

Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park Annual Report | 2025



OUR MISSION:

To generate supplemental resources to preserve, restore, and interpret the natural and cultural assets of the Park for present and future generations.



*Photo by Volunteer Gregg Olson
Cover Photo by Ranger Kelly Snyder*



A Letter From Our Leaders

a message from the President of the Board of Directors and CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thanks to you, 2025 was an exceptional year for our organization and the community we serve. Your generosity strengthened our mission and expanded what we can achieve at John D. MacArthur Beach State Park.

This year, we enhanced the visitor experience with a new kayak fleet, standup paddle board rentals, and a sunset kayak tour that quickly became a community favorite. These additions help more people enjoy the park and connect with its natural beauty.

Education remained central to our work. More than 4,000 students explored science, conservation, and Florida's ecosystems through hands-on field experiences. We also introduced Spanish translations across all education programs to make these experiences accessible to even more families.

Our community's support shone at the sold out MacBeach Gala, which raised record funds to fuel future programs and park improvements. We were also honored to be named Non-Profit of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches — a tribute to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters.

As we look to 2026, we are energized by our momentum. We remain committed to expanding access to nature, strengthening educational opportunities, and creating meaningful experiences for every visitor. With your continued partnership, we are confident we can accomplish even more.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for being such an essential part of our work.

With gratitude,

W Mason
President, Board of Directors
Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park

Veronica Frehm
Chief Executive Officer
Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park

2025-2026 Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park Board of Directors

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THANK YOU BOARD!

We want to acknowledge the work and contributions of our esteemed Board of Directors at Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park. Thank you for your service.

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

3,036

sea turtle nests recorded on our 1.6 miles of beach during 2025's sea turtle nesting season

10

miles traveled offshore to release our ambassador sea turtles

73 articles in the press and media

22,522 followers on Facebook and Instagram

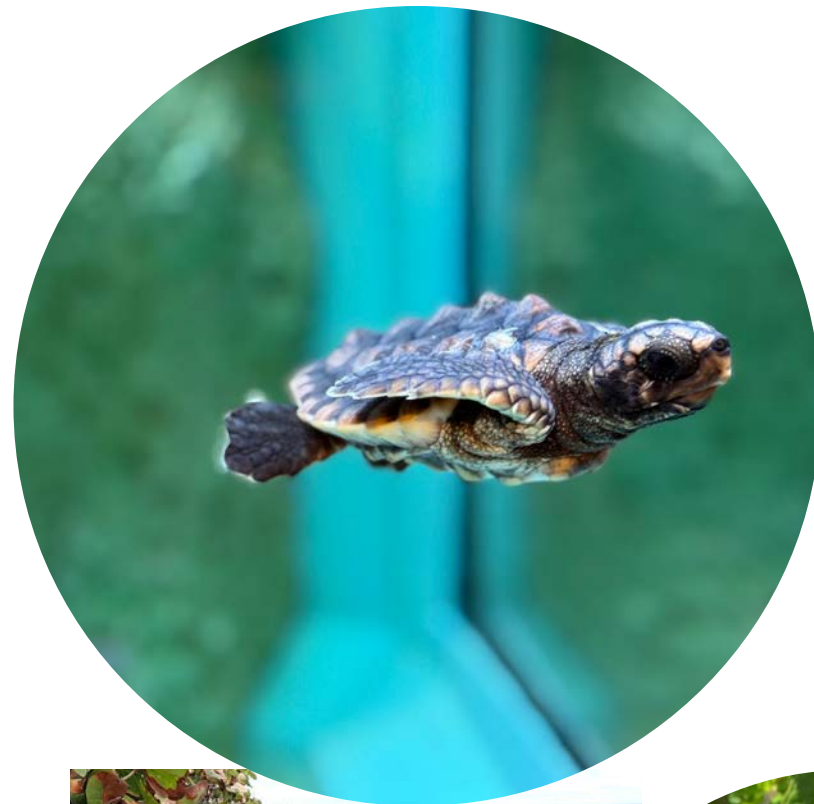
812 students transported to the park by charter bus thanks to donations and grants

6 interns completed our internship program

94 educators reached during professional development workshops

39 campers sworn in as junior rangers at our summer camp

4,000+ students attended field trips at the park



135,500+

visitors to John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

12 education programs translated into Spanish



46

local vendors and artisans that exhibited at MacBeach Nature Fest



321 pounds of debris cleaned off our beach by volunteers during International Coastal Cleanup Day



79 guests attended our new sunset kayak tours

550 visitors who paddled in paradise on our new standup paddleboards

1,525+

baseball fans who learned about MacBeach and ocean conservation during "All About the Ocean" night at Roger Dean Chevrolet Stadium

85

number of pumpkins that lined our boardwalk for our 3rd annual Pumpkin Stroll event

126

individuals who chose to attend our sold out annual Gala

13,612 hours of work contributed by MacBeach volunteers







Community Partnerships

Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park works together with park staff to identify places and projects where our effective mix of private philanthropy, volunteerism, innovative leadership, and strong partnerships most benefit the park's critical needs.

