



FRIENDS OF ROOKERY BAY

YOU DID GOOD!

Thanks to you, our generous supporters, for all the positive impacts you made at Rookery Bay Research Reserve in 2023.

This Annual Report & Appeal shares some highlights.

We couldn't do it without you!

2022-2023
YEAR IN REVIEW
— & —
2023 ANNUAL APPEAL

ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL INTERNS

YOU and Friends of Rookery Bay funded 6 college interns, including 1 from South Africa and 1 from Puerto Rico

Assisted Reserve staff with shark, fisheries, bird, water quality and sea turtle work

First time for field & lab experiences, reinforcing their science career paths



Hear thanks from South African master's candidate and future biologist Amy Arendse



A large sea turtle, likely a leatherback, is resting on a sandy beach. The turtle has a dark, mottled carapace and a lighter, orange-brown head and neck. It is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame. The background shows a wide beach leading to the ocean with white-capped waves under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

SAVING SEA TURTLES

The Reserve had 307 nests and 13,300 hatchlings – 3rd highest ever!

YOU adopted 113 nests to protect them against raccoons and coyotes

Researchers say this hot summer likely produced more female turtles



*Watch hatchlings adorably
make their way into the Gulf!*

FRUIT FARM CREEK

Florida's largest mangrove restoration project – more than 200 acres

New pipes under road to Marco Island reconnect mangrove forest to Gulf waters

The number and variety of fish and plants has already increased and will expand much more over the next few years

NOAA biologists join Reserve staff every six months for continued monitoring





PLANNED GIVING LEGACIES

A \$160,000 estate gift from a long-time Rookery Bay volunteer established the Sue Miller Memorial Scholarship and will fund interns for decades

Retirement funds, life insurance policies, stocks, bonds, real estate and other appreciated assets can be gifted to charity and provide tax benefits

Speak with your professional financial advisor about securing your family's needs and then leaving a legacy at Rookery Bay



Learn more about Planned Giving

2022-23
BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

Curt Witthoff
President

Donald Tilton
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Eileen Gallagher
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Ray Carroll
Marisa Carrozzo
Matt Flores
James Fourqurean
Steve Markert
Thomas Marquardt
Alexandria Olson
Paul Tateo

YOU'RE THE BEST!

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

BEST attendance at the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center

BEST number of membership purchases and renewals

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

BEST engagement numbers for educating youth and adults

BEST amount raised during Give Where You Live Collier



HOW YOU

CAN CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Make a year-end donation today
- Renew your Friends of Rookery Bay membership
- Purchase Friends of Rookery Bay membership for your friends/family
- Adopt an animal or sea turtle nest on behalf of yourself or a loved one
- Honor a loved one with a tribute brick in the butterfly garden
- Shop for holiday gifts in our Nature Store or at rookerybay.org
- Celebrate your child's birthday party at the learning center
- Attend our 15th annual Bash for the Bay and other upcoming events
- Volunteer with education, research and outreach programs
- Include Friends of Rookery Bay in your estate plan



Make YOUR Year-End Donation now.

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Doubling **YOUR** Impact...
the first \$25,000 will
be **MATCHED** by
Julie and Mitch McLeod!

“Julie and I fully support Rookery Bay and its mission to protect the 110,000-acre reserve through their research, education, conservation and training programs.”



FRIENDS OF ROOKERY BAY

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2023-2024

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

BOAT AND KAYAK TOURS

Daily

LUNCH & LEARN LECTURES

Monthly through April

20TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF BIRDS

plus

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FILM FESTIVAL NEW!

January 12-21

15TH ANNUAL BASH FOR THE BAY

March 14

MONTHLY PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

Art & Photo Classes

Birding Workshops

Forest Bathing