hurricane  
Prep and Cleanup)

Planning and Trainings

Reserve Program and  
Event Support

Volunteer Recruitment



## OUTREACH EVENTS

Adopt a Sea  
Turtle Nest Donor  
Reception

Classic Car Show

Art Exhibition &  
Receptions

Members' Night  
Bash for the Bay

Volunteer  
Appreciation  
Reception



## FUNDRAISING

Membership

Adopt A Sea Turtle Nest

Adopt A Shark

Tribute Bricks

Nature Store

Grants

Monthly / Planned Giving

Event Sponsorships

Investments /  
Endowments

Facility Rentals



# MEET YOUR 2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Donald Tilton, PhD, *President*

Alexandria Olson, *Vice President*

Steve Markert, *Treasurer*

Kevin Mangan, *Secretary*

Jully Bureau-Seybert

Ray Carroll

Marisa Carrozzo

Doug Corbett

Thomas L. Marquardt

John McNichol, PhD

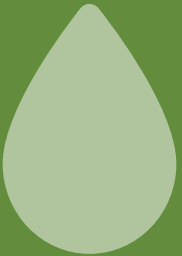
Paul Tateo

Tracy Tirrell

Curt Witthoff

Alex Yanushefski

Alan Zagier



An underwater photograph showing a vibrant coral reef with various types of coral and large pieces of driftwood. Sunlight filters through the water, creating dappled light patterns on the seabed.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many employees does Rookery Bay have? **31**

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How many employees does Friends of Rookery Bay have? **5**

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How many active volunteers are there? **400**

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What are the net assets as of 6/30/25? **\$ 1,279,968**

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Are there restrictions for annual use of endowed funds? **4-8%**

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Are FORB board members compensated? **No.**



**FRIENDS**  
**OF ROOKERY BAY**

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[RookeryBay.org](http://RookeryBay.org)



**CONNECT WITH US**  
**@FriendsOfRookeryBay**