In 2025, Friends of MacArthur forged new partnerships and built stronger collaborations from previous funders. Your partnership inspires, energizes, and sustains us.



A partner in environmental education, **VoLo Foundation** continued to support our award-winning education program ensuring Palm Beach County students who come to the park to experience hands-on learning in our living laboratory have the best experience possible. Their funding provided program materials for our environmental education program, including the translation of all our education materials into Spanish.

Sharkey Family Foundation continued to support education programming and the internship program, allowing undergraduates and recent graduates to come from all over the country to participate in our internship program. This program provides students the unique opportunity to live onsite and gain hands-on experience in the areas of teaching and leading environmental education programs, park management, and learning what it means to work at and run a nonprofit.

The **Florida State Parks Foundation** funded various park supplies and materials, such as our new park map and updated signs, to keep our park's visitor experience as convenient as possible.

A new partnership with the **Palm Beach International Boat Show Gives Back Fund** provided funds to support our animal ambassador program. The park's animal ambassadors educate thousands of visitors each year, especially our loggerhead sea turtles. While the sea turtles are staying with us, we have a unique opportunity to introduce visitors to these amazing reptiles, and to educate them about sea turtle conservation before their release into the ocean.

A continued partnership with the **Palm Beach County School District**, the **Robert and Mary Pew Public Education Fund** and **The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties** provided teachers with summertime professional development workshops, extended field experiences to the park during the year for their classes, and materials for their classrooms to connect students to nature.

The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties awarded Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park the 2025 Community Impact Grant to support Friends operations and overhead costs to continue our meaningful work. With over a decade of support, The Community Foundation's funding has helped our organization continue to operate and successfully implement its education programs including field experiences, teacher workshops, and our internship program.

Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park was awarded a grant for general operating expenses funded by the **Freed Foundation**. This type of financial support allows us to allocate funding where it is needed most.

In 2025, Friends of MacArthur launched a new **Summer Camp Scholarship Program** that will help more local children experience hands-on environmental education at the park. Funding for the scholarships is made possible through the generosity of **community donors, partners, and supporters** who believe in connecting children to nature and protecting our local environment for future generations.





A Thriving Event Scene

Special events play an important role in advancing our mission by bringing the community together to experience and support the park. Throughout the year, we host a variety of events, from signature fundraisers to family-friendly festivals, that welcome new audiences, celebrate our natural resources, and inspire deeper connections to the environment.

Art Show

In February, we continued the tradition of hosting an art show at the park, partnering with Plein Air Palm Beach, a local group of “plein air” artists (the practice of painting outdoors while the subject is in full view). Local artists drew inspiration from scenes all around the park including the kayak launch, boardwalk, trails, and beach. The Friends hosted an opening night reception and the original artwork was on display in the Nature Center Theatre all month long ending with a Meet the Artist opportunity at Nature Fest.

MacBeach Nature Fest 2025

This family-friendly park event continues to be something our community looks forward to each year. In 2025, the park’s annual outdoor festival welcomed over 45 artisans and vendors and more than 1,600 guests. The festival also added a vibrant kids zone with a touch tank and hosted top-rated musical acts. The festival continues to be an important opportunity to raise awareness of our mission while engaging families and community members in a fun and accessible way.

Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day

In September, MacArthur Beach State Park welcomed girl scouts at the park for the annual Girl Scouts Love State Parks weekend. Every year, girl scouts explore the natural wonders found across our country and celebrate our shared love for the outdoors during this annual event. Our park rangers and volunteers provided a fun afternoon for 25 girl scouts and their families. The girl scouts volunteered by painting stakes for sea turtle nests, explored the park trails on a scavenger hunt, learned about Florida snakes and had the chance to meet one during our snake encounter, and became official Florida State Park Junior Rangers.

MacBeach Gala: A Night for Nature

Our annual fundraiser, MacBeach Gala: A Night for Nature, was held at North Palm Beach Country Club in November. Thanks to an incredible outpouring of enthusiasm, the event sold out and raised more funds than ever before. These resources allow us to continue investing in the park, expanding programs, and creating opportunities for future generations. It was a wonderful night supporting the park filled with delicious food and drinks, captivating presentations, the environmental champion award, a silent & live auction, music, and more! A huge thank you to all our Gala sponsors and volunteers; because of you, it was truly an incredible night!

