



Year in Review
2012-2013

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Guy Harvey – artist, scientist, diver, angler, conservationist and explorer – served as Honorary Chair of the Friends of Rookery Bay’s 4th annual signature fundraiser, the Batfish Bash for the Bay, in March. The event included a silent auction, Olde Florida fare, band and dancing, as well as Patron Party two weeks prior. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and guests, we raised \$64,000 to benefit the Reserve’s youth and adult education programs.



Fisherman, artist and former host of the “Tarpon Bay Tales” fishing show Alex Suescun shared his experiences during the Reserve’s National Estuaries Day celebration in September and the Friends of Rookery Bay annual meeting in March.



Friends of Rookery Bay’s mission is to support the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve’s activities, and the Reserve had many significant achievements during this fiscal year.

In May, the Reserve hosted Greg Munson, Deputy Secretary for DEP’s Office of Water Policy as well as the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board and the Big Cypress Basin Board, two organizations that met in Collier County for the first time.



The groups discussed the Picayune Strand State Forest restoration project, the first of several Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Projects to get underway in south Florida. Rookery Bay Reserve is directly downstream of the restoration project and a direct beneficiary of additional freshwater flows that will arrive when the first pumping station comes online in fall. The previous month, Rookery Bay staff and Big Cypress Basin staff visited each other’s properties to better understand the impact of the restoration project on both entities.

In April, the Reserve celebrated National Everglades Day with dignitaries including Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart; Zach Zampella, Regional Director for Senator Marco Rubio; and Collier County Commissioner Donna Fiala.



Visitors to the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center are watching a new film that provides an overview shot from land, water and sky of the Reserve’s 110,000 acres. The 10-minute “Rookery Bay – A Special Place” was shot and directed by Elam Stoltzfus with Live Oak Production Group and narrated by Peter Thomas, who both worked on the previous film shown in the Center’s auditorium. J. Robert Houghtaling of Marco Island composed the music and score. Fabien Cousteau, Guy Harvey and Clyde Butcher make cameo appearances.

A leatherback sea turtle entangled in a crab trap line approximately three miles west of Caxambas Pass on Marco Island was rescued by resource management staff in cooperation with Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) law enforcement. This species is rarely found on Florida’s west coast, and staff enjoyed the opportunity to release this endangered species.



When 120 Lely High School students produced video shorts on environmental topics in partnership with Discovery Education, Rookery Bay hosted 22 of the students plus families – along with Collier County School District Superintendent Kamela Patton and other district faculty – to honor five student teams who received certificates, plaques and goodie bags. The Reserve also hosted its annual “Girls in Science Day,” where 15 middle school students enjoyed hands-on learning, a boat trip in the Reserve and science experiments.



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Friends of Rookery Bay – a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization – gratefully acknowledges the support received from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. Every effort was made to include all supporters. If you note an omission, please contact friends@rookerybay.org or 239-417-6310 x409.

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Rookery Bay Quick Facts

- Manages 110,000 acres from Gordon Pass through the Ten Thousand Islands
- Home to 150 species of birds and many threatened/endangered animals
- One of 28 national estuarine research reserves
- Promotes informed stewardship of the coast through research and education
- Field trip spot for all Collier 4th graders as well as students up through university level
- Managed by FL DEP's Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas in cooperation with NOAA
- Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center is visited by 35,000 people annually



Rookery Bay offers a variety of naturalist-led small boat cruises in the Reserve.



Students from Mike Davis Elementary School explore a diamondback rattlesnake skin.

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