Pumpkin Stroll

In October, hundreds of guests joined us for our 3rd Annual Pumpkin Stroll and Moonlight Concert. Guests enjoyed a magical night of music under the moonlight and strolled along the pumpkin-lit boardwalk. This family-friendly event featured activities for all ages including live music, festive snacks from Palm Beach Cider Donuts, and a mystery box activity and skull guessing game from our education team. This fall event was an incredible night thanks to all the community support.

Holiday Sip and Shop and Moonlight Concert

In December, park patrons joined us for our annual Holiday Sip and Shop at the MacArthur Beach State Park Gift Shop while listening to music under the moonlight. This after-hours holiday event was the perfect way to get holiday shopping done, while supporting their favorite state park! Guests enjoyed wine all while shopping a wide selection of carefully curated local and sustainable gifts. 100% of all profits from gift shop sales goes directly back into supporting the park!

“The sunset kayak tour was the highlight of my week! The guides were wonderful, we saw gorgeous views and amazing wildlife. What a special way to experience the park.”

- Lisa R., Sunset Kayak Tour guest



New Recreational Offerings

There are now more ways to paddle in paradise and explore MacArthur Beach from above the water.

This past year, Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park made exciting strides in enhancing how visitors experience and connect with the park. We expanded our recreational offerings with the addition of a new kayak fleet, paddleboard rentals, and a monthly sunset kayak tour that quickly became a community favorite.

The 2-hour sunset eco-tour navigates through the brackish estuary in the center of John D. MacArthur Beach State Park, where guests have the opportunity to encounter all the native flora and fauna that call the park home. This guided tour is the perfect way to experience MacArthur Beach State Park, ending with a stunning sunset like no other. Our sunset tour is not just about the stunning views, it is also an educational journey through the rich wildlife and history of the park. As guests kayak through the estuary, our trained guides share fascinating insights about the local ecosystem. Our Sunset Kayak Tour is a relaxing, fun way to end a perfect day in beautiful South Florida. Nature is constantly changing and on the move, which makes each tour an incredibly unique experience.



Friends of MacArthur began offering visitors standup paddle boarding in March 2025 as a new and exciting way to explore the park. Six new paddle boards were added to our fleet of rentals. Visitors can paddle around the estuary or travel under Burnt Bridge and visit Munyon Island, taking in a perfect view of the wildlife above and below their board. Depending on the season you may see wildlife including manatees, dolphins, mullet, snook, rays, and a variety of birds.

Kayaking at MacArthur Beach State Park is the park's most popular recreational activity and provides visitors with a unique experience to get better acquainted with the nature all around you. A new and larger kayak fleet offered visitors an upgraded experience to our most popular park activity. The great part about our park is the estuary is a protected body of water, which creates ideal conditions for beginners or those wanting a relaxing experience.

These programs are helping more people discover the beauty of the park while building a deeper appreciation for the natural environment we all share.





“Summer camp at the park offers children the chance to get outside and discover the natural world right here in their own neighborhood. Our new scholarship program allows us to remove financial barriers and make these life-changing experiences accessible to more families in our community.”

- Veronica Frehm, Chief Executive Officer, Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park



We also expanded access through the launch of our new Summer Camp Scholarship Program, designed to help more local children experience hands-on environmental education in one of the community's most treasured natural spaces. Through financial assistance for eligible families, the program helps remove barriers to participation in the park's popular summer camp.

Summer camp at the park gives children the opportunity to explore nature right in their own backyard, learning about local wildlife and ecosystems while building curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors. With the introduction of scholarships, even more children can take part in these transformative experiences.

This program is made possible through the generosity of our community donors, partners, and supporters who share our belief that every child deserves the chance to connect with nature. Their support helps ensure that the next generation not only experiences the beauty of our local environment, but also grows up inspired to protect it for years to come.



Expanding Access to Environmental Education

Summer camp scholarships and spanish translations allowed us to reach even more students in our community.

Education remains at the heart of our mission, and in 2025 we continued to strengthen our commitment to ensuring that even more students in our community have the opportunity to connect with nature and discover the importance of environmental stewardship.

This year, more than 4,000 students participated in our field experience programs, exploring science, conservation, and Florida's ecosystems through hands-on learning experiences at the park. As part of our ongoing effort to make these programs more inclusive and accessible, we introduced Spanish translations across all our education programming. After more than a year of collaborative work, our educational materials are now available in both English and Spanish, allowing more students to fully engage in the lessons, activities, and discoveries that take place during their visit. By offering bilingual resources, we are opening the door for more families and classrooms to participate meaningfully in these experiences and empowering a broader group of young environmental stewards.



“Our park is made even better through the energy and commitment provided by our volunteers.”

- Veronica Frehm, Chief Executive Officer, Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park



Award-Winning Volunteers

*Celebrating service, partnership, and leadership
in conservation*

Volunteers are the life force behind our organization. Working alongside our dedicated staff, volunteers help ensure that every visitor has a meaningful experience while supporting the day-to-day operations that keep the park running smoothly. In 2025 alone, volunteers contributed more than 13,000 hours of service in various roles such as greeting visitors, staffing the Gift Shop, assisting in the Nature Center, leading Nature Walks, supporting beach cleanups, participating in turtle surveys and turtle walks, helping with construction and maintenance projects, driving the tram, and so much more. Their generosity of time and talent strengthens every aspect of the park, and we are deeply grateful for the passion they bring to our community.

This dedication was celebrated at the Florida State Parks District 5 Volunteer Appreciation Day held at Jonathan Dickinson State Park, where several of our volunteers and partners were recognized for their outstanding service. Honors included Best Local Business Partner awarded to Bus One, LLC, Youth Volunteer of the Year awarded to Marcella Mugno, and Long-term Project of the Year awarded to the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park Environmental Education Program. Two remarkable volunteers, Diane Kay and Jack Ewan, were also honored for 20 Years of Service, a testament to their enduring commitment to Florida's state parks and the Friends organization. We are proud and grateful that MacArthur Beach continues to benefit from such extraordinary support.



In addition to celebrating the contributions of our volunteers, 2025 was also a year of meaningful recognition for our organization as a whole. We were honored by the Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches as Non-Profit of the Year, an award that reflects the collective impact of our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who believe in the importance of preserving this special park and expanding opportunities for environmental education.

Each year, we also celebrate individuals whose work contributes towards the preservation or betterment of Florida's natural environment through the John D. MacArthur Beach State Park Environmental Champion Award, presented at the annual MacBeach Gala. In 2025, this honor was awarded to Dr. Ian Enochs, Research Ecologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Dr. Enochs leads the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory Coral Program, where his research focuses on understanding how corals and reef ecosystems respond to global environmental change. Beyond his professional contributions, Dr. Enochs has also generously shared his expertise with our community by supporting our environmental education summer camp and intern program for many years.

Together, these recognitions highlight the power of collaboration. From volunteers who give their time each week, to partners and scientists advancing conservation through research and education, our shared commitment ensures that MacArthur Beach remains a place where nature, learning, and community thrive.



Together, we can do so much more.

As a nonprofit organization, Friends of MacArthur rely on volunteers, donations, grants, and memberships to continue our important work. Your contribution directly supports programs and services that make our park the best it can be. John D. MacArthur Beach State Park is protected and enriched by the members, donors, and volunteers of the Friends. The park continues to thrive and is a beloved destination, center for learning, and place of beauty, thanks to your generosity.

THANK YOU for all you give to this place we love so much.



Get Involved with Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park

Looking for ways to impact Palm Beach County's only state park? Here are some ways you can support our mission.

VISIT

Stop by and spend some time kayaking, standup paddle boarding, relaxing on the beach, snorkeling the rock reef, or hiking one of our trails.

VOLUNTEER

We are always looking for new volunteers! Meet new people, gain experience, and use your talents to help preserve our natural resources.

SPONSOR

There is no better place for your company to be seen than at MacArthur Beach State Park. We offer a wide variety of opportunities to meet your marketing and charitable goals.

MEMBERSHIP

Your annual membership supports the programs and activities at the park.

ATTEND

Join us at one of our many park events, there is a little something for everyone.

LIKE

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram @macarthurbeach to stay up to date with our latest news, photos, and events.

INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Give a gift of any size from yourself or on behalf of your family. Annual or monthly giving plans are also available.

PLANNED GIVING

The long-term commitment of a planned gift is a way to create a personal legacy supporting Friends of MacArthur Beach. Planned gifts take many forms and may include IRA contributions, real estate, life insurance and personal bequests.

GIFTS OF STOCK

Donating stocks and other securities is one of the most tax-efficient ways to give.



Scan here to donate or visit:

www.macarthurbeach.kindful.com

For more ways to get involved, email us at friends@macarthurbeach.org or call us at 561-776-7449



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